

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS AND  
TEACHER EMPOWERMENT IN A LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY THAT  
HAS BEEN APPOINTED AN ASSIGNED RECEIVER OR TRUSTEE

by

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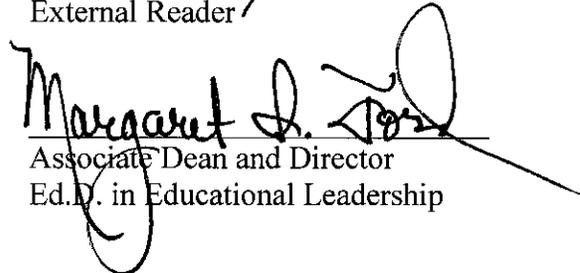
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## Abstract

This qualitative, case study aimed to better understand teachers' perceived empowerment, when working in a Local Education Agency that was placed on an improvement plan by its governing State Education Agency and resulted in the appointment of an assigned receiver or trustee to serve as head of the Local Education Agency. The need for this study is rooted in the changes of growing expectations for schools to meet adequate yearly progress and the impact that these changes have on teacher empowerment. In order to better understand teacher empowerment in a Local Education Agency that was placed on an improvement plan, Lee and Nie's (2014) Theoretical Framework of Teacher Empowerment was applied.

The study included five teachers from four different schools in same Local Education Agency that was placed on an improvement plan and assigned a receiver to serve as the superintendent and school committee. All teachers had been employed in their school for three or more years. Data was collected through two surveys, one focus group, individual interviews, review of documents, and member checking. Findings indicate that principals' empowering behaviors directly impact teacher empowerment. Additional findings indicate that the Local Education Agency's improvement plan and receivership indirectly impacted teacher empowerment through principals' empowering behaviors. The researcher recommends that principals and Local Education Agency administrators evaluate principals' empowering behaviors to identify ways of increasing teacher empowerment, as previous research found that teacher empowerment results in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment.

*Keywords:* teacher empowerment, psychological empowerment, empowering behaviors

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Twenty-first century education focuses on accountability. Measurements of accountability are created by each state, and follow requirements identified in the current active reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which is titled the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB). Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are held to the mandates identified in NCLB. LEAs and the schools they govern are expected to meet the minimal proficiency requirements on annual assessments.

LEAs and their schools face being identified as requiring improvement plans from governing State Educational Agencies (SEAs) when they do not meet the minimal required proficiency on annual assessments. Studies of teacher empowerment indicate that granting empowerment leads to greater student success (Lee & Nie, 2014; Prawat, 1991). But, can teachers be empowered when their LEA has been placed on an improvement plan, and a receiver has been assigned, holding full authority over all decisions? Placement on an improvement plan is dictated by graduation rates and measurable student growth on annual assessments, such as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium. Improvement plans may include removing particular schools from LEA jurisdiction, appointing a receiver or trustee to act as the superintendent and school board, and abolishing or restructuring the LEA (No Child Left Behind Act of 2002). Since the passing of NCLB, a study has yet to research specifically if administrators can effectively empower teachers, who are employed in a LEA that has been appointed a receiver or trustee, or been abolished or restructured, by its governing SEA, as identified in section 1116 of NCLB.

Researchers have yet to determine a common definition and conceptualization of teacher empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014; Prawat, 1991). For this study, teacher empowerment will be defined as a process of school leader(s) promoting behaviors that enable teachers to experience their own psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014). This study aims to provide public school teachers and administrators with insight into empowering teachers who are employed in a LEA under receivership.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In industries outside education, empowering employees leads to enhanced job performance, increased motivation, higher morale, improved quality of work, greater efficiency, and, most importantly, greater job satisfaction (Keiser & Shen, 2000; Shen et al., 2012). In education, the results of empowering teachers also include greater job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and identified increases in knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of pedagogy, organizational learning, breakthroughs in curriculum initiatives, improved staff collegiality; and for students, enhanced student motivation, leading to higher student achievement (Keiser & Shen, 2000; Lumpkin, Claxton, & Wilson, 2014; Shen et al., 2012). Thus, teacher empowerment is important to be studied in a LEA that is under receivership; however, is it possible to empower teachers in a LEA under receivership? If so, how can it be done?

Marks and Louis (1997) questioned “Does empowerment simply affirm teachers' longstanding classroom autonomy, or does it newly recognize the potential of teachers as professionals to reform education from the ground up?” (p. 245). This question remains unanswered.

## **Psychological Empowerment**

Promoting teacher empowerment has shown to lead to achievement (Lee & Nie, 2014). In the field of psychology, researchers relate psychological empowerment with the term “control” (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014; Shen et al., 2012). It is common for teachers to feel that they do not have much control over their own practice (Lee & Nie, 2014; Prawat, 1991). Principals and immediate supervisors, who include teacher leaders, have the highest level of decision making, in regard to issues that highly impact curriculum and pedagogy, and thus, impact psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014). Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) explain the importance of the principal’s role, through teachers’ perceptions. “When teachers perceive their principal as an authentic leader who empowers them in making meaningful changes, they feel that they have influence on what happens at school. Therefore, they are motivated to improve job performance, and go beyond expectations” (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014 p. 699). Lee and Nie (2014) agree with the importance of positive relationships between teachers and principals. They also state equal emphasis should be placed as well on teachers’ immediate supervisors, for example department heads, curriculum coordinators, teacher mentors, and teacher leaders. Immediate supervisors have more direct contact with teachers’ work. Can administrators and immediate supervisors foster their teachers’ psychological empowerment, when in a LEA that is under receivership, as evidenced by teacher perceptions?

## **Leadership in Schools**

Gates (2010) defines shared leadership as “vision, and commitment to action, with the creation of a core group of site leaders, teachers and their unions, and school board to develop and define the vision of teacher effectiveness” (p. 6). Shared leadership is not a concept that is

universal across all public schools, and it is not universally implemented or accepted.

“Principals who feel the need to maintain such tight control over decision processes often rationalize that they do so because central office administrators want a strong and assertive person in charge” (Kirby, Wimpelberg, & Keister, 1992, p. 91). Teacher empowerment can be affected by these leadership models.

Lee and Nie (2014) explain one traditional model of public education. In this model, the principal is the head of the school, and appoints mid-level management as immediate supervisors. Immediate supervisors work more directly with teachers. Dependent on the school system, mid-level management and teacher leaders vary in title and responsibility. Lee and Nie identified that the core responsibility of mid-level management is to work closely with teachers who make decisions regarding the direction of academics and behavior.

Teacher empowerment research identifies the benefits for school culture (Lumpkin, Claxton, and Wilson, 2014; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). According to Lumpkin, Claxton, and Wilson (2014), teacher buy-in is the result of teacher involvement in the establishment of instructional, curricular, and assessment goals, and where there was a congruency between a school’s mission statement and teachers’ values. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) further explain that as teachers’ perception of their own empowerment increased, along with their job satisfaction and professionalism, teachers as a group experienced decreasing amounts of on the job stress. Other research has determined that teachers express greater interest and dedication to their organization and craft when being involved in development or evolution of curriculum and instructional practices, as do employees of other industries when they are involved in development or evolution of specific aspects of their organizations (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001; Lee & Nie, 2014).

Additionally, teacher leaders affect teacher empowerment. Studies have indicated the importance of establishing teacher leaders (Lee & Nie, 2014; Lumpkin, Claxton, & Wilson, 2014). Lumpkin, Claxton, and Wilson explained that strong teacher leaders possess strong emotional leadership skills. Having strong emotional leadership skills benefits teacher leaders and those whom they lead. Teacher leaders benefit by being able to expand their personal leadership skills, while those who are being led receive help and guidance in expanding their understanding of instructional practice and pedagogy.

### **Empowerment and the LEA's Appointment of Receiver/Trustee**

Included in the requirements set in NCLB are the expectations to implement “a set of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments that include, at a minimum, academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science that will be used as the primary means of determining the yearly performance” (No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, p. 1449).

NCLB (2002) mandates that all SEAs establish a system wide accountability system for all LEAs. It is the responsibility of each SEA to enforce the system of accountability. Requirements identified in NCLB must be met. SEAs are also required to establish long term goals, and measure progress of proficiency on annual assessments. Additionally, SEAs are also required to use graduation rates as a measure of performance. The term graduation rate is defined as the percentage of students who graduate with a regular diploma, in the standard number of years, as an indicator for meeting basic programming requirements (NCLB, 2002). NCLB does not define “standard number of years” by an exact number.

Elmore and Fuhrman (2001) explain that teachers' identification of accountability and standardized tests as the current issues in education may be caused by the high stakes of student

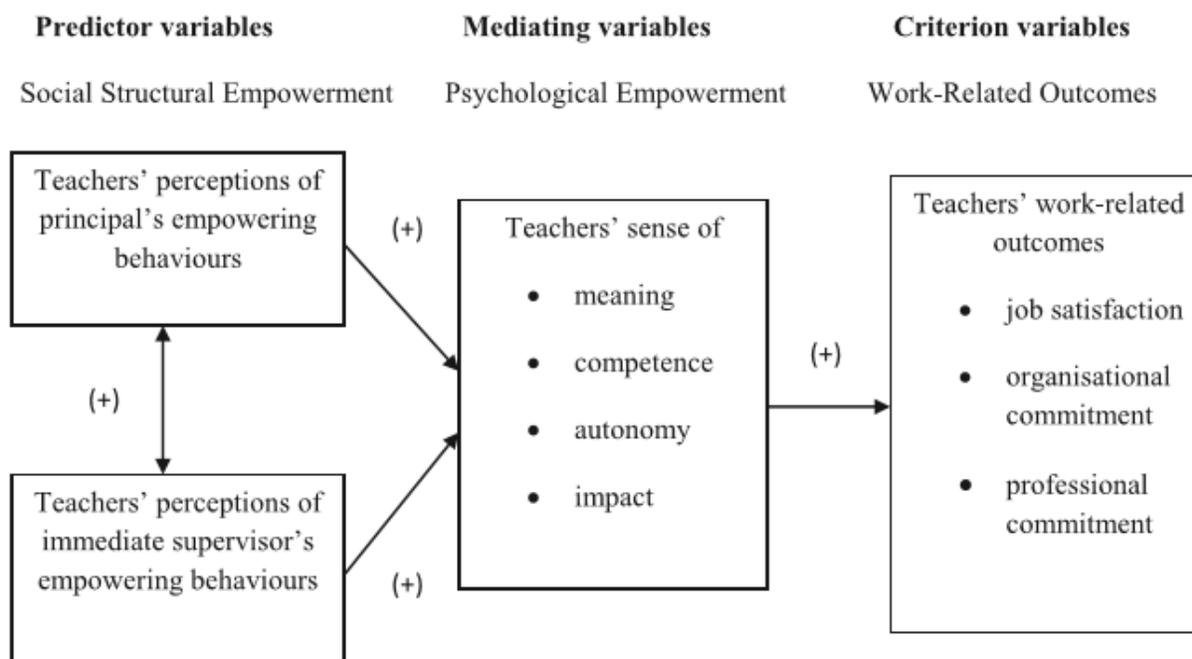
performance on annual assessments. These effects include the publication of test results, the identification of students, teachers, schools, and LEAs for improvement plans, and the denial or limitations for graduating students who do not meet proficiency requirements (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001). This is the burden that school leaders face to meet set standards. The stress that is placed upon principals, from standardized assessments and the accountability measurements, including those that are identified in NCLB, result in changes in how principals conduct themselves in their schools (Lock & Lummis, 2014). Lock and Lummis further explain that as a result of assessments and accountability measurements, principals spend a great amount of time addressing matters that include, but are not limited to, examining attendance and enrollment data, developing or attending to policy, and assessing staff on their performance. Lock and Lummis state that as the load of work is placed on principals and administrative staff, the same load will be placed on teacher leaders, or immediate supervisors, and also onto teachers.

### **Purposes of Study**

Lee and Nie (2014) indicate that the research surrounding teacher empowerment continues to evolve. Lock and Lummis (2014) indicate that the demand for administrators and the teachers that they employ to meet the accountability measurements results in greater principal focus and less time fostering teacher growth. Shen et al. (2012) explain that the way principals model their role to their teachers can positively or negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction and empowerment. At the time of this study, the subject of teacher empowerment and its application to teachers who work in a LEA, which has been placed on an improvement plan by its governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee, has not been studied. This study seeks to explore the framework originated by Prawat (1991), and improved

upon by Lee and Nie (2014), and apply it to the empowerment of teachers who are employed in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan by its governing SEA (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Lee & Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework of Teacher Empowerment



Note. (+) denotes hypothesised positive correlational/predictive relationship

### Theoretical Framework

Conceptual and theoretical frameworks are often used interchangeably in research; however, there are distinct differences between the terms (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Concept is defined as interrelated ideas; explaining, “concepts are the means by which we are able to come to terms with our experiences” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 89). Bloomberg and Volpe defined theory as “a relationship amongst related concepts, assumptions, and generalizations” (p. 89). According to Ravitch and Riggan (2012), a theoretical framework is a “systematic way of thinking through and articulating what you plan to study and how you plan to study it” (p. 3). Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) explained that having a framework allows researchers to

be selective of their study's variables, relationships, and collection and analyzation of information. Having a framework allows the researcher to begin with a clear vision and direction.

### **Theoretical Framework Background**

This study of the empowerment of teachers who work in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan from their governing SEA and been appointed a receiver or trustee will be viewed through Lee and Nie's (2014) theoretical framework of teacher empowerment, which extended Prawat's (1991) theoretical framework of conversations with self and setting. Under Prawat's framework, teacher empowerment can be viewed from two perspectives, which Prawat refers to as agendas. First, in the epistemological approach, or theory of knowledge, teachers question the validity of knowledge claims, when having conversations with self; and question where they should place their focus within the teaching environment, when having conversations with others. Prawat refers to conversations with others as conversations with settings. Prawat identifies the second perspective as the political agenda, which is explained as one's interaction with a set of issues or policies that are identified by an ideological or political group. Under the political agenda, teachers question their own offerings to the field of education, when having conversations with self. They also question the resources and supports they need to be successful as professionals, when having conversations with others.

### **Social Structure and Psychology: Separate Perspectives of Scholarly Inquiry**

Expanding upon Prawat's framework, Lee and Nie (2014) explained that teacher empowerment is a concept that is broad, and was conceptualized differently by scholars who researched the subject. Despite the varying conceptualizations, two main perspectives have been

studied in teacher empowerment. They are the social structural perspective and the psychological perspective.

**Social Structural Perspective.** Lee and Nie (2014) identified the social structural perspective as being teachers' work environment, and how it directly and/or indirectly has an effect on teacher assessment of their roles and the tasks that they complete. Studies that frame teacher empowerment on the social structural perspective view teacher empowerment as being granted to teachers by principals and mid-level managers (Sagnak, 2012; Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010). Teacher empowerment and the social structural perspective have been connected to job satisfaction, higher teacher performance, and reduction of dysfunctional resistance (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010). Teacher job satisfaction is the result of several factors, including teacher decision making, promotion, and identified status (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). The empowering behavior of principals has been shown to be predictive of school climate and teacher behaviors (Lock & Lummis, 2014; Sagnak, 2012; Shen et al., 2012).

**Psychological Perspective.** Lee and Nie (2014) defined the psychological perspective as "an individual's psychological state which manifests itself as four cognitions" (p. 68). The first cognition is identified as meaning. Lee and Nie explain that meaning is a connection of the teachers' beliefs, values, and behaviors to their work. The second cognition is competence. Bandura (1977) explains that competence is the teachers' self-efficacy in performing a work-related skill. The third cognition is autonomy. Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) explain that autonomy is the teachers' ability to have choice to initiate and regulate their own actions. The last cognition is impact. Ashforth (1989) explains that impact is the teachers' degree of ability to have an influence on outcomes in their profession, including strategic, administrative, and operating outcomes. Connecting the four cognitions, "psychological empowerment is closely

associated with an individual's intrinsic work motivation" (Lee & Nie, 2014 p. 68). Specifically, teachers with a sense of meaning, autonomy, and impact are identified as having greater organizational commitment (Dee et al., 2003).

### **The Lee and Nie Theoretical Framework of Teacher Empowerment**

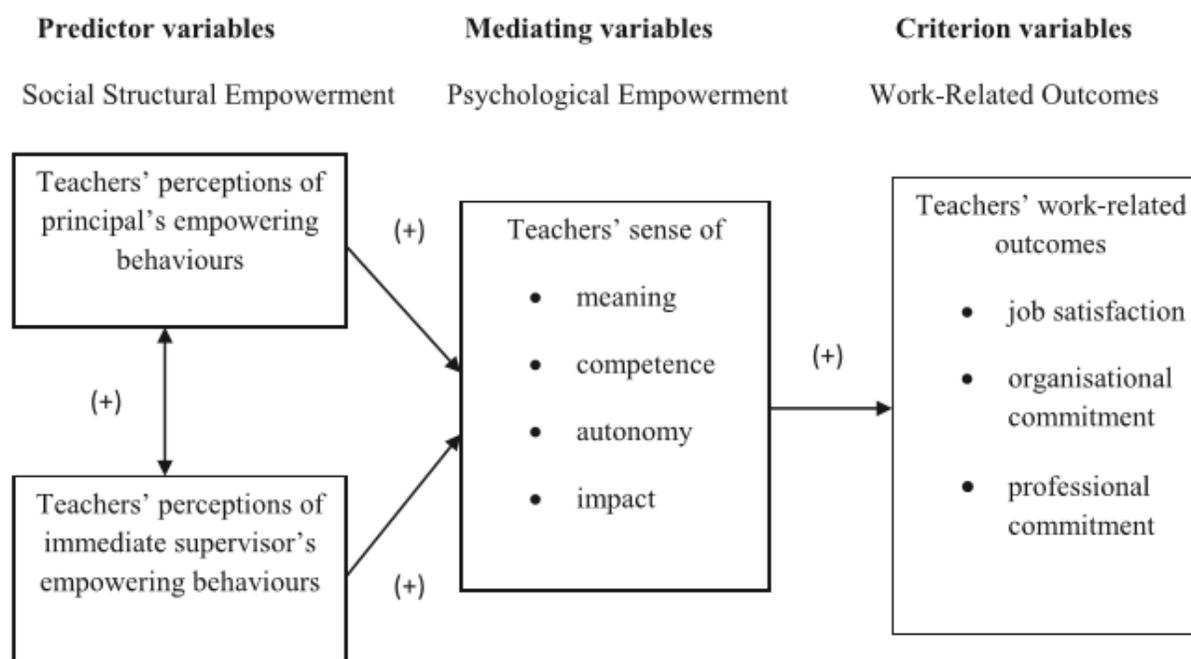
In their study, Lee and Nie (2014) identified that most research studies view teacher empowerment from either the social structural perspective or the psychological perspective on its own. The connection between both perspectives is a key missing component. "We specifically conceptualised teacher empowerment as a process of school leader(s) demonstrating empowering (behaviours) to enable teachers to experience psychological empowerment, in terms of teachers' sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact at work" (Lee & Nie, 2014, p. 69).

The Lee and Nie theoretical framework of teacher empowerment is based upon three sets of variables. The first set, known as the predictor variables, are composed of the social structural perspective. Lee and Nie explained that most studies conducted on teacher empowerment, and studied through the social structural perspective, focus primarily on empowering behaviors of principals. They further argued that under a traditional model of public schools, principals appoint mid-level management and teacher leaders to work directly with teachers, serving as teachers' immediate supervisors. These include, but are not limited to, curriculum coordinators, department heads, and teacher mentors. Mid-level managers arguably have greater interactions and influence on teacher empowering behaviors. Therefore, the predictor variables identify teachers' perceptions of principals' empowering behaviors and mid-level managers' empowering behaviors. Teacher perceptions of principals' empowering behaviors and mid-level managers' empowering behaviors both are identified to have the same effect on teachers' psychological empowerment. These predictor variables, or the social structural perspective, are predictive of

the mediator variables, or psychological perspective. As previously identified and defined, the mediator variables are meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact.

Lee and Nie (2014) identified a third set of variables, known as the criterion variables. These variables are expected work related outcomes. The three outcomes identified are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. All of the work-related outcomes can be attributed as extensions of the psychological perspective, as they all indicate teacher emotions, in relation to the profession, roles they play within the profession, and the schools in which they are employed. Lee and Nie defined job satisfaction as an affective reaction, of teachers, toward their work and their role within their work. They define professional commitment as teachers' psychological attachment to the teaching profession. Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) define organizational commitment as the teachers' strength to be identified and involved within their school.

Figure 1: The Lee & Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework of Teacher Empowerment



Note. (+) denotes hypothesised positive correlational/predictive relationship

In summary, Lee and Nie's (2014) theoretical framework of teacher empowerment explains that the teacher related work outcomes of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment are criterion variables, dependent upon both the social structural perspective and the psychological perspective. Furthermore, they explain the psychological perspective to be mediating variables that determine teacher related work outcomes but are dependent on social structural perspective. The social structural perspective is the predicting (independent) variable that determines both the psychological perspective and teacher related work outcomes. See Figure 1.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Autonomy:** the teacher's sense of having choice in the initiation and regulation of his/her own actions (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989).

**Competence:** the self-efficiency specific to the teacher's work (Bandura, 1977).

**Empowering Behavior:** the actions of principals or immediate supervisors, including teacher leaders, that extend or inhibit teachers' ability to feel psychologically connected with their organization (Lee & Nie, 2014)

**Impact:** the teacher's ability, and degree of which, to influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989).

**Intervention:** the action to improve a situation; for the purpose of this study, action to mediate, or improve upon, identification of chronic underperformance in accountability measures (Lee & Nie, 2014; Prawat, 1991)

Job Satisfaction: teachers' affective reactions to their work or to their teaching role (Lee & Nie, 2014).

Meaning: the connection of the teacher's work to their beliefs, values, and behaviors (Lee & Nie, 2014).

Organizational Commitment: teachers' relative strength to be identified with their school and be involved within (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).

Professional Commitment: teachers' psychological attachment to the teaching profession, and their identification of self-belonging within the profession (Lee & Nie, 2014).

Teacher Empowerment: a process of school leader(s) demonstrating empowering behaviors to enable the experience of psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014)

### **Research Question**

The purpose of this case study, which applies qualitative research study methodology, is to describe how teachers, who are employed in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan and has been appointed a receiver or trustee, perceive the impact their leaders' behaviors have on teacher empowerment. If they can impact empowerment, how can it be done? At this stage, teacher empowerment will be defined as a process of school leader(s) demonstrating empowering behaviors to enable teachers to experience psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014). Gathered through the perspective of teachers, this study will be guided by the question: How do the behaviors of school and LEA based administration impact the empowerment of teachers whom they supervise, as evidenced by teacher perception?

**Sub-questions**

1. Do teachers perceive the appointment of a receiver or trustee as having an effect on the processes of teacher empowerment?
2. How do teacher perceptions of their leaders' behaviors vary among teachers of different schools within the same LEA?
3. If any, which parts of the improvement plan placed on the LEA do teachers perceive as having an effect on school and LEA administrators' behaviors?

**Significance of the Study**

Although studies have been conducted on the subject of teacher empowerment, researchers have not come to common definitions and conceptualizations of the topic (Lee & Nie, 2014, Prawat, 1991). There has not been a study that has examined the empowerment of teachers who are employed in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan for underperformance, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee from the LEA's governing SEA. This study will add new data to teacher empowerment, as it will be conducted in a LEA that has not met the minimal requirements of accountability that was set by its governing SEA, requiring the LEA to be placed on an improvement plan and be appointed a receiver or trustee. The findings from this study will contribute to the research base on identifying empowering behaviors that lead to a better teacher sense of commitment and belonging to their organization. The findings will also help teachers to identify ways to be empowered and assist in leading school improvement. Furthermore, this study will provide methods and data for future researchers to replicate and compare.

This study is significant as it will explore the topic of teacher empowerment from a single case study with embedded variables and explores the same topic from the perspective of teachers

who are employed in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan and has been appointed a receiver or trustee to serve as the superintendent and school board. Although past studies have examined teacher empowerment, no study has applied it to the previously identified educational environment. In summary, this study seeks to inform educators by identifying means for teachers to be empowered to improve student performance and assist their school and LEA to meet the requirements that are set in NCLB.

### **General Procedures**

This study aims to understand the effects of LEA and school administrators' behaviors on the empowerment of teachers, who are employed in a LEA that was placed on an improvement plan and appointed a receiver or trustee, from its governing SEA. This study will involve teachers who are employed in the same LEA, but not limited to the same school. Teachers identified for the study need to have been employed within their school, as a teacher, for a minimum of three complete school years at the time of the study, with no maximum set amount of time employed.

Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan and been appointed a receiver or trustee will be identified, and the receiver or trustee will be contacted to discuss the goals of this study, for the purpose of receiving approval. Upon approval from the receiver or trustee, as well as principals, teachers within the LEA will be contacted via email, beginning the first stage of the study.

The first stage of the study will be the distribution of one demographic seeking survey and one normed survey. The surveys will be distributed via a web-based survey instrument, to the teachers' LEA based email address. The demographic survey will gather the participants'

background information, including school employed, years of service, grade(s) taught, content area(s) taught, and will seek volunteers to participate in the study. These will all be asked through open ended responses. The second survey distributed will be the normed Teacher Leadership School Survey (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The Teacher Leadership School Survey is a five-point Likert scale survey that consists of 49 questions. This survey examines seven themes which are: developmental focus, recognition, autonomy, collegiality, participation, open communication, and positive environment. The demographic survey and the Teacher Leadership School Survey will be distributed simultaneously.

After receiving completed surveys, random narrowing of the sample will take place to ensure that participants are reflective of as many schools within the LEA as feasible, by organizing participants in groups of elementary through secondary education, assigning participants random numbers, and pulling the numbers out of a box. Once a sample has been identified, it is planned that focus groups of seven to nine teachers will meet. This will allow the researcher to gather data on a variety of perspectives from teachers in the LEA.

Focus group questions will be derived using findings from responses gathered in the Teacher Leadership School Survey (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The same sample of participants selected from the focus groups will also be interviewed. Two interviews will be conducted. The purpose of conducting two interviews with each participant is to seek further information. Through the interviews, data will be collected on teacher perception of administrators' behaviors, which lead to the teachers' empowerment. To ensure that biases will not influence participants' responses, member checks will be utilized during the interview process. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) explain that member checks are a method where

interviewees are sent transcriptions or summaries of their interviews for review. This will also allow participants to clarify any shared information from their interviews.

### **Overview**

Studies have been conducted on the subject of teacher empowerment. However, researchers struggle to agree upon a common definition and conceptualization of the term. Furthermore, a study has yet to be conducted that examines how the behaviors of school and LEA administrators affect the empowerment of teachers who are employed in the LEA, which has been placed on an improvement plan, requiring the appointment of a receiver or trustee to serve as the superintendent and school board. Through examining the perceptions of the teachers impacted by having their LEA identified as requiring an improvement plan that led to the appointment of a receiver or trustee, the researcher will identify best practices to empower teachers to best serve their students.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

One limitation of studies conducted on teacher empowerment is that researchers have not come to a common definition and conceptualization for teacher empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014; Prawat, 1991). As a result, the ways in which teachers are empowered differs amongst LEAs and schools, as researchers and practitioners have yet to develop a universal framework for teacher empowerment. Lee and Nie explain that, to date, researchers studied teacher empowerment by one of two frameworks.

The first framework focuses on the social organization of schools, examining how the relationships of teacher-to-teacher, teacher-to-supervisors, and teacher-to-administration affect the empowerment of teachers (Lee & Nie, 2014). This is identified as the social structural perspective. The second framework focuses on the internal conflicts that teachers have within themselves (Lee & Nie, 2014). Teachers' internal conflicts can affect their self-confidence, knowledge, and understanding of content and pedagogy. Lee and Nie explain that teachers' internal conflicts comprise the psychological perspective, within their framework.

For this study, teacher empowerment will be examined under Lee and Nie's (2014) untitled theoretical framework of teacher empowerment. This framework explains both theories of teacher empowerment to be part of a greater framework. In this framework, the psychological perspective is dependent on social structural perspective, and the psychological perspective is a mediator that will determine job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Therefore, teacher empowerment is defined as a process of school leader(s) demonstrating empowering behaviors to enable teachers to experience psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014).

## Selection of the Literature

The literature compiled for this review includes studies that were obtained through online research databases, which include the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), SAGE Premier 2016, Proquest Dissertations and Theses Full Text, and Google Scholar. To compile the literature for this review, key terms were used that included the term “teacher” at the beginning and included: *empowerment, sense of meaning, sense of autonomy, sense of impact, sense of belonging, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, professional commitment, relationship with administrators, relationship with principals, self-advocacy, and decision making*. After reading articles which were found using the identified databases and search terms, additional articles were found within their references.

Prawat (1991), Lee and Nie (2014), state that there is yet to be a common definition and conceptualization of teacher empowerment. This review of literature yielded nine studies conducted between the years 2000 and 2015. Of the nine studies, eight were published in scholarly, peer reviewed, publications and one was a doctoral studies dissertation.

When searching for literature through online databases for studies of teacher empowerment, the researcher corroborated Prawat’s, and Lee and Nie’s, statements that researchers have not determined a common conceptualization and definition of the term teacher empowerment. Studies examined for this review of literature incorporate separate definitions and frameworks, resulting in varying definitions and conceptualizations of teacher empowerment, among the researchers. This review of literature will be organized into groups, which are further organized by topic. Each topic is defined by the application of teacher empowerment to the researchers’ studies.

### **Psychological Empowerment as a Mediating Role**

Lee and Nie (2014) conducted a study that examined relationships between teachers' perceptions of their administration and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, the psychological empowerment of teachers, and three work-related outcomes. Their study was an attempt to create a framework, which extended a framework theorized by Prawat (1991); however, not discussed in Prawat's article. The three work related outcomes are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Conducted in Singapore, the study included 304 participants and utilized quantitative methods. Of the 304 participants, 82.9% had more than three years of teaching experience, with the mean being between seven and 10 years, and 90% had earned a Bachelor's Degree. The group of participants were 74.7% female and 25.3% male. In regard to ethnicity, 68.3% of participants were Chinese, 19% were Malay, 9.7% were Indian, and 3% were categorized as other minority races.

To conduct the study, Lee and Nie (2014) utilized multiple systems of measurement. To measure teacher perception of administration and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors, Lee and Nie developed and used the School Leader Empowering Behaviours (SLEB) scale. The scale consists of 21 items, has seven dimensions, and can be used as a higher-order composite scale. The seven dimensions of the SLEB are delegation of authority, providing intellectual stimulation, giving acknowledgement and recognition, articulating a vision, fostering collaborative relationships, providing individualized concern and support, and providing role-modeling. Participants responded to separate questions that asked about administration and immediate supervisors, on a seven-point Likert scale. For the study, Lee and Nie utilized SLEB as a higher-order composite scale. To measure teacher psychological empowerment, Lee and Nie used the psychological empowerment scale. The psychological empowerment scale has 12

items and is four dimensional. The four sub-scales are meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. Other items on the questionnaire included demographic information, psychological empowerment, and work-related outcomes. Lee and Nie noted that as other studies have indicated that teaching experience and age were related to teacher empowerment, years of experience was used as the control variable. This was done for the purpose of testing these findings to determine if they could be corroborated.

To measure teachers' work-related outcomes which are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment, items from separate instruments were combined. Lee and Nie (2014) used three items from an index of job satisfaction (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). To measure organizational commitment, six items were adapted from the Organizational Commitment Scale (Mowday et al., 1979). The items measure the degree to which an employee is committed to their organization. To measure professional commitment, Lee and Nie adapted five items from multiple scales that measure career motivation.

Lee and Nie (2014) conducted path analyses to examine data and find results. Regarding the relationship of teachers' perceptions of the empowering behaviors of their principal, to the teachers' psychological empowerment, Lee and Nie suggest that teachers' perceptions of their principal's empowering behaviors positively and significantly predicted the teachers' senses of autonomy, meaning, and impact. The teachers' sense of competence was not positively and significantly predicted from the teachers' perceptions of their principal's empowering behaviors. Regarding the teachers' perceptions of their immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, Lee and Nie identified positive and significant predictors of the teachers' senses of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact.

When examining the relationship between teachers' psychological empowerment and their work-related outcomes, Lee and Nie (2014) suggest that each sub-scale of teacher psychological empowerment predicted different work-related outcomes. Teachers' sense of meaning predicted all work-related outcomes of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Teachers' sense of competence predicted job satisfaction and professional commitment, but not organizational commitment. Teachers' sense of autonomy predicted job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but not professional commitment. Teachers' sense of impact predicted organizational commitment and professional commitment, but not job satisfaction.

Lee and Nie (2014) examined teacher psychological empowerment as a mediating role between teachers' perceptions of administrators and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and teachers' work-related outcomes. Results suggest that teachers' perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors predicted the teachers' work-related outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but not professional commitment. Rucker et al. (2011) explains that mediation analysis is the act of determining whether one variable acts as a connection between two other variables, which would not have a relationship without the identifying variable. Using mediation analysis, the results indicated that teachers' senses of meaning and autonomy, but not their senses of competence and impact, were mediator variables that connected the variable of the principal's empowering behaviors with the variable of teachers' job satisfaction. The results also indicated that teachers' perceptions of their immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors indirectly predicted job satisfaction through their senses of meaning, autonomy, and competence, but not impact.

The same mediation analysis was conducted to examine teacher psychological empowerment as a mediating role, in relation to the outcomes of organizational commitment and professional commitment. When examining the effects on organizational commitment, Lee and Nie's (2014) study determined the following results. Regarding teachers' perceptions of both their principals' empowering behaviors and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, Lee and Nie suggest that they indirectly predicted teachers' organizational commitment through the teachers' senses of autonomy, meaning, and impact, but not competence. Results indicated that teachers' perceptions of their principal's empowering behaviors indirectly predicted the teachers' professional commitment through the teachers' senses of meaning and impact, but not their senses of autonomy and competence. When examining the indirect predictability of teachers' perceptions of their immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors on teachers' professional commitment, the results indicated that there was an indirect predictability. The teachers' senses of meaning, competence, and impact were mediating variables, but not their sense of autonomy. Lee and Nie further discuss that the strong correlation between the teachers' perceptions of principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors might have been the result of immediate supervisors attempting to mimic the principal's empowering behaviors in attempts to meet the principal's expectations.

Lee and Nie (2015) conducted a follow-up quantitative study that examined the possibility of significant differences between teachers' perceptions of their principals' empowering behaviors and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and teachers' perceptions of both principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors, in relation to psychological empowerment. To conduct their study, a convenience sample of 289 teachers from schools in Singapore was selected. Of the participants' genders, 75.4% were female and 24.6%

were male. Of their races, 68.4% were Chinese, 18.6% were Malay, 9.8% were Indian, and 3.2% were classified as being of other minority races. Of their ages, 56.4% were between 31 and 40 years old, 20.4% were between the ages of 41 and 50 years old, 16.1% were under 31 years old, and 7.1% were above 50 years old. Of their educational background, 82.2% held a bachelor's degree, 7.3% held a master's degree or above, 9.8% had a diploma, and 0.7% had secondary school certificates. The Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) identifies individuals who have a diploma as being trained at a post-secondary educational institute, in specific skills that are used to support the technological and economic development of Singapore (Ministry of Education, 2016). MOE identifies individuals who have a secondary school certificate as completing secondary schooling, at an age range that is similar to the high school age in the United States, resulting in receiving a certificate that determines the individual's track for offerings at Singapore's post-secondary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2016). Regarding number of years working with their current principals, 55.9% had between one and three years, 27.9% had between four and 10, 15.5% had one year or less, and 0.7% had 11 or more years. And, of the number of years working with their immediate supervisors, 48.6% had between one and three years, 25.4% had between four and 10 years, 23.8% had one year or less, and 2.2% had 11 years or more.

Lee and Nie (2015) used two measurements to conduct their study. First, the School Leader Empowering Behaviors (SLEB) scale was used to measure the participants' perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. For this study, the SLEB was not modified. The SLEB consisted of 21 items, which had seven dimensions. The seven dimensions are delegation of authority, providing intellectual stimulation, giving acknowledgement and recognition, articulating a vision, fostering collaborative relationships,

providing individualized concern and support, and providing role-modeling. Second, a 12-item psychological empowerment scale, which was developed by Spreitzer (1995), was used. To conduct their study, Lee and Nie distributed a questionnaire to potential participants that had an attached cover letter, explaining the study's objectives and ensured anonymity. Participants who responded to the questionnaire answered the 21 items by responding on a seven-point Likert scale.

Lee and Nie (2015) conducted exploratory and confirmatory analyses on the SLEB scale. Results from the analyses indicated that there was not a significant difference between the participants' perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, in terms of the composite scores on the SLEB. Results also indicated that there was not a significant difference between the participants' perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors in the SLEB factors of providing intellectual stimulation, giving acknowledgement and recognition, and providing role modeling. Regarding role modeling, Lee and Nie stated that the results suggest that role modeling behaviors, which emanate from principals, may influence immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. This is based upon the results of this study, as well as prior studies that Lee and Nie identify in their review of literature. The results suggest that providing intellectual stimulation and role modeling were associated with effectiveness in high level and low-level leaders.

In the SLEB factors of articulating a vision and fostering collaborative relationships, the participants perceived that their principals significantly engaged more than their immediate supervisors (Lee & Nie, 2015). Lee and Nie explained that principals are perceived to be significantly more engaged in articulating a vision, because they are more involved in whole school meetings and projecting a vision. Lee and Nie also explained that principals are

perceived to have significantly greater engagement in fostering collaborative relationships. In their explanation, Lee and Nie stated that this might be due to principals giving more positional power to their employees within their school's hierarchy. Regarding delegation of authority and providing individualized concern and support, the participants perceived that their immediate supervisors significantly engaged teachers more than principals. Lee and Nie explained that immediate supervisors are perceived to be engaged more in these areas, because immediate supervisors have more opportunities to have direct contact with teachers at the classroom level.

Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) conducted a study that examined teachers' psychological empowerment, as a mediating variable, between the independent variable of principals' authentic leadership and the dependent variables of teachers' Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) and withdrawal behaviors. The study used gender and seniority as two control variables. To conduct this study, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach applied the perceptions-attitudes-behaviors theoretical framework (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), which argues a strong relationship exists among the three.

The quantitative study by Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) was conducted in two rural public-school districts in central Israel. The targeted grade range was Israeli secondary schooling, which consists of grades seven to nine. To reduce the possibility of a sampling error, cluster sampling was first applied, followed by the application of stratified sampling, which was conducted for each district. Stratified sampling was applied because each district consisted of two types of secondary schools, the first type being secular and the second type being religious. Through sampling, 392 teachers were selected from 17 secular schools and six religious schools. Requirements to participate in the study included having a minimum of one-year seniority in teaching. This excluded one participant at the start of the study. Teachers whose attendance

records were not available, as well as teachers who did not complete the second phase of questionnaires were also omitted from the study.

After omissions from the study, 366 participants remained (Shapira-Lischinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Of the 366 participants, 75.4% were female, 24.6% were male, and an average of 75% of the teachers from each school returned responses. Out of the total group of participants, 62% worked full time in their positions, 23.3% worked part time, and the remaining 14.7% were classified as working more than full time. Regarding seniority, the average years of teaching was 16.49, where 82.3% of the teachers were tenured. The remaining teachers who participated had temporary contracts. Of the teachers' educational backgrounds, 63.3% had a Bachelor's Degree, 24% had a Master's Degree, and 12.7% had Non-academic Degrees. Non-academic degrees are post-secondary certifications that were not obtained at a traditional college or university.

To collect data, Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) distributed questionnaires, and received attendance records and reports about lateness, intent to leave, and OCB from the participants. The study was conducted in two phases, with the distribution of questionnaires during phase one and the reception of items from participants during phase two. The second phase of study was conducted six months following the first phase. Questionnaires were answered anonymously by the participants, which asked them about the principal's authentic leadership, their attitudes about psychological empowerment, and their personal background. Participants responded to questions on a Likert scale. To keep identities anonymous in both phases, the participants placed their responses and reports in envelopes, wrote a code on the envelope and submitted their responses to the school secretary.

Lateness, absenteeism, intent to leave, authentic leadership, psychological empowerment, and OCB were measured through separate means (Shapira-Lischinsky & Tsemach, 2014). The scales used to measure intent to leave, authentic leadership, psychological empowerment, and OCB were Likert scales, using a one to five response system. To measure lateness, a single item was adapted from a measure of withdrawal behaviors (Neal et al., 1993). Lateness was defined as being more than six minutes after the bell rang, as most schools would not find a student's tardiness of six minutes after the bell rang to be acceptable. The item was adapted, due to Israeli schools not keeping records of teacher lateness. The participants reported the number of times that they were late within the previous 30 days, along with the reason for being late. The reason for selecting 30 days was that prior studies suggest that 30 days was long enough to be reliable, while being short enough to minimize the participants' memory loss.

Absenteeism and intent to leave were measured differently. To measure absenteeism, Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) examined absence frequency over a six-month period. Absence frequency was noted to be chosen over duration, by the researchers, because prior studies suggest that teachers were more inclined to take more frequent short duration absences than longer duration absences. Furthermore, frequent absences were noted to be voluntary over long duration absences. Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach adapted a measurement from Walsh, Ashford, and Hill (1985) to measure intent to leave. Five items on the questionnaire asked about the participants' tendencies to leave their place of employment.

A sixteen-item questionnaire, developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008), was used to measure authentic leadership (Shapira-Lischinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), two items were omitted from the questionnaire, as they were not suitable for principal-teacher relationships in Israeli schools. The analysis had four sub-scales, which are

self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral reasoning, and balanced processing. The researchers explained that self-awareness reflects the extent of a leader's ability to know their strengths and weaknesses, and project these onto their followers' perceptions. They explained that relational transparency reflects the extent of a leader's ability to reinforce levels of openness with their followers. They define internalized moral reasoning as an extent of which a leader sets high standards of moral and ethical conduct, within their organization. They explained that balanced processing reflects the extent of a leader's openness to solicit sufficient opinions and viewpoints from others in their organization, prior to making decisions.

To measure psychological empowerment, Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) used a 12-item psychological empowerment questionnaire that was developed by Spreitzer (1995). Using CFA, four items were omitted, as they were not suitable for Israeli schools. Measuring psychological empowerment as an intrinsic motivation yielded two factors. The first factor was impact. Self-determination, meaning, and competence collectively made the second factor. The researchers defined impact as the teachers' sense of freedom to conduct their work, while influencing their organization. As one factor, the researchers explained that self-determination, meaning, and competence assess teachers' sense of freedom, regarding their work; as well as teachers' senses of purpose, connection to their job, and their confidence in their abilities to conduct their duties.

Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) used a 23-item scale, which was developed by Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000), to measure OCB. Using CFA, nine items were omitted from the scale, as they were deemed to not be suitable for Israeli schools. Three factors were yielded to be in relation to OCB. The factors are extra-role behavior toward the student, extra-role behavior toward the school, and extra-role behavior toward the team.

Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) initially suggested moderate and positive relationships among all dimensions of authentic leadership and psychological empowerment. Regarding the relationships between psychological empowerment and OCB, results showed that a correlation existed between the psychological empowerment factor of impact and the OCB factor of extra-role behavior toward the school; however, it was not significant. Furthermore, a correlation also existed between the psychological empowerment factor of self-determination, competence, and meaning, and the OCB factor of extra-role behavior toward the school; however, it also was not significant. Self-determination, competence, and meaning, as one factor, was suggested to have a relation to intent to leave. Results suggest that there was not a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and absence frequency, absence duration, or lateness. Furthermore, results suggest that there was not a significant relationship between any of the withdrawal behaviors. Results also suggest that there are, at most, small correlations between genders and seniority.

Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) identified that there is a positive correlation between the factor of impact with OCB. Results suggest that increased authentic leadership led to higher impact, thus resulting in higher levels of OCB. Results also suggest that as authentic leadership increased, self-determination, meaning, and competence increased, which resulted in decreasing absence frequency. Authentic leadership also was identified as having a positive relationship with intent to leave.

Singh and Sarkar (2013) also examined psychological empowerment as a mediating factor. In a mixed methods study, Singh and Sarkar examined empowerment of female primary school teachers in India. Their study began in 2007, when they conducted one hour to one and a half hour long interviews. Thirty-seven primary school teachers were interviewed, from 30

primary schools, in the Indian states of Gujarat and West Bengal. Singh and Sarkar stated that interviews were conducted over a two-month period. Content analysis was applied to help gain insights into teachers' working environment and interpersonal dynamics, understand empowerment and its various dimensions in teachers' context, examine factors determining empowerment, review the important outcomes of empowerment, and validate the researchers' contextualized scale.

In the second stage of their study, Singh and Sarkar (2013) utilized quantitative methods. Using convenience sampling, 285 female primary school teachers were requested to participate in a questionnaire that consisted of 34 questions. Of the 285 requests, 203 returned questionnaires, to which 186 questionnaires were complete. All participants were female primary school teachers. The average age of the participants was 37.51 years, with a range of 20 years to 61 years old. The average of the participants' years of experience was 11.59 years, with a range of one to 37 years. The participants' educational backgrounds varied, with 35% having undergraduate degrees, 58% having graduate degrees, and 7% having postgraduate degrees.

Singh and Sarkar (2013) used contextualized versions of scales that were created by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) and Spreitzer (1995). The contextualization was based upon information that was gathered during the interview, which resulted in rephrasing of statements on the scales for the participants. "The face validity and the content validity of the scale items were ensured through detailed interviews of seven female primary school teachers and five field experts having substantial insights in educational research" (Singh & Sarkar, 2013, p. 321). To examine any possibility of common method variance, which is false variances amongst the variables due to conducting a single method of data collection, Harman's Test was conducted.

Through conducting analyses, Singh and Sarkar (2013) suggested that of the four identified dimensions of empowerment, which are defined as meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact, meaning, competence, and impact were significantly correlated. Autonomy did not correlate with the other three dimensions, and suggests the culture of Indian schools, for female teachers, attributed to autonomy not correlating with the other dimensions. Singh and Sarkar state that authority was noted to be a different aspect to the Indian school culture than it is in other areas of the world. Authority, regarding autonomy, was seen as being routine to the study's participants. Furthermore, the results from this study corroborated with other studies that identified autonomy as being different for male and female teachers. Therefore, principals' support led to latent empowerment for teachers. Results indicated that although empowerment is defined as meaning, competence, impact, and autonomy, it is dependent on the culture of the school's setting.

Singh and Sarkar (2013) suggest that latent empowerment resulted in the participants' job satisfaction. This result indicates that for the participants, intrinsic empowerment was held in higher regard than having control over the processes of the work place. Furthermore, results from the study indicated that latent empowerment, as well as autonomy, led to a greater amount of innovative behavior. Therefore, support from principals will lead to latent empowerment, which then lead to innovative behaviors, as well as job satisfaction.

### **Studies of Teachers' Stresses and Pressures**

Judson (2014) conducted a study of science teacher preparation. The study examined the contextualization of a Master's Studies course, titled *The American Education System*. The course was originally designed as a broad course for all teachers and was redesigned to be specific for the preparation of science teachers. The customization of the course utilized the

framework of exposure therapy, which was conducted over one college semester. Study participants included science teachers who were in a cohort model Master of Education program at an Arizona university, were in the second semester of the second year-of-fulltime teaching, were in charge of their own classes, and were in a program that partnered with Teach for America. Judson indicated that as the course's teacher, he was provided the opportunity to customize the course content to specifically examine issues that are related to science education, in place of issues that are related to general education. He also explained that the expectation of the customized course was to devote time to topics that were considered to be critical to science teachers and outside of one's locus of control.

The focus of the study was "to increase the teacher's internal locus of control over chosen policy issues" (Judson, 2014, p. 3). The study was conducted utilizing quantitative methods. Judson began with a pre-survey. The survey collected data on the teachers' experiences over their time in the classroom. In the first part, the respondents identified the three crucial policy issues that affect teachers, students, and schools. In this part, teachers also used a Likert Scale to identify their perceptions of their personal influence over each issue. In the second part, the teachers were asked to repeat the process; however, this part focused on policy issues that affected science teaching.

Twenty-one respondents participated in the pre-assessment, and their responses were grouped into categories (Judson, 2014). The top three most common policy issues in all education that the respondents indicated in the pre-assessment were standardized testing (14 respondents), budget and salaries (11 respondents), and school accountability (nine respondents). The top three most common policy issues that respondents identified as affecting science

teaching were state curriculum standards (11 respondents), standardized testing (10 respondents), and budget and salaries (10 respondents).

To customize the content of the course, Judson (2014) created an urgency rating, which used a zero to two-point rating. By the urgency rating, standardized testing, state curriculum standards, and budget and salaries were identified as being the top three pertinent issues on both parts of the survey. Regarding general education, school accountability also received a high urgency rating. Regarding science teaching, special populations also received a high urgency rating. The information was used to customize the course to fit science teaching and addressed the areas of standardized testing and state curriculum standards, applying the framework of exposure therapy.

At the end of the course, the survey was redistributed to the participants. The post-survey asked the participants to identify the three crucial policy issues that affect teachers, students, and schools. Next, the teachers were asked to repeat the process, again, focusing on policy issues that affected science teaching. “[T]he number of times that particular topics were mentioned was summed and the mean influence ratings were calculated” (Judson, 2014, p. 8). Exposure therapy was applied to the policy issues of standardized testing and state curriculum standards. All other policy issues were addressed throughout the course in a traditional manner.

As a result, Judson (2014) noted that the two policy issues that were taught, utilizing exposure therapy, decreased in frequency of being identified as top policy issues. The policy issue of budget and salary replaced standardized testing and state curriculum standards as the most identified policy issue when discussing both general education and science teaching. Judson also noted that budget and salary went from being identified by 10 teachers on the pre-survey to being identified by 17 teachers on the post-survey. Judson explained that after the

course concluded, more issues were identified when comparing pre-survey and post-survey categories. “[T]he issues of parent involvement, nutrition, school scheduling, and teacher retention were mentioned only on the post-survey” (Judson, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, urgency ratings changed between the pre-survey and the post-survey. Judson indicated that special populations, which was comprised of students who were Title I status, had an IEP or 504 plan, or were an English Language Learner, significantly increased between both surveys, regarding general education. Special population was not identified as an issue in science teaching.

Judson (2014) suggests that applying exposure therapy to specific targeted areas of the course decreased the concerns of teachers, while it increased the teachers’ locus of control. The comparable data from the pre-survey and post-survey show that teachers felt that they had greater influence over the two targeted policy issues. Also noted is that the teachers’ perception changed throughout the course, but not their ability to directly influence change in policy issues. As their perceptions of the two targeted issues changed, the policy issue of budget and finance became more prominent amongst the teachers’ concerns. Judson noted the way budget and finance were covered during the course. It was covered through a guest speaker, which Judson explained delivered a vast amount of information in a short period of time. The result is that budget and salary became a counterpoint to the two targeted policy issues, as they were provided in one large presentation and inadvertently heightened the teachers’ lack of comfort with the topic. This serves as more evidence that applying exposure therapy as a framework benefits teachers’ feelings of anxiety and discomfort on policy issues.

Pearson and Moomaw (2005) conducted a quantitative study that examined the connection of teacher autonomy, with job stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. When explaining the purpose, Pearson and Moomaw stated that a measurement

of teacher autonomy needed to be developed, for aiding researchers who examine various school reform initiatives, as well as teacher attitudes and perceptions. Through a prior study that was conducted by Pearson and Hall (1993), a measurement had been developed that identified teacher autonomy as first, autonomy of curriculum selection and development, and second, autonomy of the art of delivering instruction. Using the results from Pearson and Hall's measurement, Pearson and Moomaw hypothesized that teachers who were classified as being autonomous would have less job stress, greater work satisfaction, perceive to be empowered, and have a high degree of professionalism. More specifically, they hypothesized that teachers who had curriculum autonomy would demonstrate negative relationships with job stress and positive relationships with work satisfaction, while general teacher autonomy would demonstrate positive relationships with empowerment and professionalism.

The instrument used for Pearson and Moomaw's (2005) study was the Teaching Autonomy Scale (TAS), which is an 18-item instrument that was designed to elicit teacher perception of their autonomy in the areas of activity and material selection, classroom standards in relation to conduct, planning and sequencing of instruction, and personal decision making in their position. The TAS was developed as a four-point Likert Scale. Pearson and Moomaw explained that for their study, a section of the instrument was utilized to inquire into job stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. To measure job stress, three items were used to examine teachers' perceptions of current instructional loads, paper work loads, and stresses of their work environments. Two items measured work satisfaction, which inquired into teachers' perceptions of satisfaction with their current salary and employment. Three items measured empowerment that inquired into teachers' perceptions of their administrations, which considered the teachers' opinions on matters that directly affected them, involved them in policy

development, and the frequency of times that their concerns were considered in administrative decisions. Three items measured professionalism, which inquired into teacher perceptions of recognition of high performance, openness and accessibility of administration, and activity on school level committees.

The study targeted a population of teachers from three neighboring districts/counties in Florida. To obtain a representation of the total population, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) selected two elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools from each of the three districts. Their survey was sent to 300 teachers, with a cover letter that explained the study. Of the target population, 171 teachers responded. Of the 171 respondents, 37 were elementary school teachers, 88 were middle school teachers, and 46 were high school teachers. Pearson and Moomaw explained that the range in years of teaching experience was one to 37, with a mean of 14 years. They did not indicate the number of respondents from each targeted school and district. Conducting a data analysis, Pearson and Moomaw used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between teacher autonomy and job stress, greater work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. The independent variable examined for the study was level of teaching, such as elementary school, middle school, or high school.

Pearson and Moomaw (2005) indicated that of the dependent variables measured, which were general teaching autonomy, curriculum autonomy, stress, satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism; job satisfaction had low reliability. The reason for the low reliability was that job satisfaction had two items on its scale. Results proved Pearson and Moomaw's hypothesis, that curriculum autonomy would have a strong relationship with work stress, to be true. The results showed that as curriculum autonomy increased, work stress decreased. However, due to

the low reliability of the job satisfaction variable, a relationship could not be determined between curriculum autonomy and job satisfaction. Results also proved Pearson and Moomaw's hypothesis, that general teaching autonomy would have a strong relationship with both empowerment and professionalism, to be true.

To examine the variances among elementary school teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) conducted a multivariate analysis of variance. This analysis used curriculum autonomy, general teaching autonomy, stress, satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism as dependent variables and teaching level as the independent variable. Results from the analysis showed significant differences among the three teaching levels, for the variables of curriculum autonomy, general teaching autonomy, and professionalism. Results of a Tukey post hoc comparison suggest that despite the significant differences among the three teaching levels, effect sizes were weak.

Regarding curriculum autonomy, significant differences between elementary school teachers and high school teachers, and middle school teachers and high school teachers were identified (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). However, there was not a significant difference between elementary school teachers and middle school teachers. Regarding general teaching autonomy, statistically significant differences between elementary school teachers and middle school teachers, and elementary school teachers and high school teachers were identified. However, there was not a significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers. Finally, regarding professionalism, a significant difference was identified between elementary and middle school teachers.

Pearson and Moomaw (2005) indicate that their hypothesis was proven to be true. Increased curriculum autonomy resulted in decreased work stress and increased general teaching

autonomy resulted in increased perceived empowerment and professionalism. Pearson and Moomaw also stated that results suggest that as job satisfaction, and perceived empowerment and professionalism increased, work stress decreased. Results also showed the strongest relationship amongst the variables was between empowerment and professionalism. Pearson and Moomaw stated the finding suggests that teachers who find themselves to be empowered, also find their occupation to be a true profession.

### **Perceptions of Teacher Empowerment**

Keiser and Shen (2000) conducted a study that examined the difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of teacher empowerment. The rationale for the study was the limited amount of prior literature on principal perceptions of teacher empowerment, as of the time that the study was conducted. To conduct the study, Keiser and Shen extracted data from the school and staffing survey, which was conducted in 1993-1994. The school and staffing survey is developed by the National Center for Education Statistics and is distributed nationwide by the U.S. Bureau of Census (1994).

To select the sample, public schools were stratified, by the Census data, by all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Next, they were stratified by three grade levels, which were elementary, secondary, and combined levels. The results yielded 153 strata. Keiser and Shen (2000) selected a sample of 9,825 public schools, then selected four teachers for each elementary school, eight teachers for each secondary school, and six teachers for each combined school. The sample yielded 9,098 public school principals and 47,105 public school teachers. Keiser and Shen explained that due to the method by which the Census stratified the data, including disproportionate sampling and cluster probability sampling, random sampling of principals and teachers was not available.

The instrument used by the Census asked principals and teachers to rate teachers' actual influence in six areas. Keiser and Shen (2000) operationalized Bolin's (1989) definition of teacher empowerment. The areas were hiring new full-time teachers, evaluating teachers, setting discipline policy, decision making on budget spending, establishing curriculum, and the determination of content for in-service programs. Principals and teachers rated the items using a six-point Likert scale. To analyze the data from the separate questionnaires, separate t tests were conducted, one for principals and the other for teachers. Through conducting Levene's test for equality of variances, Keiser and Shen suggest that the assumption of equality of variance was not met, resulting in modified sample t tests being conducted.

Resulting from the t tests that were conducted by Keiser and Shen (2000), three patterns emerged. First, results showed that principals identified teachers to be more empowered than teachers identified themselves to be. Second, differences existed between the survey items of teacher involvement in hiring teachers, evaluating teachers, and deciding spending of budgetary items from the survey items of teacher involvement in establishing curriculum, setting discipline policy, and determining the content of in-service programs. Keiser and Shen stated that this indicated that a greater amount of disparities exist in school policies than there is regarding classroom and instructional issues. Third, Keiser and Shen reported that there was an existing limitation in the teachers' influences when evaluating teachers, hiring new teachers, and deciding spending of budgetary items.

To find the patterns previously identified, Keiser and Shen (2000) examined the response rates, on the Likert scales where both principals and teachers responded. The following mean scores on the Likert scale resulted in the disproportions reported by Keiser and Shen. Regarding teacher involvement in hiring teachers, the principals' responses yielded a mean of 2.53, where

the teachers' responses yielded a mean of 0.98. Regarding teacher involvement in decision making for budget spending, the principals' responses yielded a mean of 3.07, where the teachers' responses yielded a mean of 1.34. Regarding teacher involvement in the establishment of curriculum, the principals' responses yielded a mean of 3.66, where the teachers' responses yielded a mean of 2.66. Regarding teacher involvement in determining the content for in-service programs, the principals' responses yielded a mean of 3.92, where the teachers' responses yielded a mean of 2.55. Regarding teacher involvement in their evaluation, the principals' responses yielded a mean of 2.19, where the teachers' responses yielded a mean of 0.62. And, regarding teacher involvement to setting discipline policies, the principals' responses yielded a mean of 4.02, where the teachers' responses yielded a mean of 2.69. Keiser and Shen explained that their results indicated clear discrepancies between principals' perceptions of the extent of teacher empowerment, and that of the teachers. Principals identified a greater amount of teacher empowerment than the amount identified by teachers.

Somech (2005) conducted a study that tested a proposed model of empowerment, which examined the relationships of teachers' personal empowerment and team empowerment on their organizational outputs. Organizational outputs are defined by the dimensions of performance, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Somech hypothesized that greater personal empowerment and greater team empowerment would increase teachers' performance, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Somech also hypothesized that personal empowerment and team empowerment would affect performance, organizational commitment, and personal commitment; however, the relationship between personal empowerment and each of the dimensions would yield separate results. Regarding performance and organizational commitment, she hypothesized that the relationship between personal

empowerment and each “dimension” would be more positive, when team empowerment is high. However, she also hypothesized that the relationship between personal empowerment and professional commitment would be less positive when team empowerment is high.

Somech (2005) selected teachers for the study from a random sample of Israeli schools. The schools were located in the northern and central parts of Israel. Reaching out to 2,400 teachers who taught middle school, seventh to ninth grade, and high school, who taught tenth through twelfth grade, at 25 middle schools and 27 high schools, 983 teachers returned completed surveys. Content teams were employed at each school that had teachers participating in the study, all of which were assigned by administrators, and had worked together for at least one year. Somech identifies that the average team consisted of 5.65 members. The participants consisted of 72% women, 28% men, 73% were Jewish, and 27% were Arab. The mean of the participants’ ages was 38.5 years old. The mean of the participants’ seniority was 10 years in their current school, and 13.5 years in the profession. Of the total number of participants, 64% had a bachelor’s degree, 26% had a master’s degree, and 10% had a professional degree, which Somech compared to that of a junior college diploma with teaching credentials.

The study began in 2001, when a quantitative questionnaire was distributed to 2,400 teachers. The questionnaire asked teachers to respond through a Likert-type scale. Somech (2005) advised the respondents to apply their responses to their current position and school. Questions asked concerned the participants’ feelings of empowerment, commitment to their school and profession, and their organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). To measure psychological empowerment, the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Reinhart, 1992) was used, which measures teachers’ overall perception of their personal empowerment. The scale was composed of 38 questions that asked respondents to respond on a

five-point Likert-type scale and consists of six dimensions. The six dimensions of the SPES are involvement in decision making, opportunities for professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact.

To measure team empowerment, Somech (2005) used the Team Empowerment Scale that was developed by Kirkman and Rosen (1999). Somech adjusted the scale to be applicable to educational settings. Consisting of four dimensions (potency, team meaningfulness, team autonomy, and team impact), the scale measures the overall perception of team empowerment. Participants responded to 26 questions that asked them to respond on a five-point Likert-type scale.

To measure the teachers' organizational commitment, Somech (2005) used the organizational commitment questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979). Somech adjusted the questionnaire to be applicable to the educational setting. The questionnaire consists of 15 items that refer to teachers' identification with, and their involvement in, their professional organization. It asks the participants to respond on a seven-point Likert-type scale.

To measure teachers' professional commitment, Somech (2005) used Lodhal and Kejner's (1965) questionnaire. Somech adjusted the questionnaire to be applicable to the educational setting. Focusing on teachers' involvement in their present job and the importance of working as a teacher, the questionnaire consists of 20 items. To respond to the questionnaire, the participants answered items on a five-point Likert-type scale.

To measure teachers' performance, Somech (2005) used the OCB scale that was developed by Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000). The OCB scale was designed to be applied in educational organizations. Focusing on the discretionary behaviors of teachers that go beyond their expectations, the scale is directed toward the individual, the group, and the organization as a

whole. The OCB scale consists of 23 items and three subscales, which are students, colleagues, and the school as a unit. To respond to items on the scale, participants answered on a five-point Likert-type scale. Somech chose to apply frequency of team meetings as a control variable. Doing so was based on reviewing literature, which stated that a relationship existed between the frequency of team meetings and the performance of team members.

Somech (2005) conducted a within and between analysis (WABA) (Dansereau et al., 1984), which is a three-step process that consists of three separate analyses. The results of the WABA I indicated that the five measures of the study were related. Results of the WABA II indicated that relationships existed between organizational commitment, professional commitment, personal commitment, and team commitment. Results also indicated that frequency of meetings influenced teacher performance, but not on organizational commitment or professional commitment. Combining personal and team empowerment were shown to have positive relationships with organizational commitment. It was hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between team empowerment and professional commitment; however, results suggest that there was not a correlation between team empowerment and professional commitment. Therefore, the hypothesis could not be confirmed. When combining personal and team empowerment and examining the relationship between the combined variable and professional commitment, results indicated that professional commitment was at its highest when either personal empowerment or team empowerment was high, but not both or neither.

Massey-Winds (2014) conducted a quantitative study that followed a correlational research design, which examined the relationship between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership practices, and teacher empowerment. The setting for the study was an urban southeastern school district in Georgia who served 25,000 elementary, middle, and high school

students. Of the teachers in the district, 47 participated for the study. Of the participants, 79% were female, 21% were male. Of their educational background, 45% had a master's degree, 21% had a bachelor's degree, and 5% had a doctorate.

To conduct the study, Massey-Winds (2014) sent both instruments and a description of the survey to the participants in a packet. To solicit participation, approval was first sought from administrators within the district. Next, she contacted the principals of the schools that she targeted to participate in the study, to seek their consent. Then, the participating schools' teachers were contacted via email to solicit participation in the study. Massey-Winds asked two research questions. The first question asked if a relationship existed between teacher perceptions of administrator leadership practices and levels of teacher empowerment. The second question asked if differences existed in perceived levels of empowerment between the teachers' genders and levels of education. To collect data, Massey-Winds used the Power Perception Profile (PPP) (Hersey & Natemeyer, 1985) and the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Rinehart, 1992) to find results that answered the first question, and the SPES to find results that answered the second question.

Both the PPP and the SPES were distributed to the participants (Massey-Winds, 2014). Massey-Winds explained that the PPP measured several powers, which are coercive power, connection power, expert power, information power, legitimate power, referent power, and reward power. Expert power referred to a leader's possession of expertise skill and knowledge that gains the respect of others. Referent power referred to a leader's personal traits. Legitimate power referred to the position that the leader held. Reward power referred to the leader's ability to provide rewards for other people. Coercive power referred to the fear that the leader had over other people. Connection power referred to a leader's connections with influential people inside

and outside the organization. Information power referred to the leader's possession of, or access to, information that is perceived as being valuable to others. Consisting of 21 pairs of reasons that people give for following leaders' decisions and directions, the PPP permitted the participants up to three points, amongst two choices, for each of the 21 pairs. The pairs consisted of alternative choices for a particular item, to which the participants allotted their points, which was based upon their judgements of their leader. The SPES measured perceived levels of teacher empowerment. "Six subscale scores were created by averaging all items in the scales; data was treated as continuous" (Massey-Winds, 2014, p. 67). The six subscales created were decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. The SPES consists of 38 items to which the participants respond on a five-point Likert scale.

To analyze data, Massey-Winds (2014) used SPSS to find statistical data and analyzed data for the sample population and variables. To examine the first research question, the 42 Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted between all subscales of both the PPP and the SPES. Massey-Winds explained that the purpose of selecting the Pearson correlation was the need for a bivariate statistical analysis. To examine the second research question, the factorial MANOVA was conducted to assess for differences of the teachers' perceptions of empowerment, as it was measured by the SPES. Massey-Winds explained that the purpose for selecting the factorial MANOVA was "to evaluate if mean differences existed on more than one continuous dependent variable between two or more discrete grouping variables with two levels" (Massey-Winds, 2014, p. 76).

Massey-Winds (2014) explained that 42 cases were deemed to be usable for analysis, where statistical tests identified the need for 137 cases. Therefore, only large effects from the study's results could be identified to be significant. Following the analysis of data, which was

conducted to answer the first research question, Massey-Winds concluded that the null-hypothesis of a statistically significant relationship not existing between the participants' perceptions of their administrators' leadership practices and levels of teacher empowerment, was not able to be rejected. Massey-Winds also explained that when analyzing data from both the PPP and the SPES, data shown for the subscales of expert, information, legitimate, reward, and connection on the PPP, and status, autonomy, and impact on the SPES was not identified to be reliable when conducting the Pearson correlation.

Following the analysis of data, which was conducted to answer the second research question, Massey-Winds (2014) identified several findings. First, Massey-Winds explains that prior to conducting the factorial MANOVA, assessments for the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance and covariance, and absence of multicollinearity were conducted. To assess normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted. The assumption was not met for the subscales of professional growth, status, and self-efficacy. To assess homogeneity, Levene's test was conducted. The assumption was not met for status, self-efficacy, or impact. To assess covariance, Box's M was conducted, to which the assumption was not met. To assess absence of multicollinearity, a correlation matrix was conducted. Correlation coefficients did not exceed .80, which indicated that the assumption was met.

Conducting the MANOVA, Massey-Winds (2014) stated that the results of interaction effect between gender and education were not significant, which indicated that simultaneous mean differences of the SPES subscales, by gender and level of education interactions, did not exist. The effect to assess differences on the subscales of the SPES by gender was not significant, which indicated that simultaneous mean differences of the SPES subscales, by gender, did not exist. The effect to assess differences on the subscales of the SPES by education

was not significant, which indicated that simultaneous mean differences of the SPES subscales, by education, did not exist. Therefore, Massey-Winds' null hypothesis, which stated that a statistically significant difference between the participants' perceived level of empowerment, by their gender and level of education, could not be rejected. Massey-Winds stated that these results can be due to the study's sample size, which was 42 cases; where the study required a minimum of 137 cases to be appropriate.

### **Chapter Summary**

The studies selected for this review of literature applied teacher empowerment to various settings and applied it to different contexts. Despite the continued differences in conceptualizations and definitions of teacher empowerment, suggestions from the studies' results are helpful in guiding this proposed study. Regarding Lee and Nie's (2014) theoretical framework, the studies in this review of literature provided the following suggestions.

Lee and Nie's theoretical framework first states that the empowering behaviors of principals and immediate supervisors directly affect teachers' senses of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. To begin, studies in this review of literature suggest that principals perceive teachers to be more empowered than teachers perceive themselves. Also, studies suggest that teachers perceive their immediate supervisors to be more engaged in tending to their individual needs than principals. Results suggest that the empowering behaviors of principals and immediate supervisors affect teachers' work-related outcomes, indirectly, through the teachers' senses that were previously identified, affecting teachers' attendance and commitment to their school and education as a profession. However, the ways that principals' empowering behaviors affect teachers' work-related outcomes differs from the ways that immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors affect teachers' outcomes. Finally, results suggest that

teachers' sense of autonomy can be influenced by the culture of the greater community in which their school resides, such as in India, where the culture leads to principals making decisions and passing them down to teachers.

The second part of Lee and Nie's theoretical framework states that teachers' senses of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact affect their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Studies suggest that empowerment can be perceived to be obtained either by individual teachers, or by teams of teachers. Work related outcomes increase as either personal empowerment or team empowerment is increased. Studies further suggest that increased autonomy in curriculum choice and development increases job satisfaction and commitment.

This study aims to further the literature through studying teacher empowerment as applied to a setting where it has not been applied previously. The setting is a LEA that has been identified as requiring intervention by its governing SEA. This intervention must have led to the appointment of a receiver or trustee to the LEA. Most studies for this review of literature applied quantitative methods, where this proposed study will apply qualitative methods. This will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this case study, which uses qualitative research study methodology, is to describe how teachers, who are employed in LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan and appointed a receiver or trustee, perceive the impact their leaders' behaviors have on teacher empowerment. The researcher will investigate the empowerment of teachers who teach in a LEA under receivership. Using teachers as participants, this study will be guided by the question: How do the behaviors of school and LEA based administration impact the empowerment of teachers whom they supervise, as evidenced by teacher perception? The following sub-questions will also guide this study: a.) Do teachers perceive the appointment of a receiver or trustee as influencing the processes of teacher empowerment? b.) How do teacher perceptions of their leaders' behaviors vary among teachers of different schools within the same LEA? c.) Which parts of the improvement plan placed on the LEA, if any, do teachers perceive as influencing school and LEA administrators' behaviors?

### **Qualitative Research Rationale**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) stated that qualitative researchers have reasons for selecting the participants, events, and processes for their study. Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research approaches benefit studies because they allow the researchers to examine the topic of their interest, in its natural setting, while collecting multiple pieces of data, and, most importantly, allowing their participants to share their experiences through providing detailed explanations. Through applying a qualitative research approach to this proposed study, the researcher will be able to gather a deeper understanding of the perceptions of teachers, who are

employed in a LEA that has been identified as requiring intervention from its governing SEA, of their school leaders' empowering behaviors

Lee and Nie (2014) have provided a theoretical framework that relates the two most commonly identified forms of teacher empowerment, which are the socio-structural and psychological, with school leader empowering behaviors and work-related outcomes, and found relationships among all. Applying Lee and Nie's framework to a qualitative study will provide the researcher with deeper findings from multiple data sources (Johnson & Christensen, 2013).

### **Case Study Rationale**

One application for case study research is investigating contemporary topics (Yin, 2014). Another application of qualitative case studies is to illustrate unique cases, which hold unusual interests that need to be described (Creswell, 2013). This study will utilize a single embedded case study design as it "focuses on an issue or concern" and "selects one bounded case to illustrate the issue" (Creswell, 2013, p. 99). The issue to be studied is the empowerment of teachers, and the bounded case selected is a LEA that has been identified as requiring intervention from its governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee.

### **Research Sample**

Participants for this study will be teachers who work in the same New England based LEA, which is commonly referred to as a school district. The identified LEA needs to have been identified as requiring intervention from its governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee who is vested with the powers of the LEA's Superintendent and School Committee. All participants will be required to work in the same school district but will not be

required to be employed in the same school. Teachers identified for the study need to have been employed within their school for a minimum of three full academic years.

It is important to note that at the time of this proposed study, a total of two LEAs in the New England area have been identified as requiring intervention from their governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee. Due to a limitation with the researcher's proximity to each location, the researcher is proposing to access a LEA where he has been employed for 10 years, at the time of this proposed study. Therefore, this study will use a convenience sample. The researcher's employment within the LEA has been at its alternative day school, which is a school that serves only students with moderate and severe special needs. The researcher does not have access to, or familiarity with, teachers of General Education or Special Education teachers who work in general education schools, providing inclusion-based instruction. To address this limitation, the research sample will include teachers from general education elementary and secondary schools.

The researcher will contact the Receiver or Trustee, as well as principals, to seek approval to contact teachers within the LEA. See Appendix B for written request sent to all principals. Upon confirmation of approval, the researcher will utilize the LEA's email system to distribute the survey to teachers contact teachers. See Appendix C for emailed invitation to teachers.

### **Overview of Needed Information**

Participants will include between seven to nine teachers, who are employed in a New England based LEA that has been identified as requiring an improvement plan, by its governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee. To effectively answer the questions,

three classifications of information will need to be examined: Contextual Information, Demographic Information, and Perceptual Information.

### **Classification I: Contextual Information**

Contextual information describes the culture and environment of a study's setting (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Bloomberg and Volpe further explain that contextual information is vital for case studies; elements of the environment may influence the participants' behaviors. Contextual information will be collected through conducting interviews, which will provide the researcher with knowledge about the LEA's climate, staffing, roles, rules, and procedures. Through reviewing online published mission statements, school priorities, and additional documentation the researcher will be able to further enhance understanding of the LEA's system and structure.

### **Classification II: Demographic Information**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) define demographic information as being a profile of the participants, including a description of who they are, their personal background, professional background, information on age, gender, and ethnicity. By conducting a survey in the first phase of the case study, the researcher will be able to organize this information in a matrix, by the participant, by pseudonym, and demographic data points. Demographic information will assist the researcher with conducting an analysis of data collected between teachers of different schools in the LEA, and will provide important data for future researchers, should they choose to replicate this study.

### Classification III: Perceptual Information

Perceptual information is a description of the participants' perceptions of their empowerment, based on the behaviors of their administrators and immediate supervisors, who include teacher leaders. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) explain that perceptual information is the most critical of information needed in a study, because it reflects the participants' perceptions of what they identify as being fact, which explains their emotions and actions.

Table 1: Overview of Information Needed

<i>Classification of Information</i>	<i>What the Researcher Requires</i>	<i>Method</i>
<b>Contextual</b>	Climate, staffing, roles, rules, procedures, system, and structure	Interviews Document Review
<b>Demographic</b>	Description of the participants' backgrounds, including age, gender, and ethnicity	Survey
<b>Perceptual</b>	Description of the participants' perceptions of their empowerment, based on the empowering behaviors of their administrators and immediate supervisors, including teacher leaders.	Survey Focus Groups Interviews

### Overview of Research Design

To conduct the research for this case study, the researcher will use the following steps:

1. The review of literature was conducted to examine prior research on the subject of teacher empowerment. At the time of this review of literature, no studies researched a LEA that has been appointed a receiver or trustee.

2. Following the defense of this proposal, the researcher will seek and obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). This will involve the outline of all procedures, which include ethical considerations that are necessary for the participants' confidentiality and consent.
3. Following receiving approval from the IRB of SNHU, the researcher will seek approval from the receiver or trustee of the identified LEA.
4. Data will be collected through the following methods:
  - a. Potential participants will be contacted through the LEA's email system. The email will contain an electronic survey, created through Survey Monkey, which will be composed of two parts. The first part will serve to collect the participants' demographic information. The second part of the survey will consist of the Teacher Leadership School Survey (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005), which is a 49 item five-point Likert scale measurement and will be used solely for guiding focus group and interview questions. An initial request will be sent, where participants will have one week to respond. Upon the completion of that week, a second reminder will be sent out for seeking additional replies. See Appendix C.
  - b. Completed surveys will be analyzed. Narrowing of the sample will take place to ensure that participants are reflective of as many schools within the LEA as feasible. Narrowing will be done by organizing survey respondents into groups. The groups will be organized into elementary school, middle school, and high school level teachers. Respondents will be assigned random numbers. Seven to nine participants will be selected and identified for participation in focus groups.

Focus group questions are located in Appendix G. The focus group will be conducted in a neutral setting that is unaffiliated with the LEA.

- c. The seven to nine participants will be interviewed in a series of two one-hour long interviews, which will be conducted face to face. Interviews will follow Patton's (2014) interview guide approach. Interview questions are included in Appendix H.
5. Interviews will be coded using Atlas.ti, and applying in vivo coding and emotional coding, and evaluation coding to identify themes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Following this process, documents and literature on the LEA will also be examined to aid the researcher in corroborating findings.
6. Data from teachers who represent different schools will be analyzed to identify emerging themes. A data chart will be created to display a clear representation of the data.

### **Data Collection Methods**

This case study will apply the methods of surveying, conducting focus groups, conducting interviews, and examining documents. These methods will be used over the course of three phases: Surveys, Focus Groups, and Interviews.

Table 2: Question &amp; Data Source Alignment

	<b>Do teachers perceive the appointment of a receiver or trustee as having an effect on their empowerment?</b>	<b>How do teacher perceptions of their leaders' behaviors vary among teachers of different schools within the same LEA?</b>	<b>If any, which parts of the improvement plan placed on the LEA do teachers perceive as having an effect on school and LEA administrators' behaviors?</b>
<b>Survey</b>	1,2,3,8,9,15,31,32,36,48	1, 2, 3, 8, 9,31,32,36,48	14,15, 31,32,36, 48
<b>Focus Group</b>	4,5,6	3,5,6,7	2
<b>Interviews</b>	5,6,7	3,4,5,6,7,8	2,2a,2b,2c,2d,3,4,8
<b>Documents</b>	No Questions Asked	No Questions Asked	No Questions Asked

### Phase I: Survey

An electronic survey, consisting of two parts, will be submitted to teachers through the LEA's email system. The survey is located in Appendix C. First, the survey will collect demographic information, such as age, gender, ethnicity, school of employment, years in LEA, years in current school, past teaching experience, and personal education experiences. Demographic information is being collected to help researchers "explain what may be underlying an individual's perceptions, as well as the similarities and differences in perceptions among participants" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 105).

Second, an electronic version of the Teacher Leadership Survey (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005) will be distributed. The Teacher Leadership Survey is a 49 item five-point Likert scale measurement, and measures teacher leadership on seven scales, which are development focus, recognition, autonomy, collegiality, participation, open communication, and positive energy.

## **Phase II: Focus Groups**

A one-hour focus group will be conducted using Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group (Elliot & Associates, 2005). The focus group will take place in a neutral setting that is unaffiliated with the LEA. Following the guidelines, the number of anticipated participants, which for this case study is seven to nine, is within the advised amount of six to 10 participants. Furthermore, the questions will be limited to eight to 10, and based on engagement, exploration, and exit. Elliot and Associates identify 12 questions as being the limit of questions for a focus group, but express eight questions as being ideal and 10 questions being better than 12 questions. The focus group questions are located in Appendix G.

## **Phase III: Interviews**

Patton's (2014) interview guide approach will be applied to this phase of the proposed case study, which states that researchers must have topics and issues specified prior to conducting interviews. However, the topics and issues should be covered in outline form, and during the interview, the researcher decides the sequence and order of questioning.

The benefit of conducting interviews is that they provide data that cannot be captured through quantitative methods (Yin, 2014). The benefit of using Patton's (2014) interview guide approach is that interviews remain conversational, as opposed to a rigid line of questioning. Furthermore, by following an outline, the researcher can identify and close gaps in the responses.

## **Phase IV: Documents**

According to Yin (2014) documentary information should be the object of explicit data collection, despite not always being accurate and lacking biases. Yin further explains that the most important use of documents is "to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources"

(p. 107). In accordance with Yin, the researcher will leave aside time to examine documents prior to, during the course of, and following conducting interviews. This will include online published mission statements, school priorities, and other documentation; as well as, allotting time to visit the community library of the same LEA being studied to examine archived documents that may be on hand.

### **Data Analysis and Synthesis**

The Teacher Leadership Survey (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005) is a normed survey, which comes with its own evaluative tool. The tool measures the respondents' responses in groups, which correspond with a respective scale. This data will be used to find commonalities in the perceptions of teachers, regarding the supports, praises, and openness from administrators to teachers, as well as between colleagues. It will support the researcher in making any necessary revisions to the focus group and interview questions.

Focus groups and interviews will be recorded through visual and audio means. The footage and audio recordings will be transcribed into Atlas.ti. Three cycles of coding will be used, with the first cycle coding being comprised of initial terms of interest, and the second cycle of coding working with the results of the first cycle coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). First cycle coding will be conducted using a combination of coding approaches, which are identified by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. First, in vivo coding is explained as “uses words or short phrases from the participant’s own language in the data record as codes” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 74). Next, emotional coding is explained as a labeling of “the emotions recalled and/or experienced by the participant or inferred by the researcher about the participant” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 75). Finally, evaluation coding is explained as the application of “nonquantitative codes onto qualitative data that assign judgements about

the merit, worth, or significance of programs or policies” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 76). First cycle coding will apply the three identified approaches congruently. Second cycle coding, which Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) identify as pattern coding, is described as a way of grouping the summaries from the first cycle into a smaller number of categories. Third cycle coding will continue to group summaries from the first two cycles into a smaller number of categories.

Upon completion of the coding process, a table will be made for the preparation of case analysis. The table will include information from reports that were written about each interview. Case analysis will be used to inspect whether clusters exist that share specific patterns (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The proposed case study will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). IRB approval from the university must be granted before research for this case study can commence. Approval from the IRB of SNHU will be added when approval is granted.

After approval from the appointed receiver or trustee, as well as principals, consent forms will be disseminated. These will explain the proposed case study’s purpose to potential participants. Consent forms will also inform potential participants of their rights to voluntary participation and to end participation at any time during the case study and will provide contact information in the instance that any further information is required.

In accordance with the IRB of SNHU, the participants’ confidentiality will be safeguarded. The identities of participants will be kept secure during the course of the case study

and its reporting of data. Names will be replaced with pseudonyms in all data records and reports. All identifiers will be removed to aid in ensuring that participants and the schools and LEA by which they are employed remain anonymous. All physical data will be kept in a locked and secured safe. All electronic data will be kept in encrypted computer files, which will require the submission of a password to access.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The researcher intends to keep personal assumptions separate from the data's findings and conclusions, to ensure a bias free report of the findings. The following will identify the researcher's methods of addressing the three major considerations of trustworthiness.

### **Credibility**

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) express that the “crunch” moment of any study as the moment when the researcher needs to ask whether the findings are credible to the participants and the readers of the study. They provide the following points for the researcher to examine for ensuring that the case study's findings are credible. These are to ensure that:

1. Descriptions are context rich and meaningful.
2. All accounts reported upon are true, make sense, are plausible, and draw the reader into the experience.
3. Triangulation of data collection methods and sources produce converging results.
4. Data sources are linked to the prior or emerging theory.
5. All findings are systematically and clearly related.
6. Descriptions are clearly provided for all parts of the study, including assertions, propositions, hypotheses, and conclusions.

7. All lingering uncertainties are identified.
8. Negative evidence was sought and accounted for, when present.
9. All rival explanations were considered prior to formulating conclusions.
10. Data has been replicated, when possible, across multiple points of the database, and not just in one instance.
11. Conclusions were considered by the original participants, if not, there is a coherent explanation.
12. If predictions are made throughout the study, the researcher must report on their accuracy.

### **Dependability**

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) state that dependability, which they identify as being synonymous with reliability, is the question of whether the process of the study is consistent and is stable over time and across researchers and methods. They suggest that the researcher should adhere to the following points for ensuring that the study is dependable. These are to ensure that:

1. There is clarity to the research questions, and that the features of the study's design are congruent with the research questions.
2. The researcher's role and status within the site have been explicitly described.
3. The researcher clearly specified all basic paradigms and analytic constructs.
4. Data was appropriately collected across full range of the study's constructs, as suggested by the research questions.
5. Intercoder agreement checks were made with adequate results, when appropriate; 6.) data checks were made to check against disqualifiers, such as biases and deceit.

## **Transferability**

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) state that transferability is synonymous with fittingness. They explain that transferability is the ability for the study's conclusions to fit within another study or other contexts. They provide the following points for researchers to examine when determining whether there is transferability. These are to examine that:

1. The characteristics of the original sample, such as participants and setting, are clearly and sufficiently described to permit all adequate comparisons with other samples.
2. The report identifies all limits on the sample selection and examines the ability to generalize to other studies and samples.
3. The sample is diverse for allowing a broader applicability, when relevant.
4. Findings are robust in description to allow readers to determine transferability and appropriateness in their own setting.
5. Theories and their transferability are explicitly stated.
6. The report suggests settings where the findings could be tested.

As will be expanded upon in the limitations section, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) argue that the goal of qualitative research is not to be generalizable, but rather transferable.

## **Limitations**

The first limitation of this study is the current targeted site of the study. This study uses a convenience sample. Due to the limitation of the number of accessible Local Educational Agencies, within the researcher's zone of accessibility that fit the description needed to conduct the study, the researcher is aiming to conduct the study in a site where he has been employed for 10 years, at the LEA's alternative day school for his entire tenure, which identifies the study as

insider research. Furthermore, the researcher's status as an insider can result in either having privileged information from the participants, or a feeling of hesitation of the participants to share information, as they would with a researcher from outside the LEA. To address this limitation, the researcher has identified the following steps. First, the study is designed to be designated for teachers who are employed at public schools that provide general education or inclusion services, thus eliminating all teachers from the researcher's school of employment, and qualifying teachers from schools of which the researcher does not have any affiliation. Next, the focus group has been designed to be conducted outside any school or LEA owned property, as well as outside any activity sanctioned by the LEA or entity affiliated with the LEA. Interviews have been designed to be conducted at a location of the participants' choice. This will allow the participants to be able to share their experiences in a setting where they will be more inclined to be comfortable with discussing their perceptions.

