

More than Words: A Basic Interpretative Approach to Understanding Internal  
Accountability through Adaptive Leadership, Relational Trust, and Professional Capital

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to the educational profession. This dissertation can provide the reader with a deeper understanding about the concept of internal accountability within secondary schools.

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and my friends, who have invested in my abilities, talents, and dreams. I am thankful to my parents, who taught me the value of determination and discipline throughout my life. My sister has always encouraged me to utilize my talents and gifts to assist others in fulfilling their dreams. My friends have been patient and understanding whenever I needed open-minded listeners.

Lastly, I am grateful to my son, Josiah, who is my pride and joy. I am most appreciative of my son, Josiah, who continues to support and encourage me. Also, I dedicate this opportunity to Richard; he is my greatest advocate, supporter, champion, counselor, and inspiration.

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*“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”  
-John Donne*

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Lastly, I am thankful for my husband and son who have allowed me to achieve this milestone. Both have dedicated their time and energy to ensure I reach my mark of excellence.

## **Abstract of Dissertation**

**More than Words: A Basic Interpretative Approach to Understanding Internal Accountability through Adaptive Leadership, Relational Trust, and Professional Capital**

There was limited knowledge about school supports and strategies for leadership, trust, and capital. The problem statement for this research inquiry was examining the deficiencies concerning the identification and characterization of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. The purpose of this research inquiry was to understand the interpretation and utilization of internal accountability by secondary principals. The theoretical framework for this research study was adaptive leadership. This research inquiry described adaptive leadership as diagnosis, action, reflection, and collaboration. Research participants described the influence of adaptive leadership on their administrative procedures, behavioral structures, and instructional practices within their school community. Poole (2011) recommended the need for principals and teachers to collaborate to establish school-level practices that acknowledge federal mandates, such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Each concept of internal accountability has components that encourage social interactions between principals and teachers. Positive social interactions existed, within school communities that foster respect, personal regard, integrity, and competence. Professional capital was maximized when human, social, and decisional capital was enhanced.

The research findings revealed two themes: (1) internal accountability required a student-centered approach with teacher supports, personalized professional development opportunities, and equitable interventions. (2) Internal accountability required collective accountability between principals and teachers. Collective accountability was

demonstrated through flexible structures, clear expectations, and personal desires. These emerging themes revealed varying degrees and elements of internal accountability based on the twelve research participants' experiences and perspectives. Similarly, the research literature demonstrated how important it is for principals to have an interest in fostering adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. The research literature and inquiry confirmed there are multiple pathways to internal accountability.

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

Internal accountability is the utilization of school-level practices to build a culture of collaborative continuous improvement (Poole, 2011). External accountability is different from internal accountability because it is constructed by external officials to establish educational policies. With internal accountability, there should be school-level practices utilized by principals and teachers within the same school. An effective internal accountability framework allows principals and teachers to understand their personal and collective roles in their school community (Fullan & Edwards, 2017). These school-level practices can be developed through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital (Bryk & Schneider, 2002/2003; Daly, 2009; Elmore, 1996; Finnigan, 2010; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, & Hargreaves, 2015; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Kershner & McQuillan, 2016; Roy, 2007). The principal initiates this culture of collaborative continuous improvement, so teachers may share in the collective responsibilities of the school community (Mayer, Donaldson, LeChasseur, Welton, & Cobb, 2013). These school-level practices foster an environment where both principals and teachers have opportunities to process and utilize data to make personalized decisions and implement sustainable practices for school growth (Elmore, 2000 a/b; Elmore, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Heifetz et al., 2009; Mosley, Boscardin, & Wells, 2014). Through internal accountability, the school community can have data informed discussions about their needs and aspirations (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Elmore, 2002; O'Donnell & White, 2005). Internal accountability can strategically guide effective practices (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006), which can lead

principals and teachers to establish shared experiences for leadership and management (Fullan, 2002; Murphy, 2012; Youngs & King, 2002).

Through this internal accountability framework, there are internal structures and practices that facilitate collaborative continuous improvement. Internal accountability fosters proactive practices to address external accountability based on contextual and relational needs. For example, Poole (2011) described high-stakes testing policies and the consequences attached to poor test performance arguing that high-stakes testing alone can reduce teacher morale and minimize teaching and learning to simply teaching to the test. Simultaneously, Poole (2011) expressed how external accountability can encourage teachers to understand student needs, maintain teacher motivation, and develop shared objectives. With internal accountability, both principals and teachers take responsibility to implement effective practices to address federal mandates and student needs. These mandates include, but are not limited to, Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) and other established federal policies (Poole, 2011). Essentially, there is a need for both internal and external accountability within the educational system. In this study, I was interested in the procedures, processes, practices, and structures that facilitate internal accountability.

### **Statement of Problem**

Principals directly and indirectly influence daily instructional practices. Directly, principals discuss innovative risk-taking approaches with teachers, communicate the shared vision of the school, and address instructional and evaluative concerns within the school community (Cosner, 2009; Cranston, 2011; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Finnigan, 2010; Fullan, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Ishimaru, 2013; Kafele, 2015; Kershner &

McQuillan, 2016; Kochanek, 2005; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008; Lingam & Lingam, 2015; Madsen, Schroeder, & Irby, 2014; McNulty & Besser, 2011; Mosley et al., 2014; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994; Wahlstrom, 2008; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). In indirect ways, principals establish school protocols, allocate human and administrative resources, and monitor school performance indicators. Finnigan (2010) expressed principals are facilitators of educational reform. She examined data from a survey of Chicago teachers, who worked in probation and non-probation schools. According to her findings, teachers from probation and non-probation schools believed principals demonstrated instructional leadership, but principals did not provide support. Subsequently, these findings required innovative structures, practices, and supports created within the school to equip teachers (Anness, 2000; Finnigan, 2010; Madsen, et al., 2014; Mosley, et al., 2014). Poole (2011) concluded that schools with cohesive practices address external measures with greater achievement. Muhammad (2018) described the need for educators to engage in continuous improvement for sustainable change. There are numerous studies on school capacity and the need for leadership, trust, and capital; however, there is limited understanding on how secondary principals interpret and utilize internal accountability (Anness, 2000; Bryk & Schneider, 2002/2003; Burns & Carpenter, 2008; Cosner, 2009; Daly & Chrispeels, 2008; Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Heifetz et al., 2009; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Lingam & Lingam, 2015; Madsen, et al., 2014; Tschannen-Moran 2009/2011; Uline, Miller, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). The examination of the practical aspects of internal accountability can enhance the theoretical concepts of internal

accountability. According to Poole (2011), there is ambiguity concerning school accountability because of the diverse needs.

### **Purpose of Study**

Exploring internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital can enhance educational expertise and provide insight into administrative, behavioral, and instructional practices. Principals and teachers can use school practices to foster effective dialogue about instruction (Cosner, 2009). Moreover, this study encouraged principals to reflect on their connection to the shared vision of the school community (Burns & Carpenter, 2008; Collins & Porras, 1996; Muhammad, 2018).

### **Research Questions**

The first research question is: How do secondary principals, if at all, interpret internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? The first research question frames the exploration of thoughts and interpretations of internal accountability. The second research question is: How do secondary principals, if at all, utilize internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? The second research question frames the comprehension of actions and practices of internal accountability. The sub questions for these research questions are: What does adaptive leadership mean to secondary principals? What does relational trust mean to secondary principals? What does professional capital mean to secondary principals? How can adaptive leadership enhance school communities? How can

relational trust enhance school capacity? How can professional capital enhance school communities?

### **Statement of Potential Significance**

Principals and teachers should examine and refine protocols to ensure current practices and accountability measures remain beneficial to the shared vision, practice, and language of their school needs (Danielson, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Heifetz, et al., 2009). Although principals may not directly design classroom routines, they lead and manage the entire instructional community.

My research study provided understanding about the experiences and perspectives of twelve secondary principals. This inquiry provided thoughts and actions of instructional and relational practices (Cosner, 2009; Daly, 2009; Hallinger, 2013; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Uline et al., 1998). There are studies exploring the theoretical elements of internal accountability; however, few have explored the practical interpretation and application of internal accountability at the secondary level (Ancess, 2000; Blasé & Blasé, 1999a/b; Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015; Bryk & Schneider, 2002/2003; Cosner, 2009; Cuban, 1984; Cuban, 2012; Daly, 2009; Daly & Chrispeels, 2008; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Finnigan, 2010; Hargreaves, 2001; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Heifetz, et al., 2009; Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001; Kochanek, 2005). My basic qualitative research inquiry provided insight on constructive narratives to minimize the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge.

### **Theoretical Framework: Adaptive Leadership**

Adaptive leadership encourages principals and teachers to implement practices beyond their daily job descriptions because of communication and collaboration (Heifetz,

et al., 2009; Mosley, et al., 2014). This type of leadership consists of four action-oriented components: (a) observing experiences and practices, (b) interpreting the observations, (c) implementing necessary solutions, and (d) refining interventions as needed (Heifetz, et al., 2009). The theoretical underpinnings promote continuous engagement and purposeful collaboration between principals and teachers to address diverse challenges with sustainable data-driven outcomes (Heifetz, et al., 2009; Northouse, 2016).

This leadership approach encourages daily interactions that can empower principals and teachers to address technical and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, et al., 2009; Horton, 2017). Moreover, adaptive leadership requires time, dedication, and commitment (Fullan, et al., 2015; Heifetz, et al., 2009; Youngs & King, 2002).

**Conceptual Framework: Internal Accountability**

In this research study, internal accountability is my theoretical construct used to examine current research literature and to explore practical application of internal accountability (Maxwell, 2005). The conceptual framework organizes the concepts, connections, and ideologies in a visual and narrative format to inform the reader (Maxwell, 2005). Figure 1 below demonstrates the components and effect of internal accountability. Adaptive leadership is the catalyst to achieve internal accountability.

**Desired Effect of Internal Accountability**

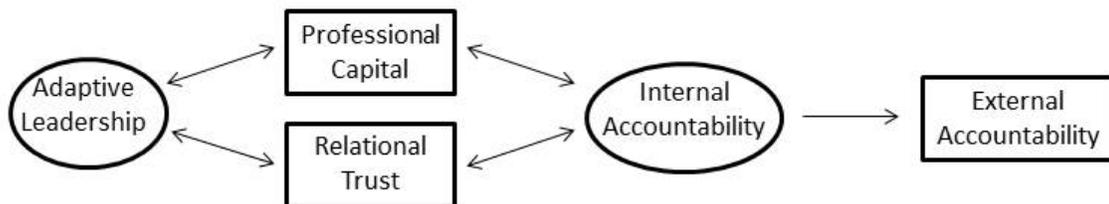


FIGURE 1

*Figure 1 is a diagram of the desired effect of internal accountability.*

## **Summary of Methodology**

My methodology is a basic interpretative approach to explore internal accountability. The twelve secondary principals revealed diverse solutions, interventions, and practices. All elements of this qualitative research design were created to acquire knowledge about internal accountability from varying perspectives and experiences (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015).

**Selection of Participants.** The participants were selected by purposive and snowball sampling to explore internal accountability. For this qualitative research study, I started with a research base site of a mid-size school district on the East Coast. This K-12 school district has approximately 65,000 students. Once the school district and The George Washington University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided approval of the research study, I extended recruitment emails to secondary principals. During the data collection and data analysis process, I assigned pseudonyms to the principals and the schools to address confidentiality concerns (Creswell, 2009).

**Epistemology for the Study.** Merriam's basic qualitative approach was utilized to support constructivist exploration. Through this epistemology, the construction of meaning is more significant than the mere discovery of meaning (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2009). Thus, the goal of this research inquiry was to understand how secondary principals perceive and experience internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. Multiple data sources (interviews and documents) assisted in understanding the research phenomenon and how it is constructed within school communities. The twelve research participants shared their school practices, expectations, and documents with me.

## **Limitations**

There were several limitations prior to this research study. First, participation in this research study was voluntary; only twelve secondary principals agreed to participate. Second, this research study was a “snapshot” of each principal’s longitudinal perspective, perception, and experience (Creswell, 2007). Third, this qualitative study, participants self-reported their perspectives, perceptions, and experiences through semi-structured interviews and document analyses. There was one grade level principal who participated in this research inquiry. This grade level principal identified with being a secondary principal. She was a principal over one grade level. Lastly, Merriam (2009) concluded limitations to documentary data: documents may not have been intended to be included in a research study or documents may mislead others. However, as the primary research instrument, I wanted to see how principals and teachers used their documents to facilitate internal accountability. Therefore, I requested to further analyze the documents, so I could assess the connectivity of the documents to the interviews.