The second limitation is one that is present in all studies, which is the possibility of the participants expressing what the researcher wants them to here. This is more of a limitation for this study, as the participants will know of the researcher's insider status. The researcher will try to address this limitation by designing the study to conduct focus groups, prior to conducting interviews. In doing so, the goal is for the participants to share more of their own perceptions within the small group of teachers, prior to one on one interviewing, where the researcher will expand on their responses from the focus groups.

As an insider researcher, the third limitation is that it is impossible to remove all personal perspectives and possible biases during research. To address this concern and ensure that the study's findings are credible, the researcher will be bracketing all personal thoughts throughout the study to keep a check on separating personal perspectives from the data sources.

Furthermore, data will not be analyzed until a phase of the study is complete, aiming to assist in removing the researcher's biases and personal perspective.

The fourth limitation of this study is that it has a small sample size. As stated in the transferability section, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) explain that the goal of qualitative studies is not to be generalizable. Therefore, the study's findings will not be generalizable to other studies. The goal of this study will be the ability of it to be transferable for future studies.

### **Delimitations**

Focus groups will be conducted at a neutral site that does not have any affiliation with the LEA. This will be done to ensure the comfort of the participants with discussing their perceptions of the topic. In contrast, to ensure maximum comfort of the participants, interviews will be conducted at a setting of the participants' choosing, which can include a location that is affiliated with the LEA.

To address the issue of insider research, the study is designed to exclude teachers who work in alternative education, where the researcher currently works. This removes the perspective of a particular population of teachers, who are part of the overall population of the LEA. Therefore, the study, its data, and findings is applicable to teachers from general education schools within the LEA.

Most prior studies in the literature review were conducted using quantitative methods, with large populations of participants to make findings generalizable. A benefit of conducting qualitative research is it allows participants to share their experiences through providing detailed explanations. Due to the nature of the study's questions, this study will only have seven to nine participants, thus not being generalizable. The study does aim to be transferable.

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the methodology for this proposed case study. A case study that utilizes qualitative research methods will be conducted to study the empowerment of teachers, who are employed in a LEA that has been identified as requiring intervention, by its governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee to serve as the superintendent and school committee. The sample of participants will be composed of teachers who have been employed in their same school, within the identified Local Educational Agency, for a minimum of three years. The study will apply the use of a survey, comprised of two parts, which are a demographics section and the Teacher Leadership Survey (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005); as well as focus groups, interviews, and documents. The survey will be used for the purpose of developing focus group and interview questions. All identified participants will participate in focus groups, as well as be interviewed. Three cycles of coding will be used, which are in vivo, emotional, and evaluation coding. This study aims to further the literature through studying teacher empowerment as applied to a setting where it has not been applied previously. It also aims to be transferrable to future research.

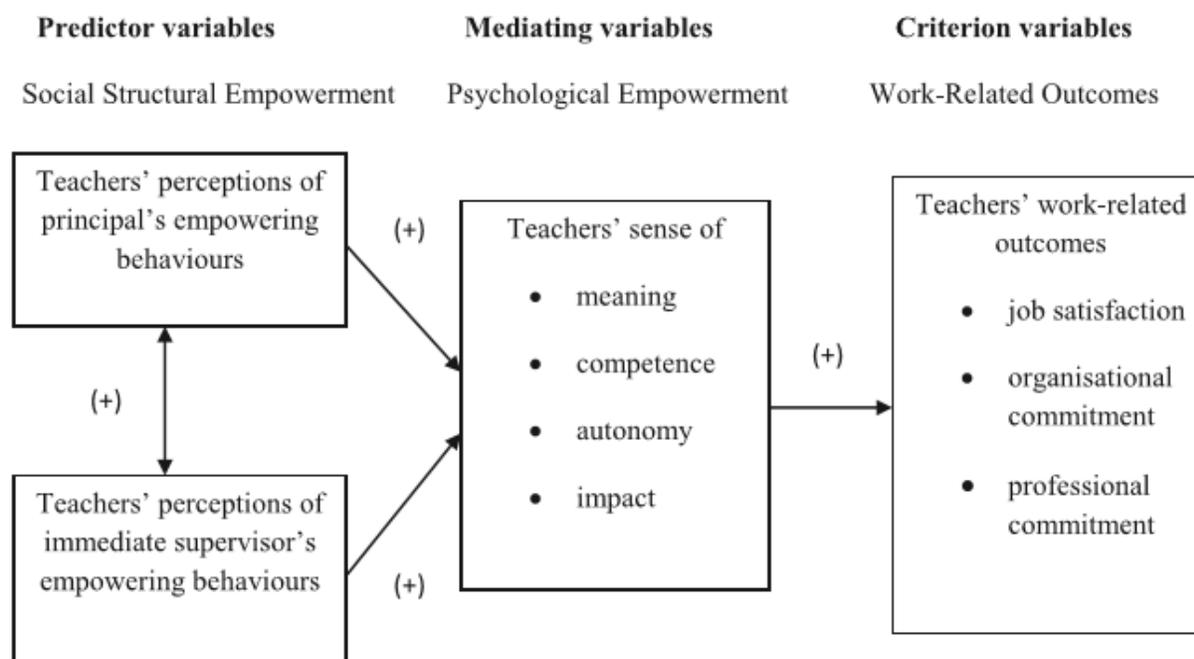
## Chapter 4

### Results

Empowering teachers leads to enhanced job performance, increased motivation, higher morale, improved quality of work, greater efficiency, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization, as well as identified increases in knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, organizational learning, breakthroughs in curriculum initiatives, improved staff collegiality; and for students, enhanced student motivation, leading to higher student achievement (Keiser & Shen, 2000; Lumpkin, Claxton, & Wilson, 2014; Shen et al., 2012). Teachers' perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors jointly influence teachers' senses of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact, which influences teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment (Lee & Nie, 2014). Specifically, teachers perceive their principals to be significantly more engaged in articulating a vision and as having significantly greater engagement in fostering collaborative relationships, yet immediate supervisors are perceived to support teachers in their day to day work, more than principals (Lee & Nie, 2015).

This study examined the perceived empowerment of teachers who are employed in a Local Education Agency (LEA) that has been placed on an improvement plan by its governing State Education Agency (SEA), resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee. The theoretical framework applied to this study states that teachers' perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors predict teachers' sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact, which predict teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment (Lee & Nie, 2014). See Figure 1

Figure 1: The Lee &amp; Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework of Teacher Empowerment



*Note.* (+) denotes hypothesised positive correlational/predictive relationship

Understanding teacher empowerment in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan and assigned a receiver or trustee to serve as the superintendent and school committee, may guide future actions taken by policy makers, SEAs, administrators, and teachers to implement improvement plans that will lead to greater success in the LEA and school turn around process, as well as better servicing students. The question which guided this research was:

How do the behaviors of school and LEA based administration impact the empowerment of teachers whom they supervise, as evidenced by teacher perception?

This chapter opens with a qualitative summary of two surveys. The first sought demographic information and another that guided the development of focus group and interview questions. Then this chapter presents a qualitative discussion of one focus group and two individual interviews which were conducted between the researcher and five teachers from one

LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan and assigned a receiver or trustee. This chapter is organized into four sections. Section one describes the chosen selection process and demographics of the LEA selected to be the site of this study. The LEA and all schools within are identified by pseudonyms. Section two summarizes the results of two surveys, which are one survey to gather demographic information and identify respondents who expressed interest in participation and the Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS) (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005), which was used to guide the development of focus group and interview questions. Section three describes the chosen selection process and demographics of the five participants. All participants are identified by pseudonyms. Section four describes the results from one focus group conducted with three of the five participants, and two individual interviews conducted with each of the five participants.

### **Section 1: Description of the LEA**

Selection of the identified LEA was based on several factors. First, a list of individual LEAs that were identified as being placed on an improvement plan by the governing SEA of one New England state was researched. No other criterion was determined as a factor to eliminate any potential LEA from research. At the time of research, two LEAs within the state were identified as being on an improvement plan and assigned a receiver or trustee. After identification of the LEAs, the factors of permission from the LEA to conduct the study, time to conduct each phase of the study, and distance and travel time for the researcher to be present on site to conduct the study were all considered to rank both sites as first and second choice.

The LEA of the Rockford Public Schools was selected as first choice, as it was located in a community that was within close proximity to the researcher's residence. The receiver of the Rockford Public Schools was contacted through a letter that was sent via email to discuss the

goals of the study and seek permission to conduct the study. The researcher was directed to complete paperwork from the Rockford Public Schools Institutional Review Board (IRB). The paperwork required to be submitted to the Rockford Public Schools IRB was separate from the requirements to complete paperwork for the Southern New Hampshire University IRB. Upon completion and submission of the paperwork, the Rockford Public Schools IRB reviewed and granted permission to conduct the study.

The Rockford Public Schools is in the urban community of Rockford. There is a predominant population of people of Latino heritage that live in the city. The city of Rockford has a long history of being a gateway city for immigrants. At the time of this study, approximately 13,000 students were enrolled in the Rockford Public Schools, between pre-school and post-graduate. Over 70 percent of students were identified as having a native language that was not English, and over 60 percent of students were identified as being economically disadvantaged. At the time of the study, the Rockford Public Schools was comprised of 35 individual school programs that reported data to the SEA and employed approximately 1,000 teachers. Schools were divided between four early childhood centers, one primary school, eight elementary schools, two grammar schools, seven middle schools, nine high schools, three schools for students with disabilities, and one adult education center (See Table 3).

Table 3: Grade Levels for Types of Schools Serviced in the LEA

# (Schools)	School Type	Grades Served
4	Early Child Center	Pre-K and Kindergarten
1	Primary School	Pre-K through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade
8	Elementary School	Kindergarten through 4 <sup>th</sup> or 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
2	Grammar School	Kindergarten through 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
7	Middle School	5 <sup>th</sup> or 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade through 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
9	High School	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade through 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
3	School for Students w/ Disabilities	Kindergarten through 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
1	Adult Education Center	Adult Education

At the time of this study, the Rockford Public School District had been designated as being on an improvement plan for over five years and was assigned a single person to serve as its receiver. The receiver was also identified as the superintendent, as the position had been vacant when the LEA was placed on its improvement plan. As part of receivership, the receiver was granted full authority to design and implement the turnaround plan for the Rockford Public Schools. The receiver granted autonomy to each school to develop its own budget and operational plan. During the interview phase of data collection for this study, it was announced that the receiver was to step down at the end of the school year, and that a committee would assume the role of receivership and a superintendent would be selected to run the LEA's day to day operations. At the time of writing the findings from data analyses, the receiver stepped down and the committee assumed the role of receiver. At the time of publication of this study,

the Rockford Public Schools remains on its improvement plan, and the committee jointly serves as the receiver. The assistant superintendent assumed the role of interim superintendent.

## **Section 2: Survey Results**

The Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Info (TES) was created and distributed via SurveyMonkey to electronically obtain demographic information and seek volunteers for participation. A total of 394 teachers were eligible to respond to TES, by written permission from their principal. Out of the 394, 308 teachers did not respond (78%), 34 teachers were not interested in participation (9%), 10 teachers indicated interest in participation (2%), and 42 requested further information (11%). Demographic information was examined by respondent age, ethnicity, gender, length of employment in the Rockford Public Schools, length of employment in the respondents' current school, and academic level at which the respondents taught. The data was examined to determine the likelihood of the researcher sampling participants, had a greater number than nine respondents expressed interest in participation.

Data from the TES showed that there was a strong distribution of respondents from ages 25 to 44 who were eligible to participate, and of respondents who were employed in their current school from three to 15 years. There was an over-representation of respondents who were of White ethnicity and female, in comparison to the demographics of staff from the Rockford Public Schools, as identified through SEA statistics from the same school year that TES was conducted. This over-representation led to sampling that made the likelihood of selecting a female participant of White ethnicity stronger than all other combinations of gender and ethnicity. See Appendix D for all data gathered and analyzed from TES.

The study's design was to use a convenience sample of respondents who expressed interest in participation by academic level taught, to allow for representation across all levels. Due to a limited number of principals who consented for the researcher to contact teachers from their school, and low number of replies from correspondence to respondents who indicated interest in participation or requested further information, the researcher selected five participants who expressed interest in further correspondence. Of the five selected participants, three responded during the 2016-2017 school year and were eligible to participate. The remaining teachers who responded during the 2016-2017 school year were employed in their current school for two years. The researcher conducted a follow-up correspondence, inviting them to participate, following the conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year, as it completed their third year of employment in their current school.

The researcher also distributed print versions of the Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS) (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The purpose of distributing TLSS was to survey teacher perception of their school environments, for aiding the researcher in developing questions for the focus group and first round interviews. A total of 394 teachers were eligible to respond to TLSS, by written permission from their principal. Out of the 394, ten teachers responded to the survey (2%). TLSS surveyed the respondents' perception to 49 statements that were evenly divided into seven dimensions, which resulted in each dimension being comprised of seven statements. Respondent Two scored each dimension the lowest amongst all respondents, having the same score as Respondent Nine in the dimension of participation. It is important to note that Respondent Nine did not score two statements, stating uncertainty of the score appropriate to give the statements. Respondent 10 scored five of the seven dimensions the highest. Of the two dimensions scored highest by one or more respondents, the dimensions were

scored second and third highest by Respondent 10, respectively. The data indicates that Respondent Two had an overall perception of the statements in all dimensions as occurring less frequently than that of all other respondents, and that Respondent 10 had an overall perception of the statements occurring more frequently in five of the dimensions.

The dimension of developmental focus scored highest with seven of the 10 respondents. Of the three remaining respondents, developmental focus scored second highest with one respondent and third highest with two respondents. Six respondents scored the dimension with 25 points or higher, with Respondent Two scoring the dimension with 19 points. Respondent Two scored developmental focus highest amongst all dimensions. The data indicated that the group of respondents had an overall perception of the statements in developmental focus as occurring more frequently than the statements in the other dimensions. The respondents' perceptions indicated that schools supported teachers in professional development and individual improvement.

The dimension of participation scored lowest with seven of the ten respondents. Of the three remaining respondents, participation scored second lowest with all three respondents. Half of the respondents scored the dimension at or between 20 and 25 points. The other half of the respondents scored the dimension at or between 16 and 19 points, indicating an overall perception of the statements in the dimension occurring sometimes or less frequent. It is important to note that Respondent Nine did not score two statements in the dimension. Had Respondent Nine scored both statements at the highest score of five, participation would remain the lowest scored dimension. Respondent Nine would have still scored participation lower than five of the other dimensions, giving it the same score as the dimension that they scored the second lowest. The data indicated that the group of respondents had an overall perception of the

statements in participation as occurring less frequently than the statements in the other dimensions.

The dimensions of recognition, autonomy, collegiality, open communication, and positive environment scored in a range amongst all respondents, with some respondents scoring particular dimensions higher than others, and some respondents scoring particular dimensions lower than others. The five dimensions scored within a range of two average points amongst all respondents, and 20 total points. TLSS served as a tool to assist the researcher in developing questions for the focus group, which was conducted with three of the five participants, and the initial interview, for the two participants who were unable to participate in the focus group. Because of the low response rate to TLSS, and the range in perception for five of the dimensions, the questions developed for the focus group and first interviews asked the participants of their perception of each dimension, instead of asking the respondents to provide their perceptions of the findings from TLSS. The information shared in the focus group and interviews were analyzed in comparison with the responses from TLSS. Questions will be discussed in section five of this chapter. See Appendix E for all data gathered and analyzed from TLSS.

### **Section 3: Selection of Participants**

Participant selection was based on several factors. First, the researcher had been employed in the Rockford Public Schools at one of the schools for students with disabilities, at the time of the study. To address the status of insider research, the study criteria sought to identify teachers who were employed in schools that serviced students in inclusion settings from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The criteria excluded teachers who were employed at four of the schools within the Rockford Public Schools, including the three schools for students with disabilities and the adult education center. Out of 35 schools, 31 fit the search criteria.

Individual principals from schools that fit the study's criteria were contacted through a written letter via email to seek permission in contacting teachers from their school (See Appendix B). Out of 31 principals, six granted permission to contact teachers from their school. Allowing approximately two weeks between the submission of the letter to principals, all remaining principals were contacted with a follow-up correspondence, seeking permission. Out of the remaining 25 principals, five principals granted permission. Schools where the researcher received permission to contact teachers included one early childhood center, three elementary schools, one grammar school, four middle schools, and two high schools.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the researcher utilized the Rockford Public Schools email server to generate a list of all teachers who were employed in each school where the principal granted permission. A total of 394 teachers were sent an invitation to participate in the demographic gathering survey, via email. The demographic gathering survey, which was created through Survey Monkey, asked respondents of their interest in participation. Simultaneously, all schools were delivered copies of the TLSS for teachers to complete. Names and email addresses of respondents who answered as being interested in participation or requesting more information on the study were collected for further analysis.

Out of the 394 teachers who were invited to participate in the demographic seeking survey, 86 responded to the survey. Out of the 86 respondents, 34 respondents stated that they would not be interested in participation, 10 respondents stated that they would be interested, and 42 respondents stated they would be interested in receiving more information concerning the study. As part of the study's criteria, participants needed to have been employed at their current school of employment for a minimum of three years, at the time of the study. Examining the combined 52 respondents who indicated interest in participation or interest in receiving more

information, 24 respondents fit the study's criteria. Each respondent who fit the criteria was sent a subsequent email that detailed the study and requested the respondents to confirm their interest (See Appendix F). Each respondent who did not fit the study's criteria was sent a thank you letter through email, which explained the study's criteria. Out of the 24 respondents, two confirmed interest, five stated that they were not interested in participation, and 17 did not reply. Allowing two weeks for respondents to determine interest and reply, a follow-up email was sent to the remaining 17 respondents. Out of the remaining 17 respondents, three confirmed interest and 14 did not reply. Allowing two weeks to determine interest and reply, a second follow-up email was sent to the remaining 14 respondents. Out of the 14 respondents, none replied.

The study was designed to be conducted with seven to nine participants, and participants were to be selected by convenience selection. This was to be done by separating the participants by their academic level taught and selecting a pre-determined number by elementary school grades, middle school grades, and high school grades. After allowing two weeks to determine interest and reply, a third follow-up email was sent to the remaining 14 respondents. Out of the 14 respondents, one replied and stated that they were leaving the Rockford Public Schools, which made them ineligible to participate. Time between the principals granting permission and the obtaining of participants was approximately four months, which concluded after the end of the 2016-2017 school year. At the time, three teachers agreed to participate in the study. Utilizing the demographic survey data, two teachers who previously expressed interest were contacted via email. Both teachers expressed interest in participation through returned correspondence; however, each had one year less of employment in their current school than the minimum requirement, at the time. As the focus group and interviews were ultimately conducted after the closing of the 2016-2017 school year, both teachers completed their third year and met

the minimum requirement. Through a meeting with the researcher's dissertation committee, it was determined that the focus group and interview phase of the study would commence with the five respondents who confirmed interest in participation, which included the two participants who completed their third year at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

The five participants included three teachers who self-identified as female, and two teachers who self-identified as male, as stated in their responses to the demographic seeking survey. Two participants were aged in the 25 to 34 range, two were aged in the 35 to 44 range, and one was aged in the 45 to 54 range. The participants' years of employment in their current school ranged from three years to five years, at the time of the study. The participants' years of employment in the Rockford Public Schools ranged from four years to eight years, at the time of the study. Each participant expressed that they had been employed in education prior to their employment at their current school, including other schools within the Rockford Public Schools and schools from outside the LEA. Two elementary schools and two middle schools were represented amongst the participants. Two of the participants were employed at the same school, at the time of the study. Although grammar schools, primary schools, early childhood centers, and high schools were represented amongst the 52 respondents who indicated initial interest in participation or receiving more information, respondents not meeting the study criteria of the minimum of three years of employment, respondents selecting to withdraw interest, and respondents selecting not to reply to further correspondence resulted in each type of school not being represented in the final sample of participants. Table 4 displays comparative data of the participants.

Table 4: Comparative Data of Participants

<u>Participant</u>	<u>School Type</u>	<u>Subject(s) Taught</u>	<u>Years in Current School</u>	<u>Years in LEA</u>
Ms. Franklin	Elementary School	Special Education	3 Years	6 Years
Ms. Joplin	Elementary School	***	4 Years	5 Years
Ms. Turner	Elementary School	***	4 Years	4 Years
Mr. Hendrix	Middle School	Science	5 Years	5 Years
Mr. Lennon	Middle School	Science	3 Years	8 Years

(\*\*\*) Denotes that teacher is responsible for teaching all elementary core academic subjects (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies).

#### **Section 4: Results of Focus Group & Interviews**

Participants were interviewed together during the focus group, then individually during two separate interviews. This section will begin with descriptions of the focus group and individual interviews. Next, the coding process will be discussed. Then, the results found from the focus group and interviews will be discussed by subject. Subjects were identified during the coding process and are directly linked to key terms from the Lee and Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework and TLSS (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005).

##### **Description of the Focus Group**

All five participants were invited to be interviewed together during the initial focus group, which took place during the summer of 2017 in a meeting room at the city's public library. The focus group was conducted prior to the individual interviews for three purposes. First, it allowed the participants to share and compare their experiences. Second, it served as a means of developing first round interview questions for the participants who were present. Third, it aimed to help the participants feel greater comfort with the researcher, prior to

conducting individual interviews. This allowed the participants to ask questions concerning the study for clarification purposes, allowing for a greater number of follow-up questions, as the participants were able to collectively question the researcher. Three participants joined the focus group, Ms. Turner, Ms. Joplin, and Mr. Lennon. Ms. Franklin cited family needs for not being able to participate in the focus group, and Mr. Hendrix cited travel reasons. The session was recorded using two video capturing devices and was transcribed by the researcher.

The focus group was composed of nine questions (See Appendix G). Two questions engaged the participants in the topic, six questions explored the subject, and one question served to conclude the focus group. Questions asked information about the leadership at the participants' schools to open the discussion and asked them to share their perceptions of their empowerment through the variables identified in the Lee and Nie Theoretical Framework and TLSS. Responses from the participants served to develop initial interview questions.

### **Description of the Interviews**

Each participant was individually interviewed on two separate occasions at a location of their choice. Interviewing took place between September 2017 and January 2018. Participants were interviewed based upon the researcher's completion of transcription and development of second round interview questions, and the participants' availability. Some participants completed both interviews prior to other participants completing their first interview. Ms. Franklin chose to meet at the researcher's school of employment for both interviews, Mr. Hendrix chose to meet at his school of employment for both interviews, Ms. Joplin and Mr. Lennon chose to invite the researcher to their places of residency for both interviews, and Ms. Turner chose to meet with the researcher at two separate fast food restaurants for each interview respectively. All interview sessions were recorded using one video capturing device. For

interviews with Ms. Turner, the device was placed between both the researcher and Ms. Turner to capture audio, as the locations requested to have not video recording on their property.

Transcription for all interviews was conducted by a transcription service, for the purpose of quicker turn around for the development of second round interview questions and scheduling of second round interviews.

Questions asked during the initial interview were dependent upon participation in the focus group (See Appendix H). For the three participants who were present during the focus group, initial questions were based upon the researcher's transcription and coding of the focus group. For Ms. Franklin and Mr. Hendrix, initial interview questions were based upon a revised version of the focus group questions, which included questions of interest that were asked to the other participants. All second-round interview questions asked were individualized for each participant and explored further into their responses from the first interview.

### **Description of the Coding Process**

Following the coding process that was stated in Chapter Three, the focus group and interviews were coded using three cycles (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). First, the researcher applied the combined coding approaches of in vivo coding, emotional coding, and evaluation coding. The combination allowed the researcher to identify terms of initial interest and determine the participants' recalled emotions and assign judgements about teacher empowerment in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan. The researcher applied pattern coding to the second and third cycles of coding. This allowed the researcher to group summaries from the first cycle into smaller groups.

Coding required the researcher correlate the Lee and Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework of teacher empowerment to the seven dimensions from TLSS, as defined by Katzenmeyer and Katzenmeyer (2005). The researcher identified the correlation of each variable from the framework to each dimension from TLSS by utilizing the connections of the framework to the 49 statements from TLSS that were described in Section Three of this chapter. The researcher compartmentalized the qualitative interview results by correlating the terms used in the Lee and Nie Theoretical Framework and the dimensions in TLSS. Coding was completed using ATLAS.ti.

### **Teachers' Sense of Principal and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behavior**

Newspaper articles concerning the implementation of receivership in the Rockford Public Schools and the LEA's website stated that when the LEA was placed in receivership, the receiver wanted schools in the LEA to have autonomy. As part of autonomy, each school could design its own budget, implement an approved curriculum, and design its own administrative team. Of the four schools that are represented by the five participants, all schools were identified as having a principal. The administrative team per school differed to include assistant principals, deans, and directors at various schools. Due to the differences in administration position titles at each school, the researcher selected not to identify the titles of each school's administrative team other than the principal, to aid in the protection of the participants' anonymity.

Existence of immediate supervisory positions varied. They were mostly limited to that of curriculum coaches and teachers who served as team leaders for their various grade level teams (See Table 5). To aid in the protection of the participants' anonymity, the researcher selected not to identify if schools employed one or more coaches. A greater amount of information was shared by the participants regarding school administration rather than immediate supervisors.

The researcher asked questions regarding the roles of immediate supervisors, which are discussed in the following results.

Table 5: Immediate Supervisors per Participant

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant(s)</b>	<b>Identified Immediate Supervisor(s)</b>
<b>1</b>	Ms. Franklin	Administrators Curriculum Coach(es)
<b>2</b>	Mr. Hendrix	Administrators Team Leaders
<b>3</b>	Mr. Lennon	Administrators Curriculum Coach(es) Team Leaders
<b>4</b>	Ms. Turner Ms. Joplin	Administrators Curriculum Coach(es)

The following results are the participants' perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, in relation to the dimensions from TLSS. This sub-section of Section Five is organized by one-to-one connections. It will begin with an examination of the connection to principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Each dimension connection will then identify the results of psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. Although statements from the participants will be shared as data to support the findings, any information that the researcher identified as being a potential identifier of the participants has been redacted to preserve the participants and their schools' anonymity.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behaviors and Developmental Focus**

To aid the researcher in identifying statements that discussed developmental focus, statements one through seven on TLSS were reviewed. It was determined that the statements discussed support provided to teachers through their obtainment of new knowledge (professional

development) and assistance provided to teachers in need. To develop a better understanding of developmental focus, the researcher asked questions during the focus group and initial interviews concerning professional development opportunities, and coded specific statements as “support” in the second cycle of coding.

### **Participants’ Perceptions of Professional Development**

Through the analysis of the focus group and interviews, statements that were identified as discussing teachers’ sense of principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and the professional development component of developmental focus varied in the participants’ perspective and topic. All participants identified that professional development was provided at their individual schools; however, the determination of how professional development originated and was distributed to teachers varied amongst the participants. Ms. Turner stated, “Most of the PDs at our school are given by our administration, one administrator in particular, or our coach.” Ms. Joplin shared Ms. Turner’s perspective, and further explained:

Professional development is planned for us. So, it's not like they put three different options in front of us and say, ‘Go to the professional development you think you need,’ or that I am saying that I feel like it's definitely planned for us and based on what admin feels our needs are. We take surveys at the end to see if they're helpful or not and I think they definitely consider those surveys.

Mr. Lennon stated that his coach organizes different professional developments for individual content areas. He also identified that he perceived some professional development opportunities to be directly connected to specific content areas, stating “I feel like there's mandatory PD for each content. Some of it's a little bit more helpful than other PDs that we've had to do.” Mr. Hendrix identified a different structure for determination and distribution, stating “In that team

with the principal plus the team leaders, that might be a space where my principal is asking them for input on upcoming professional development.” Ms. Franklin identified that her curriculum coordinator provided professional development opportunities at her school. She also stated “More often than not though, we have meetings and there is PD built into that” referencing that professional development was built into the teachers’ planning times. The researcher identified her statement as indicating that her school administration made decisions concerning professional development. The information provided by the participants added evidence that each school was granted their own decision making.

The participants identified that their schools’ professional development opportunities varied in subject. Mr. Hendrix explained:

Sometimes it might be broken up into different topics around some central theme. Maybe the theme is key point clarity where it’s aligned to materials, but there might be three break-out groups where three different members of the leadership team are talking about different things. Sometimes we might all be together. Sometimes it might just be a really deep dive on school data; behavioral data or academic data, and then sometimes the PD can be driven by video and reflection. We’ll roll the video tape ourselves and then reflect on what we see and sort of set goals moving forward.

Ms. Joplin perceived professional development to be half new ideas and half housekeeping items. Ms. Franklin and Mr. Lennon perceived that trainings varied on topic, which Ms. Franklin identified as occurring during various times that are designated as time without students. Ms. Turner perceived a change in the delivery of professional development, stating “We used to have outside people who came in and trained us, but now the administration provides the PDs.”

Several participants questioned long-term value of some professional development programs. Ms. Franklin expressed concerns with the longevity of the topics covered in professional development, stating “We keep throwing different curriculums at the teachers. Nobody gets a change to become really, really good at it.” Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin shared a similar concern regarding the follow through with the entire group, specifically discussing the benefits to all teachers. Regarding professional developments provided outside the school, Ms. Joplin stated:

[T]here's no real follow-through. I guess it would be the admin pushing for select teachers to go to that first, and then those core teachers coming back and trying to implement or trying to help us implement what it is. But, I don't feel as though they get the support to implement it.

Ms. Turner shared the same perception as Ms. Joplin, stating:

[E]very teacher receives the half day PDs from the administration. However, select teachers are the ones that are sent out for out of school and out of district trainings, which I feel I would like some more of but I am not one of those select teachers. I would suggest one teacher in the team goes to all of the ELA trainings, and maybe another one goes to all of the Math trainings, and you come back, and you share with your team during your team meeting that week what you've learned. That doesn't happen.

Despite these perceived concerns, each of the participants identified benefits from their administration and immediate supervisors, regarding professional development.

Although participants identified a need for all teachers to receive the same professional development opportunities, there were statements made by some that indicated a perception of

the principals and immediate supervisors wanting what is best for the school. Ms. Joplin and Ms. Turner explained that their school's administration takes teachers' inquiries into account. Ms. Joplin stated "If I were to approach the principal and say, 'Hey, I feel as though I need professional development. Is there anything available? Can you point me in the right direction?' She would try to help me out." Ms. Turner added "I don't want to sound like I'm bashing the administration by any means. I think they're trying. I think they're giving us professional development. They're just giving some teachers much more professional development." Both participants' perceptions indicate that their school's administration had good intentions yet feel that improvement can be made in executing professional development opportunities.

The two participants, who represented individual middle schools, identified that teachers at their schools had a greater supportive approach to providing professional development. Mr. Lennon stated "There was a wide array of different topics, but it wasn't any kind of steering. 'You need to do this because you're lacking here.' It was a wide-open door." During the follow-up interview Mr. Lennon further explained:

[T]here are the content specific PDs that we're required to take but the other ones are kind of like a blanket, and if you go, great. If not, then that's okay. But it is always pushed from both current administrators where ... you can always better your practice. Really enforcing the growth mindset. I don't know. It's deemed as important but then there's also the little slide in of, 'Well, you need those PDPs. You might as well go and do this.' But it's nothing based on an observation. It's just trying to help people along and seeing if there is something else that would foster interest.

Mr. Hendrix explained that although professional development is determined by different school stakeholders, dependent on the current needs, a great amount of input is taken from the teachers.

Mr. Hendrix discussed this perception, stating:

[A]s time goes on though, I've found as teachers begin to understand what we're trying to accomplish this year, teachers do have the ability to say, 'Well what if we talked about this?' Or, 'What if we tried that?' Or, 'Can we have a conversation around this?' The answer is usually, 'Well, yeah. We have a couple of things planned, but let's see if we can do that soon.' But not in a dismissive way, it actually happens, which is nice.

As stated, both participants represent middle schools in the LEA, where Ms. Franklin, Ms. Joplin, and Ms. Turner represented elementary schools. One question that remained with the researcher, following the coding and analysis of the focus group and interviews, was whether these perceptions were shared amongst elementary and middle school teachers, or if they were unique to their schools? Due to limited number of participants, the data collected from this study cannot guide the researcher in answering this question. A greater number of participants would be needed to answer this question.

Regarding professional development, the participants identified that they were provided professional development opportunities. Ms. Franklin perceived trainings to happen during planning and prep periods. Eight of the respondents from TLSS scored the statement of administrators supporting professional development with a score of often or always. The statements from the participants and the respondents' scores from TLSS indicated that there was a strong perception of the participants and respondents observing principals and immediate supervisors to be supportive of their professional development.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding professional development, the researcher examined statements that connected professional development with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Statements were made that discussed the participants' perception of the worth of the professional development provided to them.

Several participants discussed their preference to receive professional development trainings from trainers who were not employed in their school. In the focus group, Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin identified that their school received trainings from outside trainers, but the practice of bringing in trainers had subsided at the time of interviewing. As previously stated, Ms. Turner shared that professional development trainings at her school were provided mostly by the administration. She stated, "We really don't have people coming in to teach us anything different than what she got, other than (specific curriculum program), which is set up by our curriculum and not necessarily by our school." Later, she added:

In the years before, we had some other more literacy based professional developments, and I know that I really enjoyed it, and my team found it really beneficial, but for some reason they weren't welcomed back to conduct some more PD.

Ms. Turner's statements implied that her administrative team's empowering behaviors towards having professional development being delivered by them and not professionals, led to her feeling less value in the trainings' benefits. This implicated a connection to a lesser sense of meaning and impact, as well as possessing less job satisfaction. Although Ms. Joplin did not make statements concerning professional development that implied psychological empowerment

and work-related outcomes, she did not challenge or disagree with Ms. Turner's statements during the focus group or individual interviews. The researcher coded this as a non-verbal agreement with Ms. Turner's perception.

Mr. Lennon shared Ms. Turner's perception that professional developments from outside trainers were beneficial. Unlike Ms. Turner, he identified a feeling of increased senses of competence and impact, as well as greater professional commitment from the trainings that his administrative team suggested he take. He shared:

I was encouraged to take a class. The NMSI class, it's the National Math and Science Initiative, because I was incorporating a lot of different science and math standards in my curriculum. It was thought that I would very much enjoy it, which I actually did. So, being able to do something like that from an interest point, and from a PDP point, these things are offered but not really as a directive.

Mr. Lennon perceived that his administrative team emphasized professional development from outside trainers as a tool to increase teachers' competence in their content area. Doing so implied a greater sense of meaning, autonomy, and impact, as well as increased job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. He stated, "It's just trying to help people along when there is something else that would foster interest." These actions supported the connection that Ms. Turner made between professional developments from outside trainers and teachers' psychological empowerment. Where Ms. Turner identified a lesser sense of psychological empowerment, leading to less job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment, Mr. Lennon identified a greater psychological empowerment granted by his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Ms. Franklin shared her perception of her administrative team providing professional developments at her school. As previously stated, Ms. Franklin identified that professional development was built into time that she perceived as being for teacher planning. She stated:

The enrichment program, when it was brought into the school when it was promoted to the teachers, it was that we were going to get planning time. Time to work on the things that we need to do and for teachers, at least all the teachers I've ever worked with, planning time means 'I have time in the building without children and I get to work on what's important to me'...But to the administration, it seems to be planning time is 'the children aren't here so now we're going to do these other things.' And, that can be frustrating if you've got a lot to do and you don't want to go home and work for four hours once you get home.

Ms. Franklin did not identify any statements concerning professional developments being delivered by outside trainers. Her statement implied that teachers felt a lesser sense of autonomy, and lead to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Mr. Hendrix did not discuss opportunities for teachers to receive professional developments from outside trainers. However, he explained that where his administrative team opened school years with more top down decision making with professional developments, it was for the purpose of sharing the administrative team's goals for the school year. He perceived that as the school year continued, his principal and immediate supervisors granted greater voice to teachers in identifying areas where they perceived professional development would be beneficial. As previously quoted, Mr. Hendrix stated that as teachers began to understand the administrative team's goals, they were more inclined to ask to have conversations around areas of their interest. The administrative team would not dismiss these requests. This statement

implied a greater amount of teacher involvement in determining professional developments, which led to a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. It also implied greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

The participants' statements linked commonalities between their psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, and the academic level at which they taught. The participants who represented elementary schools made statements that implied their having less psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The participants who represented middle schools made statements that implied their having greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes.

### **Participants' Perceptions of Support**

Through the analysis of the focus group and interviews, statements that were identified as discussing teachers' sense of principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and the support component of developmental focus also varied in the participants' perspective and topic. The participants perceived their principals and immediate supervisors to demonstrate empowering behaviors in different amounts of frequency, shown through different actions. The three participants from elementary schools expressed less optimistic perspectives than of which the participants from middle school expressed. All participants identified supports that were provided by their principal and immediate supervisors.

Ms. Franklin, Ms. Turner, and Ms. Joplin all discussed supports being provided differently from their schools' administrative team. Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin discussed members of the administration as being approached differently for different teachers. Ms. Joplin stated

I feel more supported by one administrator than I do by another. Not like by one I'm not supported at all, and with the other one I'm overly supported, but I am supported, meaning that I can go to the one if I have a question. I feel like I can get help on something.

Ms. Turner expressed, “[D]ifferent people can go to one of the administrators”, explaining that the school’s administrative team has different teachers who would prefer to approach them.

When discussing her personal experiences, Ms. Turner stated, “I would say, one of the administrators, this year, seem to really come around, and be more supportive of me, and my team.” Regarding immediate supervisors, both perceived these individuals as not having a large role in their school’s leadership structure, but still being a support for teachers. Ms. Joplin explained “[T]hey might like to think that they're administration. I don't see them having that authority. However, if there's questions that we have about curriculum or about a certain type of schedule, we ask them.”

As Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin perceived their administrators to support each teacher differently, Ms. Franklin perceived her administrators and immediate supervisors to demonstrate support differently for all teachers. Regarding her principal, Ms. Franklin stated “She can be intimidating if she's angry. She can be very intimidating when she's angry. I can understand where that's coming from.” Ms. Franklin also explained that her principal preferred to be in charge of all final decisions made; however, being willing to listen to teachers’ ideas about solutions. “You’re better off going to her with a solution, because if not, she’s going to tell you what you are going to do.” Regarding her assistant principal, Ms. Franklin stated “You can go to her with a problem and go, 'I don't know what to do.' She'll help you sort it out.” Regarding her coach, Ms. Franklin stated “[Y]ou go to her with certain problems, and it's almost better to go

without a solution. She's like, 'If you would just do it the way I'm telling you to, it will work,' which is hard to hear.” Describing her coach further, Ms. Franklin stated that the majority of the coach’s work is with teachers of whom the coach evaluates.

Both participants who represented middle schools perceived support from their principal and immediate supervisors to be more optimistic. Both participants discussed their schools’ administrative teams allowing for greater teacher input. When discussing his perception of the principal’s empowering behaviors and support, Mr. Hendrix stated:

The principal's role is less the day to day teacher management. The principal will interact with teachers, will observe teachers, give them feedback and help them develop, but the principal is mainly thinking about strategic vision for the school, has an idea of where we should be at the end of the year around some key instructional priorities, and might be observing against those priorities, helping deans of curriculum give feedback related to those priorities, leading all-school professional development to make sure that the staff knows how on track or not we are toward meeting certain guideposts, toward meeting those priorities, so less the individual teacher management, more that strategic vision setting.

Mr. Hendrix also explained “I think leadership likes being informed of how things are going, and likes being informed of what we're trying, but they very much don't need to have their hands in everything, be it academic or behavioral.” Mr. Lennon perceived his principal to not being involved in directly supporting the teachers. He explained “I feel like administration, meaning principal and assistant principal, are behind the scenes a little bit. If there is something big happening, whether it's private or professional, they have insight, but it trickles up from the coach to them.” He also explained that teacher teams were encouraged to support each other.

Just as the participants who represented elementary schools shared similar perceptions of their schools' principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and support, they expressed concerns with support provided to teachers. Ms. Franklin's concerns involved an expectation to go with the administration's design and struggling teachers. When making a general statement about supports at her school, Ms. Franklin stated:

It's like you're either making it or you're gone. I don't have the time or the energy to nurture you, mentor you, and turn you into a lovely thing. I've seen people who I believe could ultimately become really talented teachers leave because there was nobody to help them. It was sink or swim.

Speaking more specifically of supporting a team of teachers who were struggling, Ms. Franklin explained that her administrative team's feelings were "[Y]ou're grown-ups. You got to fix it yourself." She expressed "I don't know that it's fixable. For me, as a leader, I would want somebody to go in and try and fix that. Let's sit everybody in a room. Let's follow up with that." Ms. Franklin also discussed her communication with her colleagues and stated "I've heard teachers complain. 'I've gone to them, I've said I need help, and they've given me nothing.' I've heard that from a bunch of people." Ms. Franklin also discussed supports for teachers who taught Special Education. Ms. Franklin taught Special Education at the time of the study. She stated "[A]s a special education teacher, I'm an island. I don't have anybody to collaborate with. And maybe it's different in an alt-ed school because they all work with a distinct population and track those kids differently. But I don't."

Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin discussed a similar perception of teachers being expected to go with their administrative team's design. Ms. Turner perceived:

If you're struggling, I think a lot of times, rather than being supported, you're targeted. I'm not necessarily speaking of myself for this one, but if you are trying to do your best, and people think that you are doing a great job, if the specific observer said that there was a problem in your classroom, and you're getting bad observation feedback, they aren't always necessarily supported to become better. They are sort of targeted and made to sort of feel really awful for the rest of the year.

Ms. Joplin expressed:

I think it depends on who you are. So, I think if administration feels as though if you have a classroom, you never have a behavior problem, your scores are okay, you're holding your own, I feel as though they tend to leave you alone more to your own devices. If you're constantly calling down to the office for help or for support and you're constantly having a battle in your own classroom, they probably tend to focus more and micro-manage more. And, again, they probably have to look at if they feel as though you're fully competent or not. And it varies. Whether you are or not, I don't think it doesn't necessarily determine if you are or not, it's if they deem you are or not.

Although identifying these concerns, Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin expressed strengths to the support from their administrative team. Ms. Joplin stated, "I feel supported academically", and "I feel that I am more supported now than what I was previously." As quoted previously, Ms. Turner perceived one administrator to be more supportive of her and her grade level team during the school year in which this study was conducted.

The participants who represented middle schools identified similar strengths within the supports provided to teachers at their schools. Both participants identified support regarding student discipline. Mr. Lennon identified that he perceived a great amount of support from his coach.

My coach would give me a lot of positive feedback of things that we could try, things that we could work on. We would meet on a regular basis, it was scheduled or unscheduled, describe some of these things. The Science program wants you to do things in a specific manner, and we found ways to supplement some of that material, kind of bring it in a different direction, knowing what the previous year did touch upon, or what's not to be touched upon until next year, so we could add it into the current year. She loved some of the ideas and suggested it to the other teachers. Some of the other teachers' suggestions were brought down. So, it was a free and open environment, where we were able to describe and discuss all these things. I kind of had the ability of skipping units, or skipping a lesson if I didn't feel that it was pertinent to what I was trying to get the students engaged in.

Although Mr. Hendrix identified not having coaches in his school, he did perceive a great amount of support from his school's administrative team.

[O]ur leadership has a mechanism every week to collect information from us through a survey to get feedback and if I say, 'That didn't feel purposeful,' or, 'That felt odd,' someone will come back to me and say, 'Sorry about that. Let's have a conversation.'

Mr. Lennon also discussed a particular administrator regarding support.

I was told not to supplement at all from the head of the science department at the time. But then the assistant principal came in, and saw what was going on, I expressed my concerns of how things could be a little bit different and beneficial for the students, and I was fully supported in implementing that change.

Both participants who represented middle schools perceived great levels of support from principals and/or immediate supervisors. The researcher questions whether this is unique to middle school or to science teachers.

Some of the participants discussed supports regarding academics and behaviors, identifying that they are supported differently for each item. Ms. Joplin identified that she felt supported academically but received limited support regarding behaviors. Ms. Joplin explained:

It's like if I said 'hey, this kid threatened another kid', or something like big, it's like 'well did you read the bullying policy', or 'what did you do about it?' It's like 'hey, I'm coming to you for support, for help.' It's where I have never felt like I have been helped in years for any sort of behavior. I feel like one of the administrators try, like 'we'll send him on errands to help you get your composure back,' or to give the class a rest from the disruption.

Ms. Turner agreed that each teacher handled student behavior differently. She stated:

They pretty much say that at the beginning of the year too. Even when it comes down to consequences in behavior, there are no overarching consequences in behavior. It comes down to what one teacher might do for a kid hitting somebody is completely different from what another teacher might do, and it might depend on the kid. I think that dealing with behavior is something that we can be a lot more empowered for, and we're not.

Mr. Lennon shared an experience with a former administrator, regarding student behavior.

They removed the student. The principal at the time brought the individual into her office. He came back downstairs with a handful of Hershey Kisses. So, from that to someone implementing a really good discipline policy, where there were triplicates for detentions. So, there was something on file, something that went home that was signed, and something that we got in our mailbox, so we knew that there was a consequence, what it was, when it was, so we knew that there was a follow through. In the new school, there really hasn't been, um, the behavior piece is really on us, which I kind of like, but some of those other serious infractions that need to be handled at a much higher level, but really aren't.

Comparing his previous administration with his current administration, Mr. Lennon acknowledged a positive change. He stated "The Dean of Discipline this year really stepped it up. He was in the hallways, really running around. He did a real lot, and we benefitted as a team, but really as a school culture." Ms. Franklin shared an opposing perspective, discussing of the overall LEA's culture surrounding student behaviors. She stated:

The biggest thing in (Rockford) is if you can't manage the kids' behavior, that's what will get you in trouble. You're gone, because nobody has time to teach them how to do it. Imagine a first-year teacher getting thrown four new curriculums. 'Go ahead, figure it out.' Here are all these kids. You've got four behavior problems in the classroom. It's a recipe for failure.

The participants' statements indicate a difference in perspective. The statements added to the finding of a contrasting perspective between the participants who represented elementary schools and the participants who represented middle schools.

One question that was asked of the participants was how they perceived the LEA's being on an improvement plan influenced their schools' organizational structure. Some of the participants included their experiences at previous schools of employment in the LEA. Regarding their perception of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and support, the participants expressed various perceptions. When speaking of student behaviors, he stated:

I'm not too sure how much receivership had to do with this, but with the implementation of a behavior support plan for the students has helped out tremendously. Again, I don't know if it came from receivership or if it was just something that happened district-wide. But, it helped out tremendously last year, it was by far my most challenging year of teaching.

Ms. Franklin shared the previously identified statement, regarding the culture for teachers being expected to have strong behavior management skills. She also discussed the language used by LEA and school administration when supporting teachers. Ms. Franklin stated:

You're asked leading questions, or you're cornered into saying 'yes, this would be the best thing to do,' even though what you've been trying to say all along is 'no.' It's sort of like ... you don't like chocolate ice cream, and you hate broccoli, would you like chocolate ice cream with your apple pie, or broccoli? 'But I don't like chocolate ice cream.' 'Well, these are your two options. Choose from what's on the table.' It's like, 'Well, I don't want either

of those things.' 'But you have to choose one.' 'Okay, well I don't like either of my choices.' Then people are like, 'Fine, whatever. Broccoli. I don't care.' I see that happen a lot with things.

Mr. Lennon also discussed the LEA's culture surrounding improving the science curriculum.

(Assistant Superintendent) is very, very involved and interested in seeing our science scores go up. She's all over the place with science, making herself visible, passing information along to principal, assistant principal, getting feedback from the teachers, and I feel there's a long overdue push for science, and I think it's a wonderful thing that science includes not only different scientific domains but cross-curricular concepts activities, so she's really pushing some things but also eliciting feedback before some of those things are rolled out which is really good.

Ms. Turner discussed the culture surrounding teacher observations at her previous school in the LEA.

I've seen people get really down on themselves, because of the way the administration made them feel. No matter how hard they try, their observations never seem to improve, and the person observing them just thought that they were not very good, and that was it. They never tried to help them get better.

Although Ms. Joplin and Mr. Hendrix discussed the LEA's being on an improvement plan effect on their school's culture, they did not speak of its effect on their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and support.

The statements from the participants displayed a variation in their perceptions of their developmental focus and their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

When comparing the participants' perspectives of developmental focus to the respondents' scores of the dimension of Developmental Focus on TLSS, the participants who represented elementary schools expressed criticism of their principals' ability to guide teachers. Combining their statements, the statements of the participants who represented middle schools, and the respondents' scores from TLSS, statements and scores indicated that perception varied. As the identities of the respondents from TLSS were anonymous, the researcher was unable to identify whether lower scores on this question were connected to specific academic levels.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors regarding support, the researcher examined statements that connected support with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Statements were made that discussed the participants' perception of the worth the professional development provided to them. As the participants' statements indicated a variation of the support they perceived to receive from their principal and immediate supervisors, their sense of psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes also varied. The participants who represented elementary schools made statements that implied their perception of having less psychological empowerment, leading to less job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

As Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin stated, they perceived that support provided to teachers varied between teachers. They also shared their perception that some teachers are provided the opposite of support, becoming people who are set up to perform poorly. As previously quoted, Ms. Turner stated that struggling teachers were targeted, instead of being supported. She

connected the targeting of teachers to poor observations made by one specific observer. She perceived that these actions resulted in teachers having poor self-esteem for the remainder of the school year.

Ms. Joplin shared Ms. Turner's perception. She added "[E]very year there's like one or two." As previously stated, both participants identified that greater support was granted to select teachers. They further shared their perception that teachers who were not included in the select group were identified as being an issue. Ms. Turner summarized:

[A] lot of times if you have an opinion about something, that's when you become targeted, or that's when you're considered not on board. Even if you are trying to help out the situation, and are going to give your professional feedback, you just realize that you need not to say your opinions all the time or suggest things. That's when you sort of get in trouble.

Ms. Joplin added "We can suggest things and sometimes I feel like some of us are afraid to ask things because they don't want to be targeted." Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin's perceptions implied teachers as sensing less competence, autonomy, and impact; as well as having less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

As previously quoted, Ms. Franklin perceived that teachers were expected to be competent in their craft, as administrators did not have time to mentor and support teachers who were struggling. She added that she perceived the culture concerning support to be sink or swim. When specifically discussing new teachers, Ms. Franklin shared her perception that they are unprepared for the challenges in the LEA. She stated:

[T]hey come to (Rockford) and they walk in, and they're like, 'I need more chairs.' Well, we don't have any. You get one case of paper for the semester and one case of paper for next semester, and that's it. They're totally unprepared for it. Their student teaching led them to believe it was going to be one thing. Then, they come to (Rockford) and they're like, 'Holy crap. What?' You see it on their faces, even the second-year teachers. They're still like, 'Wait, what? What is going on?'

Ms. Franklin's perception implied that principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors led to the expectation that teachers were to come to the LEA with a sense of competence, as support was not going to be provided to aid them in building their sense of competence. Her perception also implied that principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors did not lead to teachers sensing their meaning, autonomy, and impact; as well as having less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The participants who represented middle schools made statements that implied their perception of having greater psychological empowerment, leading to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Mr. Lennon also perceived a greater amount of support from his administrative team. As previously quoted, he identified his administrative team as "stepping up" in supporting student behavioral issues. He perceived that his teacher team and the whole school benefitted from the support provided by his administrative team. Discussing the perception of teachers being supported differently, Mr. Lennon did not share the perception of the participants who represented elementary schools. He stated:

I truly feel administration has the students' interests at heart. I feel every team member has strengths and weaknesses. It's about really putting those things under a microscope and seeing what you can add to the team that would benefit the team, but also the

students, and then the things that can be improved upon. The favoritism from one team to a next, I really don't see.

Mr. Lennon explained that his administrative team provided support by highlighting the successes of each team, which implied a greater sense of meaning and impact, and leading to greater organizational commitment. He stated:

What we do here though is, 'Hey, such-and-such grade incorporated this into their hallway transition.' Or, 'they're working with this and how to incorporate cross-curriculum activities,' and it's always presented as, 'hey, this is working really well. It's a lot of fun. They've seen some good results. What do you guys think? And would you like to try it?' Something like that. But, again, it's not 'you guys suck, and you got to do this.' Nothing like that.

Mr. Lennon's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors led to teachers' senses of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. His perception also implied greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

As previously stated, Mr. Hendrix perceived that his administrative team trusted the teacher teams to work together to address best action plans and preferred to support the teams over having a top down decision-making approach. He stated:

I also feel like, it's not just, when I say empowered, I don't feel empowered as if I'm told, 'We trust you, go do your own thing.' I feel empowered where there is a support structure in place. There are guidelines put in place. This is the growth they want to see. This is why they think it's important. Now we figure out how to get there

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that through identifying the goals, training teachers on the goals, then trusting teacher teams to work on implementing programming that works towards the goals provided teachers with a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. This led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Just as with professional development, the participants' statements cited commonalities between their psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, and the academic level at which they taught. The participants who represented elementary schools made statements that implied their having less psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The participants who represented middle schools made statements that implied their having greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. These connections determined a variation between all participants' feeling of empowerment, as analyzed through connections between their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and the dimension of developmental focus.

The elementary school principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in the participants feeling less empowerment regarding developmental focus. The empowering behaviors identified were selective of which teachers to support, which professional developments would be delivered, and the results of teachers sharing their opinions as being grounds for being targeted by the administrative teams. In these schools, the actions identified by the participants implied their having a lesser sense of psychological empowerment, as well as less job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

The middle school principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in the participants feeling greater empowerment, regarding developmental focus. The empowering behaviors identified were inclusion of teachers in discussion of whole school goals,

supporting teacher growth through professional development opportunities, highlighting teacher team successes as examples for other teams, encouraging to build upon their professional commitments, and acknowledging requests to discuss current direction. In these schools, the actions identified by the participants implied their having a greater sense of psychological empowerment, as well as less job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behaviors and Recognition**

Recognition is explained as the recognizing of the roles taken and the contributions made by teachers, the mutual respect and caring that exists amongst teachers, and the existence of processes for recognizing effective work (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The participants' statements were coded in the second and third cycles to identify the connection between the participants' perception of their principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors and the TLSS dimension of recognition. Just as with developmental focus, the participants identified differences in their perception of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding the dimension of recognition. The participants who represented elementary schools stated a greater mixed feeling of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and participants who represented middle schools stated a greater positive feeling of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Several statements regarding recognition discussed programming feedback provided by teachers. In these statements, the participants discussed their perception of the ramifications for teachers who openly expressed concerns with the school's identified direction. Ms. Turner and

Ms. Joplin discussed recognition, based specifically upon teacher advocacy for changes, or adjustments, during the focus group. Ms. Joplin stated:

If it is for your specific classroom, you will be able to get someone on board. But if you make a suggestion for the betterment of the school, for instance if we make a suggestion about behavior...it wouldn't be good.

As previously quoted, Ms. Turner perceived that teachers were considered as being “not on board”, resulting in their being targeted, for expressing their opinions. In a later interview, Ms. Turner elaborated upon her statement. She stated “I've seen in the past when teachers talk about their concerns with administrators, it's not looked on as being favorable. They kind of get the wrath.” Both participants explained that teachers benefitted when they did not state their opinions of whole school matters. Ms. Turner stated “[I]f you are trying to help out the situation, and are going to give your professional feedback, just realize that you need not to say your opinions all the time. That's when you sort of get in trouble.” Ms. Franklin discussed her experience with needing to advocate for herself. She stated:

[O]ne of the biggest lessons I've learned being in (Rockford) is how to be an advocate for myself. I've never had to advocate for my job before, or advocate and work to convince people that I'm good at what I do.

Similar perceptions of teachers expressing negative opinions and the effects on teacher recognition were shared by other participants.

Mr. Lennon discussed the ramifications of teachers sharing negative opinions at his former school of employment, within the LEA. He stated:

Except for the first-year teachers, everyone knew not to say anything negative about anything that was going on. It was either you're going to bring positive to the table, which wasn't listened to, or you are just going to stay quiet, because you were out of line... I definitely present myself differently. I definitely propose things differently. I take on responsibilities with the idea of making things better for all the people around me. I also advocate for myself as I do it. It's an uncomfortable thing. I'd rather just do the work.

Mr. Lennon also stated that he experienced negative recognition at his current school; however, the results of negative recognition were connected to teacher participation. Because of this connection, his statement will be discussed in the teacher participation section.

When discussing the difference in personalities between her administration and immediate supervisors, Ms. Franklin expressed that it was best to discuss issues with her principal through having an identified possible solution. She stated:

What she really appreciates is when you come to her with a problem and a solution. Sometimes she doesn't like the solution you have, but as long as you come to her with a solution, she's going to hear you out. Most of the time I've come to her with a problem and a solution, she's gone with my solution to the problem. A couple of times she's been like, 'nope, we're not going to do that. We'll do this instead.' Okay. We go about our business.

Ms. Joplin summarized the participants' perceptions. She stated:

Some opinions are viewed as more important than others. Their opinions would help steer a decision, whereas some opinions would not, and some opinions would really go

unheard and some would feel as though they wouldn't even bother voicing something because they know they're not going to be listened to.

Ms. Joplin's statement regarding teacher voice and advocacy, indicated that teachers are recognized by the statements in which they make. Their statements determine whether they are recognized as being of value to the school or not. Each identified participant explained that recognition and acceptance of the teacher who was advocating was subjectively based upon the principal or immediate supervisor's preference.

Ms. Joplin, Mr. Hendrix, and Ms. Franklin further discussed the perception of teacher recognition from principals and immediate supervisors, as identified by the perception of teacher voice. While discussing the recognition of select teachers by her administration, Ms. Joplin further emphasized that teachers and teams had a stronger ability to advocate for themselves, than for someone else or the entire school. Regarding self-advocacy amongst teams, Ms. Joplin stated "[S]ome teams have that ability and some teams are told what they're going to do and how they're going to do it and what they're going to do with the data that's collected. Others have more of a voice." She concluded that her perception was that teachers who had stronger relationships with her administration had greater voice.

Mr. Hendrix discussed the overall culture of his school being deeply rooted in collaboration amongst the teachers and between the teachers and administration. He identified three areas as being evident to the existence of teacher voice. The first area was the weekly surveys given to teachers. As previously quoted, Mr. Hendrix shared that his administration sends weekly electronic surveys to teachers to check into the teachers' perceptions of current school direction. He identified this as being an indication of his administration recognizing

teacher voice. Second, Mr. Hendrix discussed the Teacher Leadership Team at his school. He stated:

We have a teacher leadership team, which is a big union initiative to make sure teacher voice happens. Ours does a lot of really important things. This year we changed the schedule, and our leadership really does listen to what the TLT generates and comes up with and what changes they'd like to see happen.

Third, Mr. Hendrix discussed teachers who are team leaders at his school. He stated, “The team leaders meet with the leadership every week to sort of share reflections on how things are going and work together to set direction for the team and for all the students that we teach.” He summarized “There's a lot of interaction and communication between leadership and teachers to set the direction of the school.”

Ms. Franklin discussed the contrasting personalities amongst her principal and immediate supervisors. As previously quoted, her principal was perceived as preferring to be the decision maker within the school. Although perceived as being supportive, her curriculum coach was perceived as setting a direction and believing it to be what was best. Her assistant principal was perceived to be supportive. Ms. Franklin perceived teachers to have little voice regarding setting the direction of their school, which she perceived as being evident by the personalities of her principal and immediate supervisors. One example concerned the implementation of interventions. Ms. Franklin shared “I think a lot of times they wonder why we spend so much time talking about it, because usually what happens is the administration decides the standards.” She explained that her school implements a specific period during the day to provide all students with interventions, including specialists. Ms. Franklin shared:

The specialists, you know, art, music, and gym, for them that, they don't get to sit in on the conversation about the data. They just get them in a group and tell them what to teach. I think for them that's really frustrating because they went to school, they have degrees, they learned all about this one thing, and now you're an art teacher and you have to go teach math. Now you're a PE teacher, but you're going to go teach reading.

The other participants did not discuss the existence of a particular period for academic intervention, resulting in the researcher questioning if this was unique to Ms. Franklin's school. However, Ms. Franklin's statements added to the indication of a contrast of recognition of teachers, as evident through teacher voice, amongst the participants.

Mr. Hendrix identified that a large union initiative for teacher voice was the establishment of the TLT, when he discussed evidence of his perception of teacher voice being recognized at his school. All other participants mentioned their school's TLT during their interviews. Mr. Lennon was able to identify the existence of his school's TLT. He stated that he did not have much information about it. During the focus group, Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin shared that they voted for a TLT at their school, when it was first implemented. Both perceived the TLT to not meet much, at the time of the focus group. Ms. Franklin stated that members of her school's TLT stated that it was controlled by her principal. She stated, "I know people have said, 'hey, can we talk about this at the teacher leadership team?' I've never heard of people saying that those things showed up on the agenda. And the agenda is created by the principal." The researcher noted that the differences among the participants' schools provided evidence of the contrast between principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors, regarding recognition.

Several participants discussed their administration's recognition of certain teachers. The participants who represented elementary schools discussed their colleagues' perception of their administrators as being selective of which teachers are trusted, resulting in their ability to advocate and be included in decision making. Mr. Lennon also discussed a perception amongst the teachers at his school; however, identified that he had an opposing perception. Mr. Hendrix did not identify this perception within his school. Dependent on the participant and their school, different adjectives were used to identify teachers that were recognized by their administration.

Ms. Franklin used the adjective "favorites" when identifying the group of teachers who were able to have a candid discussion with her principal. She stated "[T]here's definitely a sensation with teachers that the administration plays favorites. I don't know how true it is. If it is true, I'm one of the favorites." Mr. Lennon used the term "golden children" when discussing his colleagues' perceptions. He stated "There's a term that's tossed around about the golden children, where there seems to be a sense of favoritism from administration with some teachers that have been there a long time. I really haven't seen that so much." Both participants also expressed that there were teachers who were not strong at their craft. Mr. Lennon stated, "[B]efore receivership there were other teachers where, even as a new teacher, I could tell that maybe teaching wasn't their thing or if maybe they had strong content knowledge, but handling students of whatever age really wasn't their thing." Ms. Franklin discussed her experience when beginning her tenure in the Rockford Public Schools. She shared:

When I got my job, I didn't know receivership from Adam. I didn't know what it was. I was just psyched I got a job and I was teaching in (Rockford), and it wasn't in (another district). I wasn't far from my house. I was in the demographic I wanted to be in. People

were like horrible to us, because we were shoved down their throat and displaced some of their friends.

The statements from each participant were not connected and were stated at different times within their interviews. The researcher questions whether there was a relation between teachers' competence to conduct their work, and their perceptions of their colleagues' recognition. The participants did not discuss a connection between the two.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin also discussed their perception of teachers being recognized. First, both participants identified the same perception of specific teachers being recognized, based on a selection from their administration. Both participants used the term "selective crew" when discussing their colleagues' perceptions of teachers who had greater recognition by their administration. As previously quoted, both participants identified the group of identified teachers to have a greater amount of involvement in professional development opportunities.

Regarding recognition, Ms. Joplin added that she perceived her administration to recognize grade levels differently, and acknowledged that beginning at grade three, when state assessments commence, the administration places greater recognition for teachers on these grade levels regarding academics. She explained:

I think a lot of clout and a lot of energy gets put towards third, fourth, and fifth, just because they're seen as such crucial, important years. We have to get those test scores, and so maybe there is a little more clout put towards third, fourth, fifth. I think pertaining to first and second, I think they get say.

She further identified her perception that where the older grades within the divide have greater recognition regarding academics, the younger grades have greater recognition regarding student

behavior. She stated, “[T]he lower grades, like first grade and second grade, are recognized and supported more behaviorally.” Ms. Joplin also recognized the different needs of teachers as being a potential variable for the recognition provided by administrators. She explained:

[E]verybody is different. Every teacher is so different. Some teachers have strengths in academics, some have strengths in, maybe, the social emotional needs and more of the behavior needs. Some are more passive, and some are more aggressive. So, there are those different roles in each team. I feel like each teacher has a role in their team and they play that role, or they have that role in their team.

Ms. Joplin’s statements of recognition being dependent upon grade level teams is indicative of the existence of a culture where testing scores are held at the highest of importance. Her statement concerning the different personality traits of her colleagues leads the researcher to question whether the combination of her administration’s main focus being of test scores, and her colleagues’ having different personality traits could be the cause of the perception of select teachers being recognized as having greater voice.

Several participants identified that recognition from principals and immediate supervisors resulted in teachers having greater control over their classrooms. Mr. Lennon stated:

I feel some teachers are given greater flexibility based on performance, based on scores.

So, I wouldn't say necessarily what is okay for me to do or some sort of deviation that has happened in my classroom is necessarily okay for somebody else.

As previously quoted, Ms. Joplin perceived that if the administration recognized that a teacher’s classroom did not have behavior problems and their scores were acceptable, they would be left to conduct their teaching.

Mr. Hendrix and Ms. Franklin discussed recognition of teachers' experiences and talents. Throughout Mr. Hendrix's interviews, he expressed his perception of his principal and deans being highly trustful of him and his colleagues. More specifically, he discussed how recognition leads to greater communication between the administration and teachers and support for teachers to have a growth mindset for themselves. Mr. Hendrix stated:

I feel like I'm being asked to reflect on, 'Here's the goal, do we agree with the goal? Okay. We agree with the goal. These are all indicators that would make me believe students are moving towards success. Now, which of these feels most helpful to you? Which of these feels like where you are? Okay great, now let's innovate with your team from where you are.' We talk with our management to figure out what some growth areas are for us.

Mr. Hendrix explained that there were instances where the administration and teachers, as a collective team, did not execute a plan well. He shared his perception of how his school addresses these moments, and stated:

There are some things we've done as a school that we haven't followed through on perfectly, but I think things we have done in general are important enough and broad enough that you take something useful, and then the following year when things shift a little bit and we have a new focus or a new goal for the year, you say great. What skills do I have from past years that I can bring to bear on how we're trying to evolve this year, but it doesn't feel like an explicit program of, this is what we are doing. It's, 'This is our vision. This is where we want to be.' We each determine how to personally get there.

Mr. Hendrix did not specifically use the term “recognize”, or a variant, during his interviews. His statements regarding the culture of his administration to have trust in the teachers to know the goals for a set period of time, for the teachers to be able to make their own plans to meet the goal, and for the administration to have an optimistic approach in supporting teachers from the teachers’ current progress, indicated that a sense of recognition is seen through trust and communication.

Ms. Franklin discussed teacher experience in relation to length of employment in years. More specifically, Ms. Franklin discussed the recognition amongst teachers that long tenured teachers were unable to leave the LEA if they tried. She stated:

I hear a lot of really talented teachers start talking, teachers who have been here for 20 years. They're like ‘I'm stuck here. I'll never work anywhere else.’ Because they're too expensive. No other district will hire them at the level they're at because other districts have ladders that you get paid for your education, and at (Rockford) you don't.

She explained that teachers with years of experience and college credits beyond their Master’s Degree would place them near the top of traditional salary charts in other LEAs. Where the LEA has a non-traditional salary system, Ms. Franklin implied that these teachers become trapped working in the LEA. She stated:

[T]here are a lot of teachers that are like, ‘I've been here for four years, not more than seven. I can get out.’ I'll have all this experience and people who survive in (Rockford), other districts are like, ‘oh, you're teaching there. Oh, you can handle anything we've got.’ So, they scoop you right up.

Through these statements, Ms. Franklin implied that pay system combined with teachers' perceptions of not being recognized for their talents results in good teachers with less years of experience having a greater likelihood to leave the LEA. She stated "[W]hen you don't feel appreciated and you do feel like nothing you do is good enough, people leave. And I've seen some really talented teachers leave. But I can't argue with what they say."

Several participants made statements regarding evaluations and observations, which the researcher connected to formal recognition. The SEA implemented a specific online based evaluation system for teachers. The Rockford Public Schools implemented its use shortly after being placed on the improvement plan and being assigned the receiver. Documentation researched through online articles and literature from the SEA, regarding the online evaluation system, indicated that the system was to be implemented in most LEAs across the SEA around the time of its implementation in the Rockford Public Schools. This included LEAs implementing its use either during the same school year as the Rockford Public Schools' implementation, or the following year. The researcher determined that regardless of the improvement plan, this evaluation system was to be implemented in the Rockford Public Schools. However, several participants stated a perception of the evaluation system to be directly connected to the improvement plan. Specifically, Ms. Franklin stated "[I]t came with receivership. The evaluation system was part of the receivership." Also, Mr. Lennon stated "I think it was kind of interesting how he rolled in and then the (evaluation system) came to the forefront of things." This indicated the possibility of a greater number of teachers understanding this misconception as being true.

Statements of evaluations and observations were made by four of the participants, with Mr. Hendrix being the only participant to not discuss evaluations and observations. Each

participant perceived a flaw with the evaluation system to be that it was rooted in the evaluators' subjectivity over their objectivity. During the focus group, all participants discussed their knowledge of the evaluation system being used as a tool to entice teachers, who are recognized as not performing to their administration's expectation, to leave their school or the LEA. Ms. Turner stated, "I feel like if you're giving the same teachers repetitive observations, I think it is the responsibility of that observer to help them get better." Ms. Joplin added "It's not as bad as I've seen it previously, but I've seen it at the school where I was at. And I feel that every year there's like one or two." Elaborating further in her individual interview, Ms. Turner stated:

[I]t's driven teachers out. I've seen fantastic teachers at our school driven out due to awful observations where the teacher is literally reading from the script that was provided from the curriculum, posting the standards she needed to post and do everything the principal wanted to see, but yet she would somehow still find negative aspects of her observation to the point where the teachers feel like there's nothing else they can do to become better or to please the administrator and they're driven out that way.

Ms. Turner's statement identified the same sentiment as Ms. Franklin's statement, which concerned her seeing talented teachers leave due to low recognition from their administration.

Ms. Franklin discussed the differences in requirements amongst evaluators within the same school, which led to teachers being recognized for their work. She stated, "Who your evaluator is has a big impact on who you interact with the most." Referring to teachers who are evaluated by each member of the administrative team, she explained "You have to produce a great deal of work and a great deal of evidence for your binder for the curriculum coordinator; whereas the principal and assistant principal, it's not nearly as elaborate. It depends."

Mr. Lennon added to the indication that formal recognition through the evaluation system was subjective. He shared a colleague's experience:

He wanted to repeal the information on the (evaluation) that was submitted on him, and in the observation, it listed that one student was tasked to handle the calculator and they would be the Mathematician, and it was brought up during his debrief that that was not okay. That every single student in that math class should've been the mathematician. However, the curriculum they were given said, 'you are to assign one student that role,' and he followed that because he isn't allowed to make any changes, and basically, he didn't get a \$6,700 raise because of it.

Mr. Lennon shared his feelings that despite the subjectivity of certain evaluators, he perceived observations to benefit his teaching. As previously quoted, Mr. Lennon expressed that through the recognition that he received from his administration, and the discussions that they had, he was supported to deviate from prescribed curriculum when there was an identified teachable moment.

The statements from the participants displayed a variation in their perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding their recognition. All participants perceived that they personally felt recognized by their administration and colleagues. Three participants perceived that not all teachers are recognized, as evidenced by a lack of ability to be listened to when advocating and the subjectivity of formal recognition through evaluations. One participant perceived their school's culture to recognize all teachers and support a growth mindset. One participant perceived personal recognition; however, identified instances with other colleagues that led them to feel recognition was not universal to all teachers.

Comparing the statements from the participants to the scores from the respondents on TLSS, the respondents to TLSS indicated a variation in their perception of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and recognizing the respondents' skills, showing confidence in the respondents, and valuing the respondents' ideas and opinions. Scores ranged from the survey's terms of "rarely" to "often." The statements from the participants corroborated the scores from the TLSS, indicating that perceived recognition from principals and immediate supervisors was dependent on the teacher's connection with principal and immediate supervisors, and the principal and immediate supervisors' perception of the teacher. The researcher questions whether Mr. Hendrix's perception is unique to his school and his relationship with his administrative team, or if due to the low response rate to TLSS and the lower number of participants in the study than originally designed, his perception is unique to these results.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding recognition, the researcher examined statements that connected recognition with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Statements were made that discussed the participants' perception of the worth of the professional development provided to them.

As previously stated, the participants' perceptions varied regarding the recognition that they perceived to receive from their principals and immediate supervisors. The participants who represented elementary schools shared statements that implied their perceptions as having a lesser sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and

organizational commitment. Ms. Joplin provided a hypothetical circumstance to explain her perception of impact of teachers voicing their concerns. She stated:

We have students with emotional needs and we need to stop teaching to address the students' needs, and we were talking about implementing some sort of either in house intervention or something. We need to be able to determine between the student's needs and if it trumps the other students' needs. If we brought that up, it wouldn't be good.

Ms. Turner expressed that she would rather discuss matters with her colleagues. She stated:

I'd rather express my concerns to my teacher team rather than to administrators. I feel like a lot of times if you express concerns, it's looked as more of like you're complaining or you're not on board, especially if it has to do with curriculum. I would rather express my concerns or complain to the other teachers in my grade where we could brainstorm together how I would fix them rather than talk to an administrator.

Both participants' perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors implied a result of the participants feeling a lesser sense of their psychological empowerment. This implied a result of their having less job satisfaction. Ms. Turner's statement implied that where her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors regarding recognition resulted in her feeling a lesser sense of autonomy and impact, collegiality amongst her teacher team resulted in her senses of competence, autonomy, and impact. This implied that collegiality amongst her teacher team increased her professional commitment and organizational commitment. A detailed discussion of the dimension of collegiality will be shared later in this chapter.

As previously quoted, Ms. Franklin perceived that it was necessary for her to advocate for herself, as she identified self-advocacy as being vital for positive recognition. Regarding her own empowerment, Ms. Franklin stated:

It's an uncomfortable thing. I'd rather just do the work. I have a much better working experience because I do advocate for myself. What I've noticed is my friends in (Rockford) who are really good at advocating for themselves do really well. They also have favored nation status with their administrations. The people that work hard and go about their business, they don't.

Ms. Franklin's perception implied that self-advocacy was crucial for teachers to be recognized. The perception implied that teachers who had strong self-advocacy skills had a greater sense of competence, autonomy, and impact, leading to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It also implied that teachers who did not have strong self-advocacy skills had a lesser sense of competence, autonomy, and impact; leading to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Ms. Franklin identified self-advocacy as having greater influence on recognition than hard work.

Mr. Lennon perceived struggles with sharing opinions at his former school, within the LEA. He shared an experience at his current school that indicated an existence of differences in the empowering behaviors of his principals and immediate supervisors at both his former school and current school. In the experience, he explained that there was a concern involving student behavior, where his teacher team voiced concerns. Mr. Lennon stated:

I had brought it up, other team members had brought it up, and it was definitely a concern. It was a red flag, and I was approached and asked, 'what could be done a little

bit differently?’ And I had talked with my team, we had gone back, and we had set up like this protocol how we would see things working very well, and we had a brief team meeting with the assistant principal and she said pretty much, ‘do it. Go after it.’ And we've seen that kind of cascade into the other grade level teams.

The researcher identified that Mr. Lennon’s experience added further evidence to support Ms. Franklin’s position, which stated that self-advocacy resulted in greater recognition.

Regarding recognition, principals and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors were implied to be determined on teachers’ ability to self-advocate. As previously stated, Ms. Franklin’s perception and Mr. Lennon’s experience implied that teachers’ senses of competence, autonomy, and impact, as well as the amount of job satisfaction and organizational commitment that they perceived, were dependent on their ability to self-advocate. These participants perceived that self-advocacy led to recognition from principals and immediate supervisors, which lead to a greater sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The researcher also noted Ms. Franklin’s statement, previously quoted, that her principal prefers teachers to discuss an issue with a pre-theorized solution in mind. Mr. Lennon’s shared experience included statements of teachers identifying possible solutions, before bringing concerns to administrators. Ms. Joplin and Ms. Turner’s perceptions that select teachers were able to voice their opinions, which might be connected to whether they were known to identify solutions, or if they voiced their concerns of problems without providing possible solutions. Ms. Joplin identified that teachers received greater positive recognition when they advocated for their classroom, over advocating for someone else or a whole school issue. However, she did not state whether teachers voiced their concerns with an identified possible solution, or not.

As previously stated, several participants identified teachers' experience and expertise as another predictor of the connection between principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and recognition. Teachers with greater experience and expertise were identified as a variable in principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors leading to psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. Dependent on the participant, and the situation where the connection was made, teachers' experience and expertise were identified as both leading to greater and less empowerment.

The statements previously shared by Mr. Hendrix identified his administrative team as recognizing teachers as stake holders in the development of his school. Discussing the recognition of teachers when decision-making, Mr. Hendrix perceived that teachers were included in most decisions. He stated, "I feel like we are trusted partners and that nothing is ever put upon us without gaining our input and hearing our concerns and then with course correcting until it feels like everyone is on the same page." Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that positive recognition of teachers' experiences and expertise resulted in teachers having a greater sense of meaning, competence, and impact; leading to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Ms. Franklin's perceptions contrasted with Mr. Hendrix. Stated previously, she identified teachers with greater years' experience as being unable to leave the Rockford Public Schools, identifying the differences in the pay scales between LEAs as being the main cause. She perceived that knowing this, younger teachers have a greater likelihood to leave. Her perception implied that negative recognition combined with teacher experience was an indicator as to when colleagues will leave. She stated:

They start hunching over. And the minute our stress ramps up, because what we're getting is 'you've got to do this, you've got to get at this, you've got to get it done. Did you see the (assessment) scores? They're not good enough!' And that pressure, pressure, pressure, of course we start to translate some of this to the kids. Of course, we do. Nobody wants to sit in the data meeting and have all those scores laid out and see your class lower than everybody else's.

Ms. Franklin's perception implied that for younger teachers, negative recognition from principals and immediate supervisors resulted in a lesser sense of meaning, competence, and impact, leading to less job satisfaction and little organizational commitment.

Self-advocacy, experience, and expertise were perceived to be connected to teacher recognition from principals and immediate supervisors. Principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors combined with teachers' self-advocacy skills, experience, and expertise were perceived to determine positive and negative recognition. As previously quoted, Mr. Lennon stated that other than new teachers, people at his former school knew not to speak negatively about the school's direction. Mr. Lennon's perception added evidence to the implied conclusion that regarding recognition, teachers' perception of their empowerment was dependent on their specific principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Furthermore, their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors were dependent on the teachers' ability to self-advocate, as well as his or her experience and expertise.

Observations and evaluations were identified as a means of formal recognition. As previously stated, several participants perceived the online evaluation system to be based on subjectivity, and not objectivity. Ms. Turner identified it as being a cause of teacher retention. She also perceived observers to provide mixed feedback, but not support teachers when negative

feedback was given. Mr. Lennon identified it as being a determining factor of increase in teachers' salaries. He also perceived that it benefitted his personal growth. The participants' perceptions of the evaluation system and the practice of observations were tools that supported select recognition by principals and immediate supervisors.

Regarding recognition, the participants' perceptions indicated that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that led to mixed feelings of empowerment. Discussions of the cultures within each of the participants' current schools would have led to the question of whether the differences existed between the elementary and middle school academic levels. However, Mr. Lennon's statements concerning his former school of employment indicated that differences were solely between the principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and not exclusive to each academic level.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behaviors and Autonomy**

Autonomy is explained as the encouragement of teachers to be proactive in their innovation and improvement making (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The participants' statements were coded in the second and third cycles to identify the connection between the participants' perception of their principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors and the TLSS dimension of autonomy. The participants continued to identify differences in their perception of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, which was indicated in statements that connected their perceptions with autonomy. The participants who represented elementary schools continued to identify their feelings of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors as being mixed, and participants who represented

middle schools continued to identify their feelings of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors as being positive.

Each participant discussed their perception of the effects that principals and immediate supervisors' decision-making has on teachers' autonomy. The participants who represented elementary schools identified that their schools' administrative teams expressed a greater top down decision-making approach, regarding academics. In her second individual interview, Ms. Turner stated "[W]e don't have any freedom with curriculum. We have to do it by the book, lesson by lesson. We need to be on a specific lesson on a specific day." In her first individual interview, she elaborated further on her perception, as she stated:

We have to be on the right lesson of every curriculum all the time. It was brought up to us in one of our meetings that we have to, have to, have to teach both of the (specific academic program) lessons every single day so that we're not behind. They were like you can't skip it for one day. Not the day before Christmas break. Not the day before Thanksgiving. So, there's no way you can stop the class and review if they need it or anything like that.

Ms. Joplin shared Ms. Turner's perception of their school's administration, and further explained that she perceived their administrative team to be highly influenced by academic decisions made by the LEA. She stated, "If it comes down more from the top, like if (the receiver) says that's what we are implementing, then that's what we implement." The perception shared of Ms. Franklin's school administrative team indicated a similar perception.

Ms. Franklin shared her perception of her administrative team making decisions. She perceived that her colleagues questioned the worth of meeting to discuss academics. As

previously quoted, Ms. Franklin identified that several meetings at her school, which included administration and teachers, discussed student interventions. She stated that her administration made the final decision in most occurrences and described “[S]o you'd look at it across and you're like, ‘oh, everybody got question six wrong this is standard whatever, so that's the standard we're going to use.’ We're going to reteach that during our intervention.” She further explained that out of the administrative team, the principal made the final decisions. When asked about her perception of the decision-making abilities for her school’s assistant principal and immediate supervisors, she stated “I think that they can get certain things that they want through, if they choose their timing appropriately. Ultimately, it comes down to whatever the principal wants.”

Regarding teacher autonomy, Ms. Franklin perceived that conflicts between opposing decisions from the administrative team caused dilemmas for teachers. She explained:

Where the conflict really starts to show up is when you have the principal as your evaluator, but you have your curriculum coach. She is telling you to do one thing and the principal is telling you to do something else. You’re stuck in the middle.

Ms. Franklin’s perception of conflict for teacher autonomy caused by opposing decisions made by the administrative team was not identified by any of the other participants. This indicated her perception to be unique amongst the participants, and the researcher questions if other teachers in the Rockford Public Schools and Ms. Franklin’s school had a similar perception.

The participants who represented elementary schools also discussed the topic of curriculum changes made by their administration. Ms. Franklin perceived that curriculum changes were highly influenced by her administrative team. She explained her perception to be

that hypothetical changes in administrators and immediate supervisors to directly lead to changes in curriculum. She stated, “You know, our curriculum coordinator, if somebody else were to come in, they’ll change it. The principal leaves, somebody else could come in and they’ll change it. And that’s what people expect.” Her perception was stated to be based upon conversations between teachers at her school, which concerned discussions of changes in curriculum. She shared:

I love phonics programs. So, I asked ‘What are you guys using?’ They’re like, ‘we’re not.’ I was like, ‘well that’s wrong. We need one.’ And so, we got (specific program) and they actually brought somebody in to model the lessons. And when we showed up following Monday, one of the teachers had all the flashcards. Everything done. Neatly rubber banded, and I was like, ‘overachiever much.’ And she was like, ‘oh, no, let me think. We had this twelve years ago, something like that? Yeah, we threw it out, but I kept all this stuff.’ Because she knew it would come back around eventually.

Her experiences with changes in the curriculum compared to experiences shared by Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin. During the focus group, the participants were asked about the topics that were covered in professional development at their schools. While answering, Ms. Joplin explained that a program for tracking data was enacted. She stated, “We had to make these charts, then by midyear we were told not to make the charts anymore.” Ms. Turner added “[I]t fell off the face of the earth.” These statements indicated that amongst both schools that were represented by participants who taught elementary school, teachers had little autonomy regarding academics.

The perception of teachers having less autonomy in academics was shared by Mr. Lennon. He connected his perception of administration’s decision-making effecting teacher autonomy as being applicable differently for teachers from each subject area. As previously

quoted, Mr. Lennon shared his colleague's experience with being recognized as needing improvement in his teaching methodology, although the colleague had been following a prescribed math lesson as it was written to be done. Regarding his perception of autonomy being different for teachers of each academic area, Mr. Lennon made several statements. At first, he identified that several subjects included prescribed curriculum. He stated, "For math, the curriculum is very much set in stone and there's little to no deviation involved." Regarding his subject, Mr. Lennon stated "[F]or us, working with science, it is somewhat presented with making sure you did maintain high fidelity to the program. No deviation. Make sure you follow the book for day one, day two, day three." However, he identified instances when administrators provided him with the ability to have greater autonomy.

Mr. Lennon shared his perception of personally being granted autonomy in the subject he taught, despite the regular expectation to follow the prescribed curriculum. He stated, "I am supported in the way I handle things, in terms of what I see as student needs and if there is a teachable moment to be able to digress." As he discussed several experiences where he decided to not follow the script of a lesson, and he adjusted the lesson. Mr. Lennon expressed "I feel that if there is something that is a concern of mine or a need of the students, I do have that flexibility." When concluding his perception of the connection between principal and immediate supervisor's empowering behaviors and autonomy, Mr. Lennon stated:

I feel maybe some teachers are given greater flexibility based on performance, based on scores. So, I wouldn't say necessarily what is okay for me to do or some sort of deviation that has happened in my classroom is necessarily okay for somebody else.

Mr. Lennon's sharing of his perception indicated that autonomy for teachers in his school were dependent upon his administrative team's recognition and trust in the teachers. Teachers who

were not trusted were expected to follow the script from prescribed curricula, and teachers who were trusted were granted autonomy to adjust lessons. His statements compared with the statements made by the participants who represented elementary schools, regarding the connection between trust in the teacher and principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors concerning granting autonomy. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools will be discussed later in this section.

Mr. Hendrix's statements indicated a positive connection between his principal's empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy. As previously quoted, Mr. Hendrix perceived his administrative team as wanting to have knowledge as to what was happening in the classrooms, as they wanted to be able to support teachers. Regarding autonomy, Mr. Hendrix discussed that his administration's decision making was for guiding teachers in the school's vision. Where Mr. Lennon perceived the amount of teacher autonomy to be dependent on trust, Mr. Hendrix perceived it to be dependent on teacher accomplishment. Mr. Hendrix stated:

We might get a protocol. We might get some sort of stakes in the ground to help us do it, and I think you can scale up or scale back the amount of support leadership provides depending on how much we're able to accomplish, just through the expertise in the room and the teachers who have worked together for a few years and done this. I find it a nice balance.

Mr. Hendrix further perceived an ability for teachers to voluntarily seek their administrative team's decision making regarding academics, but his administrative team initially grants autonomy to teachers. He stated that his principal expressed "You're there. You're teaching those kids. You work with these teachers every day. Here's what we're trying to accomplish as a school. Now take this back. Work with your team and make it work with your team and your

kids.” Mr. Hendrix’s perception was comparable to Mr. Lennon’s perception, with the difference between the two participants noting that autonomy was granted on an individual basis or a whole team basis. The researcher questions if this perception is connected by the participants’ subject taught or academic level taught.