## **Delimitations**

Principals coordinate the administrative, behavioral, and instructional practice within the school community (Cosner, 2009; Cranston, 2011; Devos & Bouckennooghe, 2009; Finnigan, 2010; Fullan, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Ishimaru, 2013; Kershner & McQuillan, 2016; Kochanek, 2005; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008; Lingam & Lingam, 2015; Madsen et al., 2014; McNulty & Besser, 2011; Mosley et al., 2014; Senge et al., 1994; Wahlstrom, 2008; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). All adults and students matter for the purpose of this study I focused on principals. My methodology was Merriam’s basic qualitative approach with social constructivist

principles. I analyzed the perspectives and experiences of secondary principals and their interpretation and construction of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

### **Subjectivity Statement**

As a secondary educator, there may be some potential bias concerning expectations for secondary principals and classroom teachers. At the same time, I understand the external and internal expectations and constraints that influence schools. There are times when I consider both the principals' and the teachers' perspectives. Then, there are times I concluded there is a more effective approach to addressing technical or adaptive challenges. There are federal mandates implemented within schools. Principals and teachers should be actively involved in discussing the challenges and implementing solutions (Finnigan, 2010; Heifetz, et al., 2009). Therefore, I completed reflective journaling along with peer debriefing to ensure my biases were minimized. During reflective journaling and peer debriefing, I did not disclose identifying markers concerning the participants or their schools.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

These terms provided understanding and contextual meaning for this qualitative research study:

1. Leadership: Northouse (2010) defined leadership as “a process whereby individuals influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). This definition encompasses elements of principal leadership within school. My research study defined principal leadership as the principals coordinating school practices. Principals coordinate school practices through explaining the school mission, managing

teaching and learning, and promoting a constructive school culture (O'Donnell & White, 2005).

2. Professional capital: Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) constructed professional capital as a leadership framework. Professional capital has three components- human, social, and decisional capital. Human capital is the ability to recognize and utilize human abilities and skills. Second, social capital is the use of collaboration between principals and teachers to develop strategies and share perspectives (Elmore, 2000a; Elmore, 2000b; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Youngs & King, 2002). Third, decisional capital has structural processes that encourage collaborative decision-making (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Youngs & King, 2002).

3. Relational trust: Bryk and Schneider (2002/2003) explained relational trust as daily demonstrations of respect, personal regard, competence, and personal integrity. Reciprocal actions are the exchange of interactions between parties. Forsyth, et al. (2011) labeled these characteristics as collective trust, established from interpersonal trust connections.

4. Internal accountability: Fullan, et al. (2015) described internal accountability as school professionals constructing research-driven practices to enhance their present-level of progress. These school professionals hold themselves and colleagues responsible for continuous improvement efforts. Chapter 2 is constructed from the conceptual framework of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational capital, and professional capital.

5. External accountability: Fullan, et al. (2015) expressed external accountability as mandates created by policymakers and other external individuals.

6. Personal mastery: Senge (1990) explained personal mastery as the ability to understand individual and collective awareness in various situations and events.

7. Adaptive leadership: Heifetz, et al. (2009) identified adaptive leadership as a collaborative exchange concerning observing challenges, interpreting experiences, implementing solutions, and refining interventions with an inclusive and reflective focus on solving adaptive challenges.

### **Chapter Summary**

This research study consisted of five chapters revealing various components of the research design. Chapter 1 explained the problem statement, the research purpose, and the research question to support the conceptual framework along with the qualitative research methodology. Chapter 2 revealed an understanding of the research literature through the research study's conceptual framework of internal accountability, a compilation of professional capital, adaptive leadership, and relational trust. The literature review described the possible role of adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital in schools. Chapter 3 explained the research methodology and the components of the research inquiry process. The methodology section described the research design, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the research study.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

Researchers suggested the utilization of internal accountability practices for sustainable growth (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hattie, 2012; McNulty & Besser, 2011). Youngs and King (2002) stated the importance of providing opportunities for exchanging innovative ideas and articulating multiple perspectives. The authors suggested principals and teachers define and implement innovative instructional practices through their daily formal and informal interactions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The authors stated the importance of reflective thinking and communication for evaluation and refinement (Hattie, Masters, & Birch, 2016). Heifetz et al., 2009 affirmed that is necessary for individuals to understand current norms and structures and feel comfortable reflecting on and refining those norms and structures. This reciprocal exchange demonstrated attributes of adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. Researchers indicated visible learning requires collective actions from principals and teachers to establish and sustain flexible structures for communication and praxis (Freire, 1993; Hattie et al., 2016).

### **Consulted Databases and Search Terms**

I utilized multiple educational resources: educational books, white papers, peer-reviewed resources, scholarly articles, and educational research databases to gain relevant literature for this research study. The following educational databases were explored:

Gelman Library System	Educational Source
Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)	JSTOR
ProQuest Research Library Plus	Academic Search

**Research terminology examined:**

Qualitative research	Reflective practice
Instructional leaders	School improvement
Continuous improvement	System reform
Instructional leadership	Learning organization
Instructional feedback	Instructional systems
Instructional coaching	Social learning theory
Trust	Communities of Practices
Instructional supervision	Professional Capital
Leadership	Adaptive Leadership

On multiple occasions, research turned into a snowball effect, where an article would lead to another article or source. I constructed open-ended research questions based on the following concepts: internal accountability, adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. I used the research sources to communicate a more thematic approach to this research inquiry rather than chronological concepts. The research literature examined in this literature review spanned from 1991-2018 except for seven articles from 1981, 1983, and 1989 which presented seminal concepts or notions in educational research literature. I started my research on principal and teacher evaluations. Through the research literature it became evident that the evaluation process had essentials of internal accountability. However, there was limited dialogue on the practical knowledge of implementing internal accountability. The research literature identified a correlation among adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital (Bryk & Schneider, 2002/2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Heifetz et al., 2009).

For sustainable school effectiveness, it was imperative to examine principals' individual perceptions of their current leadership practices.

### Conceptual Framework: Internal Accountability

Internal accountability was a theoretical construct to critically examine the research contributions of adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. For this research study, the conceptual framework organized the concepts, connections, and ideologies in a visual and narrative format to inform readers (Maxwell, 2005).

Conceptual Framework: Internal Accountability

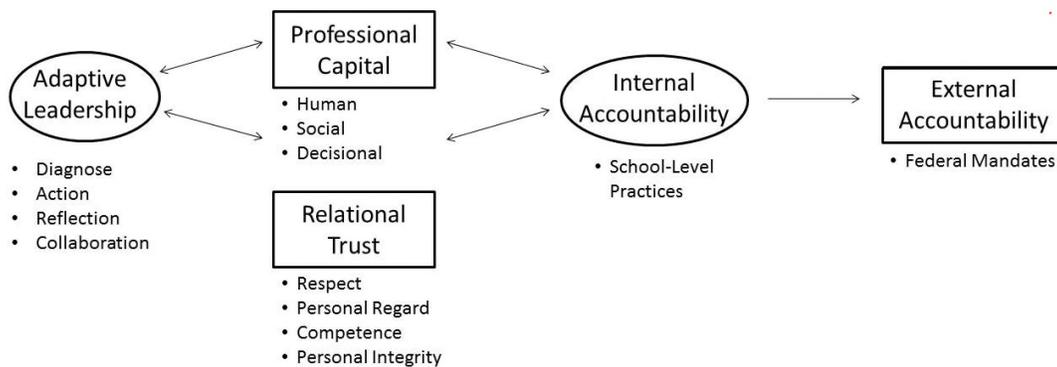


FIGURE 2

*Figure 2 is a visual iterative interpretation of the conceptual framework utilized for this review of the literature.*

Figure 2 showed the elements of internal accountability with a desired outcome of external accountability. With this conceptual framework, there was an opportunity to gather empirical and conceptual evidence from secondary principals on their professional application and reflection (Hallinger, 2003). This conceptual framework demonstrated how secondary principals could implement internal accountability. Adaptive leadership was the primary instrument to support internal accountability. The elements of adaptive leadership (diagnose, action, reflection, and collaboration) fostered relational trust

(respect, personal regard, competence, and personal integrity) and professional capital (human, social, and decisional) together these components lead to a type of internal accountability. These components addressed external accountability measures.

It was imperative to understand the principals' objectives concerning current and future instructional and organizational practices. Furthermore, understanding the effects and barriers that were often present within educational systems, such as time restraints, limited professional collegial interactions or professional development opportunities (Cosner, 2009). In addition, the hierarchical and specialized structures within educational settings also had the potential to create barriers (Cosner, 2009; Cuban, 1984; Daly, 2009; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). These researchers described the importance of collaborative interactions for reflection on their practices and processes as they intentionally seek continuous improvement (Hattie, 2012; McNulty & Besser, 2011). Most secondary schools classified their classes and master schedules by content disciplines, which can limit continuous interdisciplinary collaboration (Cuban, 1984). Uline et al. (1998) acknowledged there are distinct roles and responsibilities for principals and teachers.

### **Theoretical Framework: Adaptive Leadership**

Leadership was defined as multi-faceted and foundational for school improvement, capacity, and trust (Danielson, 2009; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Fink & Markholt, 2011; O'Donnell & White, 2005). Devos and Bouckenooghe (2009) described effective leadership as transformative instructional guidance and action. Elmore (2002) believed leadership efforts should support all students and classrooms. Hence, Elmore (2002) asserted that continuous leadership improvement contributes to student growth measures and practices (Horton, 2017). Researchers

established principals as facilitators, constructing and supporting administrative, behavioral, and instructional frameworks for daily use (Danielson, 2009; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Spillane, 2003; Teague & Anfara, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014). Northouse (2016) expressed leaders should model and inspire others.

Gruenert (2008) stated the learning personality of a school is the cultural environment where personal and professional experiences cultivate a shared set of expectations, usually unwritten tenets, which govern the learning environment (Muhammad, 2018). The following researchers indicated the benefit of principals assessing their personal mastery, understanding collective cultural norms, and considering their teachers' fundamental needs, including student growth within their daily practice (Lambert, 2003; Senge, 1990; Youngs & King, 2002). Heifetz et al. (2009) asserted that if leaders want to change the system all they need is the desire and ability to manage the change. Adaptive leadership required changes in the structure of the actual system. Researchers expressed the significance of a shift in mindsets and actions (Elmore, 2000b; Elmore, 2002; Hattie, 2012; Heifetz et al., 2009; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). The authors suggested the need to foster dialogue about practices, perceptions, and assumptions to create a forum for exchange of ideas (Danielson, 2009; Fullan, 2003a/b; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Mitchell, 1989; Sergiovanni, 2005). As principals and teachers participated in these activities, they assess daily practices and enhance moral professionalism (Fullan, 2003a/b; Mitchell, 1989). The following sections were essential components of adaptive leadership: diagnosis, action, reflection, and collaboration.

## Diagnosis

**Leadership and culture.** It was imperative for principals to consider their leadership influence on their learning environment (Barnett & McCormick, 2004). Barnett and McCormick (2004) conducted an international study using multilevel analysis and structural modeling to examine secondary schools serving students 12-18 years old. Through random sampling of 117 secondary schools, 55 schools agreed to participate, but 41 completed the self-administered surveys. The school response rate was 74.5% with some variation based on student population, so schools with school populations of 600 to 1,200 students decreased to 70.8%. Within the 41 schools, there were 373 completed self-administered teacher responses, but there were 820 submitted surveys.

The researchers utilized two research instruments: multifactor leadership questionnaire and patterns of adaptive learning survey (PALS) examining school leadership and culture. This study revealed there is a correlation concerning school leadership and culture. Likewise, the researchers acknowledged the necessity of principal and teacher collaboration. Barnett and McCormick (2004) communicated there are several external variables that contribute to leadership and culture, but they focused on internal variables only. Through leadership confirmatory factor analysis, three leadership approaches were identified: transformational leadership connected through vision ( $\alpha = .91$ ), transactional leadership connected to individual concern ( $\alpha = .92$ ), and passive leadership aligned to non-leadership actions ( $\alpha = .91$ ). The Cronbach's alpha confirmed reliable internal consistency with these three leadership approaches. School

leadership demonstrated variability through individual concern (24.2%), passive leadership (17.3%), and vision (35.7%) between schools.

There was limited empirical evidence on transformational, transactional, and passive leadership within secondary schools. School learning culture demonstrated a moderate significance level: task focus ( $\alpha = .71$ ), excellence in teaching ( $\alpha = .60$ ), favoritism ( $\alpha = .71$ ), task focus instruction ( $\alpha = .78$ ), performance focus instruction ( $\alpha = .70$ ), and personal expectations for teaching ( $\alpha = .62$ ). The researchers considered the presence of a school learning culture but did not assess the statistical significant variations concerning school culture between teachers. Teachers assessed execution of tasks and implementation of practices based on perception of leadership and cultural essentials: individual concern (75.8%), passive leadership (82.7%), and vision (64.3%). Through perspectives and experiences, teachers communicated their individual variable analysis. Teachers, who worked closely with principals gained additional insight concerning the principals' personal and collective expectations, experiences, and practices within the school. Individual teachers were the collective unit of school culture.

**Social leadership.** The research literature explained adaptive leadership as the ability to recognize possible affiliations, differentiate benefits and liabilities of low and high levels of trust (Heifetz et al., 2009; Selnes & Sallis, 2003), and possible deliberate actions (Heifetz et al., 2009; Sergiovanni, 2005). Subsequently, adaptive leadership was connected to other leadership theories, such as social leadership, which can produce personalized continuous improvement for principals and teachers. With social leadership, there was an expectation to establish a platform for daily formal and informal

social exchanges for principals and teachers (Porteous, 2013). Schools were constantly evolving and adapting to accommodate individual needs and meet specific goals for the community. Adaptive leadership and social leadership required a mutual understanding between principals and teachers (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Heifetz et al., 2009; Porteous, 2013). Furthermore, both leadership styles asserted the need for principals and teachers to be active agents of their diagnosis and action (Heifetz et al., 2009; Porteous, 2013). As leadership, trust, and capital evolved principals and teachers create a sustainable collaborative culture that produces an effective school infrastructure (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Heifetz et al., 2009).

Authors stated that principals lead as chief instructional leaders of their school (Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000b; Fullan, 1992b; McNulty & Besser, 2011). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) analyzed challenges from two perspectives: dance and balcony (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Dance perspective was when a participant is engaged in the constant flow of events. Balcony perspective was when the participant removes himself or herself physically or mentally from the constant flow of events. Sometimes participants saw only one possible outcome because of their limited vantage point, but when participants are open to changing their perspective there can be a shift in their mindset or action (Hattie, 2012). Subsequently, it was imperative for the participant to return to the dance floor to participate and coordinate actionable feedback and practice within the event (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) described the benefit of utilizing both dance and balcony perspectives.

The researchers explained adaptive leadership can differentiate technical and adaptive challenges within an organization (Fullan, 1992b; Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz &

Linsky, 2002). Technical challenges were solved by current operating processes (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). With a reflective approach, adaptive challenges are addressed; therefore, technical challenges are minimized or resolved (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Constant collaborative reflection of structural frameworks and school expectations resolved adaptive challenges (Fullan et al., 2015; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Youngs & King, 2002). Both challenges required collaborative decision-making protocols to analyze current practices and possible solutions (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008; Fullan, 1992b; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Reeves, 2006). Heifetz et al. (2009) asserted it is necessary to determine if the organization is ready to address adaptive challenges.

Depending on school leadership and capacity, principals and teachers implemented flexible structures (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Mitchell, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1989a/b; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Hoy and Sweetland (2001) described inflexible structures that can prevent collaboration and communication. Principals and teachers acknowledged their roles and responsibilities in creating internal accountability (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Elmore, 2000a/b; Heifetz et al., 2009; Sergiovanni, 2005). Some teachers feared loss, so the principal should empower teachers to improve teaching and learning (Heifetz et al., 2009). Hoy and Tarter (2004) confirmed the need for vulnerability to cultivate relational trust (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). The authors expressed the importance for schools to unlearn ineffective practices or actions (McNulty & Besser, 2011). Heifetz et al., 2009 asserted teams should acknowledge fear and provide support to assist individuals. Researchers expressed the significance of shared frameworks for instructional interactions (Heifetz et al., 2009; Sergiovanni, 1989a/b; Youngs & King,

2002). Eisner 1998 expressed the benefit of critiquing practices and delivering feedback (Eisner, 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

**Shared leadership.** Shared leadership and active participation with distributed roles and exchanges were necessary to cultivate school norms (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Elmore, 2000b; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Fullan, 2003a/b; Lambert, 2003; Reeves, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2005; Youngs & King, 2002). If principals align their professional goals with their schools' shared expectations, then all individuals achieved success (Fullan, 2004; Kafele, 2015; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Then principals made innovative decisions using data-driven approaches (Danielson, 2009; Sergiovanni, 2004). Researchers encouraged both principals and teachers to take an active role in establishing and supporting the shared practices and goals of the community (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000b; McNulty & Besser, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Blasé and Blasé (2002) expressed the importance of recognizing authoritarian behavior. This type of behavior demonstrated top down communication and coerced compliance.

### **Action**

**Decisional capital.** Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) examined leadership, trust, and capital through a teacher survey and stepwise linear regression for elementary, middle, and high school levels. The researchers explained if a school community has shared leadership then individual teacher trust in principals becomes unnecessary (Danielson, 2009; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). These results suggested that principals could foster

collective trust. Therefore, collective trust facilitated by principals could produce an environment where collaboration and communication exist. The researchers found two polarizing perspectives on decisional capital. In one aspect teachers are involved in formal decision-making procedures with minimal input. The other aspect was collaborative school-based decision-making (Sergiovanni, 1989a/b; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). According to this article, the research literature does not make it apparent how principals should collaborate (formal and informal) with teachers on decisional capital (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Both Leithwood and Wahlstrom (2008) and Youngs and King (2002) asserted that leadership and followership have a direct connection. Furthermore, Youngs and King's (2002) research literature explained if there is high trust within the school community it is because teachers are involved in the decision-making process. Decisional capital provided greater opportunity for shared practices to become common practices (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). The data revealed that leadership is significant at the elementary and high school levels with a higher significance at the high school level. At the middle school level, trust in principal leadership was more significant. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) concluded that trust could be passive.

**Social capital.** Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) explained the significance of three capitals: human, social, and decisional. For strategic planning, these three professional capitals were useful in cultivating leadership and trust (Fullan et al., 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). According to Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) this type of social capital enabled teachers to consistently communicate ideas. Teachers who felt collective efficacy about their school practices may had a vested interest to share in decision-making (Wahlstrom, 2008). It was imperative to define what direct assistance means in

this research study. Establishing effective structures, shared norms, and school practices could be defined as immediate direct assistance (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Based on the researchers, future studies consisted of shared leadership or other leadership attributes to assess school effectiveness. They suggested a mixed-method approach to show qualitative and quantitative data or a qualitative approach. Research questions were not accompanied with hypotheses for this study. The review of the literature does not explicitly state the conceptual or theoretical framework. Wahlstrom and Louis' (2008) study provided the fundamental empirical and conceptual assumptions for further investigations concerning elements of leadership, trust, and capital. The theoretical and practical elements of this study need to be further analyzed to support internal accountability.

**Principal leadership.** O'Donnell and White (2005) conducted a quantitative correlational study focused on Pennsylvania middle schools with diverse middle-aged grade levels (5-8, 6-8, or 7-8). The focus of this research inquiry was based on identifying possible correlations between principal leadership behaviors and student growth measures. This study utilized Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) as their research instrument. The PIMRS was used to understand principals' daily practice: defining school mission, managing teaching and learning, and promoting a constructive learning climate. This research inquiry examined the faculty and the principal's perceptions of the frequency of principals fostering instructional practices. The researchers acknowledged the significance of monitoring and influencing instructional practice. For this research study, they selected stepwise regression with

predictable variables, Pearson correlation, and T-test. Teachers' perceptions revealed principals, who encouraged a school climate and culture that is conducive to learning, have significant gains in math and reading scores. The research article addressed three of the seven research questions. Principals and teachers completed surveys. Principals self-rated their instructional practices and teachers shared their perceptions of principals' instructional practices. The research article provided some instructional practice recommendations, such as: maintaining daily visibility throughout the school community, providing learning opportunities for all principals and teachers throughout the school year, and allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process. The researchers acknowledged there is a relationship between principal leadership and student achievement.

## **Reflection**

**Principal Reflection.** Devos and Bouckennooghe (2009) constructed an international multiple case study inquiry based on three dimensions: goal-orientedness, collaborative decision-making, and innovative strategies. The purpose of the study was to examine principals' beliefs and conceptions about their roles and responsibilities and how these concepts affect school climate and organizational structure. The sample size consisted of 46 primary schools participating in a survey instrument to examine the climate and leadership styles. Teacher response rate for the survey was 75% with 700 out of 934 teachers completing the questionnaire. Besides the questionnaire, there were semi-structured interviews conducted with all 46 principals. The theoretical framework for this study was an adapted version of Quinn's leadership role model. During the interview process, researchers utilized four adapted types of Quinn's leadership role for

participants to identify personal characteristics. The data source was an interview with the following characteristics: (a.) principal with a high climate and leadership scores (people focused), (b.) principal with low climate (administrative minded), and (c.) principal with mild climate with a mixture of high and low (moderate minded). With this cross-case analysis, these researchers described some conceptual and empirical concepts. Principal A is goal oriented with a focus on human capital and shared participation. The principal conducted brief learning walks in multiple classrooms to interact with the instructional practices. The article acknowledged the more teachers and students see principals in the classroom the more collaboration can manifest. Principal B had a people minded profile but lacked the ability to involve teachers in school community decisions. Principal B preferred administrative tasks more than going into classrooms. Principal C did not conduct learning walks or value collegial relationships.

The semi-structured interview protocol allowed the researchers to assess possible themes across participants. There were polarizing perspectives between the data sources. Principals scored school climate dimensions based on self-reflection, which is beneficial to the research purpose. There was one principal who self-reported his desire to consider his human capital needs, but his actual practice did not align with his desires. The article provided varying types of direct quotes to construct meaning about these participants. The researcher reported, Principal A could not identify which of the four adapted Quinn models aligned to his daily leadership practice. Eventually, Principal A elaborated on his preference of mentoring and innovating. Nonetheless, Principal B expressed her assumed responsibility is to ensure organizational principles are met. Moreover, there were direct quotes about leadership behavior, which provided some

guidance to my research on leadership, capital, and trust. The study had implications: to foster participation, manage shared school vision, and sustain an effective learning community.

### **Collaboration.**

**Adaptive Leadership.** Preece's international university case study research (2013) on adaptive leadership was developed around community engagement and collective service learning. Adaptive leadership required appropriate listening and speaking skills. Appropriate listening and speaking skills provided opportunities to clarify responsive values and expectations. This study was conducted at an international university but can be applied to K-12 because of the need to understand adaptive leadership. The two participants, Rape Crisis and Counseling Centre and Advocacy Centre for People with Disabilities provided understanding concerning adaptive leadership. The findings indicated that teams were encouraged to collaborate, but student participants perceived they did not effectively collaborate with their peers throughout the entire learning process. Some adults felt there was a lack of effective social exchanges. The two major themes were collaboration and adaptive leadership. Students described their collective experience and offered reflective feedback. Preece (2013) defined collaboration as a mutual exchange through formal arrangement based on common values.

Preece (2013) utilized action research as the research methodology. In the methodology section, the researcher explained why action research was conducted along with the case study. The author described the characteristics of action research through an iterative distribution of collecting, evaluating, assessing, and constructing data inputs

and outputs. Through this methodological explanation, the researcher communicated the need to have a strengthened transferability. The researcher utilized quantitative and qualitative language but identified with a qualitative approach.