Regarding student behaviors, the participants who represented middle schools made statements that indicated no difference in their perception of the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy. Mr. Hendrix perceived that just as with academics, his administrative team granted autonomy to teachers to address student behaviors. He stated:

I think the team model is consistent, which is teams are trusted to take direction from the administration. ‘We would like every team to come up with a behavioral focus that aligns with academic engagement.’ Then, teams are trusted to solve problems and innovate and figure out the best solution that takes that direction but then fits it to teachers’ strengths, teachers’ skills and interests, and the scholars in the room.

Mr. Hendrix perceived his principal to invest teachers into the school’s direction, over conducting top down decision making.

Mr. Lennon shared experiences from both schools where he was employed within the LEA. Both experiences regarded the connection between both administrative teams’ empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy, focusing on student behaviors. During the focus group, he discussed an incident from his former school of employment, where he perceived his autonomy to not be supported. He stated “[A] student threw a large eraser at me, and someone happened to be walking by. I called him in. They removed the student. The principal at the

time brought the individual into her office. He came back downstairs with a handful of Hershey Kisses.” Comparing to his current school of employment, Mr. Lennon stated “[T]he behavior piece is really on us, which I kind of like, but some of those other serious infractions that need to be handled at a much higher level.” Mr. Lennon expressed his preference for support from his administrative team, regarding student behavior. He perceived his current administrative team as providing greater support, regarding student behavior, at the time of this study.

Ms. Turner expressed a similar preference as Mr. Lennon’s preference. She explained that where she perceived a minimal amount of teacher autonomy, regarding academics, she perceived teachers had a greater amount of autonomy, regarding student behavior. Ms. Turner stated:

Even when it comes down to consequences in behavior, there are no overarching consequences in behavior. It comes down to what one teacher might do for a kid hitting somebody is completely different from what another teacher might do, and it might depend on the kid.

Ms. Turner perceived that although teachers had greater autonomy in addressing student behavior, she perceived it to be a result of minimal support from her administrative team. She stated:

[I]f we're having a serious issue one of the administrators will step in. But, it's still there are no major procedures. We have, like, a missing child procedure for safety reasons. We have fire drill procedures. But we don't have, like, a 'if you fight' you get one day detention, or two-day detentions after you fight three times, or any specific procedure like that. So, some kids go without consequences often.

Ms. Turner summarized her preference, as she stated “So, a little more autonomy on academics and a little less on behavior.” Her perception of the connection between principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors and teacher empowerment were also discussed by Ms. Joplin.

Ms. Joplin’s perception of the connection between her principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy, regarding student behavior, differed from Ms. Turner’s perception. Ms. Joplin agreed that there was greater teacher autonomy regarding student behaviors, because of less support from her administrative team. However, she perceived it as being more for teachers from third, fourth, and fifth grade. Ms. Joplin explained:

Not that there isn’t behavior in third, fourth, or fifth. Maybe not as many, but more serious, I would say, in third, fourth, or fifth. It's kind of like, you're on your own. I mean, if you're in third, fourth, or fifth, and you have a behavior, you're on your own. If you're in first or second, you get support. I don't know why. It's just the way it is.

Ms. Joplin explained that teachers do have an outlet to collect data and discuss with the administrative team; however, the administrative team would refer to strategies the teacher used to address the student’s behavior. She identified the administrative team’s questions as “Have you tried A, B, C or D before coming to us? What was the consequence? What did you choose for a consequence?” Both Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin perceived student behavior to be an area that required focus from the administrative team.

Ms. Franklin perceived the connection between principals and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy, regarding student behaviors, to not be that lack of support from her administrative team caused greater teacher autonomy. She perceived a greater amount of teacher autonomy; however, she did not identify her administrative team’s lack of

support as being the cause. She stated, “[T]he behavior challenges we face are pretty extraordinary, and it’s because of the lack of consistency and the way that the teachers work together.” Later in the same interview, she stated “There’s a lot of wild, wild west with some of the teachers. They kind of let the children run amok and it makes me insane.” Unlike the statements shared by Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin, Ms. Franklin identified how a select group of teachers at her school were able to develop a plan to address a specific behavior amongst the students, which was supported by her principal. She stated:

[T]hey were going to do it in terms of creating school-wide procedures for certain things. And she liked it. And so, she adopted it. And as a team we sort of tweaked and everybody sort of gave input to it.

Ms. Franklin further explained that her administrative team did not provide teachers outside the group with any information regarding discussions that took place within the group. The participants who represented elementary schools did not express a common perception of the connection between principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy, regarding student behaviors.

Teacher autonomy, regarding student behavior, was solely based upon the actions of each principal, where there was not a common empowering behavior by all participants’ principals and immediate supervisors that resulted in greater or less teacher autonomy. For the participants who represented elementary schools, this contrasted with their common perception of the connection between their principals and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and teacher empowerment, regarding academics. Regarding student behaviors, the two participants from the same school had differing perceptions. Where one identified a common level of teacher autonomy amongst the whole school, the other identified that teacher autonomy was dependent

upon the teachers' grade level taught. As two elementary schools were represented by participants, the researcher questions whether the perceptions of the three participants are indicative of all elementary schools in a LEA that is on an improvement plan.

Several of the participants shared their perceptions of differences in autonomy between different teachers and schools, as caused by the empowering behaviors of administrative teams. The participants' perceptions were determined by several factors, including their observations and personal experiences, as well as one participant sharing their understanding of the cultures of other schools within the LEA. Mr. Hendrix did not discuss much of the other schools within the LEA. Of the two interviews conducted with Mr. Hendrix, most of the interviews focused on his school. However, he was asked about his perception of the comparison between his school and other schools within the LEA. He stated, "My understanding is that we teachers are empowered to drive school climate and student growth more here than in some other schools that I have heard about." His statement was comparable to statements made by Ms. Franklin.

Ms. Franklin perceived that the receiver's direction of granting autonomy existed across schools in the district; however, she identified that she was uncertain if the autonomy granted to principals led to autonomy being granted to teachers. She stated "It gives the principals the opportunity to make really good choices for their particular setting. I don't know that all the principals that I'm aware of in (Rockford) are making choices that the teachers think are the best." Ms. Franklin identified the cause of this to be a lack of communication combined with a greater amount of top down decision-making. She further stated:

They may be making the best choices, but there's so much top-down where it's like, 'Okay, so I've decided to do this.' Everyone's like, 'Wait, what?' Maybe the thing that was

decided upon, it was chocolate or broccoli. Maybe they had two really bad choices, so they chose this one. But, we don't know.

Ms. Franklin's statements are comparable to Mr. Hendrix's statements. Mr. Hendrix identified that his school involved a greater amount of teacher autonomy, through their input into decision-making. As previously quoted, he perceived that teachers were considered to be trusted partners, with his administrative team not making decisions without teacher input. He added "I do perceive that to be more that way than at other schools." The statements from Mr. Hendrix and Ms. Franklin provided evidence of the existence of a perception amongst teachers that the connection between their perception of principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors and teacher autonomy varied between the different schools within the Rockford Public Schools.

The perception is further supported by statements made by Ms. Turner, who discussed her perception of autonomy granted to Special Education teachers. She described her perception as being directly caused by administrators' decision-making. Ms. Turner stated:

The principals don't necessarily mediate in the Special Ed classes. You know, they're not as on top of being standard base, and curriculum base, and rigorous. So, you have more freedom to do your own lessons and go at your own pace when you're in Special Ed.

Ms. Turner's statement added to her perception that administrative teams are more focused on academics, and provide less support to other areas, therefore when the area in question is not academic based, teachers have greater autonomy. As previously quoted, Ms. Franklin stated that she viewed her position as a Special Education teacher as being one where she was on her own but did not indicate its connection to her autonomy.

The statements from the participants displayed a variation in their perceptions of their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding their autonomy. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to lead to a lesser sense of autonomy, and the participants who represented middle schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to lead to a greater sense of autonomy.

Comparing the statements from the participants to the scores from the respondents on TLSS, the respondents to TLSS indicated a variation in their perception of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, their having input in decision-making, and their principal and immediate supervisors supporting teacher innovation. Scores ranged from "rarely" to "often." The statements from the participants corroborated the scores from the TLSS, indicating that perceived autonomy from principals and immediate supervisors was dependent on the teacher's connection with his or her principal and immediate supervisors.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding autonomy, the researcher examined statements that connected autonomy with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Statements were made that discussed the participants' perception of the worth of the professional development provided to them. Autonomy is identified as one variable of teachers' psychological empowerment in the Lee and Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework. It is also identified as one of the seven dimensions of TLSS. This sub-section compared the participants' perception of their empowerment to autonomy, as one of the seven

dimensions of TLSS. It is important for readers to note that as autonomy was used as a comparative dimension, the researcher identified that all statements were connected to the participants' sense of autonomy, as part of the theoretical framework. Therefore, the researcher will not identify autonomy when stating the results of principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, as it should be implied that all statements are relatable to teachers' sense of autonomy.

As previously stated, the participants' perceptions varied on the amount of autonomy that they perceived to receive from their principals and immediate supervisors. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to lead to a lesser sense of autonomy. They identified that their schools' administrative teams expressed a greater top down decision-making approach, regarding academics. Ms. Turner perceived herself as not being allowed to voice her concerns regarding academics and needed to follow a strict lesson plan. Ms. Joplin perceived that any curriculum-based decision from the LEA's central office was expected to be followed. Ms. Franklin perceived that conflict in decision-making amongst the school's administrative team resulted in difficulties for teachers, which was identified as being a unique perception amongst the participants.

The participants who represented elementary schools perceived that regarding academics, they sensed less psychological empowerment. Ms. Turner expressed that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in her perception of feeling powerless. She stated, "I don't feel like there's much left for me to do even if I feel it's the best for my kids. So, I don't feel like there's trust there." She further explained that her administrative team expressed feelings of trust in discussions but did not show trust in their actions.

Ms. Joplin did not discuss her feelings towards her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding autonomy. However, she stated several times during the focus group and her individual interviews that a group of teachers were known to receive preference from her administrative team. Regarding the LEA being on an improvement plan, Ms. Joplin perceived that despite the receiver's statement of schools having autonomy, her school implemented curriculum by LEA decisions. The statements from both participants implied their perceptions were that their administrative team's top down decision-making approach resulted in their having a lesser sense of meaning, competence, and impact; leading to less job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment.

Ms. Franklin identified her perception of her administrative team as their not having a great amount of trust in teachers, just as Ms. Turner perceived. Regarding her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and autonomy, Ms. Franklin perceived that teachers were expected to be able to adjust to changes. She stated "Teachers are expected to respond with the utmost of flexibility, and the utmost of joy and rapture at their flexibility... There's not a lot of trust. I think it probably goes both ways." Her perception implied that between the conflict in decision-making and the perception of a lack of trust, teachers perceived a lesser sense of meaning and impact. She added:

A lot of the teachers feel they should compromise. They should get on the same page.

That's what most of the teachers would like, for them to get on the same page. It doesn't happen very often. They each tend to seem to go their own way, in a slightly different direction.

Ms. Franklin's statement further supported the conclusions that were implied from Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin's experiences. Her perception implied that her administrative team's top down

decision-making approach resulted in their having a lesser sense of meaning, competence, and impact; leading to less job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment.

As previously stated, Mr. Lennon shared the perception that select teachers were granted greater autonomy, regarding academics. He perceived autonomy to be dependent on the subject area taught, and specifically identified math and science as two curricula where teachers were expected to be aligned with the prescribed curriculum. When asked if teachers were able to address concerns, Mr. Lennon stated, "I really don't see quite the equity from teacher to teacher in that sense, and I guess it depends on the observer." Mr. Lennon's perception implied that teachers' sense of competence and impact depended on whether their administrative team granted them the ability to have autonomy in their lessons.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied a positive connection between his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and autonomy. In both interviews, Mr. Hendrix stated that his administrative team valued input from teachers. Decision-making was not top down, and teacher feedback was regularly sought. He added, "[T]he leadership might want to know what we're up to, and they want might want to know what best practices exist that they can share, but it doesn't feel really prescriptive." Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding autonomy, resulted in teachers having a greater sense of meaning, competence, and impact; leading to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Regarding the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and autonomy of academics, the participants' perceptions implied that teachers' psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes varied. Three participants perceived autonomy to be granted to select teachers, leading to a mixed amount of sensing

psychological empowerment and leading to mixed amounts of the job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Of the three participants, the two who represented elementary schools shared perceptions that implied less sensing of psychological empowerment, leading to less job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. One participant perceived the dynamics between her principal and immediate supervisors to lead to a minimal amount of autonomy in academics. This perception implied less sensing of psychological empowerment, leading to less job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. One participant perceived the principal and immediate supervisors to honor teacher feedback and decision-making. This perception implied greater sensing of psychological empowerment, leading to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Regarding the connection between principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and autonomy of student behavior, the perceptions of the participants who represented middle schools resulted in the same implied conclusions, as the connection with autonomy of academics. Mr. Hendrix perceived his principal and immediate supervisors to encourage teacher feedback and decision-making, which implied a greater sense of meaning, competence, and impact; leading to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Mr. Lennon shared experiences from both his current and former school. At his former school, he perceived his administrative team to diminish teachers' concerns with student behavior by not taking concerns seriously. At his current school, he perceived his administrative team to grant greater autonomy to teachers. Mr. Lennon's perception implied that teachers' senses of meaning, competence, and impact were dependent on the principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. This was not exclusive to each academic level.

Regarding the connection between principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and autonomy of student behavior, the perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools resulted in different implied conclusions. Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin agreed that with student behaviors there was greater autonomy for teachers. They disagreed on who had autonomy. Ms. Turner perceived that all teachers had greater autonomy, where Ms. Joplin perceived teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grade to have greater autonomy over teachers in first and second grade. Both participants linked the greater amount of autonomy to a lack of support from their administrative team. Although both participants identified their perceptions of having greater autonomy, it implied that teachers sensed less competence and impact, and led to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Ms. Franklin associated autonomy of student behaviors to teacher behaviors. She stated that teachers did not have a uniform procedure for addressing student behaviors, and referred to it as the "wild, wild west". Regarding her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, Ms. Franklin identified that when a team of teachers developed an action plan to address specific behaviors, her principal approved and adopted the plan. However, only the team of teachers who were involved in the plan's development were included in the decision-making process. Ms. Franklin's perception implied that the select teachers had a greater sense of competence and impact; however, the rest of teachers did not.

For Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin, despite a perceived greater autonomy in student behavior than in academics, it did not yield greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. For Ms. Franklin, where her principal was identified as the final decision maker, there was greater autonomy for student behavior, resulting in a culture of student behavior leading to chaos. Ms. Franklin's perception implied that despite teachers having greater

autonomy in student behavior, it did not result in a greater sense of meaning, competence, and impact. The participants' perceptions implied that there was not greater job satisfaction or organizational commitment.

Regarding autonomy, the participants' perceptions indicated that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that lead to mixed feelings of empowerment. Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, regarding autonomy in both academics and student behaviors. Mr. Lennon perceived that select teachers had greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, regarding academics, and that both depended on the principal and immediate supervisors' actions, regarding student behaviors. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools implied that there was less psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes that resulted from their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding autonomy in both academics and student behaviors.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behaviors and Collegiality**

Collegiality is defined as the collaboration of teachers, regarding instructional matters and student-related matters (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The participants' statements were coded in the second and third cycles to identify the connection between the participants' perception of their principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors and the TLSS dimension of collegiality. As a dimension, collegiality emphasized greater focus on teacher to teacher interactions, and less on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

To connect collegiality with principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, the researcher examined the seven statements within the dimension of collegiality in TLSS. Two statements asked respondents to share their perceptions of connections with their administration. Statement 26 stated, "Teachers and administrators work together to solve students' academic and behavior problems." Statement 28 stated, "Conversations among professionals at my school focused on students." Where Statement 26 directly identified a connection with principals and immediate supervisors, Statement 28 identified all professionals. The researcher determined that professionals would include principals and immediate supervisors.

All participants shared statements that connected their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors with collegiality. Each participant perceived that collegiality existed amongst the teachers; however, the perceived impact of collegiality was dependent upon principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. As previously discussed, Mr. Hendrix perceived his administrative team support teacher input and decision-making. He stated, "I think our school administration also does a nice job investing teachers and making clear what the rationale is." Regarding collegiality, he stated:

[T]here are tons of decisions I make with my team that we know we can solve this problem, and we're trusted to solve these problems. If it's something related to the school priority, the leadership might want to know what we're up to.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supported collaboration amongst teachers.

Discussions of teacher collaboration included Mr. Lennon's experiences at his current school and former school, both of which were in the LEA. His perception of the experiences at both schools added to the implied conclusion that principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors differed between schools. Mr. Lennon perceived that his former school's administrative team did not support collegiality, but collegiality naturally existed between teachers. He stated:

[M]y first year teaching, um, communication within the team was pretty much with the level of it was derived from the team itself. It really wasn't supported by the administration, like 'hey keep your door open, or your middle door open, go in between each other's classroom and talk.' You know, 'during your prep time, go up and see another Science teacher's lesson', or anything like that.

He explained that over the course of his employment at his former school, vertical planning was implemented. He added:

My third-year teaching, they started implementing a vertical planning time. It was supposed to be delivered where 95% of the conversation was delivered by teachers communicating. It ended up being more, like 'you're not doing it right, this is how it's supposed to be done.' So, the vertical discussion was not really there.

Readers should note that the researcher calculated Mr. Lennon's time within the LEA. The experiences shared from his former school included two years of employment prior to the implementation of the improvement plan and appointing of the receiver. His statements of his former school of employment initiating methods to foster collegiality coincide with the beginning phases of the improvement plan's implementation. The researcher questions whether

the initiation of collegiality fostering methods were a direct result of the improvement plan's implementation.

Mr. Lennon also discussed his experiences with changes in curriculum. He explained curriculum programs that were strictly enforced during the time before the implementation of the improvement plan were abandoned by LEA administrators. He perceived that there was little inclusion from teachers in collaboration on the effectiveness of these programs. He stated:

[Y]ou got to try some things out. It's looking at data and I hear how, 'This school is comparative to your school. Same demographics, same type of grade range. Look what this program did for this school. It's going to do the same for you.' And I've heard it from the other different programs that we've implemented, and they really haven't quite worked. So, I feel like there does need to be a little bit more research done

Mr. Lennon perceived that he noticed a greater amount of support in collegiality from his administrative team and others outside of his school, near the time of the study. This implied the existence of LEA administration and his school administration supporting collegiality. He shared his experience with the LEA initiating a new Science curriculum, and piloting the program before implementing the curriculum across the LEA. Mr. Lennon stated:

I really like the sense that the administrators and other professionals really wanted our input as to if this would work or not, and I felt like the opinions from the teachers and the data produced from instruction, from the students, was instrumental in answering the question of whether or not we were going to go with that program. I think it's working very well.

Mr. Lennon's perception implied that the LEA and his school's administrative team supported teacher collegiality. Mr. Lennon's perception and experience are comparable to those of Mr. Hendrix. These perceptions implied that LEA administrators, principals, and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supported teacher collegiality.

Ms. Turner also discussed her experiences with changes in the curriculum. Sharing her experiences, Ms. Turner did not identify a time when teachers were asked to share their input. She perceived that curriculum was constantly changing, without allowing for teachers to provide input and evidence, as Mr. Lennon discussed in his experience. Concerning curriculum changes, Ms. Turner stated:

I feel like every year there seems to be a big push for something. I don't know if it's just our school, or education in general, as everybody's trying to figure out how to best access the common core and all the standards and everything like that, but every year there seems to be a big push.

Ms. Turner perceived that teachers were expected to accept the changes without providing input or raising objection. She stated:

A couple years ago, we were all about (specific program), and everybody loved it, and we had trainings in it all the time. And then, the next year it was like, 'We're never doing (specific program) again. Get on board. We're on something else.' And then if you bring up the fact that you really liked (specific program), then you're not on board with what we're doing this year.

Ms. Turner's perception implied that where teachers worked together to share input, her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors limited the effect of collegiality amongst teachers on the progress of her school.

Ms. Turner discussed LEA administration empowering behaviors, surrounding curriculum. At the time of this study, Ms. Turner identified that recent curriculum changes were implemented by LEA administrators. She stated:

This time it was central office that changed our curriculum, which I don't think is bad. This one is proven to be addressing the standards and everything like that, so they feel that if every school is on board with this curriculum and they start from kindergarten, then every year there'll be building blocks on the same curriculum rather than every school doing different things, which I think is a good idea.

The researcher noted that where forced curriculum changes by the school's administrative team resulted in perceptions that implied no support of collegiality, forced curriculum changes by the LEA's administration resulted in perceptions of positivity, but no connection to collegiality. The researcher questions if the missing connection is a result of Ms. Turner not having direct interactions with the LEA's administration. The researcher hypothesizes that if there was not a direct interaction, and the implementation of the LEA administrators' changes in curriculum were conducted by the principals and immediate supervisors, then the effect of teacher collegiality is dependent on the principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

As previously stated, Ms. Franklin perceived her administrative team as conflicting with their decision-making. She explained:

[I]t becomes one of those things where the teachers are like, 'Okay, so now we have to go to the principal and we have to talk to her about this.' Then, she will tell them something, so then they'll go back to the curriculum coach, and she will say, 'No, no, no, we're going to do this.' Then, they'll go back. And, it could all be resolved if the two of them just sat in the room together with the teachers. That almost never happens.

Ms. Franklin's perception implied that the top down decision-making style of her administrative team resulted in no support for teacher collegiality.

Ms. Franklin identified that collegiality amongst teachers, in some teacher teams, was limited due to conflict between the teachers. She identified the conflicts as including teacher teams being new, and poor collegiality amongst the team members. Regarding the connection between the teams' collegiality, and the principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, Ms. Franklin stated:

I don't think the administration has done anything to sort of try to fix them. They would have fixed it by now if they could have on their own, but they didn't work well before, and they're not working well now.

Ms. Franklin's perception added to the implied conclusion that top down decision making did not support collegiality amongst teachers. Her perceptions of her principal and immediate supervisors not aiding teams who are struggling with collegiality, implied that collegiality amongst teachers emulate the collegiality amongst administrative teams.

Comparing the statements from the participants to the scores from the respondents on TLSS, seven of the respondents to TLSS indicated a perception that teachers and administrators work together to solve academic and behavior issues often. Of the seven respondents, one

perceived it to happen always. This contrasted with the overall perceptions of the participants. Of the four participants who made statements that connected principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to collegiality, two identified a positive connection and two identified a negative connection. Ms. Joplin's statements concerning collegiality were identified as not having a connection with her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Her perception will be shared in the following sub-section.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding collegiality, the researcher examined statements that connected collegiality with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. As previously stated, collegiality emphasized greater focus on teacher to teacher interaction. This sub-section will discuss teacher to teacher interactions and connect them with principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

As previously stated, participants perceived the impact of collegiality was dependent upon their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Mr. Hendrix identified that where his principal requests to be updated in decisions made from collaborative sessions, teachers can collaborate to solve problems. As previously quoted, Mr. Hendrix expressed his approval of the balance between teacher collaboration and his administrative team's decision-making. He further stated, "I get to help my team gel around what do we have to do as a team to help our students do their best in school." Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supported collegiality, leading to teachers' perceiving a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. His perception also

implied that teachers sensed greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

At the time of the study, Mr. Lennon perceived that his principal, immediate supervisors, and the LEA's administration supported teacher collegiality. As previously quoted, Mr. Lennon identified that teacher input was included in determining a decision to implement a new curriculum across the LEA. The researcher asked Mr. Lennon about the existence of collegiality during his second interview. He stated:

[I]t was heavily enforced at the beginning of the year where there was really no prep time. Any prep time was encouraged to 'hey, we're scheduling a meeting. You're going to go and do this.' Most of the time administration wasn't there. They would chime in every once and a while to see how things are going, or if we had a list of things that we needed to do.

Mr. Lennon explained that teacher collegiality happened on a regular basis. He stated:

In the morning we usually chat. At lunchtime we all sit together and we're talking. In the afternoon it's like a quick debrief, passing in the hallway, but there is a lot of communication... it's something where the administrators are encouraging it, and I feel as though the teachers are benefiting.

Mr. Lennon's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding collegiality, resulted in teachers perceiving a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; leading to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. This compared to Mr. Hendrix's perception.

As previously stated, Ms. Turner' perception of her principal and immediate supervisors' decision-making style, which did not support collegiality amongst teachers, contrasted with Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Lennon's perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' decision-making styles. Ms. Turner perceived that her principal and immediate supervisors enacted changes, expecting teachers to accept the changes. She expressed that with some announced changes, teachers would be confused and feel hesitant towards the changes. Ms. Turner stated:

[W]e did away with reading groups altogether and were told, 'The data shows that if students are reading books at their level then they're never going to get better', and all this stuff. Every teacher had their jaws on the floor. We're not going to do reading groups? Kids aren't going read books on their level anymore?

When asked for a reason as to why teachers do not address their concerns, Ms. Turner stated, "I guess we don't fight the battle. Nobody wants to be that person." Ms. Turner's perception of her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding collegiality, implied that greater top down decision-making results in a lesser sense of meaning, autonomy, and impact; leading to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Ms. Joplin's statements did not yield a connection between her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and collegiality; however, she did share her perception of collegiality amongst teachers. Ms. Joplin perceived that teacher teams collaborated well. She stated, "I think teams feel comfortable collaborating with each other. I felt really comfortable collaborating in my old team. I felt like we did meet at least once a week together and collaborated." Ms. Joplin identified that teachers shared teacher teams provided each other with input and assistance on helpful strategies. She added, "Yeah, like 'this worked really well in my classroom today, you should try it.' We would collaborate that way. I would even say that there

are some teachers from different grades who you feel comfortable collaborating that way.” Ms. Joplin’s perception implied that collegiality amongst teachers resulted in a sense of meaning, competence, and impact; and led to greater professional commitment and organizational commitment. However, as she shared Ms. Turner’s perceptions of her principal and immediate supervisors’ top down decision-making approach in the focus group and interviews, the implied psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes are hypothesized to be limited.

As previously stated, Ms. Franklin perceived conflict between her administrative team, and conflict within specific teacher teams. Furthermore, she perceived that her administrative team did not provide support to help teacher teams resolve issues. Ms. Franklin perceived collegiality to exist amongst teachers at her school, but within specific groups. She identified that different teams had different dynamics, and stated:

There's a lot of variation in our school. At our school, the (redacted) team is really tight. They're like rock stars. They talk to each other all the time, they coordinate all the time, they take turns, like I'm going to go do the do-now for math this week, you're going to do the exit ticket. They work it all out... And then we have other grade levels where it's almost like they have different curriculums. It seems completely different. The expectations in the classrooms are different. It's like they're compartmentalized.

Ms. Franklin’s perception of the teacher teams and administrative team at her school implied that the dynamics of a team determined the amount of collegiality between the members. For teams who work well together, Ms. Franklin’s perception added to the implied conclusion that collegiality amongst teachers resulted in a limited sense of meaning, competence, and impact; and led to greater professional commitment and a limited increase in organizational commitment. Ms. Franklin’s perception added to the implied conclusion that greater top down decision-

making results overall in a lesser sense of meaning, autonomy, and impact; leading to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Regarding collegiality, the participants' perceptions indicated that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that lead to mixed feelings of empowerment. Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Lennon's perceptions implied that their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, regarding collegiality. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools implied that there was less psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes that resulted from their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding collegiality. Ms. Joplin and Ms. Franklin's perceptions of the existence of teacher teams having collegiality, despite low support from their principals and immediate supervisors, implied that limited increases in psychological empowerment, professional commitment, and organizational commitment resulted from collegiality amongst teachers. These increases were noted as being limited, as statements from the participants stated that the effects of collegiality were limited, due to the top down decision-making leadership styles of each school.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behaviors and Participation**

Participation is defined as the involvement of teachers in decision-making and providing input into important matters (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The definition also stated that leadership within schools, such as department chairpersons and team leaders, were selected with teacher input. Previous statements shared by the participants connect principals and

immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors with participation. This section will recall these statements and share new statements that identify the participants' perceptions of participation.

To connect participation with principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, the researcher examined the seven statements within the dimension of participation in TLSS. Three statements asked respondents to share their perceptions of connections with their administration. Statement 31 stated, "Teachers and administrators share decisions about how time is used and how school is organized." Statement 32 stated, "Teachers and administrators at my school understand and use the consensus process." Statement 34 stated, "My opinions and ideas are sought by administrators at my school." These statements directly connect acts by principals and immediate supervisors with teachers' sensing their participation.

Prior statements implied a mixed perception of principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supporting teacher participation, amongst all participants. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived less support of participation from their principals and immediate supervisors. As previously stated, the participants who represented elementary schools identified decision-making at their schools to be top down. Previous statements from Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin identified their perceptions as being that select teachers were provided with greater voice to address concerns and receive professional development opportunities. For teachers who were identified by the participants as being "selected", decisions were made by the administrative team, then presented to the teachers. Teachers did not provide input and were expected to accept decisions that were made by principals and immediate supervisors.

Both Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin made further statements that connected their perceptions of teacher participation to their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Ms. Turner identified that a committee existed of teachers whose purpose was to make decisions. Her perception was that the committee did not meet regularly as it was meant to. She stated:

[W]e have a committee of decision making teachers, that are supposed to meet a few times a year to make the big decisions for the school. I was told that they only met when there was something that needed to be discussed, so I don't think they met at all this year. So, who made all the decisions?

Ms. Turner's perception added to the implied conclusion that teachers at her school had little involvement in decision-making. Later, she continued to discuss the existence of committees. She added:

[W]e'd have committees based on the needs of our school, and we met for maybe like three hours every month, maybe that, maybe six hours a month. We'd have things that we decided were the most important, and we'd take from reports that were the most important. And, we would spend time trying to plan things to make it better, but they never went anywhere. Like every idea our committee had got shot down by the admin, for whatever reason.

Ms. Turner perceived that as committees existed, the participation was artificial, resulting in her principal and immediate supervisors' not supporting teacher participation.

Ms. Joplin shared Ms. Turner's perception of teacher involvement in committees were artificial. She stated, "We break into committees, and they would say that we're this committee and you're that committee, but we couldn't make any really big decisions." Ms. Joplin also expressed that as committee members identified items that were needed to improve academics

and student behavior, the administrative team would not honor the determinations from the committee. She added:

We'd say ok we need this for our curriculum, we really have to focus on vocabulary, and that really came to a dead end. We'd think this, we'd present it, and it was up to admin to, I guess, make the final decision.

The perceptions of both participants implied that at their school, top down decision-making resulted in little to no participation from teachers. Their perceptions implied that any evidence of the existence of teacher participation was mock participation.

Ms. Franklin previously shared that her principal made all final decisions at her school. Her perception was that conflict existed between her administrative team regarding decision-making. Specifically, Ms. Franklin provided the analogy of two parents having a disagreement, which resulted in discomfort amongst the teachers. Her perception of her school culture was that some teacher teams had similar conflicts as the administrative team, and that the administrative team did not intervene in teacher team conflicts. She also perceived that teachers with the ability to self-advocate had greater ability to address concerns with decisions that were made.

Regarding participation, Ms. Franklin identified two specific areas where teachers had the opportunity to provide input. First, she discussed teacher meetings where assessment data was used to plan for interventions. She stated:

They tend to be more academic based. A lot of them are data driven. We'll have meetings where we'll look at the (specific assessment program) data results... we take data in math and ELA and we talk as grade level teams.

Ms. Franklin expressed that she found these meetings to not have much purpose for her, because the students whom she services are more prone to not meet the expectations of the assessment. She asked if she perceived her colleagues to benefit from these meetings. As previously quoted, she perceived it to provide some help, and stated, “[U]sually what happens is the administration decides the standards.” Previously quoted, she also identified that specialists, such as gym and art teachers, did not have the opportunity to provide input in these meetings. Specialists were assigned intervention groups and given curriculum to teach. This perception added to the implied conclusions that top down decision-making did not result in genuine teacher participation.

The second area where teachers had the opportunity to provide input was the Teacher Leadership Team. Where Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin both perceived their school’s Teacher Leadership Team to not meet, Ms. Franklin made statements of her school’s team that implied it met on a regular basis. Regarding the impact of the Teacher Leadership Team, Ms. Franklin stated, “In theory, they can email the principal and say, ‘hey, we want to talk about blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.’ And then it goes on the agenda and they talk about it. I haven't seen it happen yet.” As previously stated, Ms. Franklin perceived that the agenda for the Teacher Leadership Team was created by her principal, and that requests for items to be placed on the agenda were not honored by her principal. She added:

And there are times where there are things that they do that the teacher leadership team has to do. They have to make choices and do things. But even within the teacher leadership team, they're like, ‘really? This is the most pressing thing that we're going to do right now. This right here.

Ms. Franklin identified that where it is expected that Teacher Leadership Teams were to compose goals for each school year, her principal supplied her school's team with the goals for a prior school year. She also perceived that some goals were unobtainable. Ms. Franklin's perceptions added to the implied conclusions that in schools with top down decision-making styles, committees and teams were in place that allowed teachers to organize and discuss topics. However, the input from the members of the committees and teams was not honored, concluding that participation was mock, and that principals and immediate supervisors made most decisions without participation from teachers.

The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools implied that top down decision-making resulted in less genuine teacher participation. Teacher input existed; however, it was not honored by the principals and immediate supervisors. As previously stated, the participants who represented middle school perceived their principals and immediate supervisors to actively seek for and include teachers' input.

Previously discussed statements from Mr. Lennon indicated that trusted teachers were supported to deviate from course curriculum when student learning would benefit, and that his current school's administrative team listened to teachers' concerns. Regarding the connection between his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and participation, Mr. Lennon discussed his experiences with meetings, the design of teacher teams, and the results of teacher decision-making. He also identified that his school had a Teacher Leadership Team, but he stated that he did not know much about it.

The statements in TLSS included the identification of selected teachers into leadership roles. Mr. Lennon identified that teacher teams had such leadership. Although he did not state

how teachers were selected for team leadership, he explained that they served an important role.

Mr. Lennon stated:

[T]here are team leaders that would help out with correspondence, collecting information, correspondence with the administration or with parents, so there are those people that definitely take the lead on those things which is really powerful, and I don't feel like teachers that have that team leader responsibility, it's going to their head where they become a dictator. It's almost like a, I don't know, not a mediator, but someone in between that handles a lot of those responsibilities going back and forth between administration and teachers.

In previously discussed statements from Mr. Lennon, he perceived that teacher participation existed. In the section that discussed the connection between his administration's empowering behaviors and collegiality, Mr. Lennon shared his experiences with the LEA piloting a new curriculum. He stated, "I really like the sense that the administrators and other professionals really wanted our input." Mr. Lennon's statements implied that he perceived teacher participation to exist. Mr. Lennon explained that a ramification of teacher participation at his school, specifically teacher decision-making, was that teachers who decided to not join specific initiatives would be expected to stick to their decisions. He shared one experience regarding a decision to address student behaviors and increase academic time. To protect the anonymity of the participant and his school, only his conclusion will be shared. He stated:

[M]y team at the time decided not to implement that, so we came back later with another couple suggestions, of how we can handle some of the bad decisions that a couple of students were making. It was kind of laughed at and said that our team decided not to do it, and we had to deal with it.

Mr. Lennon's perception of this experience implied that his administrative team supported teacher participation and allowed teacher teams to opt out of select decisions made by the whole school. However, teacher decision-making resulted in loss of support from his administrative team. This does contrast with the perception of Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin, who both expressed feelings that their principal and immediate supervisors did not want to be involved in student behavioral issues.

Mr. Hendrix identified the existence of teacher participation at his school, and evidenced it with statements concerning meetings, teacher team leadership, and the existence of his school's Teacher Leadership Team. Mr. Hendrix expressed his experience at his school as being one where what would be considered the "regular school leadership structure" did not exist. He stated:

I think it's the absence of some of the bureaucracy that I feel here. I think our administration is very keen on reducing extraneous tasks and responsibilities so that we can focus on the core elements of teaching and supporting our kids and families.

Previous statements shared by Mr. Hendrix identified his perception as being that top down decision-making did not exist at his school, and his administrative team sought input from teachers through meetings and weekly surveys.

Mr. Hendrix identified that weekly meetings were held amongst his teacher team. He explained the process for participation within his teacher team to be run on a weekly basis. He stated:

Typically, communication with the team begins through email at the beginning of the week saying, 'Here's what's coming this week.' We are followed up with about action

items that we said needed to get done. For example, ‘you said that you would check in with this kid.’ Then at the end of the week, our team meets.

Mr. Hendrix explained that this process is coordinated by the teacher team, and not the principal and immediate supervisors. Regarding the role of teacher team leadership, Mr. Hendrix stated, “I view team leadership as a role straddling the line between teacher and management.” He also stated, “I think of team leadership as mirroring what the district has done at large, which is the superintendent sets up open architecture.” Mr. Hendrix identified that LEA and improvement plan initiatives guided the direction of his school, which implied that his principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors as being what was granted through receivership.

Mr. Hendrix was asked about shared decision-making between teachers and administrators, in his first interview. His response identified the weekly surveys, teacher team leadership, and the existence of the Teacher Leadership Team as three pieces of evidence to the existence of shared decision-making. As previously quoted, Mr. Hendrix perceived his school’s Teacher Leadership Team to be involved in making important decisions, which the school’s administrative team honored and worked with the team to implement. Mr. Hendrix’s perceptions of the connection between his principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and participation implied that teacher participation was highly supported by his administrative team.

Both participants who represented middle schools shared perceptions that teacher participation existed and was supported by their principals and immediate supervisors. Mr. Hendrix directly connected the means established to support teacher participation to the improvement plan and receivership. Both participants further perceived that their principals and immediate supervisors honored teacher input and did not express a top down decision-making style. This contrasted with the participants who represented elementary schools, who perceived

the same means of teacher participation as existing. However, they perceived that their principals and immediate supervisors' top down decision-making style resulted in teacher input not being honored, and teacher decision-making being limited to either select groups of teachers or topics about which the principals and immediate supervisors had no interest in making decisions.

Comparing the statements from the participants to the scores from the respondents on TLSS, the statements regarding teachers and administrators, and participation, scored amongst the lowest of all statements on TLSS. The most common score provided amongst the three statements was a three, or sometimes. The range of all three statements was between one (never) and four (often). No respondents scored any of the statements at five, or always. The responses were comparable to the statements made by the participants, which ranged from perceptions of participation being less, or mock, to greater, and being honored by principals and immediate supervisors. The researcher questions if the differences between the perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools and the participants who represented middle schools are comparable to all elementary and middle schools in the LEA. A future study with a greater number of participants would aid in answering this question.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding participation, the researcher examined statements that connected participation with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. The group of participants expressed an overall mixed perception of the support of participation from their principals and immediate supervisors.

For the participants who represented elementary schools, participation was perceived to not be supported for all teachers. As previously stated, Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin explained that committees, such as a Teacher Leadership Team, existed at their school. They perceived that despite the existence of these committees, decisions made from them were not honored. During the focus group, Ms. Turner stated, “So, we have committees that make it seem like we have some voice, but just don't ever end up getting anywhere.” During her second interview, she repeated her perception, when she stated:

We're supposed to have a group of teachers that are a part of a leadership board that are supposed to make decisions. But, from what I hear, that leadership team, or leadership committee, does not meet so often. So, we have it so that it's there on paper that we have it. But we don't necessarily have it. And they're not necessarily making decisions.

Ms. Turner's perception implied that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding participation, resulted in teachers having a lesser sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; and led to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Her perception implied that as committees were organized, and teachers participated to provide input, teachers experienced greater professional commitment.

Ms. Joplin explained that the personalities of her principal and immediate supervisors resulted in teachers feeling discomfort with voicing their concerns and questioning decisions made. She stated:

Some leaders have to make decisions. I feel like that's their role. Some things, I feel like, would be best being decided by the majority, and sometimes you're afraid to voice that. Even when they do ask for our input.

Ms. Joplin added that she perceived that her principal and immediate supervisors were selective with choosing when to support teacher participation. As previously stated, Ms. Joplin perceived that teachers had greater autonomy, regarding student behavior. Regarding participation, she stated, "I would say that some things I do feel empowered with, and some things I don't. Behavior, I feel that it is pretty much on us. They don't want to deal with behavioral."

Ms. Joplin's perception added to the implied conclusion of her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding participation. Her perception implied that participation existed when her principal and immediate supervisors expressed a perceived feeling of not wanting to be involved in decision-making and agreed with the implied conclusion from Ms. Turner's perception. Teachers had a lesser sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment, when the principal and immediate supervisors were involved in decision-making. These were identified as decisions in all topics, except student behavior. For student behavior, the principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in a greater sense of competence and autonomy. However, as Ms. Joplin and Ms. Turner previously expressed, their preference was to have greater top down decision-making with student behavior. Therefore, their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in a lesser sense of meaning and impact and led to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

As previously discussed, Ms. Franklin perceived that her principal and immediate supervisors provided committees and teams that were designed for teachers to provide input into decisions being made. In committee and team meetings, the principal and immediate supervisors were perceived to not honor requests from members of adding items to meeting agendas, decide which courses of action to take, and to create goals that were perceived as being unobtainable.

As previously stated, when select groups of teachers were brought together to provide input, her principal and immediate supervisors did not include teachers outside the group with information pertaining to the discussions from the members of the group. She stated, “But the members were the only people that gave input to it. It was never released to the rest of the staff to talk about. It was just given to them.” Ms. Franklin’s perception of the connection between her principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors were comparable to Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin’s perceptions of the connections at their school. Teachers had a lesser sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Mr. Lennon shared his perception that his principal and immediate supervisors supported input from teachers, as identified through the existence of teacher teams with a teacher serving as the team’s leader. In previous statements, Mr. Lennon shared his perception that his principal and immediate supervisors supported teacher input and encouraged teachers to make decisions regarding that they identified as benefitting student learning. As previously quoted, Mr. Lennon perceived that changes are made with input from the teachers and administrative team. Regarding individual teachers’ input, he stated, “I also feel like if there's the sole individual that brings something up, other concern, then it is very much listened to and there have been adjustments made to varying degrees.” Mr. Lennon’s perception implied that the connection between his principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors and teacher participation resulted in teachers having a greater sense of competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Mr. Lennon discussed the ramifications of teachers deciding to exclude their teams from specific implementation plans. As previously quoted, he stated that when teams would later ask

to develop plans to remediate concerns where plans were implemented, and the team opted out, they were told that it was up to the team to decide how to remediate their concern. This experience was provided as an example to his perception that teachers addressing their concerns could result in negative recognition. Where he spoke largely of his former school of employment, he also stated that from this experience, he perceived that in certain situations teacher participation results in negative recognition, which results in less support from principals and immediate supervisors.

In this experience, Mr. Lennon did not perceive the team to have less participation. However, it did have negative recognition and less support. Mr. Lennon's perception implied that when teachers are granted greater participation, principals and immediate supervisors have the possibility of not agreeing, which continues to result in a greater sense of competence, autonomy, and impact; which leads to greater organizational commitment. However, their decisions led to negative recognition and less support, which resulted in less job satisfaction.

Mr. Hendrix's perception was that his principal and immediate supervisors supported teacher participation through the existence of teacher teams who met on a weekly basis, the Teacher Leadership Team, and the distribution of surveys. He added to his perception that his principal and immediate supervisors valued teacher input and viewed their role as support for the teachers. Mr. Hendrix expressed that this culture aligned with the direction of the improvement plan and receivership. His feelings were that his principal and immediate supervisors supported teachers when experiencing feelings of frustration. He stated:

Rarely does it feel extraneous or unnecessary. If it is, our leadership has a mechanism every week to collect information from us through a survey to get feedback and if I say, 'That didn't feel purposeful,' or, 'That felt odd,' someone will come back to me and say,

‘Sorry about that. Let's have a conversation.’ There are always times when it's, ‘You have to do this,’ but I don't feel burdened by that. Usually I know why we have to do it.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, concerning participation resulted in teachers having a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Regarding participation, the participants' perceptions added to the implied conclusion that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that led to mixed feelings of empowerment. Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Lennon's perceptions continued to imply that their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools continued to imply that there was less psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes that resulted from their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived that participation existed but did not influence their schools' direction; they perceived participation to be artificial.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors' Empowering Behaviors and Open Communication**

Open communication is defined as teachers sending and receiving information, that is relevant to their school's effective functioning, in open and honest ways (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The dimension of open communication places a great emphasis on teachers' emotional state. Katzenmeyer and Katzenmeyer (2005) explained that in open

communication, teachers feel informed of school happenings, share opinions and feelings, and are not blamed when something goes wrong. Previous statements shared by the participants connect principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors with open communication. This section will recall these statements and share new statements that identify the participants' perceptions of open communication.

To connect open communication with principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, the researcher examined the seven statements within the dimension of open communication in TLSS. All statements in the dimension imply acts that can involve principals and immediate supervisors' actions. Statement 36 stated, "Because teachers and administrators share ideas about our work, I stay aware of what is happening." It was directly identified as the one statement in the dimension that connected principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to open communication. Where comparisons existed between the participants who represented elementary schools, regarding connections between their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and the previously discussed dimensions, their perceptions contrasted when connecting to open communication.

Ms. Franklin's previously shared statements implied that conflicts existed between the members of her school's administrative team, concerning decision-making. She identified the conflicts to be a cause of confusion and frustration amongst the teachers and resulted in lower perceptions of collegiality. As previously stated, teachers were subject to conflicting decisions and information being provided by different members of her administrative team, relating it to two parents having a disagreement. Her perception implied that the conflicts between her principal and immediate supervisors resulted in less open communication.

Ms. Franklin discussed issues with communication of basic information, in her school. She identified situations where information was expected to be disseminated to the teachers through casual relaying of the messages. Discussing a specific experience, she explained that an electronic correspondence was sent, directing teachers to an assigned room for a meeting. Then, there was a change which was not relayed to all teachers. She stated:

[A]nd it was like, why? You know we have a PA system. Just tell us. That's why it's there. And we walk down, and we finally were like, it is clearly not here. We should go. We should find this meeting. And I started texting people, and we all started walking downstairs to the other places, classrooms where we normally meet. And so, we started walking down, we're about halfway there, we got a text like, 'we're in room two, where are you?' So, we came down and we got dirty looks as we walked in.

In previously quoted statements, Ms. Franklin also discussed her perception of teachers not receiving communication of important information. She added:

[I]n terms of communication, there were also problems where a kid gets dismissed, nobody tells the classroom teacher, and then sometimes the teachers call down and they're like, 'where is this kid?' 'Oh, he went home.' Okay. But for us, we're always like, how hard would it be to just buzz me or send me a note? 'Hey, Bob went home.' And it's little things like that. Why are we withholding this information? Why not just announce it?

Ms. Franklin's perception was that her principal and immediate supervisors expected information to be shared between the teachers. This implied that there was less open communication due to her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Previous statements from Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin explained that committees and teams existed. Although they made statements that implied teachers having less participation in their school, their statements did not imply a presence of less open communication at their school. Previous statements shared by Ms. Turner identified her perception as her principal and immediate supervisors asking teachers questions, providing teachers with information, and providing teachers with in-school professional development trainings. One example surrounded the implementation of an in-school training concerning a specific curriculum. She stated:

[T]he admin actually did ask us what we wanted to learn in relation to that, if we had any questions we specifically wanted to hear, if we had any direction for the person coming in, if we had any direction on where we wanted to go with this PD. She did ask us that.

Ms. Turner perceived that where open communication existed, it did not result in feeling support, recognition, autonomy, or as if they could participate. She added, “But when it comes to broad strokes, what do we feel like we need to work on, I feel like we're asked the question but it's not necessarily what's going to happen.”

Previous statements from Ms. Joplin agreed with the statements made by Ms. Turner. As previously quoted, Ms. Joplin's perception was that where select teachers were provided with professional development opportunities and were able to add input, all teachers received communication from the principal and immediate supervisors. Ms. Joplin acknowledged that in certain situations, open communication is conducted via word of mouth. She stated:

[I]f someone's in the office when they're trying to decide something, she might say to that one person, ‘Hey, this is happening, blah, blah, blah. If you want to ask your team what you're going to do, come back and let me know,’ or something.

Ms. Joplin identified a similar circumstance of miscommunication between members of her administrative team as causing issues for teachers. Where Ms. Franklin identified conflict between her administrative team as being the cause in her school, Ms. Joplin identified lack of communication between members of the administrative team as being the cause in her school. She stated:

Sometimes there's not much communication between them. So, I feel like maybe one might give a directive, and then the another will give either an opposite directive or you would get reprimanded for the directive that you're following under one. So, there's maybe a little disconnect.

Ms. Joplin's perception implied that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in the existence of open communication.

The participants who represented middle school expressed perceptions of open communication existing in their schools. Mr. Lennon's previously shared statements indicated that he perceived his principal and immediate supervisors to honor teacher input and decision-making. His statements were further examined to determine if his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in the existence of open communication.

Mr. Lennon discussed communication on several occasions during his interviews. When asked about his principal and immediate supervisors' strengths and weaknesses, Mr. Lennon identified that miscommunication occurred at times. He identified miscommunications as being the result of last minute changes and many activities being planned. He stated:

[T]he door for communication has been left open with, you know, 'hey, we're planning this, what do you guys think? Come together, send us an email.' Or, 'let's come up with

a plan together at a quick staff meeting.' I feel like it's very simple things, but they've been listened to, they've been addressed, and I'm sure things will change for the better moving forward.

Mr. Lennon also perceived that his principal shared updates and information meetings with LEA administrators. He stated:

The principal talks frequently about her conversations, with the superintendent, and going over data analysis, some of the results of how things are rolling forward. So, it does seem like there is a trickle-down effect, but there is also the ability to speak with administrators and have that information go back to some of the higher ups.

Mr. Lennon perceived that his principal and immediate supervisors allowed for the existence of open communication within the school and between the teachers and LEA administrators.

Although miscommunications existed at his school, Mr. Lennon perceived that open communication was valued.

During his interviews, Mr. Hendrix shared his perception of his principal and immediate supervisors. As previously stated, Mr. Hendrix perceived his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors as supporting each of the previously discussed dimensions from TLSS. Mr. Hendrix previously identified that his principal and immediate supervisors supported teacher participation through teacher team leadership, the existence of the Teacher Leadership Team, and the distribution of weekly surveys to teachers. When asked directly about open communication and collaboration, Mr. Hendrix stated, "There's a lot of interaction and communication between leadership and teachers to set the direction of the school."

Mr. Hendrix also discussed his perception of the role that teacher team leaders serve in open communication. First, he explained that team leaders met with his principal and immediate supervisors. He stated, “There's information that is going to be more easily disseminated in that group of leaders where they can take questions and talk about how it affects our class and our kids.” Next, he discussed the responsibilities taken on by team leaders. He stated:

[T]hey manage the climate of our teams, to make sure that student behavior is on track, that families are being communicated with, that we are working toward the school priorities in whatever way we're doing. It's a little bit of both. They do act as a conduit from leadership. Then they are also empowered to lead our teams in the way that best serves our kids.

Finally, he discusses his perception of the interactions between team leaders and his administrative team. He stated:

In that team with the principal plus the team leaders, that might be a place where my principal is asking them for input on upcoming professional development. It might be a place to ask them to give input on programming or events that are coming up. It might just be a space for them to reflect with the principal.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors allowed for the existence of open communication. Furthermore, his perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors allowed for open communication to be a key part of developmental focus, collegiality, and participation.

Comparing the participants' statements with the respondents' scores on TLSS, the researcher found the statements regarding teachers and administrators, and open communication

scored high among the respondents. Of the 10 respondents, seven scored it with a four (often) and one scored it with a five (always). The two remaining respondents scored the statement with a two (rarely) and three (sometimes), respectively. This was comparable to the participants' statements, who mostly identified that their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors allowed the existence of open communication. As one respondent to TLSS scored the statement low, Ms. Franklin perceived less open communication at her school. One area for future research is to examine relationship between open communication and teacher empowerment. As previously stated, Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin perceived open communication to exist, but their principal and immediate supervisors were perceived to not support all other previously discussed dimensions. Their perceptions implied that for their principal and immediate supervisors, open communication was artificial.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding open communication, the researcher examined statements that connected participation with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. The group of participants expressed an overall mixed perception of the existence of open communication from their principals and immediate supervisors.

As previously stated, the participants who represented elementary schools differed in their perception of open communication, between the two schools represented. As previously stated, Ms. Franklin expressed personal frustration with the limited open communication in her school. She stated that all information was expected to be relayed through casual conversations.

Teachers who did not receive the information were subject to being looked down upon for not having the information.

Ms. Franklin also expressed her displeasure with the principal and immediate supervisors' decision-making resulting in teachers not receiving important information. Ms. Franklin previously discussed her school's Teacher Leadership Team and goal setting. As previously stated, the researcher determined her shared experience to be revealing of her and her school's identity. The experience concerned a short-term goal that was decided upon by her administrative team. She stated, "They were like, 'no, we're serious.' I was like, 'are you serious? Does anybody else know this?' And, the staff didn't know. It had never been communicated." Ms. Franklin's perception implied that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, concerning open communication, resulted in teachers having a lesser sense of meaning, competence, and impact; which led to less job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin shared a similar perception of the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and open communication. Ms. Turner identified that teachers were asked for their opinions into upcoming matters, but their opinions were not usually considered when her principal and immediate supervisors made decisions. She added:

Like maybe there was a Survey Monkey that said a top three what would we like to work on. Also, we write our teacher goals, which I feel like could be a good indicator on what people would want to get more PD in. But that's not where they get their information.

Ms. Turner did not make a statement that identified her administrative team as creating an environment where open communication did not exist.

As previously stated Ms. Joplin perceived that members of her school's administrative team did not communicate with each other regularly. She perceived that due to their minimal communication, teachers were reprimanded by an administrator for following the directive of another, on occasion. Ms. Joplin referred to this as "a little disconnect", which the researcher identified as meaning that this was not a perceived concern, but rather a perceived area for improvement. She perceived that despite the miscommunications, teachers knew with which member of the administrative team they could best communicate. Ms. Joplin added:

[I]f I needed something, let's say, with the math curriculum, I would know who to address. If I needed something with more of a housekeeping issue, I would address somebody else. So, I guess there's clarity in that you know who to go to for what needs.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin's perceptions implied that their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors allowed open communication to exist at their school.

The researcher analyzed their perceptions of the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and the previously discussed dimensions. As they perceived negative connections with the previously discussed dimensions, their perceptions implied less psychological empowerment, which led to less work-related outcomes. Both participants perceived that participation was mock, or for show, which did not support feelings of empowerment. Therefore, their perceptions of the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors did not imply a greater or lesser sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, or impact.

Mr. Lennon perceived that his principal and immediate supervisors allowed for the existence of open communication within the school, as well as between teachers and LEA administrators. He further perceived that the principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding open communication, benefitted teacher communication and participation. He stated:

The administration's promoting a sense of open communication and collaboration. I think my team is doing an absolutely fantastic job in doing that. I think this is probably one of the best teams that I've worked with in my years of teaching, because we are always, especially informal meetings whether it's lunch or something in the hallway where we're planning things, we're always helping each other out.

Mr. Lennon's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding open communication, resulted in teachers having a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; and led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors empowering behaviors allowed for the existence of open communication, and that his principal and immediate supervisor's empowering behaviors allowed for open communication to be an important component for supporting developmental focus, collegiality, and participation. Regarding the impact of open communication, Mr. Hendrix stated that much of the information is disseminated to the teacher teams from the team leaders. As previously quoted, Mr. Hendrix perceived that his team was able to make decisions and was trusted to solve problems. He also perceived that his principal and immediate supervisors preferred to share information that would aid his team in solving problems. Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and

immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding open communication, resulted in teachers having a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to increased job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Regarding open communication, the participants' statements implied that in all but one school, open communication existed. However, only the statements from participants who represented middle schools implied that open communication resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. Therefore, the participants' perceptions added to the implied conclusion that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Ms. Franklin perceived that little open communication existed, resulting in overall confusion and less empowerment amongst teachers. Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin perceived that their principal and immediate supervisors provided mock open communication, which did not result in psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. Mr. Lennon and Mr. Hendrix perceived open communication to result in psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes.

Ms. Franklin, Ms. Joplin and Mr. Lennon all perceived issues with miscommunication, to which each of them identified as being caused by different issues. Mr. Lennon identified it as being last minute changes and many planned events and stated that his principal and immediate supervisors supported open communication. Ms. Joplin identified it as being little communication by members of her administrative team. Ms. Franklin identified it as being conflict between members of her administrative team. Only Mr. Lennon's perception implied that despite miscommunications, teacher empowerment existed.

### **Principals and Immediate Supervisors Empowering Behaviors and Positive Environment**

Positive environment is defined as teachers feeling respected by their colleagues, students, students' parents or guardians, and administrators; as well as teachers perceiving their administrative leadership being effective (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The definition of positive environment was identified to encompass the statements and perceptions previously shared by the participants in the discussions of the other six dimensions. This section will recall these statements and share new statements that identify the participants' perceptions of positive environment.

To connect open communication with principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, the researcher examined the seven statements within the dimension of open communication in TLSS. Two statements asked respondents to share their perceptions of connections with their administration. Statement 46 stated, "Teachers and administrators at my school work in partnership." Statement 48 stated, "The principal, faculty, and staff at my school work as a team." These statements directly connect acts by principals and immediate supervisors with teachers' sensing their school to be a positive environment.

Previous statements made by the participants who represent middle schools implied that schools' principals and immediate supervisors support a school climate that is recognized as being a positive environment. For Mr. Hendrix, previous statements included that his principal and immediate supervisors valued collaboration amongst the teachers, participation from teachers in school decisions, provided ways for teachers to share their perceptions on school related matters, and assisted teachers by sharing expertise when help was needed. Mr. Hendrix used positive emotional and evaluative phrasing, such as "I feel", "I think", and "I believe" when he discussed his perception of his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Mr. Hendrix concluded his interviews identifying the successes of his school. Regarding his principal and immediate supervisors, he perceived them as fostering an environment that is supportive of teachers and students and works to retain teachers. He stated:

I would say the last one would just be leadership. We're lucky to have a phenomenal school leader who's thoughtful about both adults and how to take care of them and keeping them in the building, because that's good for kids, it's good for families, and also about how to push us on where we need to go to do even better by our kids.

He further summarized his perception of his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. He added:

[W]e have this team model where teams can meet with a peer leader to set course for their teams. That makes me and my team feel empowered to make decisions that best serve our kids and our situation in those classrooms. I mentioned before we are sent a survey every week asking for feedback and the administration replies to that feedback and is always super receptive to it. I think about our work with our managers where we're really empowered to work collaboratively, to set professional goals, and to think about how do we most want to improve to serve kids this year.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supported a positive school environment.

For Mr. Lennon, previous statements included that his principal and immediate supervisors encouraged teachers to collaborate, accepted feedback and respected teachers' concerns, supported teachers whom they trusted to adjust curriculum when it benefitted student learning, and worked together to improve areas of need, such as student behavior. Mr. Lennon

accredited part of the positive environment of his school to his principal and immediate supervisors being visible in the school. He stated, "I don't know what reason. But I think that visibility piece is key in transferring information into kind of a direction. Coming from the top going down. And I feel like leadership there really plays a big role." When asked how he would hypothesize the school's change, if he were to switch the administration from his current school to the administration from his former school, Mr. Lennon stated:

If we were to switch administrators and go back to what I'd experienced before, I don't think that would be a positive thing for the school in any way. Having the principal and assistant principal work together is a very important thing. It's seen, noticed, felt by students but also from staff.

Regarding the connection between his principal and immediate supervisors, and positive environment, Mr. Lennon stated, "I just feel like they're trying to really create a very positive environment at the school and rewarding improvements in academics, growth, but also on the behavior side of things, so it's fantastic."

Where Mr. Hendrix perceived that the improvement plan and receivership influenced his school's environment, Mr. Lennon did not. Mr. Lennon stated:

The administration that's in place now, I don't think they would have been affected by receivership. I feel as though they're a very strong team. They're excellent leaders...I feel as though, with the administrative team that we have in place now, striving for the academic performance, but I guess overall happiness, in that it's a great place to be, I think this administration team would have done that regardless of receivership. So, it's a nice place right now.

Mr. Lennon's perception implied that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supported a positive school environment.

Previous statements made by the participants who represent elementary schools implied a mixed perception of how both schools' principals and immediate supervisors support a school climate that is recognized as being a positive environment. For Ms. Franklin, previous statements included that her principal and immediate supervisors had conflicts that created confusion and uncomfortable feelings amongst teachers, separately gave teachers conflicting direction, did not provide open communication, and made decisions with minimal input from teachers. Ms. Franklin also perceived that individual teachers were able to address concerns so long as they had an identified solution.

Previously stated, Ms. Franklin perceived her principal and immediate supervisors' leadership style to be top down decision making. She equated her perception to be reflective of LEA's administration as well. She stated, "I see a lot of top down. I don't see a lot of comparison." She also equated her perception of the lack in open communication to be reflective of the LEA's administration. She stated:

I think that's one of the things that teachers get so frustrated about. You never know what's going on. You learn so much about what's going on through rumors. I learned about the plan to push the principle of inclusion in the district... conversations are just driven in the direction where all we could say, because questions are all skewed, and you can't say anything other than clearly what the conclusions are to come to. And it's so frustrating.

Ms. Franklin perceived the environment of the LEA to one that claimed to be supportive of teacher participation, voice, and be receptive to input; however, she described her perception as the culture being for show.

Ms. Franklin was asked how her perception connected to the direction put forth by the receiver. As previously quoted, she expressed she was not certain that principals in the LEA were making good choices. She added, “They may be making the best choices, but there's so much top down.” And, she later stated:

[B]ecause all of those discussions take place behind closed doors, so to speak, or only a couple people hear about it, or they get one or two opinions from these two people, then, they're like, ‘Well, I spoke to the staff.’ We're all like, ‘What? Okay?’ It's like that.

Ms. Franklin’s perception implied that her principal and immediate supervisors’ empowering behaviors did not support a positive school environment. Her perception also implied that teachers sensed the lack of positive environment to be a result of decisions made by the LEA administration.

For Ms. Joplin, previous statements included that her principal and immediate supervisors did not allow for teacher decision-making in academics, did not support the higher-grade teacher teams regarding student behavior, did not receive criticism well but were approachable for assistance in areas of strength for them, openly communicated with teachers, and did not interact with each other on a regular basis, resulting in miscommunication and teachers wrongfully being reprimanded at times. For Ms. Turner, previous statements agreed with most of Ms. Joplin’s statements. Differences between both were noted in the amount of support perceived to be provided to teachers, regarding student behaviors, and the

miscommunications resulting in teachers being wrongfully reprimanded. Regarding support with student behaviors, Ms. Turner perceived little support for teachers at all grade levels. Regarding teachers being wrongfully reprimanded, Ms. Turner did not make any statement that would agree or disagree with Ms. Joplin's statement. For both Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin, previous statements were determined to be inconclusive as to whether their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors supported a positive school environment. Examination of further statements was conducted to determine whether their perceptions could imply a result.

Ms. Joplin compared the culture of school to that of students in a high school and explained that teachers worked within different groups. Her explanation included that she did not perceive hostility between the different groups, but rather teachers coming together with others with whom they felt comfortable. She stated:

[I]t's kind of different groups. It's almost like high school. There's different, not cliques, but it's just like your own team, you're with them all the time. So, I worked a couple different teams so there's a couple different people that I would look out for, try to help if they needed help. It happens a lot with the newer teachers, not so much the older teachers, the teachers who have been there for a while.

She also shared her perception of teachers supporting their colleagues. Regarding the environment, Ms. Joplin stated:

If you can approach a situation and say, 'Hey, listen, can I help you?' And the teacher's receptive to that help, then I would say, we'd try. But, teachers are leery of upsetting

anyone or ruffling any feathers, so I feel as though we have a core group of teachers that look out for each other.

Ms. Joplin's perception implied that an overall positive environment did not exist. However, teachers who were comfortable with each other worked together to make a positive environment.

Ms. Joplin did make any further statements that connected her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors with positive environment.

Ms. Turner made statements that implied her feelings of hope. She did not make statements that contrasted with Ms. Joplin's statements; however, she did add her perception of the cause of her school's environment. When asked about her perception of her principal and immediate supervisors strengths and weaknesses, she identified the root of their behaviors to be assessment data. As previously stated in Chapter One, placement on an improvement plan by the governing SEA resulted from different variables, including state assessment data (NCLB, 2002).

She stated:

I don't think those flaws or weaknesses specifically have to do with the receivership. I think that they're worried about our school in general, just passing our observations by the state and making sure our school does better, and making sure the kids, we're showing what the kids can actually do in those observations and on the tests. So, I think that there's pressure for the principals and for the teachers to get out of receivership and try to do better as a school overall.

Ms. Turner equated the lack of a positive environment to emotional pressure amongst all faculty and administrators to improve assessment data. She added that she perceived everyone in her school to have the right intentions and stated:

[I]t's hard to say if maybe teachers and principals might start to feel a little less pressure and start to not try as hard. I'm not sure. I hope not. I hope we continue to go in the right direction.

Ms. Turner perception agreed with Ms. Joplin's perception, and implied that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors did not support a positive school environment.

### **Participants' Psychological Empowerment and Work-Related Outcomes**

To determine the participants' perceptions of their level of empowerment and work-related outcomes through their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding positive environment, the researcher examined statements that connected participation with their sense of psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. The group of participants expressed an overall mixed perception of the existence of open communication from their principals and immediate supervisors.

As previously stated, the participants who represented middle schools presented perceptions that supported cultures of positive school environments. Mr. Hendrix's previous statements included his summary that his principal and immediate supervisors created a model that resulted in his teacher team feeling empowered. He added, "I feel a sense of empowerment here. If I have a concern, someone will follow up with me and we can talk about it so that we can fix it. Yes, I feel empowered here." Mr. Hendrix also shared his perception of the growth that his school made over the course of the LEA being on the improvement plan. He stated:

It takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of time and energy and reflection. I think we've gotten where we've been because we are constantly thinking how we can get better. Like I said, I think our leadership does a great job setting priorities for us, talking to us until we have

some things that we believe will help guide our work towards what's going to best serve kids.

Mr. Hendrix also shared that his school's environment was expressed through all school staff, and not just teachers. Sharing his perception of a conversation with the school's custodian, Mr. Hendrix stated:

I remember my first or second year one of the custodians showing me a picture on his phone of what the hallways used to look like. He said 'we would get them clean and then kids would just throw stuff on the ground. There was broken glass.' Again, the receivership and the level of accountability it brought, and the flexibility it gave us to design our program allowed us to establish, within a few years, this is how we expect our school climate to be. Here's how we're going to get there. I still remember the pride that he had in saying that this used to be a mess and now look at this school.

Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that the connection between his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and positive environment, resulted in teachers having a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Mr. Lennon's previously shared statements identified his perception as being that his principal and immediate supervisors created a positive school environment. He was asked if at the time the improvement plan and receivership leave the Rockford Public Schools, would he hypothesize changes at his school. He replied:

I don't think so. I think day-to-day operations or if you're looking at the scope of the whole year, nothing is really going to change. If the receivership ends or someone else

takes that place, I think what we have in place right now is working and I think that would be pretty much consistent across the board.

Mr. Lennon perceived that his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors created a positive school environment, where he perceived most teachers as feeling empowered. He reaffirmed his perception of being trusted to adjust his curriculum to help students learn more. He stated:

I had said, 'Is that okay, that we've taken basically a class or a class and a half just making a materials list?' And she said, 'Absolutely. You've identified the student's weakness in this. They need to do some of the heavy lifting, so we feel like it's appropriate. Roll with it.' On the same side of the coin, I've had some do-nows where clearly there was some sort of misconception that needed to be addressed, and what should have taken anywhere between five to seven minutes ended up taking 60, 70, maybe even 80 minutes, and it was a teachable moment that I was allowed to seize and be able to go through it. And in years past that would have been shelved immediately, that I'm too off topic.

He concluded his interviews identifying math teachers as one group that does not have greater ability to adjust their lessons. Although Mr. Lennon did not state the reason for this perception, the researcher hypothesizes that his statements regarding student performance as being a predetermining variable of teachers being allowed to adjust their lessons. The researcher hypothesizes that math was a subject area of concern in student performance.

Mr. Lennon's perception also implied that the connection between his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and positive environment, resulted in teachers

having a greater sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. The participants who represented middle schools combined perception indicated a greater sense of psychological empowerment. As two participants represented two middle schools, the conclusions are not generalizable. However, the comparisons between the Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Lennon are that they teach in the middle school level and they teach science. The researcher questions if there are differences in the perceived empowerment among all middle schools and between teachers from different subject areas. Mr. Lennon's statement of math teachers having less autonomy implied the possibility for differences to exist.

As previously stated, the participants who represented elementary schools presented mixed perceptions concerning cultures of positive school environments. Ms. Franklin's previous shared statements implied that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors did not support a positive school environment. She evidenced conflict between her principal and immediate supervisors and lack of communication as being reasons for her perception.

Ms. Franklin was asked if she perceived teachers in the Rockford Public Schools to be empowered. She replied:

I don't think so. I think one of the biggest lessons I've learned being in (Rockford) is how to be an advocate for myself. I've never had to advocate for my job before, or advocate and work to convince people that I'm good at what I do. I just always, in everything that I did, since my very first job in high school, I did my job and people noticed I was good at it.

Later in the discussion, she added:

I actively do my job...I definitely present myself differently. I definitely propose things differently. I take on responsibilities with the idea of making things better for all the people around me. I also advocate for myself as I do it. It's an uncomfortable thing. I'd rather just do the work. I have a much better working experience because I do advocate for myself.

Ms. Franklin perceived that self-advocacy resulted in teacher empowerment, and not principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Regarding the connection between principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and positive environment, Ms. Franklin's perception implied that it resulted in teachers having a lesser sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin's shared perceptions implied that their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors did not result in a positive school environment. Ms. Joplin explained that positive environment existed in a limited capacity between groups of teachers who banded together to help each other. Ms. Turner did not place blame on their principal and immediate supervisors, stating that the nature of the improvement plan being centered on improving state assessment data being a leading cause of stress amongst her principal and immediate supervisors, resulting in the lack of a positive environment across the whole school. The researcher hypothesized this to be the cause of their principal and immediate supervisors' displaying top down decision making, regarding academics, and being less involved in issues regarding student behaviors.

During the focus group, the participants who attended were asked if they felt empowered and to provide evidence. Ms. Joplin replied:

I would say with some things and sometimes, personally. District wide, I would say no. We're a small drop in the ocean, really, and some of things I feel like we can't make the decisions. Some leaders have to make decisions. I feel like that's their role. Sometimes you are afraid to voice your feelings, even when they do ask for our input.

As quoted before, Ms. Turner added:

They pretty much say that at the beginning of the year too. Even when it comes down to consequences in behavior, there are no overarching consequences in behavior. It comes down to what one teacher might do for a kid hitting somebody is completely different from what another teacher might do, and it might depend on the kid.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Joplin's combined perceptions implied that the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and positive environment, resulted in teachers having a lesser sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact; which led to greater job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. Ms. Turner's perception was that the identified connection was the result of her principal and immediate supervisor's stress concerning the improvement of state assessment data.

Regarding positive environment, there were differences among the participants' perceptions. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived less empowerment, regarding positive environment. Ms. Franklin's perception implied the cause of this to be an overall LEA culture of presenting a particular impression of valuing open communication and teacher participation and it being artificial. Ms. Turner's perception implied that it resulted from stress related to improving state achievement data. The participants who represented middle schools perceived greater empowerment, regarding positive environment.

## Summary of Results

The preceding data was shared to provide evidence as to the participants' perceptions of their empowerment, while working in an LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan. The data was organized to coincide with the areas of the TLSS, which was distributed to respondents, prior to conducting the focus group and interviews, for developing focus group and interview questions. The sub-sections were organized by seven dimensions, including developmental focus, recognition, autonomy, collegiality, participation, open communication, and positive environment. The researcher identified statements to be interchangeable among the dimensions. In some occurrences, a statement might support one sense of empowerment, but not support another sense of empowerment. Also, in some occurrences, statements implied a cause and effect relationship between the dimensions and guided the researcher in finding results to teacher empowerment.

Regarding developmental focus, there were differences among the participants' perceptions. Developmental focus is defined as teachers being assisted in gaining new knowledge and skills, and encouraging others to learn (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The participants who represented elementary schools perceived less empowerment, regarding developmental focus. The empowering behaviors identified were selective of which teachers to support, which professional development opportunities would be delivered, and the results of teachers sharing their opinions as being grounds for being targeted by the administrative teams. The participants who represented middle schools perceived greater empowerment, regarding developmental focus. The empowering behaviors identified were inclusion of teachers in discussion of whole school goals, supporting teacher growth through professional development opportunities, highlighting teacher team successes as examples for other teams, encouraging to

build upon their professional commitments, and acknowledging requests to discuss current direction.

Regarding recognition, the participants' perceptions indicated that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Recognition is defined as teachers being recognized for the roles they take and the contributions they make and having mutual respect and caring (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that lead to mixed feelings of empowerment. Discussions of the cultures within each of the participants' current schools would have led to the question of whether the differences existed between the elementary and middle school academic levels.

Regarding autonomy, the participants' perceptions indicated that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Autonomy is defined as teachers being encouraged to be proactive in making improvements and innovations, with barriers being removed and resources being found to support teachers' efforts (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that lead to mixed feelings of empowerment. Mr. Hendrix's perception implied that their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, regarding autonomy in both academics and student behaviors. Mr. Lennon perceived that select teachers had greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, regarding academics, and that both depended on the principal and immediate supervisors' actions, regarding student behaviors. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools implied that there was less psychological empowerment and

work-related outcomes that resulted from their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding autonomy in both academics and student behaviors.

Regarding collegiality, the participants' perceptions indicated that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Collegiality is defined as teachers collaborating on instructional and student-related matters (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that lead to mixed feelings of empowerment. Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Lennon's perceptions implied that their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, regarding collegiality. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools implied that there was less psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes that resulted from their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding collegiality.

Regarding participation, the participants' perceptions added to the implied conclusion that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Participation is defined as teachers being actively involved in making decisions and having input on important matters, and department chairpersons, team leaders, and other key leaders being selected with the participation of teachers (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The collective group of participants expressed a mixed perception of empowering behaviors that lead to mixed feelings of empowerment. Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Lennon's perceptions continued to imply that their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. The perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools

continued to imply that there was less psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes that resulted from their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived that participation existed but did not influence the impact of their schools' direction. They perceived participation to be mock.

Open communication is defined as teachers sending and receiving information relevant to the effective functioning of the school in open and honest ways and feeling informed about what is happening in the school (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). Regarding open communication, the participants' perceptions implied that in all, but one school, open communication existed. However, only the perceptions from participants who represented middle schools implied that open communication resulted in greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. Therefore, the participants' perceptions added to the implied conclusion that teacher empowerment in the Rockford Public Schools was dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Regarding positive environment, there were differences between the participants' perceptions. Positive environment is defined as teachers having a general satisfaction with the work environment, feeling respected by another, by parents, students and administrators, perceiving the school as having effective administrative leadership (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005). The participants who represented elementary schools perceived less empowerment, regarding positive environment. Ms. Franklin's perception implied the cause of this to be an overall LEA culture of presenting a particular impression of valuing open communication and teacher participation and it being mock. Ms. Turner's perception implied that it resulted for stress related to improving state achievement data. The participants who represented middle schools perceived greater empowerment, regarding positive environment.

All results from the participants' statements aided the researcher in determining that the empowerment of teachers was dependent upon the empowering behaviors of their principals and immediate supervisors. Commonalities existed between the perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools and the perceptions of the participants who represented middle schools. As a total number of four schools were represented by five participants, these results are not generalizable to all schools in the Rockford Public Schools, nor to teacher empowerment as a subject. Regarding receivership, the statements made by the participants implied that receivership did not directly impact their empowerment. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five. These results provide one piece of evidence that will guide future research in the subject of teacher empowerment.

### **Chapter Summary**

A study was conducted to examine the perceived empowerment of teachers in a LEA that was placed on an improvement plan, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee. The researcher sought to determine whether teachers perceived themselves to be empowered. A qualitative methodology was applied to conduct the study. Data was collected through three sources.

First, the Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Information (TES) was submitted to teachers at schools, where principals granted the researcher permission to invite teachers to participate (See Appendix C). The demographic seeking survey was comprised of eight-items that were designed to obtain demographic information of the respondents and determined whether respondents were interested in participation. A total of 394 teachers were eligible to receive the invitation to respond to the survey. Through respondent interest in participation, eligibility to participate, responses to invitations to participate, five teachers were

interviewed in their perceptions of teacher empowerment in an LEA that was placed on an improvement plan. See Appendix D for all collected data from TES.

The study's design included selecting respondents who expressed interest in participation by academic level taught, to allow for representation across all levels. Due to a limited number of principals who consented for the researcher to contact teachers from their school, and low number of replies from correspondence to respondents who indicated interest in participation or requested further information, the researcher selected five participants who expressed interest in further correspondence. Of the five selected participants, three responded during the 2016-2017 school year and were eligible to participate. The remaining two responded during the 2016-2017 school year, and at the time had been employed in their current school for two years. The researcher conducted a follow-up correspondence, inviting them to participate, following the conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year, as it completed their third year of employment in their current school.

At the same time of distribution of the electronic demographic seeking survey, the researcher distributed the Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS) (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005) to teachers at schools, where principals granted the researcher permission to invite teachers to participate (See Appendix C). TLSS is designed as a quantitative data tool, using 49 statements to gather information concerning seven dimensions. Each dimension was measured with seven statements. The researcher did not use TLSS to quantitatively gather data. It was used to gain an understanding of the respondents' perceptions of their school and administration, for guiding the researcher in developing focus group and interview questions. A total of 394 teachers were eligible to respond to TLSS, by written permission from their principal. Of the 394, 10 teachers responded to the survey (2%).

The dimension of developmental focus scored highest with seven of the 10 respondents. Of the three remaining respondents, developmental focus scored second highest with one respondent and third highest with two respondents. Six respondents scored the dimension with 25 points or higher, with Respondent Two scoring the dimension with 19 points. Respondent Two scored developmental focus highest amongst all dimensions. The data indicated that the group of respondents had an overall perception of the statements in developmental focus as occurring more frequently than the statements in the other dimensions.

The dimension of participation scored lowest with seven of the 10 respondents. Of the three remaining respondents, participation scored second lowest with all three respondents. Half of the respondents scored the dimension at or between 20 and 25 points. The other half of the respondents scored the dimension at or between 16 and 19 points, indicating an overall perception of the statements in the dimension occurring sometimes or less frequently. It is important to note that Respondent Nine did not score two statements in the dimension. Had Respondent Nine scored both statements at the highest score of five, participation would remain the lowest scored dimension. Respondent Nine would have still scored participation lower than five of the other dimensions, giving it the same score as the dimension that they scored the second lowest. The data indicated that the group of respondents had an overall perception of the statements in participation as occurring less frequently than the statements in the other dimensions. See Appendix E for all collected data from TLSS.

As previously stated, although the study was designed to include seven to nine participants, the researcher obtained five interested and eligible teachers to participate. The focus group was conducted with three of the participants, and two individual interviews were conducted with each participant. Data collected from the focus group and interviews was

organized by the connection between their principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and each of the seven dimensions from TLSS. The sub-sections were organized by seven dimensions, including developmental focus, recognition, autonomy, collegiality, participation, open communication, and positive environment. The researcher identified statements to be interchangeable between the dimensions. In some occurrences, a statement might support one sense of empowerment, but not support another sense of empowerment. Also, in some occurrences, statements implied a cause and effect relationship between the dimensions and guided the researcher in finding results to teacher empowerment.

All results from the participants' statements aided the researcher in determining that the empowerment of teachers was dependent upon the empowering behaviors of their principals and immediate supervisors. Connections between components of the improvement plan were perceived to be determining variables of principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Commonalities existed between the perceptions of the participants who represented elementary schools and the perceptions of the participants who represented middle schools. As a total number of four schools were represented by five participants, these results are not generalizable to all schools in the LEA, or teacher empowerment as a subject. In Chapter Five, the researcher will analyze the data, connect the results with previous research, identify areas for future study, and discuss the limitations and delimitations of this study.

## Chapter 5

### Discussions, Recommendations, and Reflections

The purpose of this case study, which applied qualitative research study methodology, was to describe how teachers, employed in a Local Education Agency (LEA) that had been placed on an improvement plan appointed a receiver or trustee perceived the impact that their leaders' behaviors had on teacher empowerment. In this study, teacher empowerment was defined as a process of school leaders' demonstrating empowering behaviors enabling teachers to experience their senses of meaning, autonomy, competence, and impact (Lee & Nie, 2014). This study was guided by the question: How do the behaviors of school and LEA based administration impact the empowerment of teachers whom they supervise, as evidenced by teacher perception? This study was supported through the exploration of three sub-questions, which were:

1. Do teachers perceive the appointment of a receiver or trustee as having an effect on the processes of teacher empowerment?
2. How do teacher perceptions of their leaders' behaviors vary among teachers of different schools within the same LEA?
3. If any, which parts of the improvement plan placed on the LEA do teachers perceive as having an effect on school and LEA administrators' behaviors?

Through exploring the research question and sub-questions, the researcher sought to understand the perceived empowerment of teachers who worked in a LEA that had been placed on an improvement plan by its governing State Education Agency (SEA), resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee. The overarching goal of this study was to provide researchers, SEA

administrators, LEA administrators, school administrators, and teachers with insight into teachers' perceptions of their own empowerment, for the purpose of identifying principals' empowering behaviors that foster teachers' senses of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. A purpose for the researcher was to provide a foundation that would guide future researchers. An additional purpose for the researcher was to provide LEAs, which have been placed on improvement plans, with insight into the empowering behaviors that teachers perceived to result in greater and less psychological empowerment.

In all LEAs and schools, teachers perceived psychological empowerment as being dependent upon their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, which subsequently affected teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment (Lee & Nie, 2014; Lee & Nie, 2015). For LEAs that were placed on improvement plans, the data collected from this study's focus group and 10 individual interviews confirms Lee and Nie's theoretical framework. For the case study site of the Rockford Public Schools, principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors were perceived to be different among the four schools that were represented, resulting in the participants perceiving varying amounts of self-psychological empowerment.

This chapter discusses the researcher's analysis, synthesis, and interpretations of the study's findings. The chapter is organized by first presenting connections between this study's findings and prior studies' findings, then presenting the researchers reflections, and lastly presenting recommendations for future research. The conclusion of this chapter will summarize the researcher's synthesis and reflections.

### **Connections between This Study and Prior Studies**

This case study was designed to examine teachers' perceived psychological empowerment, as determined by their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The study's participants were employed in a LEA that was placed on an improvement plan by its governing SEA, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee to serve with the absolute authority regularly bestowed upon the combined roles of the superintendent and school committee. The findings from this case study's collected data identified that despite the LEA's improvement plan, teachers' psychological empowerment was dependent upon their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Furthermore, of the four items that Lee and Nie (2014) identify as comprising the existence of teachers' psychological empowerment (senses of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact), different empowering behaviors from principals and immediate supervisors influenced one, some, or all of these senses differently.

The researcher identified that of the principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, the participants' statements concerning supporting teachers, teacher voice in school-wide decision-making and addressing concerns and allowing for teacher autonomy in academics and student behavior, with guidance, were identified as being the three themes that the discussions in the focus group and individual interviews encompassed. Dependent upon the identified school's administrative team, the participants also expressed varying perceptions of the improvement plan's influence on these empowering behaviors. To discuss the findings and compare to prior studies, the following summary is organized separately by each of the themes identified by the researcher. Each section will include findings from the participants'

perceptions of their school's administrative team and of the improvement plan's influence on their administrative team, when applicable.

### **Supporting Teachers**

Concerning the support of teachers through providing assistance and professional development opportunities, the participants' statements indicated that principals and immediate supervisors within the case study site had varying empowering behaviors. Statements from the participants who represented elementary schools identified support as being dependent on principals and immediate supervisors' subjective positions towards individual teachers. The participants identified their perception of top down decision-making as leading to the teachers' struggles to meet expectations.

The participants who represented elementary schools perceived their particular school's culture to be one in which teachers who were struggling to meet expectations were more likely to resign. Teachers who were identified as being competent received greater support. Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach's (2014) study found that increased authentic leadership resulted in decreased intent to leave, and increased feelings of meaning and competence. The participants identified that they were conditioned to know who to contact for assistance, when and when not to contact the identified administrator or supervisor, and how to approach the situation. Furthermore, they perceived that professional development opportunities were limited to in-school activities that were conducted by their principal and immediate supervisors. Professional development from outside the school was perceived to be specifically for select teachers with whom the principals and immediate supervisors had a greater kinship, or not available at all. Lee and Nie's (2015) study corroborated the participants' perceptions, finding that principals had greater engagement in delegating authority and immediate supervisors had greater engagement in

supporting teachers. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived a decreased release of authority, which resulted in limited support being available for teachers. This resulted in perceptions of lower psychological empowerment.

Statements made by the participants who represented elementary schools indicated their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors limits their perceptions of having low psychological empowerment. Specifically, they identified perceptions of selected teachers receiving support, their being expected to not question decisions that were made, and their receiving conflicting supports from their principals and immediate supervisors. Through examination of their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and further statements of their empowerment, the statements from participants who represented elementary schools indicated that they perceived the amount of support that teachers received to be dependent on a subjective criterion. The subjective criterion included their principals and immediate supervisors favoring selected teachers. They further perceived their low support as resulting in their perceptions of having less psychological empowerment.

The participants' perceptions were further compared to Lee and Nie (2015), and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach's (2014) findings. As previously stated, Lee and Nie found that principals had greater engagement in delegation of authority, and immediate supervisors had greater engagement in supporting teachers. Also, Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach found that increased authentic leadership resulted in increased perceptions of meaning and competence. The participants perceived a hesitation of their principals to delegate authority. They also perceived their immediate supervisors to be limited in the support that was able to be offered. Their statements may imply a perception of feeling less self-meaning and competence. The

findings lead to a new hypothesis that principals who do not delegate authority establish school cultures where teachers perceive less support, resulting in teachers perceiving less psychological empowerment.