**Conclusion.** Adaptive leadership contained elements of relational trust and professional capital. Heifetz et al., 2009 emphasized it was necessary to acknowledge emotions and conflicts, but not internalize emotions and conflicts. In an adaptive learning environment, there were opportunities to make mistakes and reflect on those mistakes and losses (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Fullan, 2014; Heifetz, et al., 2009). The researchers expressed that reflective thinking and practice can enhance collaboration and professional capital (Danielson, 2009; Sergiovanni, 2005; Sirotnik, 1989). Thus, principals encouraged and value continuous learning and development (human capital), communication and collaboration (social capital), and model trust and risk-taking in the decision-making process (decisional capital) to enhance internal accountability (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000a/b; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Adaptive leadership connected: distributed leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, instructional leadership, leader-member exchange theory, and shared leadership (Elmore, 2000b; Fullan, 2003b; Northouse, 2010). Fink and Markholt (2011) suggested principals cannot lead these various leadership approaches and initiatives without gaining an understanding of their school. Furthermore, Fullan (2003b) confirmed these same sentiments but goes further indicate the need for principals to understand what they are attempting to accomplish. Researchers stated if a principal does not understand his or her structures

and practices, then he or she will be passive rather than engaged (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Fullan, 2003b; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

## **Relational Trust**

### **Relational Trust**

Prior to trust being utilized in educational discipline, it was used in clinical and experimental psychological disciplines. The historical educational exploration of relational trust started in 1985 (Forsyth et al., 2011). The research continued at The Ohio State University when Hoy and another team revised the relational measures. Bryk and Schneider and their colleagues from The University of Chicago conducted a longitudinal research study on relational trust within Chicago elementary schools. The scope of my literature review is framed primarily by Bryk and Schneider's relational trust components and facets. Relational trust was established in social-emotional facets and functions.

Relational trust was defined as daily social emotional exchanges with distinct sets of roles and responsibilities, which are demonstrated through personalized and interdependent connections (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cranston, 2011; Fullan, 2014; Sergiovanni, 2005; Uline et al., 1998). Bryk and Schneider's (2002/2003) longitudinal study consisted of 400 Chicago elementary schools. They desired to understand the degrees of relational trust within these public elementary schools. For four years they conducted interviews, observed interactions, and facilitated focus groups with principals, teachers, parents, and other individuals across 12 school communities. Through this data collection and analytical process, the degree of relational trust used for school improvement was revealed. Bryk and Schneider (2002/2003) lacked description about the selection criteria for their research participants.

Educators usually have a desired outcome to improve their schools; therefore, the examination of daily effective practices can improve schools (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). These researchers shared sentiments that limited or no relational trust impede collaborative decisions, school improvement efforts, and other growth opportunities; more importantly, there needs to be daily social exchanges (Barth, 1981; Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000a/b; Forsyth et al., 2011; Fullan, 2003a; Hammack, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2005). Positive or negative social exchange can shape another individual's outlook and perspective on their teaching and learning experience (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Youngs & King, 2002). Trust is essential to a school's culture because it establishes a responsive environment for principals, teachers, and students to work as a collaborative unit to ensure challenges are addressed from multiple perspectives and rationales, which can increase school capacity (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hattie, 2012; Knobloch & Jefferson, 2008; Sergiovanni, 2005; Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijssel, 2011; Youngs & King, 2002). Essentially, relational trust was necessary for continuous improvement practices. Bryk and Schneider (2002) described relational trust as mutual respect, personal regard, personal integrity, and interdependent competence.

**Respect.** There should be reciprocal respect between principals and teachers. School communities utilized professionalism and communication. Tschannen-Moran (2009) used multiple regressions to explore teachers' perspectives on principals' professionalism in schools. She utilized a survey completed by 2,355 teachers within 80 middle schools in a Mid-Atlantic state. This research study encouraged principals to cultivate an environment for both principals and teachers to take an active role in

developing and evaluating teaching and learning (Fullan, 2003b; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Both Tschannen-Moran (2009) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) concluded teachers have higher levels of relational trust in other teachers than in principals. Torres (2016) explored teacher retention and its connection to relational trust. Teachers in this research study indicated the need for both effective leadership and relational trust to be evident. In Torres' (2016) research, relational trust was utilized as the theoretical framework. Relational trust required active social interactions to foster collaboration and communication (Robb, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The following researchers shared principals should initiate communicating and reviewing the school's shared vision and mission for clear expectations (Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000b; Knobloch & Jefferson, 2008; Thoonen, et al., 2011; Youngs & King, 2002). Researchers confirmed mutual respect encourages listening to others, recognizing human capabilities, and developing school norms (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Teague & Anfara, 2012). Subsequently, both principals and teachers have a shared responsibility to develop mutual respect (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000a; Elmore, 2000b; Knobloch & Jefferson, 2008; Sergiovanni, 2005; Youngs & King, 2002).

The research literature revealed that mutual respect inspires principals and teachers to become interdependent. Interdependence allowed principals and teachers to share their knowledge and expertise (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Eisner, 1998; Elmore, 2000b; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Knobloch & Jefferson, 2008). Respect was more than being transparent and vulnerable to others. Respect was incremental or large-scale (Elmore, 2000a; Elmore, 2000b; Knobloch & Jefferson, 2008). Researchers discussed that principals and teachers should openly communicate

their individual and collective obligations and expectations (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Youngs & King, 2002). When relational trust was evident within a school community, the fear of taking risks was minimized (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Hammack, 2004; Uline et al., 1998). Costa and Garmston (2002) expressed the concept of “fail-forward” to encourage individuals to look at their mistakes as opportunities for growth. Students benefited from an environment cultivated in relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). With developed relational trust, there is individual accountability and personal regard for school practices (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Respect grew through these social exchanges because of vulnerabilities (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

**Personal Regard.** The authors described that principals and teachers need to cultivate a shared vision that encourages individuals to address challenges that are not in their formal job description (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Leis & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Personal regard was the willingness to consider and assist other principals and teachers to maximize their full potential. Adams and Forsyth (2013) revisited the concept of faculty trust within 56 urban elementary schools to identify school practices. Their research purpose was to assess the main outcome of relational trust after controlling for free and reduced lunch and previous scholastic achievement. Subsequently, the researchers also wanted to understand the relationship between self-regulated learning and relational trust to understand student achievement. Adams and Forsyth (2013) explained the significance of personal regard for colleagues to establish an environment for personal regard.

**Competence.** Bryk and Schneider (2003) expressed that even when there are conflicts or obstacles, the hope is to learn from those incidents and then move forward (Six, et al., 2010). Sergiovanni (2004) encouraged principals and teachers to analyze their individual competencies to create collective competency units. The author asserted collective organizational competence can minimize or eliminate dissension, and confusion (Sergiovanni, 2004). Sergiovanni (2004) stated individual competence alone breeds division. Leis and Rimm-Kaufman (2016) conducted a pilot study to examine principals' cultivation of relational trust. The researchers examined this phenomenon through a comparative case study. The research study was limited to a purposeful sample of three elementary school communities that reported low levels of trust. The research sample consisted of 95% female, 100% Caucasian, average age 46 years old with 95% Master's degree and at least six years of teaching experience. Many of the teachers have been in their school for several years, taught for five to nine years (37%) and 10 to 15 years (63%). Teachers (16%) taught specialized subjects and some teachers taught self-contained classrooms (84%). Each principal selected between three to five teachers who participated in the professional development opportunity and three teachers that did not participate. The data methods were surveys, observations, and interviews. The survey (n = 19) yielded an internal consistency reliability of  $\alpha = 0.92$ . One school increased relational trust and the other two reported maintaining low levels of relational trust. The sample size is small, so it was difficult to assess the statistical significance. In this research study, three themes emerged concerning principal actions to establish relational trust. The first theme was communicating current conflict within the school community. The second theme was facilitating relationships between principals and teachers. The

third theme was establishing decisional capital. The school with increased relational trust and professional capital demonstrated all three emerging themes; however, the other two schools did not reflect the emerging themes.

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) encouraged principals to implement a learning environment where information is communicated to all principals and teachers. Then principals and teachers can participate in their daily learning experiences. There may be some intentional and unintentional actions that have contributed to low trust (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Principals and teachers may have to establish contrived practices to formulate collaboration (Sergiovanni, 2004). Sergiovanni (2004) validated the need for temporary contrived actions to establish sustainable collaboration. Sustainable collaboration required organizational competence to enhance the school's level of intelligence. Organizational competence needed the collective unit to acknowledge and connect individual capabilities, social interactions, and shared decision-making actions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Reeves, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2004).

**Personal Integrity.** Researchers affirmed there should be a connection between what is said and what is done (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Danielson, 2009; Leis & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016). Bryk and Schneider (2003) supported principals and teachers should believe their colleagues are committed to the educational achievement and overall welfare of all students. The researchers supported opportunities to improve on reflective thought and practice (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, Howell, & Rasmussen, 2006). The researchers affirmed principals and teachers should be active participants in developing meaningful and constructive social exchanges (Fullan, 2004; Youngs & King, 2002).

***Relational trust application.*** The research literature described benefits of high trust but there is limited content on the application of trust within schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002/2003; Cranston, 2009; Liou & Daly, 2014). Liou and Daly (2014) coordinated a mixed-method study on collaborative interactions and instructional practices. These researchers utilized four data sources: social networks, site-based observations, structured interviews, and reciprocal trust surveys. For this study, there were purposive and theoretical sampling techniques with a variation of random sampling. This research study sample consisted of four high-performing Midwestern elementary schools in two different public school districts from one state. The sample size ( $n = 24$ ) with 20 randomly selected teachers by the principal and four school principals. Randomly selected teachers had extensive teaching experience.

The dependent variables are constructed by previous questionnaire indicators. The first questionnaire instrument consisted of nine items from the prior research of Bryk and Schneider (2002) and the researchers provided 17 additional items on trust. Liou and Daly (2014) examined the results of the questionnaire instrument based on two scales: teacher-principal trust with  $\alpha = .98$  and teacher-teacher trust with  $\alpha = .90$ . The confidence level was high for both scales. There were at least two items removed for lack of directional change. The correlated items had scale ranges of .70 to .93. Two items were removed to increase the confidence level. The second questionnaire indicated the extent of professional dialogue within a school. This instrument used two scales: teacher-principal professional dialogue  $\alpha = .82$  and teacher-teacher professional dialogue  $\alpha = .83$ . At least two items on these scales were removed because of low factor loading.

The correlated items had a scale range of .76 to .92. There was a 77% response rate from the total sample, but each elementary school ranged from 74% to 95%.

The conceptual framework was social capital with an emphasis on structural implementation, relational trust, and cognitive mindset. Liou and Daly (2014) explained the importance of conducting sited-based observations before the structured interviews to understand the climate and culture. As the researchers analyzed the data sources, they applied several coding processes: open, inductive, emic, and hierarchical coding to understand emerging research themes. The research demonstrated the need for collaborative networks. Some teachers remained in the same school building and felt comfortable participating in candid and reflective dialogue. The researchers indicated there is limited empirical research on change efforts, instructional practices, and flexible structures within high-performing elementary schools. As the researchers clarified their processes, it would be beneficial to understand the order of their data collection process and the desire to use qualitative techniques to explain quantitative data.

Liou and Daly (2014) analyzed professional interactions and instructional practices focused on collaboration and communication. Depending on the level of experience, education, and mindset, they discovered various levels of willingness to participate in a collaborative environment. Barth (1981) communicated some teachers did not desire for principals to be involved in the classroom processes like classroom observations. However, principals involved in classroom processes can enhance professional and student growth opportunities (Horton, 2017). Subsequently, some Chicago classroom teachers requested principals to guide their instructional practices and frameworks within the educational setting (Goe, 2013; Sartain, Stoelinga, Brown,

Luppescu, Matsko, Miller, Durwood, Jiang, & Glazer, 2011). Several researchers described the importance of principals developing shared commitment to improve their current practice, feel encouraged to evaluate their current practice, and cultivate a collaborative environment for constructive feedback and support (Eisner, 1998; Elmore, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hattie, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Youngs & King, 2002).

***Relational trust and collaboration.*** High relational trust contributed to individual and collective knowledge and success (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Thoonen, et al., 2011). When trust was evident, teachers do not feel uncertain about their practices and their vulnerability was seen as a positive attribute (Thoonen, et al., 2011). The authors supported that relational trust will increase collaboration, which supports the organizational structure of schools (Blasé & Kirby, 2009; Thoonen, et al., 2011). Thoonen, et al, 2011 revealed trust can enhance social capital. The researchers did not hypothesize before exploring the concept of relational trust (Thoonen, et al., 2011).

***Trust and leadership.*** Trust needs an effective leadership approach for professional and student growth. Tschannen-Moran (2014) examined multiple case studies. Three elementary school principals were interviewed concerning their leadership approach. Principals were provided pseudonyms for this research study. One principal lead with power and authority. She (Gloria) felt it was imperative for the school to see her as the authority. Under this leadership style, teachers felt alienated and isolated. The second principal (Fred) felt it was necessary to maintain peace and comfort. He refused to challenge teachers to adjust their practices. The researcher described him as a principal who was steadfast in avoiding conflict. His ineffective leadership fostered

distrust. The last principal demonstrated high expectations and high supports, which cultivated an atmosphere of relational trust.

Trust should be nurtured and renewed for effective instructional practices (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). Tschannen-Moran (2014) described a willingness to demonstrate vulnerability in a school community through transparent, reliable, and competent exchanges. Relational trust can promote engagement and commitment to the shared mission of the school (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The researcher does not indicate when these leadership attributes emerged whether it was prior, during, or after data collection and analysis. Each principal utilized a different leadership approach. Tschannen-Moran (2014) described elements of flexible structures (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Also, she warned individuals that trust is not easy. Relational trust has complexities (Fullan, 2008). Similarly, Tschannen-Moran (2014) and Devos and Bouckennooghe's (2009) case studies explored the experience of urban elementary principals. Understanding each principal's experiences and perspectives can strengthen behavioral and instructional practice.

Heifetz et al., 2009 described five basic elements that can foster daily relational trust. First, principals and teachers should identify their current needs and actions. Second, principals and teachers should have time for informal and formal instructional conversations. Then they can examine how to incorporate those conversations into their daily practices. Third, principals and teachers need to reflect on their daily practices and understand their roles and responsibilities for various situations. Fourth, principals and teachers should reflect on their personal goals and aspirations and examine possible connections to the shared vision. Personal connections can encourage genuine actions

and inspire others to communicate their personal connections through sustainable outcomes. Burns and Carpenter (2008) revealed two viewpoints to organizational citizenship: (a.) differentiating of individual and collective needs or (b.) commingling of individual and collective needs. These authors believed commingling of individual and collective needs was necessary for organizational citizenship. Fifth, principals and teachers should commit to developing their personal attributes and professional networks. Trust was more than words. It required effective instructional practices and candid conversations (Bryk & Schneider, 2002/2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2011; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

*Tacit and explicit knowledge.* Louis (2006) coordinated a research study on trust and improvement within schools. The researchers examined the use of total quality management practices with each participant. Researchers explored social exchanges between principals and teachers for at least three years through participant interviews and focus groups. The data revealed there were multiple connections to trust. The researchers examined the concept of trust through two avenues: institutional and relational trust. Out of five schools, there were two schools with high trust and three schools with low trust. The research purpose changed, so the interviews were coded again to examine trust. With an emphasis on quality management the four values were vision, cooperation, teacher involvement, and data-based decision-making. The data analysis revealed the need for cohesive actions for school achievement. With high trust levels, there should be established structures to ensure social cohesion. This research study does extend Bryk and Schneider's relational trust at the elementary level, but there was limited understanding about relational trust at the secondary level.

Relational trust is complex because there are tacit and explicit attributes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, 2006). Both explicit and tacit knowledge are essential, but tacit knowledge was harder to identify. Understanding both types of knowledge will provide fundamental information to assist principals and teachers with creating a collaborative environment (Passow, 1989). Principals and teachers should consider their professional judgement when developing relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Through respect, personal regard, competence, and personal integrity, principals can utilize vulnerabilities and interactions to foster collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Hammack, 2004). The authors described “communities of practice” to build social networks to communicate shared ideologies, values, norms, and expectations about instructional practices (Elmore, 2002; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Even though social networks and social exchanges are mutually exclusive it is important to recognize the need for connected and coordinated instructional dialogues and interactions (Danielson, 2009). Both social networks and relational trust efforts required candid conversations (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Principals can dictate a collaborative environment where necessary resources are given to school personnel (Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014).

**Conclusion.** Bryk and Schneider (2002/2003) provided a framework for a collegial learning environment. Through social-emotional exchanges, principals and teachers developed mutual respect, personal regard, personal integrity, and competence. Researchers confirmed respect is developed through effective communication skills and teacher professionalism efforts. Principals and teachers, who desired an environment to reveal vulnerabilities, need personal regard. Bryk and Schneider (2002/2003) expressed

the importance of competence within schools. The last component of relational trust was personal integrity. Personal integrity required an honest environment for conversations, actions, and practices. A collegial learning environment allowed schools to address external accountability with minimal pressures (Sergiovanni, 2005).

### **Professional Capital**

Professional capital was a comprehensive approach to addressing human abilities, social exchanges, and collaborative decisions (Sergiovanni, 2005). Professional capital was developed from three types of capital: human, social, and decisional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). These three capitals are elements connected to leadership and trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Heifetz et al., 2009). My research inquiry encompassed Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) idea of capital, as an object or idea that has the potential to produce sustainable value. The concept of professional capital sharpened both principals and teachers' ability to gain positive professional outcomes (Fullan & Edwards, 2017). Internal accountability introduced flexible structures and support high standards (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Youngs and King (2002) conducted a qualitative multi-year research study to ascertain how urban elementary school principals constructed professional development within their schools. These researchers expressed professional capital through the following concepts: teacher knowledge skills and dispositions (human), professional community (social), and program coherence (decisional) with elements of adaptive leadership and relational trust. Youngs and King (2002) suggested that professional development is essential to building leadership and instructional capacity;

however, it is imperative to acknowledge there is a combination of concepts needed to facilitate desired outcomes (Heifetz et al., 2009). The concept of program coherence consisted of intentional shared goals accomplished by daily instructional practices. Without intentional shared goals influencing daily instructional practices, teaching and learning can be ineffective (Youngs & King, 2002). This study revealed there is limited empirical data on program coherence. These researchers declared that effective principals establish trust, create structures, and implement opportunities for continuous growth.

Nine schools were visited, and reports were developed based on field notes from interviews and observations. The field reports consisted of principals' actions, principals' statements, and school personnel's perspectives on principals' leadership approach. The researchers organized various data sources to explore possible themes and recommendations. After preliminary interviews, the research partners conducted secondary interviews based on professional development needs. From the nine schools, there were four schools visited three more times because of their professional development. This research study does not identify their sampling technique as criterion sampling and does not provide explanation to why secondary schools are not included in their sample. Researchers described a national search for participants, but they did not identify the criterion for the samples. All these participants had specialized norms and initiatives to implement within their schools.

Lewis, a school that had one principal for twelve years, now had a new principal, who balanced supporting his school community and implementing necessary principal leadership practices. Their collaboration occurred through the facilitation of common

planning time and professional development. Another school, Renfrew Elementary explored grading and assessment systems and created collaborative teams to focus on closing the achievement gaps. This school community had two principals to serve them with similar strategies, but different leadership approaches. The new principal assessed the current school practices and policies to ensure a smoother transition. There was a comparison between the former principal and new principal. The third school, Kintyre Elementary implemented a Montessori approach with literacy and teaming. The final school, Falkirk Elementary structured their professional development around the Accelerated Schools model, literacy training, teaming structure and thematic curriculum with an emphasis on fine arts. At this elementary school, there were multiple changes and initiatives, causing fragmentation. The entire sample size utilized collaborative networks and instructional frameworks to implement continuous improvement. Two schools utilized mostly external facilitators and the other two utilized mostly internal facilitators for professional development and program coherence.

Day et al. (2016) gathered empirical data through a three-year case study with mixed methodology. The research design consisted of 20 schools and their participation in critical and national surveys. Also, they explored educators' perceptions on school improvement practices and student growth measures. The findings from this research study corroborated the Youngs and King (2002) findings that it is not enough for principals to implement practices, but what is the principal's reflective knowledge and understanding of various practices (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Day et al., 2016). In this research study, primary principals perceived that the following actions were necessary to increase school effectiveness: (a.) enhance assessment procedures, (b.) utilize data-driven

decision-making, (c.) implement teaching policies and initiatives, (d.) allocate human and fiscal resources, and (e.) understand pupil target setting. Secondary principals identified the following actions as significant factors in enhancing school effectiveness: (a.) utilize data-driven decision-making, (b.) implement teaching policies and initiatives, (c.) cultivate school culture, (d.) allocate human and fiscal resources, and (e.) enhance assessment procedures. Visionary principals combined transformational and instructional practices as one leadership approach (Day et al., 2016).

Established school-level practices should be a fundamental component of the school improvement process. Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003) identified eight key elements associated with effective school capacity: vision, decision-making authority, power, knowledge and skills, information, rewards, leadership, and resources. These eight key elements demonstrated the necessity for change process. At the beginning of the school year, principals and teachers should establish the school's shared focus and provide collective time to meet, discuss, and develop a plan of action (Collin, 2001; Danielson, 2009). Principals should facilitate a culture built on relationship and appreciation for human, social, and decisional capital (Briggs & Wohlsetter, 2003). For example, if there was a toxic environment that suppresses honest and candid communication then principals and teachers should develop school norms and protocols (Collins, 2001; Danielson, 2009). Danielson (2009) proclaimed that atmosphere is a foundational precondition to establishing collaboration and communication (Ravitch, 2010). Once the atmosphere is established, then principals and teachers can position themselves to accomplish the shared mission (Collins, 2001).

## **Human Capital**

School personnel should communicate to the principals when there are teacher incompetency concerns so the principals can intervene (Roy, 2007). Sergiovanni 1989a/b expressed the importance of investing in human capital to develop positive school culture. Leana (2011) explained the significance of educators receiving formal education and practical experience to prepare them. Enhancing human capital will require principals and teachers to model and communicate shared expectations, values, and behaviors (Elmore, 2000a/b; Elmore, 2002; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Lambert, 2003).

Elmore (2000a/b) discussed the need for principals and teachers to examine norms, routines, and practices. Principals need to understand instructional guidance to support their school communities (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Instructional guidance should provide opportunities for principals and teachers to learn by doing (Fink & Markholt, 2011). In order to sustain, principals should implement equitable practices, school improvement efforts, and collaborative structures to develop human capital (Elmore, 2000a/b; Fullan, 2014; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). Instructional feedback should not be categorized into evaluative and non-evaluative (Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). All instructional feedback should be a catalyst for school improvement (Elmore, 2000b; Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; McNulty & Besser, 2011; Wagner et al., 2006). Separating the actions of coaching, mentoring, collaborating, and evaluating establishes low trust environments (Fullan, 2014). Fullan (2014) expressed 50% of teachers never receive feedback and 79% of teachers would appreciate constructive feedback. Meaningful feedback should be purposeful and specific to their learning environment (Fullan, 2014).

Human capital requires the acknowledgement of the potential and actual gifts and talents possessed by principals and teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Conley (1991) asserted human capital is more than individual capabilities, rather there is a connection to social capital and decisional capital. Collaborative participation can assist principals and teachers in achieving and exceeding their shared goals (Conley, 1991). Human capital translates into individual professional skills that principals should acknowledge and use to build capacity. When most principals foster human capital, there is an intentional awareness to develop other's professional attributes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Principals should use leadership skills to understand varying types of explicit and tacit knowledge (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

### **Social Capital**

James Coleman, a sociologist, constructed the term social capital to demonstrate relational ties (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leana, 2011). If principals desired to utilize social capital, they should construct collaborative actions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Johnson, Lustick, & Kim, 2011). Coleman's research revealed the need for interconnectedness and trustworthiness (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Interconnectedness encouraged opportunities for supported expectations and trustworthy interactions to establish operational norms (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Fullan, 2003a). Like most researchers, Coleman's research connected personal regard, respect, competence, and personal integrity with individual and collective exchanges of social capital (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth et al., 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Moran, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Moran (2005) described the components of social capital as structural and relational embeddedness. In this quantitative research study, structural embeddedness was focused on structures for communication and collaboration. Moran (2005) defined relational embeddedness as the attribution of social exchanges between the managers and followers (Moran, 2005). With relational embeddedness, there were open and closed networks. Usually open networks were not familiar with all managers and followers. While closed networks were more familiar with most managers and followers' abilities and capacities, there were benefits and liabilities to both open and closed networks. Open networks provided opportunities for many ideas because there was limited familiarity. Closed network provided candid feedback because there was increased familiarity. Moran (2005) posited the importance of structural and relational embeddedness. This does not imply that relational embeddedness was not significant, but it cannot be fostered without structural embeddedness. The researcher stated the difficulty with gaining empirical evidence on relational trust due to the limited distinction between structural frameworks and relational exchanges. Elmore (2002) explained how teachers learn through social exchanges. Social capital connected to collective human capital to enhance the academic environment producing more intellectual actions, emphasizing an instructional focus, and utilizing personalized learning for adults and students (Fullan & Edwards, 2017; Leana, 2011).