However, the participants who represented middle schools perceived a greater sense of support from their principals and immediate supervisors. Statements made by the participants indicated similarities and differences in their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. The similarities included a perception of their principals and immediate supervisors meeting with teachers on a regular basis and have discussions about what was best for students. This resulted in teachers being able to communicate their needs and was perceived as being evident of principals and immediate supervisors actively listening to and supporting the participants. Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) identified connections between principals' authentic leadership, teachers' sense of impact, and teachers' organizational citizenship behaviors, which the researcher identified as being comparative to organizational commitment (Lee & Nie, 2014). The empowering behaviors of the principals and immediate supervisors from the represented middle schools, regarding support, resulted in statements from the participants that identified their sense of having impact in their teaching and their involvement in their school's culture; which resulted in their emotional and evaluative statements of their satisfaction of improving the culture of their schools.

Though the empowering behaviors exhibited were different, they resulted in the participants' perceiving greater psychological empowerment. One participant perceived his administrative team to set their vision, provide professional development, and allow teachers to collaborate on best practices, while supporting the teacher teams when they struggled. The other participant perceived a greater expectation to remain faithful to prescribed curricula, with his

administrative team supporting teachers' deviation when it would best support student learning. This was evident in the shared statement concerning the differences between his ability to remain focused on a do now exercise when students benefitted from a class discussion, but math teachers being expected to stick to a lesson's pacing guide. Pearson and Moomaw's (2005) findings suggest that increased curriculum autonomy results in increased perceptions of empowerment and decreased job stress. One participant's statements about his colleague indicate a corroboration with these findings. He did not express emotions of job stress. Instead, he expressed his perception of being empowered. However, he stated that this perception was not shared by one colleague.

Statements made by the participants who represented middle schools indicated their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to result with their perceptions of having greater psychological empowerment. Both participants perceived their principals and immediate supervisors as supporting teachers in manners that had the students' best interests in mind. They had several perceptions. Teachers were encouraged to collaborate with their colleagues. They were to share best practices and seek support from their principals and immediate supervisors after working together to identify a solution. Lastly, teachers were to collaborate with their principals and immediate supervisors to identify additional supports through problem solving and professional development. Although both participants perceived greater support, there were differences in the perceived amount of release of authority to the teachers and immediate supervisors. Both expressed their being supported through a release of authority; however, one participant perceived this was not the case for all teachers. As previously stated in Chapter Four, his colleague's experience exemplified the different experiences between teachers at his school. However, the participant still perceived a

great amount of support to be evident at his school for all teachers. The other participant perceived the release of authority to be equal amongst all teachers and made statements that expressed his perception to be school-wide.

The statements made by the participants who represented middle schools implied a sense of teachers having greater psychological empowerment. The culture of the represented middle schools was perceived as being supportive of teachers. The participants had greater involvement in decision-making, while possessing an understanding that decision-making needs to be top-down at times. Their perceptions implied that teachers were able work collaboratively, and that their principals and immediate supervisors were receptive of teachers' thoughts and concerns. The results of Lee and Nie's (2015) study showed that principals were more engaged in fostering collaborative relationships. Lee and Nie suggested this might be due to principals providing more positional power to their employees.

While examining the data collected from the focus group and interviews, the researcher identified that, for a school in receivership, the improvement plan did not result in an exact school leadership approach regarding supporting teachers. There was not one adopted leadership approach by all principals and immediate supervisors of the represented schools. The researcher hypothesizes this to be representative for all schools within the case study site. Differing empowering behaviors from principals and immediate supervisors resulted in differing perceptions of psychological empowerment amongst the participants.

Singh and Sarkar (2013) found that for female teachers from India, latent empowerment can be perceived from their principals' support. This was identified as being derived from India's societal culture, where males were identified as having greater authority. Therefore, it was determined that different empowering feelings existed among female and male teachers.

The researcher's study findings also corroborated with findings from other international studies that were conducted. The researcher identified that all elementary school participants were female teachers and middle school participants were male teachers. To determine whether Singh and Sarkar's findings could have a connection with the case study site, the researcher evaluated the identified gender of the participants' principals and immediate supervisors and sought to determine whether the participants perceived empowering behaviors were dependent upon gender of their principals and immediate supervisors, or teachers.

To obtain this information, the researcher examined the participants' statements to determine the genders of their principals and immediate supervisors, and if they made any evaluative or emotional statements regarding gender. Due to concerns with anonymity, the gender of each participants' principal and immediate supervisors cannot be shared. However, all five participants used gender specific pronouns when discussing their principal and immediate supervisors, and all participants used female and male related pronouns to reference the members of their school's administrative team. Furthermore, no statements made during the focus group or interviews identified differences in supports or perceived psychological empowerment between teachers of any gender. The researcher determined, for this study, that the participants' perception of their psychological empowerment was not related to their gender or their principals and immediate supervisors' genders.

Evaluating the LEA and improvement plan's role in supporting teachers, the researcher identified more statements were made concerning the participants' school administration than of the LEA, improvement plan, and receivership. Four of the participants made statements that identified supports in curriculum. One participant did not make statements regarding support from the LEA administration. Another participant identified that the LEA supported his school's

administration to have its own autonomy, who supported teachers in the same manner, which created a system of administrators being there to guide employees when it was needed. In contrast, three of the five participants made statements that indicated the LEA administration supporting their schools with selected curriculum, with the aim of improving student learning.

Pearson and Moomaw (2005) found that increased curriculum autonomy resulted in decreased work stress. The three participants identified that despite having less curriculum autonomy, they perceived the curriculum to be beneficial to student learning, and not a cause of work stress. One participant shared a colleague's experience. With this experience, the participant attributed the stress to his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors concerning the mathematics curriculum, and not the mandated curriculum on its own. This was further noted in the statement he made of his being supported to deviate when it benefitted student learning. The researcher determined that the participants did not perceive the LEA administration's empowering behaviors to hinder their perceptions of their psychological empowerment. Their statements of support identified their principals and immediate supervisors as having a greater role in influencing their perceived psychological empowerment than the LEA, improvement plan, and receivership.

In relation to supporting teachers, principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors were determined to vary between the represented schools. The LEA administration was perceived by three participants to have a greater focus on identifying curriculum need. One participant perceived his principal and immediate supervisors to be provided with autonomy by the LEA administration.

The participants' statements indicated that school-based administrators' empowering behaviors had a greater impact on the empowerment of teachers. Lee and Nie (2015) found that

principals had greater engagement in delegation of authority, and immediate supervisors had greater engagement in supporting teachers. The researcher found that in this case study, delegation of authority was a predicting variable in determining the participants' perceived psychological empowerment. Principals who enacted top down decision-making provided less ability for immediate supervisors to support teachers. Principals who allowed for delegation of authority also allowed for teachers to feel supported. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) found that authentic leadership resulted in increased feelings of meaning and competence. By delegating authority, teachers received greater support, which resulted in greater perceptions of psychological empowerment.

### **Teacher Voice**

The participants shared their perceptions of their having voice in school-wide decision-making and addressing their concerns. As with their perceptions of receiving supports from their principals and immediate supervisors, the participants' perceptions indicated varying empowering behaviors among all represented schools' principals and immediate supervisors. The researcher recognized that the participants' perceptions remained different between the participants who represented elementary schools and participants who represented middle schools.

As with support, the participants who represented elementary schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors as demonstrating empowering behaviors that allowed for limited teacher voice in addressing concerns. They also perceived teachers as having less involvement in school-wide decision-making. As stated in the supporting teachers section, the participants who represented elementary schools explained that they knew who to contact, when to contact the identified person, and how to address their concerns. Two participants explained

that dependent on the concern, teachers knew which member of their administrative team was best to contact. They also stated that in many instances they knew not to address concerns to their principal and immediate supervisors, but rather seek assistance from their colleagues. Results from Somech's (2005) study determined that professional commitment was high when teachers either perceived personal empowerment or team empowerment. The participants' statements indicated that they felt more comfortable working in teams and addressing concerns in teams rather than individually.

One participant explained that her principal expressed to the faculty that all decisions made by the principal were final. She further explained that she was able to address concerns with her principal but needed to come with an identified solution. The participant indicated that because of conflict among the principal and immediate supervisors, decisions were often conflicting. Because, of conflicts, teachers struggled to voice their concerns. The researcher determined through the participant's statements that due to conflict, teachers struggled to voice their concerns. Singh and Sarkar (2013) suggested that job satisfaction still resulted despite latent empowerment. They also suggest that perceptions of empowerment and its definition are dependent upon the culture of the school, as in some schools, teachers can perceive latent empowerment. However, the participant explained that she perceived that she was heard by her principal and her voice was valued. Her statements about her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors indicated that she did not perceive the same for all teachers.

Statements made by the participants who represented elementary schools continued to indicate their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to result with their perceptions of having less psychological empowerment. Specifically, they identified perceptions of not being able to voice concerns with their principals and immediate

supervisors, having feelings of confusion and hesitation when asked about voicing their concerns, and feeling as if they were not permitted to be included in the decision-making process, regarding curriculum. Through examination of their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and further statements of their empowerment, the statements from participants who represented elementary schools implied a sense of teachers needing to be subordinate to top down decision-making and being limited in their ability to add their suggestions to decision-making. Their statements added to the indicated conclusion that they perceived themselves to have less psychological empowerment. Returning to Lee and Nie (2015), and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach's (2014) studies, the researcher determined that as there was not delegation of authority at the schools, the participants perceived less ability to have voice. As they perceived less authentic leadership, their senses of meaning and competence decreased.

As with support, the participants who represented middle schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors as demonstrating empowering behaviors that allowed for greater teacher voice in addressing concerns and having involvement in school-wide decision-making. As previously discussed in the supporting teachers' section, one participant identified that his principal and immediate supervisors supported teachers by sanctioning greater teacher autonomy. Regarding teacher voice, the participant stated that his principal and immediate supervisors organized teachers into teams, where they shared ideas and strategies. His principal and immediate supervisors were described as presenting their goals for the school year, then allowing teachers to work together to conceptualize best strategies for achieving the identified goals. Teachers would seek out the principal and immediate supervisors when guidance was needed. Another participant shared a similar perception of his school. His statements identified

that his principal and immediate supervisors encouraged teacher collaboration. His principal and immediate supervisors were described as being receptive of teachers' concerns, adapting their practices to improve the school's climate, being transparent in decision-making, and encouraging teachers to share best practices.

Somech (2005) determined that professional commitment was high when teachers either perceived personal empowerment or team empowerment. Both participants who represented middle schools identified that their principals and immediate supervisors demonstrated empowering behaviors that fostered teacher voice individually and in teams and fostered teacher collaboration. Both participants perceived that along with being receptive of teacher voice, their principals and immediate supervisors expressed empowering behaviors that promoted professional commitment for teachers. The researcher noted that as the participants who represented elementary schools identified that teacher teams existed in their schools, similar statements of perceiving principals and immediate supervisors to support the collaboration and voice amongst the teacher teams were not made by the participants who represented elementary schools.

Connecting back to Lee and Nie (2015) and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach's (2014) studies, the participants who represented middle schools identified perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors demonstrating empowering behaviors that resulted in teachers feeling understood and cared about. Allowing for teachers to have a greater voice and demonstrating empowering behaviors that showed reception of teachers' concerns through changing their own behaviors resulted in the participants perceiving greater psychological empowerment. The participants who represented middle schools expressed feelings of being committed to their schools and the LEA, as well as wanting to grow as professionals. The researcher noted that

similar statements were not shared by the participants who represented elementary schools. This does not imply a difference in professional commitment or organizational commitment, rather it corroborates the findings from this case study with Lee and Nie, and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach's findings that greater delegation of authority and authentic leadership results in teachers expressing greater psychological empowerment, leading to expressing organizational and professional commitment.

As stated in the supporting teachers' section, Singh and Sarkar (2013) identified that in some cultures, differences in empowerment exist between female and male teachers. This is culturally based. Regarding teacher voice, the researcher examined the statements between the female and male participants to determine whether the connection between their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and the participants' psychological empowerment was the result of gender. Statements made by all participants did not make reference to any gender, nor did they identify differences in their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors towards any particular gender. The researcher determined that the commonalities between psychological empowerment of the female participants and the male participants did not relate to gender.

Evaluating the LEA and improvement plan's role in teacher voice, the researcher identified that not many statements were made regarding the LEA, improvement plan, and receivership's involvement in increasing or decreasing teacher voice. Three of the participants made statements that identified teacher voice, regarding the LEA. One participant perceived that the LEA expressed high interest in teacher voice, but identified it as being artificial. She stated that the LEA often used leading questions, that prevented teachers from an opportunity to have an open expression of their preferences. As previously stated, another participant identified that

the LEA supported his school's administration to have its own autonomy, who supported teachers in the same manner. He attributed the design of the improvement plan by the receiver to foster open communication between administrators and teachers. A third participant identified that LEA administrators, who were involved in curriculum changed from a model where curriculum was assigned to a model where curriculum was piloted. He stated that this allowed for teachers who piloted new curriculum to voice their findings, allowing for necessary adjustments prior to introducing the curriculum to all teachers.

Regarding teacher voice, the participants' statements continued to indicate that school-based administrators' empowering behaviors had a greater impact on the empowerment of teachers. As with supporting teachers, the researcher found that with teacher voice, delegation of authority continued to be a predicting variable in determining the participants' perceived psychological empowerment. As previously stated, the findings from this case study corroborated with Lee and Nie's (2015) findings. Principals who enacted top down decision-making provided opportunity for teachers to voice their concerns and add insight into decision-making. Principals who allowed for delegation of authority also allowed for teachers to have greater voice. Somech (2005) found that greater personal empowerment or team empowerment resulted in teachers having greater professional commitment. By allowing for greater teacher voice and encouraging greater team collaboration, the participants had greater perceptions of psychological empowerment, which resulted in their having greater professional commitment.

### **Teacher Autonomy**

The participants shared their perceptions of having autonomy in curriculum and student behaviors. As with their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, regarding supporting teachers and teacher voice, the participants' perceptions

indicated varying empowering behaviors between all represented schools' principals and immediate supervisors. The participants' perceptions continued to best be separated between the participants who represented elementary schools and participants who represented middle schools.

The participants who represented elementary schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors as demonstrating empowering behaviors that allowed for limited teacher autonomy in academics. Connecting to their perceptions of the support received by teachers and teacher voice, the participants explained that their principals delegated less authority to members of the faculty, which Lee and Nie (2015) found that immediate supervisors had greater engagement in supporting teachers, and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) found that increased authentic leadership resulted in increased feelings of meaning and competence. The participants perceived that curriculum was decided upon by their principals and immediate supervisors. One participant stated that teachers including physical education and art teachers, were assigned to specific academic teaching periods. Two participants stated as part of limited teacher voice, teachers knew not to complain or speak negatively about the identified curriculum. All participants shared that curriculum was changed without input from teachers. Of the two participants, one participant identified that teachers were expected to have a positive attitude about the changes or face possibilities of being identified as "being not on board".

The participants who represented elementary schools expressed mixed perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' as demonstrating empowering behaviors that allowed for teacher autonomy in addressing student behaviors. One participant perceived a greater amount of teacher autonomy in addressing student behaviors. However, she did not identify it as being caused by her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. Rather, the

participant identified teachers' lack of consistency in following school policies and procedures as being the cause. Two participants perceived lack of consistency amongst the teachers regarding addressing student behaviors. However, they perceived the lack of consistency to be caused by their principal and immediate supervisors choosing to have latent leadership in addressing student behaviors. Their statements identified that their principal and immediate supervisors would ask teachers of what consequences they attempted, and then ask teachers to think of what else they could do.

Statements concerning teacher autonomy in academics continued to indicate that the participants who represented elementary schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors to result with their perceptions of having less psychological empowerment. Specifically, they identified perceptions of not being able to address concerns with academics, being assigned curriculum, and receiving short notice of changes. Through examination of their perceptions of their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, and further statements of their empowerment, participants who represented elementary schools implied teachers believing that they did not need to invest in curriculum as constant changes was expected. Their statements also added to the implied understanding that teachers needed to be subordinate to top down decision-making and being limited in their ability to add their suggestions to decision-making. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) found that increased curriculum autonomy resulted in decreased work stress and increased general teaching autonomy resulted in increased perceived empowerment and professionalism. All participants expressed emotions that the researcher connected with stress, when they discussed their limitations in teacher autonomy regarding academics.

Although Pearson and Moomaw (2005) found that increased general teaching autonomy resulted in increased perceived empowerment, the statements made by two participants did not indicate their perception of having greater psychological empowerment. Through examination of their statements, the researcher determined that as they perceived to have greater autonomy in addressing student behaviors, it was perceived to be the result of receiving less support from their principal and immediate supervisors. As Lee and Nie (2015) identified that principals were engaged more in delegation of authority and immediate supervisors were engaged more in supporting teachers, for the participants' school, the researcher hypothesizes that lack in delegation of authority indirectly resulted in greater teacher autonomy in addressing student behaviors. Therefore, for the participants, their psychological empowerment was influenced more by support than by having autonomy.

The participants who represented middle schools perceived their principals and immediate supervisors as demonstrating empowering behaviors that allowed for greater teacher autonomy in academics and addressing student behaviors. Both participants expressed differing empowering behaviors from their principals and immediate supervisors. Through the support provided to teachers, and the encouragement of teacher voice, one participant identified that his principal and immediate supervisors encouraged greater teacher autonomy. For autonomy in both areas, the participant stated that his principal and immediate supervisors preferred to allow teacher teams to evaluate their progress, inform them of the progress, and work together to identify next steps.

As stated in Chapter Four, one participant identified that teacher collaboration was highly encouraged by his principal and immediate supervisors. As stated in the supporting teachers section, the participant identified that his principal and immediate supervisors expected teachers

to adhere to the assigned curriculum; however, when teachable moments were evident, several teachers were encouraged to digress if it benefitted student learning. Regarding student behavior, the participant identified his principal and immediate supervisors as improving their support. The participant expressed a similar desire as two other participants to have less autonomy in addressing student behaviors, preferring a rigid system of consequences for particular behaviors. His principal and immediate supervisors were described as receptive of teachers' concerns and adjusting their empowering behaviors to address the concerns.

As previously stated, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) found increased curriculum autonomy resulted in decreased work stress and increased general teaching autonomy resulted in increased perceived empowerment and professionalism. Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) defined authentic leadership as promoting positive internalized moral perspectives. They found that authentic leadership resulted in increased feelings of meaning and competence. Somech (2005) found that professional commitment was high when teachers either perceived personal empowerment or team empowerment. Both participants who represented middle schools identified perceptions of being able to identify students' needs in academics and behavior, make changes individually or in teams that were agreed upon teachers and their principals and immediate supervisors to benefit student learning. One participant did identify that for math teachers particularly, his principal and immediate supervisors allowed for less autonomy in academics. Lee and Nie (2015) and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach's (2014) combined findings of authentic leadership and support are also connected to these empowering behaviors. Both participants' statements indicated that autonomy was granted in conjunction with supports from their principals and immediate supervisors. The researcher determined that

supporting teachers was a predicting variable in determining the participants' perceptions of autonomy and their psychological empowerment.

Evaluating the LEA and improvement plan's role in teacher autonomy, the researcher identified that two statements were made regarding the LEA, improvement plan, and receivership's involvement in increasing or decreasing teacher autonomy. As stated in the teacher voice section, one participant identified that LEA administrators who were involved in curriculum changed from a model where curriculum was assigned, to a model where curriculum was piloted. Through piloting a curriculum, the participant perceived that teachers were awarded the ability to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the curriculum. This allowed teachers to collaborate in improving the curriculum prior to introducing the curriculum to all teachers. Another participant concluded his interviews stating that the autonomy granted to his school by the improvement plan and receiver directly allowed teachers to have greater autonomy. He did note that his perception was that teachers at his school did have greater autonomy than teachers at other schools. All other statements that discussed autonomy in academics and student behaviors did so regarding principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors.

Regarding teacher autonomy, the participants' statements continued to indicate that school-based administrators' empowering behaviors had a greater impact on the empowerment of teachers. The researcher found that with teacher autonomy, supporting teachers was a predicting variable in determining the participants' perceived psychological empowerment. As previously stated in the supporting teachers' section, delegation of authority was a predicting variable in determining supporting teachers. The researcher determined that delegation of authority indirectly predicted teacher autonomy in the case study site. As previously stated, the findings from this case study corroborated with Lee and Nie's (2015) findings. Principals who

enacted top down decision-making provide less ability for immediate supervisors to support teachers. However, they provided less opportunity for teachers to have autonomy in academics and were a determining variable if autonomy in student behavior resulted in perceptions of psychological empowerment. Schools that delegated authority and supported teachers were identified as schools where teachers perceived having autonomy.

### **Summary and Research Question Findings**

This study was guided by the question: How do the behaviors of school and LEA based administration impact the empowerment of teachers whom they supervise, as evidenced by teacher perception? It was also guided by three sub-questions. This summary will answer each sub-question, then will answer the research question.

The first sub-question that guided this study was: Do teachers perceive the appointment of a receiver or trustee as having an effect on the processes of teacher empowerment? The statements made by the participants from the case study site indicated that their perceived empowerment was influenced more by their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, than by the appointment of the receiver. One participant stated that he did not predict a difference in his principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors, had there not been an improvement plan. He predicted a negative culture shift in teacher empowerment, had his principal and immediate supervisors been replaced with the principal and immediate supervisors from his former school.

Several of the participants did make statements that indicated their perception of the appointment of the receiver as effecting their principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors. One participant identified that she perceived her principal and immediate supervisors

to have well intentions and want what was best for her school. She added that receivership and the improvement plan were a direct result of poor test scores, concluding that her principal and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors were driven by their desire to improve test scores and keep the school from being designated as underperforming. The researcher notes that if this were to happen, it would result in the SEA placing the school on its own improvement plan.

Another participant also stated that receivership was the result of test scores and added attendance as a second cause. She agreed that principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors were affected by a desire to improve both. The first participant identified his school's culture to be directly affected by the improvement plan. He stated that the autonomy granted to his school by the receiver allowed the school to develop the culture that was in place at the time of the study.

The second sub-question that guided this study was: How do teacher perceptions of their leaders' behaviors vary among teachers of different schools within the same LEA? The participants perceived differences in the exact supports provided to them, the delegation of authority, the allowing of teacher voice, and teacher autonomy. The participants who represented elementary schools perceived less support from their leaders, as their principals did not delegate authority to the faculty. They further perceived their principals as being the final decision-makers. The principal and immediate supervisors of the two participants from the same school did not accept teachers' questions of decisions that were made. Another participant's principal expected teachers to have an identified solution to questions and concerns. This determined whether her principal agreed with the solution or not. The behaviors of their principals and immediate supervisors resulted in teachers perceiving their having less voice and autonomy.

The participants who represented middle schools perceived more support from their leaders. Principals delegated authority and entrusted teacher teams to collaborate on best solutions that improved student learning. They further perceived their principals and immediate supervisors as actively listening to teachers' questions and concerns and providing support when asked. One participant perceived his leaders in creating a school culture where teachers are engaged in the school's direction and vision. Another participant perceived more control by his leaders, regarding academics, but felt trusted to make good judgements that supported student learning. The behaviors of their principals and immediate supervisors resulted in teachers perceiving their having greater voice and autonomy.

The third sub-question that guided this study was: If any, which parts of the improvement plan placed on the LEA do teachers perceive as having an effect on school and LEA administrators' behaviors? Several participants identified the cause of the improvement plan as effecting school and LEA administrators' behaviors. As previously stated, the two participants who were employed in the same school identified that their school administrators were impacted by the desire to improve test scores and attendance. The participants perceived their principal and immediate supervisors' attention to improvement in student achievement to be a cause of their latent leadership in addressing student behaviors. Their principal and immediate supervisors had greater focus on academics. Three participants identified that curriculum changes introduced by LEA administrators were done so to address improvements in academic achievement. One of the three participants attributed this to her principal's top down decision-making leadership style.

In answering the research question "How do the behaviors of school and LEA based administration impact the empowerment of teachers whom they supervise, as evidenced by

teacher perception,” the researcher determined that in the case study site of the Rockford Public Schools, teacher empowerment was impacted most often by the empowering behaviors of their principals and immediate supervisors. LEA administrators’ empowering behaviors were perceived most often to have a direct connection with teachers through curriculum implementation. One participant identified that new curriculums were piloted by teachers, where their insight was utilized in determining whether to introduce it to all teachers. Other statements concerning LEA administrations’ empowering behaviors did not directly connect to teacher empowerment in the school.

As Lee and Nie (2015) stated, principals had greater engagement in the delegation of authority. How and if principals delegated authority was a determining variable of the participants’ perceptions of their empowerment. Delegation of authority determined the amount of supports that teachers received and the voice that teachers perceived to have. The supports provided to teachers determined whether the participants perceived a sense of autonomy in academics and student behaviors. As Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014) found, the authentic leadership by their principals and immediate supervisors determined whether the participants perceived a sense of meaning and competence. As Pearson and Moomaw (2005) found, increased perception of personal empowerment or team empowerment, resulted in the participants having increased professional commitment. The researcher hypothesizes that increased personal empowerment and team empowerment results in increased organizational commitment. This hypothesis is based on the comparative statements between the participants who represented elementary schools and the participants who represented middle schools.

### **Researcher's Reflections**

As this study was insider research, the researcher found himself keeping a log of his biases. Employed at an alternative education school in the Rockford Public Schools, the researcher had one conception of the improvement plan and receivership at the onset of designing and conducting this study. To avoid biased influence, this study was purposefully designed to remove his school of employment. Contact was only had with schools and teachers who the researcher did not have any prior connection.

During the study, the researcher noted that for all participants, their principals set the tone of their perceptions. Regardless of the LEA being placed on an improvement plan and being assigned a receiver, the participants expressed stronger evaluative and emotional sentiments towards their principals than their immediate supervisors and the LEA administration. This is not to say that improvement plans, receivers and trustees, do not have an impact on teacher empowerment. The principal serves as the teachers' daily supervisor and is the top executive of the school. Therefore, principals serve as the leaders with whom teachers interact the most. Prior to this study, the researcher hypothesized that the participants would focus on the improvement plan. The researcher's presumption was that the participants would discuss great test scores and attendance, positively or negatively. Other than two brief statements by two of the participants, their focuses were on their principals' actions, and how these actions increased or decreased their perceptions of their empowerment.

After evaluating data collected from the focus group and individual interviews, the researcher connected the participants' perceptions with Abraham Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. To perceive psychological empowerment, which is esteem on the hierarchy, teachers need to feel supported. The need to know that they can voice their concerns and be heard, and

that their perspective is valued. These needs equate to the needs of being loved and belonging on the hierarchy, which is one step below the need for self-esteem. Therefore, without support, having a voice, and being permitted to make decisions that are trusted by the principal, teachers have less psychological empowerment.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings from this case study, the researcher recommends that LEA administrators and principals in LEAs that are on improvement plans and LEAs that are not on improvement plans evaluate principals' interactions with their teachers and administrative teams. Based on prior researcher conducted by Lee and Nie (2015), Pearson and Moomaw (2005), and Shapira-Lischinsky and Tsemach (2014), as well as the findings from this study, principals' empowering behaviors are the predicting variable that determines immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors and teacher empowerment. Regardless of being overseen by the governing SEA, principals determine the impact of supporting teachers, providing teachers with voice, and allowing for teacher autonomy. The study may provide recommendation for additional research.

There was a greater representation of respondents of White ethnicity to respondents of all other ethnicities. Respondents of White ethnicity who indicated interest in participation or requested further information, and were eligible to participate, were over-represented by a ratio of 7:1. All respondents who expressed interest and participated in the focus group and individual interviews identified as being of White ethnicity. Future research should look to compare the perceived empowerment of teachers of different ethnicities, who are employed in an LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan.

The purpose of this data was to serve the researcher in identifying demographic information concerning the ages of teachers employed in the Rockford Public Schools and current school. Data from TES showed relatively equal number of respondents between ages 25 and 34 years, and 35 and 44 years as indicating interest in participation or requesting further information, in a study that examines their empowerment in a LEA that is placed on an improvement plan. An area for future research may be to examine the difference in teacher comfort discussing their empowerment, by age. Another area for future research can include replicating this study by returning to the Rockford Public Schools to discuss with teachers who did not meet the criteria, but were interested in participation, at the time of this study.

Data from the gender and ethnicity comparisons on TES indicated several implications for future research. There was a greater representation of female respondents to respondents of all other identified genders, who indicated interest in participation or requested further information on TES, and were eligible to participate, by a ratio of 5:1.

Future research should ensure to conveniently sample participants for a greater representation of multiple genders and ethnicities to allow for greater comparison of the empowerment of teachers from each ethnic and gender background that represents the total population from the LEA of study. Regarding the Rockford Public Schools, future studies that replicate this methodology would benefit from allowing longer time and additional reminders for respondents to participate in the demographic seeking survey and for communication with interested respondents and respondents who requested further information. The researcher did not set aside time to visit schools and meet with teachers, in person, to introduce the study, relying on written correspondence. The researcher hypothesized that this could be a cause of the data collected from TES regarding gender and ethnicity.

The participants' statements linked commonalities between their psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes, and the academic level in which they taught. The participants who represented elementary schools made statements that implied their having less psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The participants who represented middle schools made statements that implied their having greater psychological empowerment and work-related outcomes. Due to the limited sample of participants, these findings cannot be generalizable to the entire population of teachers from the Rockford Public Schools or all elementary and middle schools within the LEA. Future research would benefit from having a greater number of participants, as it would help researchers to determine whether this is common amongst academic levels.

During the focus groups and interviews, one participant identified that teachers received greater positive recognition when they advocated for their classroom, over advocating for someone else or a whole school issue. However, the participant did not state whether teachers voiced their concerns with an identified possible solution, or not. As the participants were not asked about the means in which they address their concerns, nor did they discuss their means of advocacy, the researcher identified the connection between the means of teacher advocacy and teacher empowerment as being a possible topic for future research.

### **Summary**

This study demonstrated that in a LEA that has been placed on an improvement plan, teacher empowerment remains to be mostly impacted by the principals' empowering behaviors. The empowering behaviors that the participants from this study identified as having the greatest impact on teacher empowerment were delegation of authority, allowing for teacher voice, and allowing for teacher autonomy. Through delegation of authority to immediate supervisors,

immediate supervisors were empowered to support teachers. This was identified as an empowering behavior of immediate supervisors that impacted teacher empowerment. The designation of an improvement plan and the appointment of a receiver did not directly impact teacher empowerment. Dependent on the principal, the improvement plan and receiver's impact on their empowering behaviors may result in an indirect impact on teacher empowerment. In the school, the principal's empowering behaviors directly impacts the structure of the school and teacher empowerment.

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Appendix A  
IRB Summary and Consent Forms



Department of Education

The Relationship Between Administrative Actions and Teacher Empowerment in a Local  
Educational Agency that has been Appointed an Assigned Receiver or Trustee

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

*Introduction:*

I am Raymond L. Moschetto, a doctoral candidate at Southern New Hampshire University. I am doing research on the empowerment of teachers who are employed in a school district that has been placed on an improvement plan by the Massachusetts Department of Education, and assigned a receiver or trustee to serve as its superintendent and school committee. For this study, teacher empowerment will be defined as a process of school leader(s) promoting behaviors that enable teachers to experience their own psychological empowerment. I have provided an explanation of this research. You are invited to participate in the study, and your participation is voluntary.

Before you decide, you can talk to anyone of whom you feel comfortable with about the research.

This consent form might contain terms that you do not understand, or discuss processes that need clarification. If you prefer or require me to stop and clarify any information, please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can contact Raymond (Ray) Moschetto at (978) 397-3850 or [Raymond.Moschetto@snhu.edu](mailto:Raymond.Moschetto@snhu.edu)

*Purpose of the Project:*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 created the right for each state's Department of Education to identify schools and school districts as requiring intervention. This includes the appointment of a receiver or trustee to serve as the superintendent and school committee. This study seeks to

answer how do teachers, who teach in a district on an improvement plan, perceive their own empowerment. By participating in this research study, you will provide experiences and perceptions which will allow for a greater understanding of the empowerment of teachers who work in a district that is identified as requiring an improvement plan. The researcher believes this knowledge will help teachers and administrators identify strategies that best support teachers' empowerment.

*Type of Research Intervention:*

This research will involve your participation in a group discussion. It will take approximately one hour. You will also be asked to participate in three interviews to be conducted at later dates. Interviews will take no longer than an hour.

*Participant Selection:*

This invitation to participate is being extended to you because your experience as a teacher working in a school district that has been placed on an improvement plan from the state's Department of Education can contribute to the understanding of teacher empowerment.

*Voluntary Participation:*

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If at any time you wish to withdraw from participation, it is your right to do so without any negative repercussions.

*Procedures:*

You are being invited to help the researcher learn more about the empowerment of teachers, who work in a school district that was placed on an improvement plan. If you accept, you will be asked to take part in a discussion with six to eight other participants with similar experiences. Raymond (Ray) Moschetto.

The group discussion will start with me making sure that you are comfortable. I will answer any questions that you may have concerning the research, at that time. Then you will be asked questions about your experiences working in a school district that has been placed on an improvement plan, as well as your own empowerment as a teacher. You do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing.

The discussion will take place at the Southern New Hampshire University Salem campus, and no one else but the people who take part in the discussion and myself will be present during this discussion.

For the interviews, I will schedule times and locations that best accommodates you. These will be done in person. During the interview, we will sit in a comfortable place. The interview will take place at a location of your choice, which can include your school. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and I will move on to the next question. No one else but you and I will be present unless you would like someone else to be there.

All discussions will be recorded digitally, but no one will be identified by name on the recording. All recordings will be encrypted on computer files, which will be kept on a password-protected computer. The information recorded is confidential, and only Raymond (Ray) Moschetto will have access to the recording.

*Duration:*

For the group discussion, the researcher will need no longer than an hour of time on a single occasion to ask you a series of questions about your experiences as a teacher who works in a district that has been placed under receivership, as well as your empowerment as a teacher.

For the interviews, the researcher will need no longer than one hour of time on a single occasion, for three occasions, to ask you a series of questions of your experiences as a teacher who works in a district that has been placed under receivership

*Risks or Discomforts:*

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, I do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

*Benefits of the study:*

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help in the findings about the empowerment of teachers who work in a school district that has been placed on an

improvement plan, by its governing state's Department of Education. This information will help researchers in the field to better understand teacher empowerment.

*Compensation:*

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

*Confidentiality:*

Your part in this research is confidential. None of the information will identify you by name. All information will be given a coded number or pseudonym. Only I will have the codes that link names to the data. All data will be held in an encrypted computer file that will require a password to access the computer, and a separate password to access the file.

I will ask each of you to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that I cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should remain confidential.

*Sharing the Results:*

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results.

*Right to Refuse or Withdraw:*

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time with no penalty. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

*Who to contact:*

If you have questions about the study, please contact Raymond (Ray) Moschetto at (978) 397-3850 or [raymond.moschetto@snhu.edu](mailto:raymond.moschetto@snhu.edu).

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by the SNHU IRB, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find about more about the IRB, contact Thomas Beraldi at [t.beraldi@snhu.edu](mailto:t.beraldi@snhu.edu) or 603-645-9695.

**I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.**

Print Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year

Appendix B  
LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Hello,

My name is Ray Moschetto. I am the Technology & Data Coordinator at (school name redacted), as well as a doctoral candidate at Southern New Hampshire University. Over the past year, I developed my dissertation research proposal, and have received approval from both the university and Superintendent's Office of the (Rockford Public Schools). I am now at the stage where it is time to commence my study. In my research, I am conducting a qualitative study that will examine the empowerment of teachers who are employed in a Local Education Agency that has been placed on an improvement plan, resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee.

Attached to this email is my (Rockford Public Schools) IRB approval form, which has been signed by (superintendent and assistant superintendent) this past Friday and Thursday, respectively. Although I have approval from the district, as part of my Southern New Hampshire University IRB approval, I stated that I would also seek your approval before reaching out to teachers from your school about the possibility of their volunteering to participate in my study. The theoretical framework of my study is designed to examine how principals and immediate supervisors' empowering behaviors relate to teacher empowerment. Therefore, it is imperative that I be transparent with every principal, whose teachers fit the criteria for participation in this study.

By approving, I will include your teachers in my dissemination of an electronic survey that will provide me with demographic information. I will also deliver paper copies of *The Teacher Leadership School Survey* by Marylin and Bill Katzenmeyer (2005) to your school and pickup copies that your teachers volunteer to complete. Any teacher who indicates interest in participating will be added to a list, of which seven to nine participants will be ultimately chosen to participate in a one-hour long focus group and a series of two one-hour long interviews. As stated, all participation is voluntary. I will also be keeping the identify of teachers, their schools, and the Lawrence Public Schools anonymous. Therefore, other than the grade level and gender, and years employed in your school, all other information will be replaced with pseudonyms.

Before I commence, I am reaching out to principals of all schools that provide general education and inclusion services, for their approval. By allowing your teachers to be included in my research, the study's results will be more reflective of 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade general education and special education teachers who provide inclusion services across Lawrence Public Schools. By conducting my research, I aim to provide the district with insight into the practices of teacher empowerment across each school and each level, as well as highlight strengths and wonderings that the participants identify, regarding their leaders' empowering behaviors and teacher empowerment. For the field, I aim to apply a methodology of study that has not be widely used regarding teacher empowerment, which is to gather teacher perception through conversation over solely responding to a survey.

Sincerely,

Ray Moschetto

Doctoral Candidate

Educational Leadership

School of Education

Southern New Hampshire University

Appendix C  
SURVEYS: INVITATIONS & QUESTIONS

**Survey: Part A**  
**Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Information (TES)**  
**TES - Emailed Invitation**

**FROM:** raymond.moschetto@snhu.edu via surveymonkey.com

- **DATE:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 2:42 PM
- **SENT TO:** Recipients
- **SUBJECT:** Survey for my Dissertation
- **MESSAGE:**

## Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Information

My name is Ray Moschetto, and I am the Technology & Data Coordinator at **(school name redacted)**, as well as a Doctoral Candidate at Southern New Hampshire University. As part of my dissertation research for my doctorate, I am sending this survey to gather demographic information of the schools, whose principals granted permission for me to include. This survey is comprised of eight questions and will take approximately one minute to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, thank you for taking a moment to read this email. If you choose to participate, please click on the link below to begin.

[Begin Survey](#)

Please do not forward this email as its survey link is unique to you.  
[Unsubscribe](#) from this list

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Survey: Part B**  
**Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Information (TES)**  
**Copied & Pasted from SurveyMonkey**

**Welcome To My Survey**

I am Raymond (Ray) Moschetto. I am the Technology & Data Coordinator at (specific school), and am a Doctoral Candidate at Southern New Hampshire University. For my dissertation, I am doing research on the empowerment of teachers who work in a school district that has been placed under receivership by its governing State Education Agency. For my study, I am looking to gather some background information about the teachers at each school where I am approved to conduct my study. The following survey will obtain demographic information, and should take approximately one minute to complete. Your participation is voluntary. For those who select to do so, it is greatly appreciated.

I will like to extend my sincere gratitude to all who take a moment to review this information and to those who take the time to participate. Thank you!

## 1. What is your age?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

65 to 74

75 or older

## 2. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Non-Binary/Third Gender

Prefer to Self-Describe

Prefer not to say

## 3. Please describe your race/ethnicity.

White

Black or African American

Hispanic

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

From Multiple Races

Race other than identified (Please Specify):

#### 4. How many years have you been employed in your school district?

Less than 3 years

3 years to 5 years

6 years to 10 years

11 years to 15 years

16 years to 20 years

21 years to 25 years

26 years to 30 years

31 years to 35 years

Greater than 35 years

#### 5. How many years have you been employed in your current school?

Same as my time employed in the district

Other (please specify)

## 6. At what school are you employed?



## 7. What academic level do you teach?

Elementary (Kindergarten - 4th Grade)

Middle School (5th Grade - 8th Grade)

High School (9th Grade - 12th Grade)

**Survey: Part C**  
**Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)**  
**TLSS - Cover Letter to Teachers**

Hello,

My name is Raymond (Ray) Moschetto. I am a doctoral candidate at Southern New Hampshire University, and am employed in the district, at (school name redacted). For my dissertation, I am conducting research on the empowerment of teachers who are employed in a school district that has been placed on an improvement plan by the (governing SEA), resulting in the appointment of a receiver or trustee. For this study, teacher empowerment will be defined as a process of school leader(s) promoting behaviors that enable teachers to experience their own psychological empowerment. This research has been approved by the separate Institutional Review Boards of Southern New Hampshire University and the (Rockford Public Schools), as well as your school's principal. Research for the entire study will be conducted over three phases, including one demographic survey, which was sent to you via your district email account, and the attached *Teacher Leadership School Survey* (Katzenmeyer & Katzenmeyer, 2005).

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose to complete the survey, it should take approximately five minutes. Please do not include your name or school's name to this survey. It is comprised of 49 statements, which ask you to rate them on a scale of one to five. Included at the end of the survey, you can rate your own responses. Doing so is not required and is included to allow each participant the opportunity to investigate further into their responses. Your responses will assist me in revision and further development of focus group and interview questions, which will be conducted in the proceeding phases of the study.

If you have any questions concerning the survey, I can be reached at [raymond.moschetto@snhu.edu](mailto:raymond.moschetto@snhu.edu). If you are interested in volunteering to participate in the focus group and interview phase, please take a moment to complete the demographic survey where you can express interest. I will like to extend my gratitude to all who took a moment to read through this information and who participated in the survey.

Sincerely,

Raymond Moschetto

Doctoral Candidate

Southern New Hampshire University

**Survey: Part D**  
**Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)**  
**Marilyn and Bill Katzenmeyer (2005)**

Please respond to the following statements in terms of how frequently each Statement is descriptive of your school.