Moran (2005) elaborated about relational trust. He supported relational trust was necessary to foster collaboration; however, most assume if structural embeddedness is present, then so is relational embeddedness. Both structural and relational embeddedness need to be constructed and monitored for organizational capacity. The sample size was

Fortune 100 companies with 170 worldwide companies. The data sources consisted of surveys and interviews. The survey consisted of demographic information and ego-centered network assessment. Participants described their experiences and perspectives concerning supportive interactions, communication skills, and innovative structures. The survey was sent to 208 sales managers, but only 185 met the threshold for the evaluation process conducted by senior managers. The response rate was 65%, which the researcher indicated is high. The researcher speculated it may be a high response rate due to biases. Participants utilized special codes and initials to protect confidentiality. Another survey was sent to the senior managers. There was a three-month separation between the sales managers' survey and the senior managers' survey. The five hypotheses (one direct tie, two indirect ties, closeness, and relational trust) were examined utilizing multivariate regression, but there were no research questions to accompany these hypotheses. Moran (2005) controlled for three demographic attributes: age, gender, and educational level. The research inquiry yielded the following results, none of the control variables were significant but there was a positive effect between sales performance and staff size. There was no correlation between direct or indirect ties or sales performance. Closed networks had a positive correlation to sales performance (coeff. = 0.69,  $p < 0.05$ ), closed networks had direct and indirect ties (coeff. = 0.09,  $p < 0.05$ ; coeff. = -1.29,  $p < 0.05$ , respectively). Closeness connected to sales performance with a positive relationship (coeff. = 0.33,  $p < 0.01$ ). There was a relationship between relational trust and sales performance (coeff. = 0.24,  $p < 0.12$ ). With the interviews, the researcher sought to understand the connection between social capital and behaviors within the organization. Even though this study was conducted in the business sector, there was still a relevant

connection between business and educational. This study demonstrated how social capital is necessary in organizational infrastructures. For instance, Leana (2011) conducted a research study identifying the importance of collaboration amongst math teachers produce higher student growth. This research study validated the need for collective effort opposed to individual effort. For instance, educators with social interactions scored one standard deviation above their colleagues, increasing their math achievement by 5.7 percent. Furthermore, Fullan (2014) concluded low achieving teachers who connect with a thriving collaborative culture will improve. This researcher concluded that when social capital has decreased, it adversely affected student growth. There should be a reciprocal process between sources of information and receivers of information (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Chen, Bapuji, Dyck & Wang, 2012; Fullan, 2014). Siccone (2012) shared a survey based on the importance of trust between principals and teachers. This study found a correlation between relational trust and teacher turnover. According to this study, teacher turnover can be minimized with a high-level of trust. School communities can thrive based on their core principles and practices that govern their contextual environment (Fullan, 2003a).

Principals should establish open exchanges, collective expectations, and hiring and retention supports (Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000a/b; Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 2014; Horton, 2017; Leana, 2011; Mednick, 2003; Roy, 2007). Leana (2011) indicated that teachers do not always include their principals in building social capital. In another study she discussed math competency of 1200 New York elementary school teachers. The study revealed these teachers were not competent in their math skills (Leana, 2011). Leana (2011) concluded teachers are 4 times more likely to discuss instructional concerns

with another teacher than their principal. Additionally, Leana (2011) collected data from Pittsburgh public schools from 2000-2010, which consisted of both human and social capital. Through the research inquiry, the researcher wanted to know how the principal fostered or impeded teacher's collaborative efforts. Individual and collective learning constructed in a trusting environment produces a collegial atmosphere where principals and teachers flourish through their formal and informal interactions (Elmore, 2000a; Elmore, 2000b; Elmore, 2002; Lambert, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2007; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). Principals typically spent their work week: 57% administrative tasks, 25% instructional tasks, 14% external relations. There was 4% not accounted for in this data. Leana (2011) expressed the importance of creating systems for social exchanges. With this increase in social capital, there were opportunities for access to more knowledge and expertise (Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 2002; Liberman & Friedrich, 2007).

Researchers described if teachers are not exposed to an engaging culture with risk-taking, they tend to avoid risk taking and refuse to challenge or examine their current practices (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Hammack, 2004; Fullan & Edwards, 2017; Thoonen, et al., 2011). Social capital dealt with fostering social exchanges as well as resources to handle conflicts (Fullan, 2003b; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The researchers affirmed social capital promotes a stronger commitment to collaboration for solving problems, providing actionable feedback for solutions and using strategic actions (Elmore, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Thoonen, et al., 2011). Researchers described how collaboration can expand supportive structures and aid in collective efforts towards the school's shared vision (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Thoonen, et

al., 2011). Social learning encouraged principals and teachers to align their school's shared purpose and vision with federal, state, and local mandates (Danielson, 2009). Social capital was a collective effort to cultivate trust. Trust was cultivated through constant dialogue and feedback (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

### **Decisional Capital**

Participation in collaborative decision-making required principals and teachers to identify shared priorities, expectations, structures, and practices (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Conley, 1991; Teague & Anfara, 2012). Decisional capital was the ability to exercise individual and collective discretion, insight, and experience with confidence (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Mednick, 2003; Teague & Anfara, 2012). Conley (1991) explained two types of decision-making- delegated and collaborative. Delegated decision-making had limited ability for teachers to exercise decisional capital. Collaborative decision-making allowed teachers to work with principals in making decisions (Conley, 1991; Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000a/b Thoonen, et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

Mayer, et al. 2013 described the notion that structure, culture, and agency are significant factors in the implementation of internal accountability. There cannot be laissez-faire management and leadership if internal accountability is the desired school outcome (Lambert, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1989a/b). Collaborative decision-making required autonomy and empowerment with reflective feedback (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Blasé and Blasé (2001) expressed there is a lack of empirical evidence on how to develop and sustain shared governance. Conley (1991) explained collaborative participation is essential to organizational practices and outcomes. Elmore (2000a/b) confirmed the participation in shared governance has no

effect on teachers' self-efficacy without opportunities to participate in shared governance. Therefore, principals and teachers should feel comfortable to utilize their professional judgment without feeling constrained or unprepared (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Lambert, 2003).

Conley (1991) described two types of domain: technical and managerial. Technical domain developed the necessary processes to resolve adaptive and technical challenges. The managerial domain focused on the structural elements and practices within the school community. Conley (1991) posited collaborative efforts between principals and teachers are minimal because principals make most decisions concerning administrative tasks throughout the school community. The authors stated that principals and teachers should establish effective lines of communication for productive practices and flexible structures (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Conley, 1991; Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Through these effective lines of communication there can be shared practices, concurrent practices, and reserved practices depending on the knowledge and expertise of the individuals and teams.

Mayer, et al. 2013 examined six urban schools' implementation of the first two years of Together Initiative (TI) within their school community. This was a program that fosters school autonomy and teacher decision-making opportunities. TI coaches guided principals and teachers through six empowerment processes: buy-in, visioning, setting priorities, establishing shared governance structures, inquiry teams, and instructional improvements. The research design for this study was constructed as a mixed method case study inquiry using observations, interviews, and surveys. Through the data analysis

process researchers coded interview transcripts, observation notes, and document artifacts using open, axial, and selective coding. These data sources were triangulated to understand school autonomy and teacher decision-making. The findings in this research study indicated there were only two schools that experienced enhanced ability in school autonomy and teacher decision-making. The other four schools were missing structural or cultural supports for school autonomy and teacher decision-making.

Reeves (2006) asserted there are three levels of decision-making within a school community. Level I demonstrated individual professional discretions and individual classroom practices. Level II provided collaborative interactions between principals and teachers. Level III consisted of principals making and communicating behaviors for safety and procedures for all school members. Reeves (2006) cited 2,000 teachers and administrators, expressed their experiences concerning shared decision-making. Reeves (2006) examined more than 60 urban, rural, and suburban schools 39% of teachers experienced individual discretions, 34% of teachers participated in collaborative interactions, and 27% witnessed top down decision-making.

Conley (1991) and Reeves (2006) acknowledged the limited empirical examples for decisional capital. Researchers indicated the need for additional research on decisional capital and types of decisional structures for principals, teachers, and students (Conley, 1991; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). There is limited research on how principals and teachers establish daily decisional practices and procedures throughout the school community. These decision-making actions informed professional capital (Fullan, et al., 2015). Heifetz, et al., 2009 expressed the importance of creating meaningful social interactions. For instance, a collaborative learning team

was having a difficult time building consensus on how they will define active and passive engagement. In social learning, principals, teachers, and students are shaped by their experiences and ideologies (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007). Principals in high-performing schools embraced other principals and teachers' perceptions and experiences as resources (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). True growth and change were results of the team's discussion about possible solutions (Heifetz, et al., 2009).

**Conclusion.** According to the research literature, it was imperative to examine professional capital to establish school capacity. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) provided a three-point framework: human, social, and decisional capital. Each concept can enhance school practice. Human capital supported individual and collective capabilities and competencies. Social capital required collaboration and communication within the school. Decisional capital is utilized to gain the collective voice of the school.

### **Chapter Summary**

With internal accountability, principals, teachers, and specialists can coordinate the logistical analyses and monitor student growth (Elmore, 2000b; Passow, 1989). For external and internal accountability to co-exist there should be a constructed set of roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Through developed methods and procedures, principals and teachers can monitor progress and provide communication channels to accomplish desired school outcomes (Weissman, 1983). Instructional practices should be cohesively connected to internal accountability for enhanced school effectiveness (Elmore, 2000a/b; Youngs & King, 2002; Wahlstrom, et al., 2010). Mitchell (1989) explained some attributes necessary for internal accountability: (a.) active engagement; (b.) process for inquiry; (c.) systematic practices; (d.) and critical

conversations. Weissman (1983) explained in 1960, there was an increase in “grassroots” organizational change; however, many institutions did not acknowledge that accountability required daily social exchanges and mechanisms. With a social approach to internal accountability there is interconnectedness between principals and teachers without expectations for perfection or perspectives of “groupthink” (Weissman, 1983).

Scholars across multiple years have similar recommendations, commendations, or concerns that continue to appear in the literature on leadership, trust, and capital (Elmore, 2000a/b; Hammack, 2004). Adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital may cultivate effective flexible structures, authentic practices, and social exchanges (Elmore, 2000b; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). To my knowledge, there is not a comprehensive practical source on how to facilitate a culture of sustainable relational trust and effective development of professional capital within adaptive leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Cosner, 2009).

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

Merriam's basic interpretative approach framed the exploration and evaluation of this research inquiry (Merriam, 2009). Exploration consisted of gathering, listening, and constructing meaning of internal accountability from secondary principals' perspectives and experiences. Evaluation involved the examination and assessment of the data collected and analyzed for this research study. I used two data sources- interviews and documents. Basic interpretative approach encouraged sharing life experiences (Merriam, 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) described qualitative methods allowed for thick and rich descriptions and the analytic processing of transcriptions and matrices (Merriam, 2009). I processed each transcript by completing a matrix containing research codes and emergent themes. Then I compared the matrices for similarities and differences amongst the research participants.

This research inquiry had two research questions: First, how do secondary principals, if at all, interpret internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? Second, how do secondary principals, if at all, utilize internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within the school communities? The sub questions for these research questions are: What does adaptive leadership mean to secondary principals? What does relational trust mean to secondary principals? What does professional capital mean to secondary principals? How can adaptive leadership enhance school communities? How can relational trust enhance school capacity? How can professional capital enhance school communities? The focus of the sub questions included: adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

## **Research Goals**

This research inquiry had three research goals constructed around the premise that secondary principals impact the school's daily instructional and administrative practices (Devos & Bouckennooghe, 2009; Fullan, 2008; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008; Lingam & Lingam, 2015; Madsen et al., 2014; McNulty & Besser, 2011; Senge et al., 1994; Wahlstrom, 2008; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). First, I explored the interpretation of internal accountability through the voices of twelve secondary principals. Second, I wanted to understand the active use, if any, of internal accountability by secondary principals for school improvement. Third, I wanted to articulate current daily practices within secondary schools. This research inquiry provided systematic evidence to add to the research literature on internal accountability (Marshall, 1999).