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
15.	In my role as a teacher, I am free to make judgements about what is best for my students.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
16.	At my school administrators and teachers try hard to help new teachers be successful. At my school I have freedom to make choices about the use of time and resources.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	At my school, teachers are provided with assistance, I know that we will bend the rules if it is necessary to help children learn.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Administrators at my school actively support the professional development of faculty and staff. Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative to make improvements for students.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	We gain new knowledge and skills through staff development and professional reading. I have input to developing a vision for my school and its future.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	We share new ideas and strategies we have gained with each other. At my school teachers can be innovative if they choose to be.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Teachers at my school are supportive of each other personally and professionally. Administrators and other teachers support me in making changes in my instructional strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Teachers at my school are engaged in gaining new knowledge and skills. Enter the total of items 15-21 in the space to the right	1	Total Items 15-21		4	5
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Enter the total of items 1-7 in the space to the right	Total Items 1-7				
22.	Teachers at my school discuss strategies and share materials.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
23.	The administration at my school have confidence in me. Teachers at my school influence one another's teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	My professional skills and competence are recognized by the administrators at my school. Teachers in my school observe one another's work with students.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Other teachers recognize my professional skills and competence. I talk with other teachers in my school about my teaching and the curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	It is apparent that many of the teachers at my school can take leadership roles. Teachers and administrators work together to solve students' academic and behavior problems.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	The ideas and opinions of teachers are valued and respected at my school. Other teachers at my school have helped me find creative ways to deal with challenges I have faced in my classes.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	At my school we celebrate each others' successes. Conversations among professionals at my school focused on students.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Many of the faculty and staff at my school are recognized for their work. Enter the total of items 22-28 in the space to the right	1	Total Items 22-28		4	5
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Enter the total of items 8-14 in the space to the right	Total Items 8-14				
29.	Teachers have input to decisions about school change.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Teachers have a say in what and how things are done.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Teachers and administrators share decisions about how time is used and how school is organized.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Teachers and administrators at my school understand and use the consensus process.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Teachers participate in screening and selecting new faculty and/or staff at my school.	1	2	3	4	5

34.	My opinions and ideas are sought by administrators at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	We try to reach consensus before making important decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
Enter the total of items 29-35 in the space to the right		Total Items 29-35				
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
36.	Because teachers and administrators share ideas about our work, I stay aware of what is happening.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	At my school everybody talks freely and openly about feelings and opinions they have.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Faculty and staff at my school share their feelings and concerns in productive ways.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Teachers at my school discuss and help one another solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Faculty and staff talk about ways to better serve our students and their families.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	When things go wrong at our school, we try not to blame, but talk about ways to do better next time.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Faculty meeting time is used for discussions and problem solving.	1	2	3	4	5
Enter the total of items 36-42 in the space to the right		Total Items 36-42				
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
43.	Teachers are treated as professionals at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Teachers at my school look forward to coming to work every day.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	There is a general satisfaction with the work environment among teachers at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	Teachers and administrators at my school work in partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	Teachers at my school are respected by parents, students, and administrators.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	The principal, faculty, and staff at my school work as a team.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	We feel positive about the ways we are responding to our students' needs.	1	2	3	4	5
Enter the total of items 43-49 in the space to the right		Total Items 43-49				

**Scales of the Teacher Leadership School Survey**

**Developmental Focus:** Teachers are assisted in gaining new knowledge and skills and are encouraged to help others learn. Teachers are provided with needed assistance, guidance and coaching.

**Recognition:** Teachers are recognized for roles they take and the contributions they make. A spirit of mutual respect and caring exists among teachers. There are processes for the recognition of effective work.

**Autonomy:** Teachers are encouraged to be proactive in making improvements and innovations. Barriers are removed and resources are found to support teachers' efforts.

**Collegiality:** Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters. Examples of collegial behavior include teachers discussing strategies, sharing materials, or observing in one another's classrooms.

**Participation:** Teachers are actively involved in making decisions and having input on important matters. Department chairpersons, team leaders, and other key leaders are selected with the participation of teachers.

**Open Communication:** Teachers send and receive information relevant to the effective functioning of the school in open, honest ways. Teachers feel informed about what is happening in the school. Teachers easily share opinions and feelings. Teachers are not blamed when things go wrong.

**Positive Environment:** There is a general satisfaction with the work environment. Teachers feel respected by another, by parents, students and administrators. Teachers perceive the school as having effective administrative leadership. Appointed or informal teams work together effectively in the interests of students.

**Self-Scoring Procedure**

<b>Developmental Focus:</b> Enter Total of Items 1 - 7	<input type="text"/>	<b>Collegiality:</b> Enter Total of Items 22 - 28	<input type="text"/>
<b>Recognition:</b> Enter Total of Items 8 - 14	<input type="text"/>	<b>Participation:</b> Enter Total of Items 29 - 35	<input type="text"/>
<b>Autonomy:</b> Enter Total of Items 15 - 21	<input type="text"/>	<b>Open Communication:</b> Enter Total of Items 36 - 42	<input type="text"/>
		<b>Positive Environment</b> Enter Total of Items 43 - 49	<input type="text"/>

<b>Teacher Leadership School Survey</b>																
For each scale blaken the box for your score then draw a line back to the scale name.																
<b>Scale Name</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>
Development Focus																
Recognition																
Autonomy																
Collegiality																
Participation																
Open Communication																
Positive Energy																

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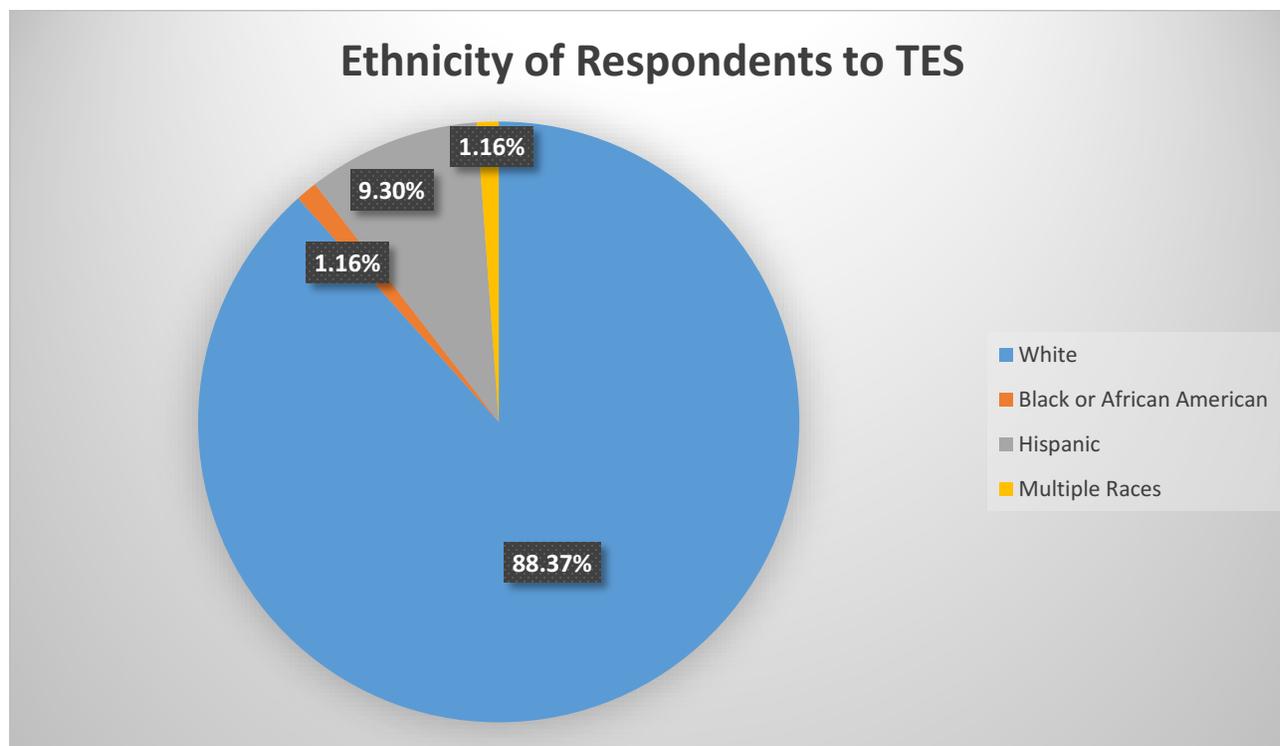
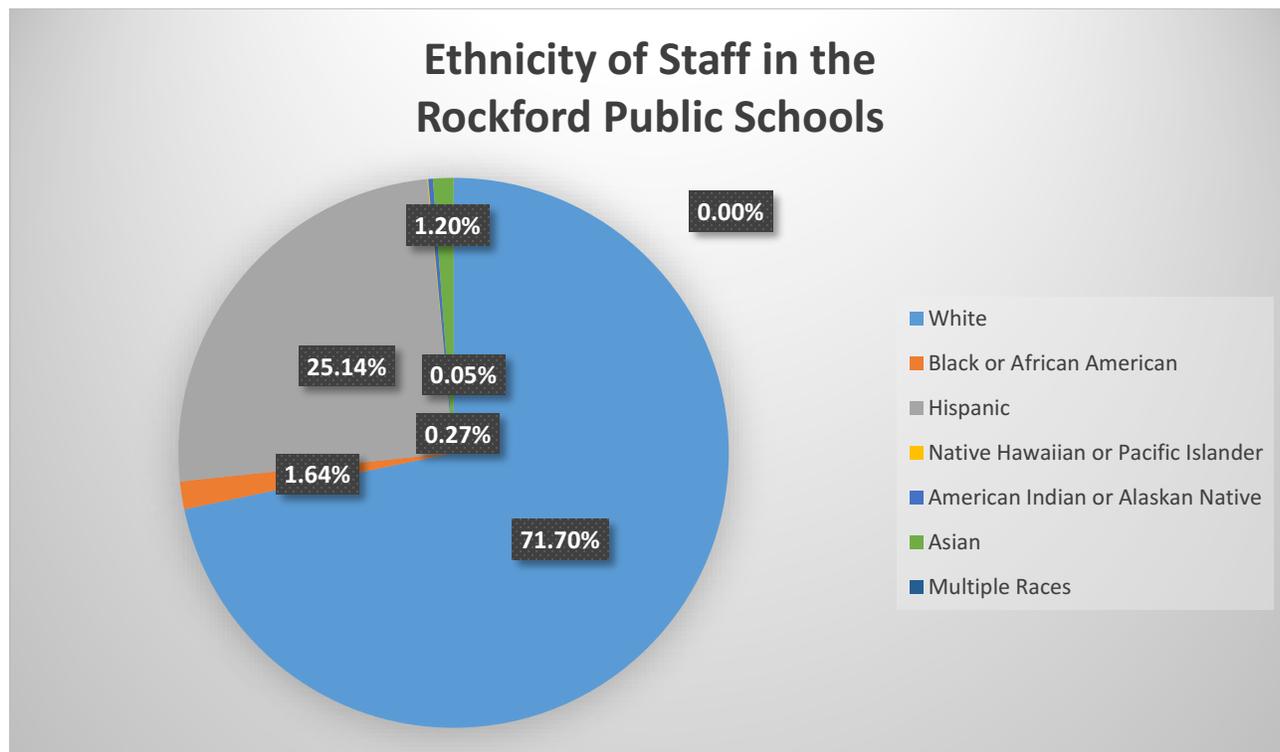
Appendix D  
Data Gathered from Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Information

TES - Respondent Interest & Meeting of Criteria by Age

Identified Age Range	Respondents (#)	Expressed Interest (#)	Expressed Interest & Met Criteria (#)	Requested Info (#)	Requested Info & Met Criteria (#)
18 to 24	5	0	0	4	0
25 to 34	31	4	1	12	2**
35 to 44	22	2	1**	13	11
45 to 54	15	2	1	4	1**
55 to 64	12	2	2	8	4**
65 to 74	1	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5**</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19**</b>

**\*\*Denotes that some respondents did not indicate years at current school, but only in LEA.**

Comparison - Ethnicity Percentage of Teachers in LEA & Respondents to TES

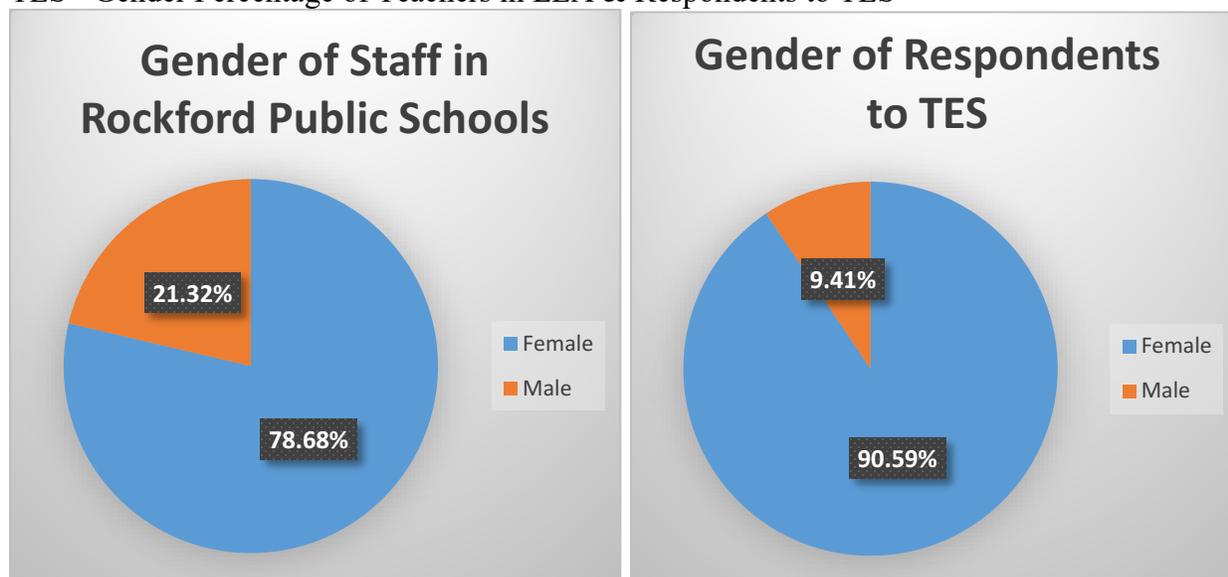


## TES - Respondent Interest &amp; Meeting Criteria by Ethnicity

<b>Identified Ethnicity</b>	<b>Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>
<b>White</b>	76	9	5	35	16**
<b>Black or African American</b>	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Hispanic</b>	8	1	0**	6	2
<b>Multiple Races</b>	1	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	86	10	5**	42	19**

**\*\*Denotes that some respondents did not indicate years at current school, but only in LEA.**

## TES - Gender Percentage of Teachers in LEA &amp; Respondents to TES

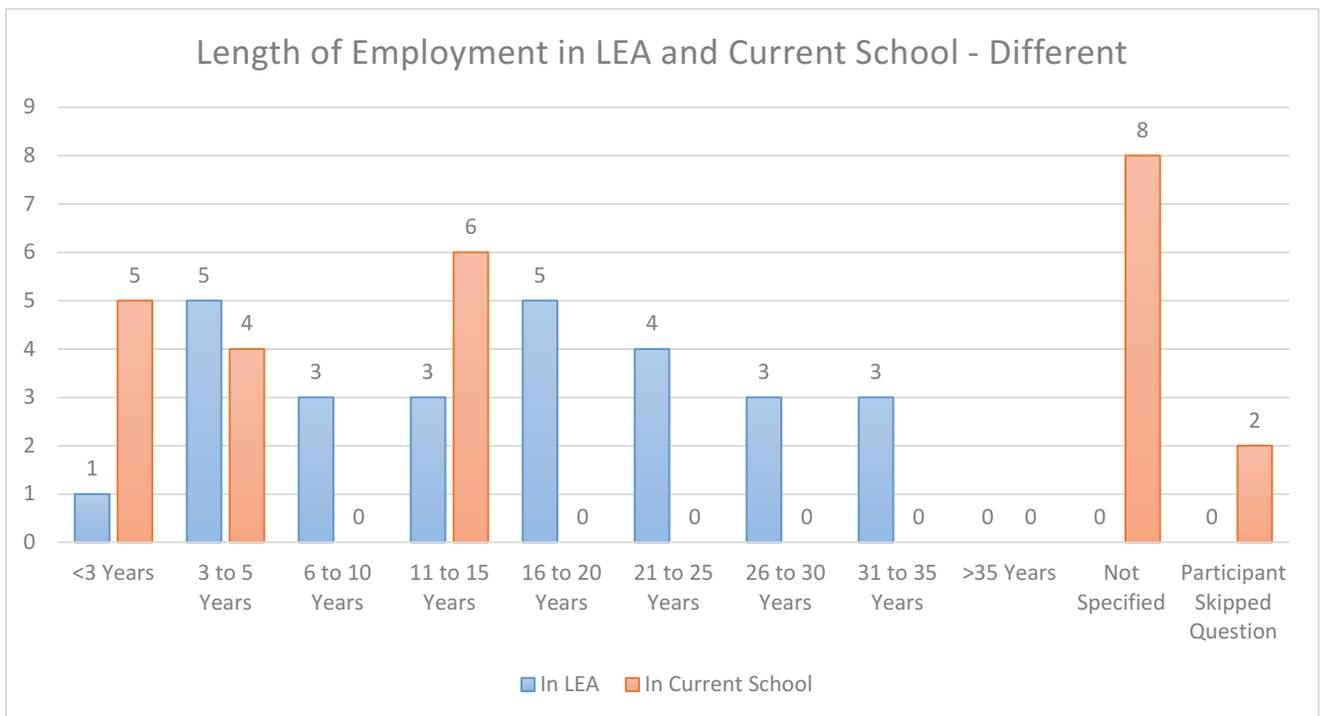
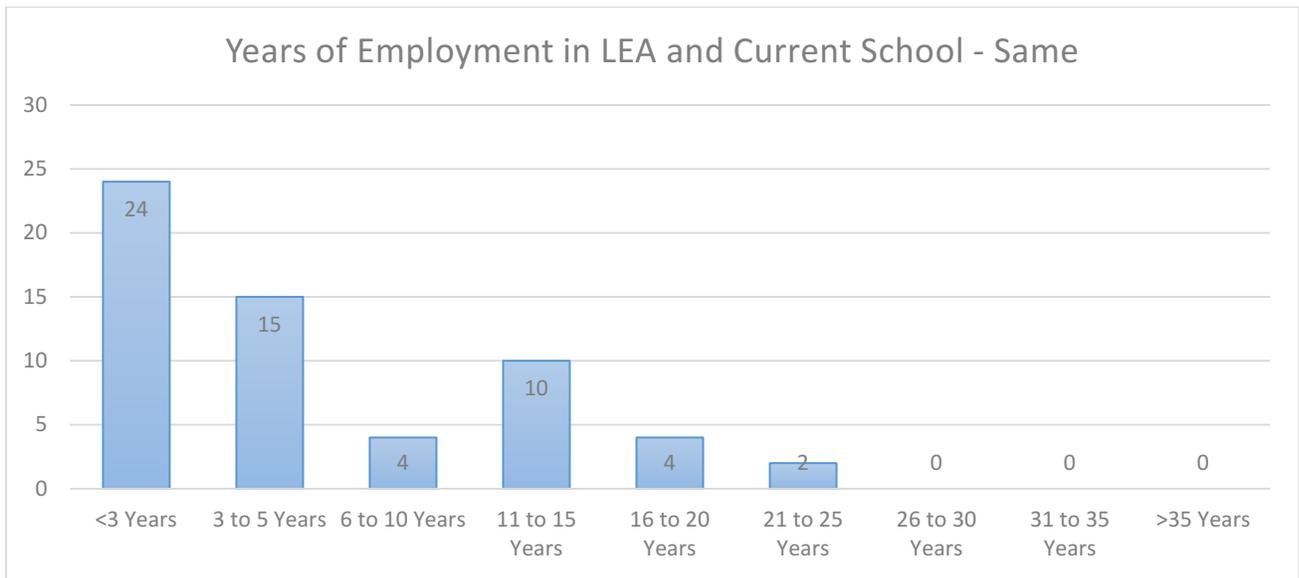


## TES - Respondent Interest &amp; Meeting of Criteria by Gender &amp; Ethnicity

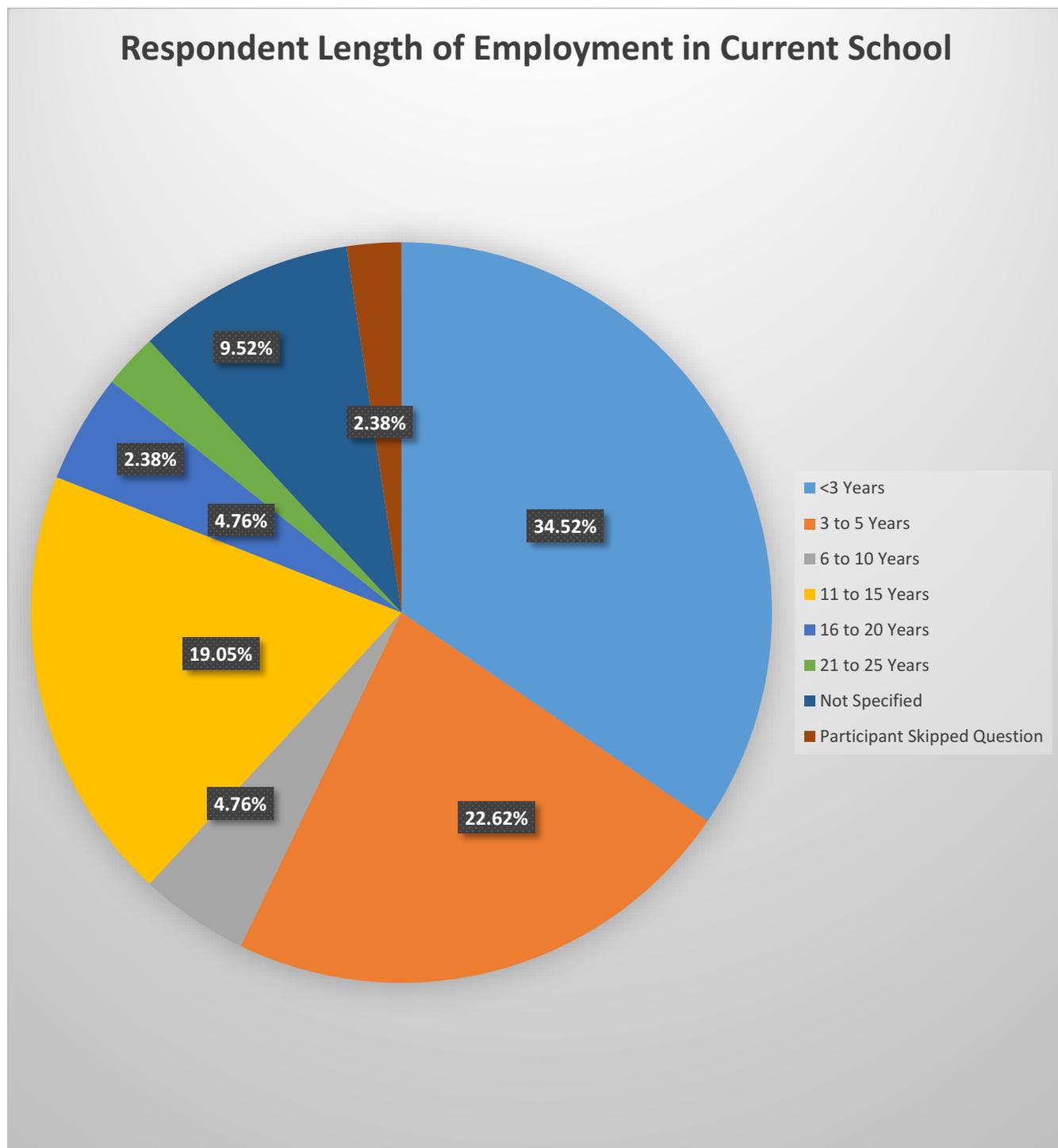
Identified Ethnicity	Respondents (#)	Expressed Interest (#)	Expressed Interest & Met Criteria (#)	Requested Info (#)	Requested Info & Met Criteria (#)
<b>Female</b>	77	9	4	38	19**
<b>White</b>	68	8	4	31	16**
<b>Black or African American</b>	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Hispanic</b>	7	1	0**	6	2
<b>Multiple Races</b>	1	0	0	1	1
<b>Male</b>	8	1	1	4	0**
<b>White</b>	7	1	1	4	0**
<b>Black or African American</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hispanic</b>	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Multiple Races</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	85	10	5**	42	19**

\*\*Denotes that some respondents did not indicate years at current school, but only in LEA.

TES - Length of Employment of the Respondents in LEA & Current School



## TES - Percentages of Respondents Length of Employment in Current School



## TES - Respondent Interest &amp; Meeting of Criteria by Length of Employment in LEA

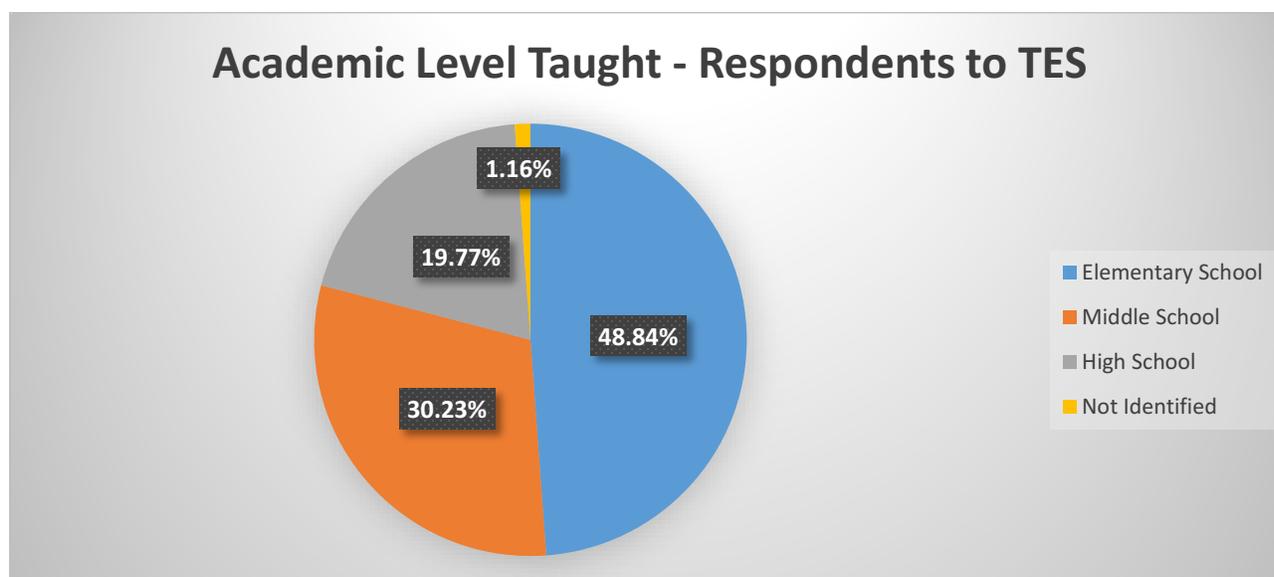
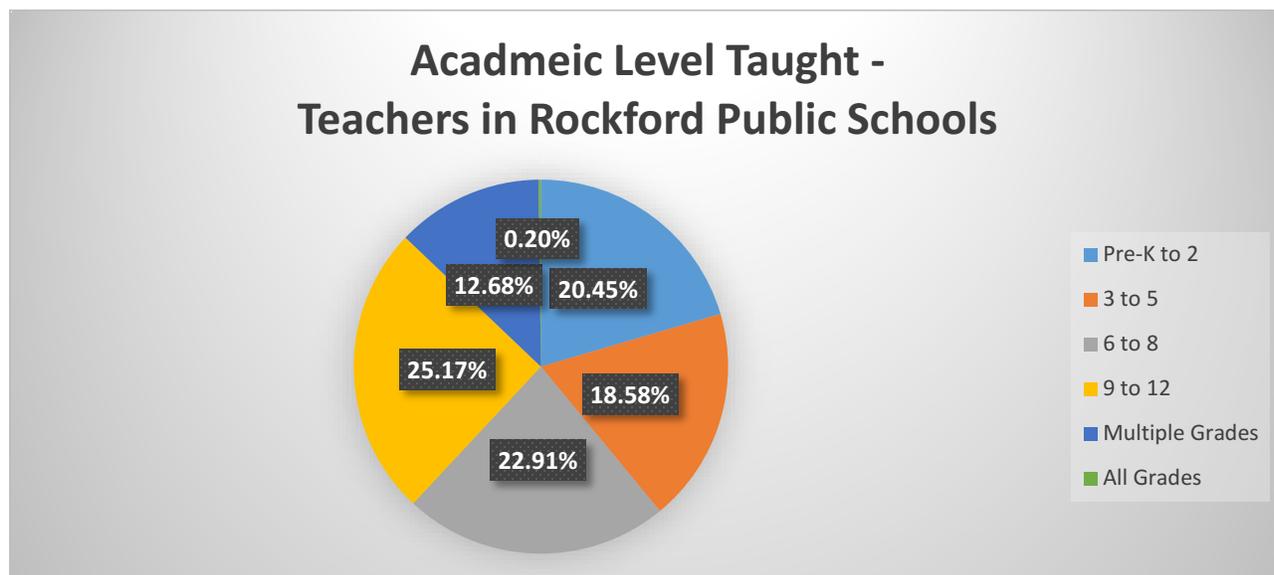
<b>Identified Ethnicity</b>	<b>Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>
<b>&lt;3 Years</b>	25	3	0	17	0
<b>3 to 5 Years</b>	20	4	2**	5	4**
<b>6 to 10 Years</b>	7	0	0	5	5
<b>11 to 15 Years</b>	13	0	0	8	7
<b>16 to 20 Years</b>	9	1	1	3	1**
<b>21 to 25 Years</b>	6	1	1	3	1**
<b>26 to 30 Years</b>	3	0	0	0	0
<b>31 to 35 Years</b>	3	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	86	10	5**	42	19**

**\*\*Denotes that some respondents did not indicate years at current school, but only in LEA**

## TES - Respondent Interest &amp; Meeting of Criteria by Length of Employment – School

<b>Identified Ethnicity</b>	<b>Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>
<b>&lt;3 Years</b>	29	4	0	20	0
<b>3 to 5 Years</b>	20	2	2	5	5
<b>6 to 10 Years</b>	4	0	0	3	3
<b>11 to 15 Years</b>	15	2	2	9	9
<b>16 to 20 Years</b>	5	1	1	2	2
<b>21 to 25 Years</b>	3	0	0	0	0
<b>Not Specified**</b>	8	1	0	3	0
<b>Skipped Question</b>	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	86	10	5	42	19

Comparison of Academic Level of All Teachers in LEA & Respondents to TES



## TES - Respondent Interest &amp; Meeting Criteria by Academic Level Taught

<b>Identified Ethnicity</b>	<b>Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest (#)</b>	<b>Expressed Interest &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info (#)</b>	<b>Requested Info &amp; Met Criteria (#)</b>
<b>Elementary School (K-4)</b>	42	5	2	19	11**
<b>Middle School (5-8)</b>	26	3	3	13	4**
<b>High School (9-12)</b>	17	2	0**	10	4
<b>Skipped Question</b>	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	86	10	5**	42	19**

**\*\*Denotes that some respondents did not indicate years at current school, but only in LEA**

Appendix E  
DATA GATHERED FROM TEACHER LEADERSHIP SCHOOL SURVEY  
Bill & Marilyn Katzenmeyer (2005)

The data in Appendix E includes the connection of the questions from each dimension to the three variables from the Lee & Nie (2014) Theoretical Framework of Teacher Empowerment and the respondents scores to each question. The data is presented by each dimension.

## TLSS - Respondent Scores to All Seven Dimensions

	Developmental Focus	Recognition	Autonomy	Collegiality	Participation	Open Communication	Positive Environment
Respondent One	31	27	19	28	17	28	27
Respondent Two	19	16	16	16	16	13	18
Respondent Three	25	17	21	22	20	22	20
Respondent Four	25	24	24	30	18	21	22
Respondent Five	29	25	23	28	21	25	29
Respondent Six	30	30	26	30	21	27	29
Respondent Seven	28	29	28	32	23	25	29
Respondent Eight	29	25	33	30	19	30	29
Respondent Nine	33	31	32	26	16**	29	32
Respondent 10	35	35	24.5*	27	25	29	33
<b>Dimension Average</b>	28.4	25.9	25.027*	26.9	20.1**	24.9	26.8

\* Denotes that Respondent 10 skipped one statement in Autonomy Dimension.

\*\* Denotes that Respondent 9 skipped two statements in Participation Dimension.

## TLSS - Connection of Developmental Focus Statements to Theoretical Framework

	<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>	<b>Framework Connection</b>
1	At my school administrators and teachers try hard to help new teachers be successful.	Teachers’ perceptions of principal’s empowering behaviors  Teachers’ sense of competence and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
2	At my school, teachers are provided with assistance, guidance or coaching if needed.	Teachers’ perceptions of immediate supervisors empowering behaviors  Teachers’ sense of competence  Job Satisfaction
3	Administrators at my school actively support the professional development of faculty and staff.	Teachers’ perceptions of principal’s empowering behaviors  Teachers’ sense of competence and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional commitment
4	We gain new knowledge and skills through staff development and professional reading.	Teachers’ sense of meaning, competence, and impact.  Professional commitment  Job Satisfaction
5	We share new ideas and strategies we have gained with each other.	Teachers’ sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact.  Organizational Commitment  Professional commitment  Job Satisfaction
6	Teachers at my school are supportive of each other personally and professionally.	Teachers’ sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact.  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
7	Teachers at my school are engaged in gaining new knowledge and skills.	Teachers’ sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact.  Organizational Commitment  Professional commitment

## TLSS - Individual Scores from Developmental Focus Statements

<b>TLSS Item Number</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Respondent One</b>	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	31
<b>Respondent Two</b>	3	3	2	2	2	4	3	19
<b>Respondent Three</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	25
<b>Respondent Four</b>	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	25
<b>Respondent Five</b>	5	4	4	3	4	5	4	29
<b>Respondent Six</b>	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	30
<b>Respondent Seven</b>	3	2	4	4	5	5	5	28
<b>Respondent Eight</b>	4	3	5	4	5	4	4	29
<b>Respondent Nine</b>	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	33
<b>Respondent 10</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35
<b>Score Average</b>	4.1	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.9	4.5	4.2	28.4

## TLSS – Connection of Recognition Statements to Lee &amp; Nie Theoretical Framework

<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>		<b>Framework Connection</b>
8	The administration at my school have confidence in me.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence and autonomy  Job Satisfaction
9	My professional skills and competence are recognized by the administrators at my school.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
10	Other teachers recognize my professional skills and competence.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
11	It is apparent that many of the teachers at my school can take leadership roles.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment
12	The ideas and opinions of teachers are valued and respected at my school.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, autonomy, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
13	At my school we celebrate each others' successes.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
14	Many of the faculty and staff at my school are recognized for their work.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction



## TLSS – Connection of Autonomy Statements to Lee &amp; Nie Theoretical Framework

<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>		<b>Framework Connection</b>
15	In my role as a teacher, I am free to make judgements about what is best for my students.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
16	At my school I have freedom to make choices about the use of time and resources.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
17	I know that we will bend the rules if it is necessary to help children learn.	Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment
18	Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative to make improvements for students.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment
19	I have input to developing a vision for my school and its future.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
20	At my school teachers can be innovative if they choose to be	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment
21	Administrators and other teachers support me in making changes in my instructional strategies.	Teachers' perceptions of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Job Satisfaction

## TLSS – Individual Scores from Autonomy Statements:

TLSS Item Number	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Total
<b>Respondent One</b>	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	19
<b>Respondent Two</b>	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	16
<b>Respondent Three</b>	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	21
<b>Respondent Four</b>	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	24
<b>Respondent Five</b>	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	23
<b>Respondent Six</b>	3	2	4	5	3	5	4	26
<b>Respondent Seven</b>	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	28
<b>Respondent Eight</b>	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	33
<b>Respondent Nine</b>	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	32
<b>Respondent 10</b>	4	4	3	4	4.5	5	No Score	24.5
<b>Score Average</b>	3.8	3.3	3.5	3.9	3.25	3.5	3.7	246.5 25.027

## TLSS – Connection of Collegiality Statements to Lee &amp; Nie Theoretical Framework

*\*Framework does not identify connections of Autonomy to Autonomy*

<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>		<b>Framework Connection</b>
22	Teachers at my school discuss strategies and share materials.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment
23	Teachers at my school influence one another's teaching.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
24	Teachers in my school observe one another's work with students.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment
25	I talk with other teachers in my school about my teaching and the curriculum.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment
26	Teachers and administrators work together to solve students' academic and behavior problems.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment
27	Other teachers at my school have helped me find creative ways to deal with challenges I have faced in my classes.	Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
28	Conversations among professionals at my school focused on students.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction



## TLSS – Connection of Participation Statements to Lee &amp; Nie Theoretical Framework

<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>		<b>Framework Connection</b>
29	Teachers have input to decisions about school change.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
30	Teachers have a say in what and how things are done.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
31	Teachers and administrators share decisions about how time is used and how school is organized.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
32	Teachers and administrators at my school understand and use the consensus process.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of autonomy and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
33	Teachers participate in screening and selecting new faculty and/or staff at my school.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy and impact  Organizational Commitment
34	My opinions and ideas are sought by administrators at my school.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
35	We try to reach consensus before making important decisions.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of competence, autonomy and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction

## TLSS – Individual Scores from Participation Statements:

TLSS Item Number	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	Total
<b>Respondent One</b>	2	3	1	1	3	4	3	17
<b>Respondent Two</b>	3	2	2	1	4	2	2	16
<b>Respondent Three</b>	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20
<b>Respondent Four</b>	2	3	3	2	4	2	2	18
<b>Respondent Five</b>	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	21
<b>Respondent Six</b>	4	4	3	2	2	4	2	21
<b>Respondent Seven</b>	4	3	3	3	2	4	4	23
<b>Respondent Eight</b>	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	19
<b>Respondent Nine</b>	3	3	3		4	3		16
<b>Respondent 10</b>	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	25
<b>Score Average</b>	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.3̄	2.9	3.1	2.7̄	196 20.1̄

## TLSS – Connection of Open Communication Statements to Lee &amp; Nie Theoretical Framework

<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>		<b>Framework Connection</b>
36	Because teachers and administrators share ideas about our work, I stay aware of what is happening.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
37	At my school everybody talks freely and openly about feelings and opinions they have.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
38	Faculty and staff at my school share their feelings and concerns in productive ways.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
39	Teachers at my school discuss and help one another solve problems.	Teachers' sense of competence autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
40	Faculty and staff talk about ways to better serve our students and their families.	Teachers' sense of meaning, competence autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
41	When things go wrong at our school, we try not to blame, but talk about ways to do better next time.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
42	Faculty meeting time is used for discussions and problem solving.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence autonomy, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction



## TLSS – Connection of Positive Environment Statements to Lee &amp; Nie Theoretical Framework

<b>TLSS – Item Number and Statement</b>		<b>Framework Connection</b>
43	Teachers are treated as professionals at my school.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
44	Teachers at my school look forward to coming to work every day.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Job Satisfaction
45	There is a general satisfaction with the work environment among teachers at my school.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
46	Teachers and administrators at my school work in partnership.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Job Satisfaction
47	Teachers at my school are respected by parents, students, and administrators.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment  Professional Commitment  Job Satisfaction
48	The principal, faculty, and staff at my school work as a team.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Organizational Commitment
49	We feel positive about the ways we are responding to our students' needs.	Teachers' perception of principal's empowering behaviors  Teachers' sense of meaning, competence, and impact  Job Satisfaction



Appendix F  
INVITATION LETTER TO PROSPECTED PARTICIPANTS

Hello,

It is imperative that I open with thanking you for taking the time to respond to the previous survey: *Teacher Empowerment Survey: Demographic Information*. All responses from the survey greatly aid in the development of my study, where my sole ambition is to expand upon the subject of Teacher Empowerment for current and future researchers and practitioners.

I am writing to you today, because you indicated either a request to receive more information about my study prior for deciding whether you are interested, or an interest in participation in the focus group and interview portion of my dissertation research. Before I explain, please note that all participation in all phases of the study is voluntary, and participants can opt out at any time. In the study, I am researching the empowerment of teachers who are employed in a school district that has been placed on an improvement plan, resulting in the appointment of a receiver. As current teachers in the (Rockford Public Schools), you are eligible to volunteer.

All volunteers who are selected for participation will be asked to take part in a single one-hour focus group, with all participants, and two individual one-hour interviews. The focus group will be held in a centralized location, which is to be determined, based upon availability of the participants and the site. I have tentatively identified the (Rockford) Public Library conference room; however, that is subject to change. The participants will be asked to select the time and location that best suits their availability. As the participants are volunteering their time to allow me to conduct my research, I will travel to the locations of the participants' choosing. Although there is not compensation for participation, all volunteers will be placed in a raffle for a Starbucks gift card, seeing that if you are like me, you live for your morning coffee or tea. In my case, it is definitely iced tea. All volunteers who are selected for participation will be provided with a meal during the focus group and interviews.

All sessions will be recorded via audio and video devices for the sole purpose of aiding me in transcription. All recordings will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed following the completion of transcription. All participants identities will be kept anonymous, and each will be provided with a pseudonym, of which I will have the decipher secure in a separate location. Please note that general demographic information, such as gender, years of service, and age range will be identified in my completed dissertation. Upon completion of the final draft, the decipher will also be destroyed.

Attached is a copy of the study's consent form, which will be distributed to all participants prior to commencing the focus group and interviews. I implore that if you are interested in volunteering, please read through the consent form and contact me with all questions. The form does not need to be signed at this time. Volunteers who are selected for participation will be distributed the consent form prior to participation. If you are interested in volunteering, contact me at [Raymond.Moschetto@snhu.edu](mailto:Raymond.Moschetto@snhu.edu). I can also be reached through my cellphone at (redacted).

Sincerely,  
Ray Moschetto  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Education  
Southern New Hampshire University

Appendix G  
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: JULY 10, 2017

Engagement

- 1.) How long have you been in your current school and the district?
- 2.) What positions make up your school's administration and immediate supervisors?

Exploration

- 3.) Are professional development opportunities provided to teachers at your school?
- 4.) Is there collegiality amongst teachers, or shared decision making between your school's teachers and administration?
- 5.) Are teachers supported at your school by administrators and immediate supervisors?
- 6.) Are teachers encouraged to be active in making improvements and making innovations?
- 7.) What is your school's culture regarding collaboration and communication?
- 8.) Has your experience differed over the last three years, as compared to your experiences in education, in prior years?

Exit

- 9.) What advice would you give to a teacher contemplating about working in the district?

Appendix H  
FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Interview Part A: Questions for Participants who Participated in the Focus Group**

Beginning Questions

1. Has there been any changes in your school's leadership since the focus group?
  - a. (If there was a change) Has your school's culture been affected?

Improvement plan

2. It was discussed in the focus group, as well as in other interviews, that not every teacher, in the schools represented, has a say. Are you able to elaborate further, regarding your school?
3. Another statement from the focus group was that regarding their own classrooms, teachers can address their concerns with their administrators and immediate supervisors. What is the experience like in your school for teachers to address their concerns?
4. It was stated in the focus group that the individual PD provided to teachers is based on several variables. Notably whether it was deemed needed, and whether observers approved of the teacher's work, as noted on observations. Are you able to elaborate further, regarding your school?
5. Another statement made during the focus group, and during other interviews, was that specific teams are supported over others. If you could hypothesize the reason for this, what would be your hypothesis?
6. In the focus group, it was stated that certain initiatives were started, then were dropped without any further explanation. Are you able to elaborate further, regarding your school?
7. Are there connections between the district being under receivership and the actions and statements of your principal and immediate supervisors?

Closing Question

8. The definition of teacher empowerment in this study is "a process of school leader(s) demonstrating empowering behaviors to enable the experience of psychological empowerment". Based on that definition, and our discussion, do you believe that teachers are empowered?

**Interview Part B: Questions for Participants who Did Not Participate in the Focus Group**

## Engagement

- 1.) How long have you been in your current school and the district?
- 2.) What positions make up your school's administration and immediate supervisors?

## Exploration

- 3.) Does your school's administration provide professional development opportunities to teachers?
- 4.) What is your school's culture regarding collaboration and communication?
- 5.) Is there shared decision making between your school's teachers and administration?
- 6.) Are teachers supported at your school by administrators and immediate supervisors?
- 7.) Are teachers encouraged to open share their thoughts and ideas in making improvements and innovations?
- 8.) Have you observed any differences between your school's culture and the culture of the district?
- 9.) Have you observed any changes in the overall culture of your school and the district in your time employed?

## Exit

What suggestions would you provide to a teacher who recently started working in your school?