## **Epistemology: Social Constructivism**

The epistemological underpinning of this research study is social constructivism with simultaneous realities and truths occurring within various schools (Krauss, 2005, Schwandt, 2000). This epistemology connects to Merriam's basic interpretative methodology encouraging participants to explore their own perceptions and experiences. Constructivism promotes exploring each school's possible practices in developing viable solutions. Crotty (1998) expressed the continuous process of making and improving solutions. The idea of social constructing allows principals and teachers to develop collective, flexible, relational, and interpretative frameworks (Creswell & Miller, 2000) for internal accountability.

Through constructs, principals and teachers can apply contextual solutions and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of those solutions (Merriam, 2009). Socially constructed interpretations consider capabilities, exchanges, and decisions through praxis (Freire, 1993; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). With an evaluation of practices, there could be refinement opportunities. Internal accountability requires a continuous improvement mindset (Heifetz, et al., 2009; Louis, 2006). Social constructivism is the epistemology that guided my research inquiry. This epistemology connects to Collins' (2001) hedgehog concept. The hedgehog concept involves the allocation of resources to achieve a "sweet spot" for the organization (Collins, 2001/2005, 19). Figure 3 below demonstrates a desired outcome of internal accountability. The "sweet spot" alignment demonstrates a connection of adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital working together to achieve internal accountability. The research participants fostered their own internal accountability and shared their experiences and perspectives of their level of internal accountability. Collin's (2001, 2005) Hedgehog concept provided another framework demonstrating the use of various degrees and strategies to achieve internal accountability. This figure encourages taking theoretical knowledge and constructing school practices.

“Sweetspot” of Internal Accountability

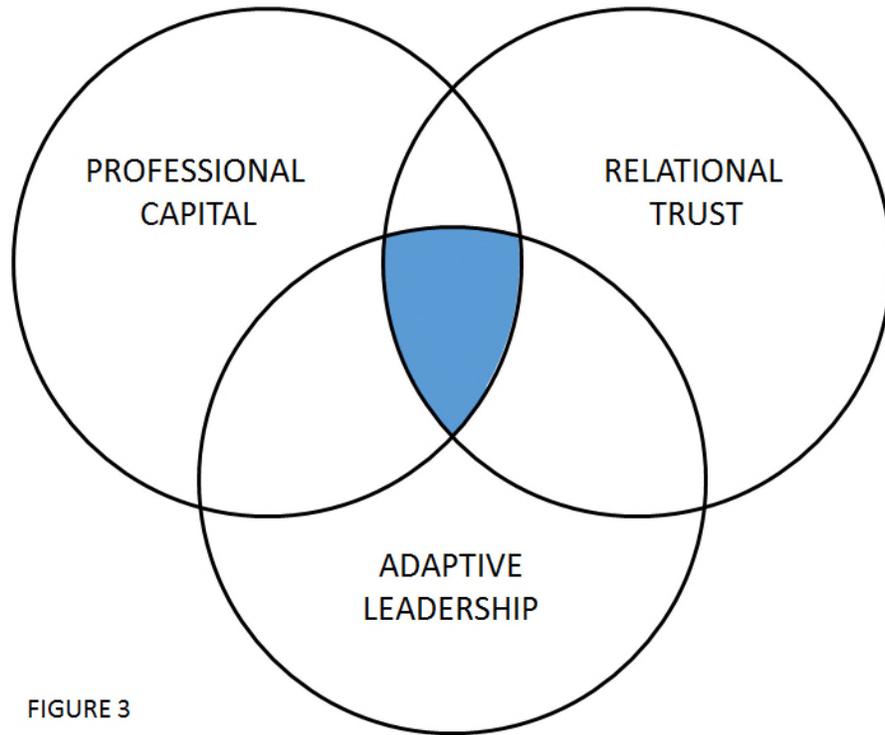


FIGURE 3

*Figure 3 Adapting Collin’s (2001, 2005) Hedgehog concept to examine these three concepts of internal accountability.*

**Role of Researcher**

As the primary research instrument (Eisner, 1998; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hsiung, 2008; Maxwell, 2005), I examined and explored the topic, the participants, and the data collection and analysis process (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2009). My responsibility was to explore and communicate secondary principals’ experiences and perceptions of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their respective schools. I had open dialogues with participants as they share their experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell,

2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I utilized analytic memos to capture my thoughts, biases, and observations during the data collection and analysis process.

Moreover, it was necessary for me to see participants as partners in exploring internal accountability (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Hsiung, 2008). Marshall (1999) described the researcher collaborating with participants to gather information, understand the information, reflect on the information, interpret the information, and evaluate the information to construct meaning. Merriam (2009) provides three guidelines for researchers to follow as they conduct qualitative research. First, researchers should understand their epistemological paradigm and ontological reality (Merriam, 2009). I acknowledge that I am interested in understanding, developing, constructing, and reflecting on internal accountability. Second, researchers need to understand the significance of their research (Merriam, 2009). The significance of this research study is to understand the degree of internal accountability within secondary schools. Third, researchers should understand the problem and purpose of their research inquiry and construct an appropriate research design (Merriam, 2009). I maintained a cohesive research design in order to provide a clearer understanding of the foundational research elements, processes, and experiences within internal accountability. Through inductive research, I explored and examined leadership practices within each school community. All these research action steps provided guidance on how to gather data on internal accountability. I conducted this research study in an ethical manner through fostering candid dialogue about leadership and practice (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## **Research Context**

The research context consisted of six East Coast school districts with twelve secondary principals. Those who agreed to participate provided additional secondary colleagues whom they believed had resources and perspectives to share concerning internal accountability through snowball sampling. I did not reach saturation after five initial interviews. I contacted my snowball participants and social media connections by email. Through social media connections, I obtained seven additional interviews.

## **Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews and analysis of documents were the two data collection methods for this research inquiry. I selected each data source to understand the theory and practice behind the cultivation of internal accountability (Merriam, 2009). Data collection ceased once saturation was met. The data collection methods provided varying sources, perspectives, and experiences on internal accountability (Johnson, 2002). Each data source provided insight into the principal's perspectives and experiences concerning internal accountability. Through the data collection process, it is imperative to understand the actual events, perspectives, and experiences that secondary principals shared with me (Eisner, 1998). Each participant agreed to one semi-structured interview with two parts. The first part was a series of conversational questions. The other part was a document analysis within the semi-structured interview process.

**Semi-Structured Interviews (Part A).** I conducted twelve interviews, and they ranged from 32:07 to 90:43 minutes. Each interview consisted of two parts. Prior to each semi-structured interview, participants completed a Google form to gather demographic information. Each interviewee provided descriptive and transparent details

based on his/her perspective and degree of internal accountability. The semi-structured interviewing process provided structure and flexibility for descriptive thoughts (Merriam, 2009). Part A is the first section of the semi-structured interview. The first part of the semi-structured interview used the open-ended approach. The open-ended approach allowed the participants to share their “lived experience” (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). It was imperative to ask clarifying and probing questions to obtain descriptive details (Hsiung, 2008). The first part consisted of thirteen questions to understand internal accountability. The second part had four questions focused on at least two educational or administrative documents. Each participant chose his or her documents because he or she believed the documents demonstrated internal accountability. The data analysis process encouraged me to be an active participant in understanding internal accountability from all twelve secondary principals. Through constant interaction with the participants’ words, perspectives, and experiences I was able to develop data-driven codes, categories, and themes. Data-driven coding was predominant; however, I did consider theory-based elements while analyzing data. Then, I examined the collective similarities and differences of the twelve secondary principals’ responses for emerging patterns and themes. Through the semi-structured interviewing process, it was important to explore the homogeneous and heterogeneous elements of the participants’ experiences and perspectives.

**Document Analysis within Semi-Structured Interviews (Part B).** Secondary principals provided at least 2-3 selected documents they believed facilitate internal accountability. Through this document analysis, we discussed the degree of internal

accountability considered when utilizing the selected documents. All participants provided access to their school documents for data analysis after their interviews.

Through the document analysis section, I sought out secondary principals' rationale for using certain school documents. Documents are "snapshots" of the possible practices utilized. During the document analysis section, secondary principals shared their perspective of these documents to support their internal accountability. Afterwards, I examined these documents alone attempting to understand how the documents supported the secondary principal's interpretation of internal accountability. I explored the school documents for triangulation. For example, Dr. Wilson described her dedication to empower her students for success through a goal setting process. The school document "Passport to Success" solidified the school's vision to foster a learning environment that cultivated student readiness and reflection. After I examined all documents, I did not code them. Rather, I used them to examine the connectivity to each participant's interview and vision of internal accountability (Merriam, 2009). I examined the connectivity by creating a matrix for each participant. Then I added the portion of their interview to the matrix with descriptive notes from the document.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a personalized interactive process for active thinking about a research phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). I coded data by using open, axial, and process coding. The coding process allowed me to understand each participant's description and application of internal accountability. Conducting data analysis required a draft of the research proposal details, participants' transcripts, and analytic memos, and participants' matrices (Merriam, 2009). During the data analysis

process, I consulted my conceptual framework (adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital) to identify theoretical and practical connections. Both data sources provided an opportunity to describe and understand each participant's perspectives and experiences about internal accountability (Merriam, 2009).

At the conclusion of each interview, I reflected on the participant's attitude, body language, environmental circumstances, events, and perspectives of the overall interview processes through analytic memos and interview reflections (Maxwell, 2005). Interviews were transcribed, and transcripts were utilized to construct coding matrices. Coding is an avenue to analyze data and discover possible themes and future recommendations (Merriam, 2009; Saldaña, 2013). I used three different coding approaches. The first approach was open (initial) coding to identify large overarching concepts from each participant. Open coding provided an opportunity to examine connections within the participants' experience or perspectives (Merriam, 2009; Medjedović & Witzel, 2008; Saldaña, 2013). I read the transcript and developed phrases based on the transcript. Open codes captured participants' perspectives and experiences on building internal accountability through leadership, trust, and capital (Medjedović & Witzel, 2008). Open coding matrices were used to identify similarities and differences that emerge from the initial analysis of the data. Second, axial coding was utilized to further synthesize codes and establish categories (Merriam, 2009; Saldaña, 2013). With axial codes, I had the opportunity to synthesize empirical data to identify emerging relationships from the initial codes to create codes and categories (Medjedović & Witzel, 2008). Both open and axial coding provided opportunities to assess codes and relationships. Third, process coding was utilized to construct action-oriented codes, categories, and themes (Saldaña,

2013). Process codes assisted with identifying current instructional practices (Medjedović & Witzel, 2008).

All three coding styles can be utilized for synthesis and evaluation of relevant codes, categories, and themes. This level of analysis can provide recommendations on the research topic (Medjedović & Witzel, 2008). Coding as an analytical method that allowed me to understand the deductive and inductive processes of internal accountability. Through categorizing the data, there were emerging descriptive phrases, codes, and themes. The matrices used have the following essentials: thematic codes, participants' pseudonyms, categories, process codes, transcript quotes, thematic explanations, and thematic evaluations of the research codes (Medjedović & Witzel, 2008). Themes are abstract phrases constructed from the coding process (Saldaña, 2013). I utilized thematic analysis to discover and analyze themes and patterns that support this study (Bowen, 2009). Thematic analysis provided an opportunity to understand how principals interpret and utilize internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

### **Trustworthiness and Credibility**

I utilized validity elements to assess the aspects of all interviews and documents. I, also, used a reflective template to process my reactions and observations of the interview process (Appendix F). Transcripts were completed and then each participant had an opportunity to participate in member-checking. There were no content errors in any of the interviews. Finally, I participated in a peer debriefing process with an assistant principal concerning the data analysis process and emerging themes.

### **Ethical Issues and Human Participants**

This research study adhered to all procedures and precautions as directed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of The George Washington University in order to minimize potential harm to all participants. Prior to obtaining data, I provided potential participants with research purpose elements, risks, benefits, and confidentiality statements (Creswell, 2009; Eisner, 1998). Only individuals who are on the research team have access to the raw data (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 2009). Once data analysis occurred and member checked transcripts were assessed, I deleted the audio interviews. I will keep all paper data in a secured box for five years and electronic drives password protected. After five years, all data contained in the box will be destroyed and electronic drives deleted (Creswell, 2009; Eisner, 1998). As the researcher, I utilized reflexivity strategies, such as reflective questioning before, during, and after data collection procedures to minimize personal biases (Creswell, 2007; Hsiung, 2008). I was respectful to my participants and asked questions for deeper meaning (Hsiung, 2008).

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 described the research methodology and epistemology of the research design. The data collection methods support the components of the research elements. After conducting the research, I analyzed the data and established possible recommendations to add to the current research literature on internal accountability.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

This research inquiry explored the interpretation and cultivation of internal accountability. The research questions focused on secondary principals and their interpretation and cultivation of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. I sent recruitment emails in three phases: school district, snowball, and social media. The sample size consisted of six different school districts within four states along the East Coast. I interviewed twelve secondary principals. These twelve interviews were conducted from July to August 2018 in an environment where the participants were free to express their individual experiences and perspectives. There were five face to face interviews and seven conducted by telephone.

The first research question is: How do secondary principals, if at all, interpret internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? The first research question frames the exploration of thoughts and interpretations of internal accountability. The second research question is: How do secondary principals, if at all, utilize internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? The second research question frames the comprehension of actions and practices of internal accountability. The sub questions for these research questions are: What does adaptive leadership mean to secondary principals? What does relational trust mean to secondary principals? What does professional capital mean to secondary principals? How can adaptive leadership enhance school communities? How can relational trust enhance school capacity? How can professional capital enhance school

communities? I utilized research questions and sub questions to develop interview questions (Appendix D; Appendix J).

The outline for this chapter consisted of a collective thematic analysis of research findings based on the entire sample. The twelve secondary principals expressed the need for student-centered supports and collective accountability measures. These two themes revealed six sub thematic components. Below Table 1 recorded participant’s demographic characteristics with pseudonyms.

Table 1 *Identifying Demographic Attributes*

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Educational Attainment	Years in Education	Years in District	Years in Current Position	Years in Current School	Middle or High School Principal
Emily Allen	Female	Caucasian	Master’s	20-24	15-19	5-9	15-19	Middle
Michelle Highland	Female	Caucasian	Doctorate	25 or more	25 or more	5-9	5-9	Middle
Nathaniel Howard	Male	Caucasian	Master’s	25 or more	25 or more	10-14	10-14	High
Julian Lawson	Male	Caucasian	Doctorate	20-24	5-9	10-14	5-9	Middle
Alexis Lewis	Female	Caucasian	Doctorate	25 or more	20-24	10-14	4 or less	High
Gerald Manley	Male	Caucasian	Master’s	25 or more	15-19	10-14	10-14	Middle
Jennifer Miller	Female	African-American	Doctorate	25 or more	25 or more	4 or less	4 or less	Middle
Rashad Newsome	Male	African-American	Master’s	20-24	4 or less	10-14	4 or less	High
Keith Richards	Male	Caucasian	Master’s	15-19	15-19	5-9	5-9	Middle
George Willis	Male	Caucasian	Master’s	20-24	20-24	5-9	4 or less	High
Renee Wilson	Female	African-American	Doctorate	25 or more	25 or more	5-9	5-9	Middle
Timothy Wright	Male	African-American	Master’s	15-19	4 or less	4 or less	4 or less	High

### Thematic Analysis

Table 2 *Themes and Sub-themes for this Research Inquiry*

Theme 1: Student-Centered Approach and Learning Environment	Theme 2: Collective Accountability and Continuous Improvement Efforts
Student-Centered Teacher Supports	Collective Accountability
Personalized Professional Development Opportunities	Flexible Structures
Equitable Interventions	Clear Expectations
	Personal Desires

Table 2 listed the two main themes and eight sub-themes. Theme 1 dealt with elements to support student-centered efforts for student achievement. Theme 1 supported elements with student needs, supports, and practices. The sub-themes have attributes of leadership, trust, and capital. Learning environments are connected to leadership guided by principals and teachers. All research participants had emerging trust examples with limited documents. All of the themes were examples of enhancing capital with principals, teachers, and students. Theme 2 dealt with elements of collaboration and communication. Theme 2 allowed principals and teachers to establish school structures and practices for continuous improvement. The sub-themes have attributes of leadership, trust, and capital. Collective accountability is collaboration with responsibilities through flexible structures, clear expectations, and personal desires. Themes and sub-themes had connections to one another. Most school documents had connections to sub-themes except attendance, discipline, and testing data. These three documents had basic data without any analysis. School documents with sub-themes do not mean these documents contained all the characteristics of internal accountability. Table 3 listed all documents and their sub themes.

Table 3 *School Documents and Sub-themes*

<b>Documents</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Academic and Behavior Interventions	Student-centered	
Staff Handbook	Teacher Supports	Flexible Structures
Plan of Success	Equitable Interventions	
Student Norms	Collective Accountability	
Faculty Staff Norms	Collective Accountability	
In-service Week 2018	Teacher Supports	
Staff Handbook	Teacher Supports	Flexible Structures
District Student Code of Conduct	Student-centered	
Staff Handbook	Teacher Supports	Flexible Structures
PBIS Discipline Matrix	Student-centered	
PLC guide	Flexible Structures	
PBIS matrix	Student-centered	
Passport for Goal Setting	Student-centered	
Meeting Wise Agenda	Collective Accountability	Flexible Structures
Danielson Instructional Framework and Observation Tool	Teacher Supports	
Attendance Data	None	
Discipline Data	None	
Testing Data	None	
Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Concept Map	Flexible Structures	Collective Accountability
Profile of Graduate	Student-centered	
Talent Ed Rubric Evaluation Process	Teacher Supports	
Staff Handbook	Flexible Structures	
Evaluation Document	Teacher Supports	
Staff Handbook	Teacher Supports	Flexible Structures
PLC Protocol	Flexible Structures	
Hallway Sweep	Collective Accountability	
Hallway Sweep Summary	Collective Accountability	
Personal Professional Development Plan	Teacher Supports	
Staff Survey: Collaborative Working Relationships	Collective Accountability	
Observation and Evaluation Standard 7	Teacher Supports	
Consultancy Protocol Framing	Flexible Structures	
Consultancy Dilemmas		
Consultancy Protocol	Flexible Structures	
Tuning Protocol	Flexible Structures	
Course Syllabus Template	Teacher Supports	
Student Handbook	Student-centered	

**Theme 1: Student-Centered Approach and Learning Environment**

The first theme was student-centered approach and learning environment. The student-centered approach focuses on cultivating a learning environment for student success. The research participants provided multiple examples of how they categorized

student needs. For instance, they described providing daily meals and school supplies, developing school policies to communicate expectations, and collaborating with teachers to provide a quality education to all students. Both student-centered approach and learning environment emerged as initial and axial codes. Eleven of the 12 participants described their school as a learning environment focused on student needs. Seven of the 12 participants described the importance of student-centered approaches. These coding categories contribute to the following four sub-themes for theme 1: student-centered approach, teacher supports, personalized professional development opportunities, and equitable interventions.

**Student-centered approach.** All twelve participants expressed the importance of considering students' needs. Principals responded with phrases, such as "every child is capable," "all students can succeed," "every student can learn," "opportunity to learn," "every decision that we make ... [is in students'] best interest," "create a culture that enhances the ability for students to achieve," "student-centered" approach, "students first," "we all can learn including adults," "every child deserves," and "we have to reach each and every child." Seven of the 12 participants described the need for a student-centered approach to build student capacity. The participants expressed the importance of supporting student and teacher growth. For instance, Mr. Manley described the importance of motivating teachers and students to develop and maintain a growth mindset. Both Dr. Lewis and Dr. Wilson expressed the importance of principals and teachers seeing the humanity in everyone. Dr. Wilson illustrated the need for principals to embrace humility and service:

It's a team thing. You've got to jump in and make sure that I'm not telling you what to do, I'm modeling for you. I will pick up a piece of trash in a minute. I will serve anyone. You know, I'm not better than any position in this building.

Mr. Manley emphasized the importance of doing everything possible for students to learn and grow. He emphasized the importance of building alliances:

Building alliances and building networks, and sometimes ... compromises ... when it comes to doing what's best for kids and what's best for staff. I would say that right now, the other simple way that I define my philosophy ... it's actually a newer element with the amount of technology that's available now, is a belief that we need to teach students for their future, not our past.

Mr. Manley understood it was necessary to align his educational philosophy with the progressive resources to prepare students for their future endeavors. Mr. Wright agreed with Mr. Manley's commitment to prepare students for their future. However, Mr. Wright extended the idea to include the importance of collaboration and communication within schools. Mr. Wright stated:

I believe that every student can learn, and I believe it's up to us as educators to create the conditions for learning, and that means that we're tirelessly trying to figure out how we can connect students to the information that they have in front of them, and connect it to the world beyond. working together and not by doing anything in isolation. Constant communication. ... communication as the organization.

Mr. Richards expressed, "Everything we do is for the kids, so every decision that we make, we make with their best interest." Mr. Richards shared various ways to personally invest in his school: address student needs, balance decisions, and balance his "high expectations with realistic expectations." Both Mr. Manley and Mr. Richards considered student and teacher needs when making school decisions.

The research participants expressed the importance of building relationships with students, teachers, parents, and other individuals. Dr. Highland articulated the need to cultivate a safe environment for students. She stated, "[students] can't have self-

discovery ... [or] self-actualization if they don't have a sense of safe self." Mrs. Allen acknowledged, "relationships come first. We have to foster basically Maslow's hierarchy of needs with each and every kid before we can do anything educational." Both Dr. Highland and Mrs. Allen described the importance of addressing students and their needs. Then Dr. Lewis communicated that students need curiosity, wonderment, and awe to maximize their full potential.

Dr. Lawson provided numerous examples of building confidence in students. He promoted personalized instruction and encouraged individual self-reflection. Dr. Lawson communicated the importance of identifying student strengths and developing those strengths as assets. Dr. Lawson postulated, "I feel like we spend a lot of time trying to identify what students may need, and we sometimes ignore what students' strengths are." He expressed the need for educators to utilize student-centered practices to address student challenges and needs. Dr. Lawson stated, Teachers should "constantly be willing to change in order to move our students forward." Dr. Lawson spoke candidly about student preparation:

If we really are preparing our students for the real world, we need to provide them with the opportunities to ... experience what goes on in the real world. ... different mindset. ... no one cares how you learn the information. What they care about is how do you apply that information, and our teachers have done a very good job of changing their practice from just teaching them the information, but now kids can find out anything on Google. It's how can you go ahead, how can you apply what it is you've learned to really solve authentic real-world challenging problems.

The research participants utilized several documents to assist with a student-centered approach. These documents focused on student-centered needs, such as PBIS Discipline Matrix, Academic and Behavioral Interventions, PBIS Matrix, Passport for Goalsetting, Profile of Graduate, District Student Code of Conduct, and Student

Handbook. The research participants described how they used the documents to build internal accountability. Each document addressed this theme by providing a framework for students, principals, and teachers to operate within the school.

**Teacher Supports.** Teacher supports are necessary to facilitate the learning process. Dr. Miller observed students and teachers can learn, but she recognized learning happens at different rates based on supports. Dr. Miller expressed her thoughts on building teacher efficacy:

I'm always talking about building teacher efficacy. When teachers feel like They're not being supported and those things are not there for them to take advantage of, whether it's professional learning or just the opportunity to lead, then they won't be successful. I think the more success that they experience, that translates into their classroom where it can affect them, whether it's the instructional piece or the classroom management piece, but you have to make sure that you're providing them with the support necessary for them to experience success so that they then do the same thing for their students so that they're successful as well.

Teacher efficacy is developed through learning opportunities. Mr. Willis provided an example of a learning opportunity to cultivate teacher efficacy. He expressed the importance of teachers taking ownership over student learning and progress. Mr. Willis expounded upon the significance of internal accountability:

So I think accountability is recognizing where the areas of improvement are and taking responsibility that I can make that improvement happen by rolling up my sleeves, looking at the data, looking at a variety of points and saying we need to fix it.

Mr. Willis described recognizing possible improvements and taking responsibility for student outcomes. Dr. Lewis shared some areas of improvement that will require action and data. She expressed students are capable of learning if given opportunities to experience higher level thinking. Dr. Lewis stated, "give them opportunities to keep their curiosity sparked, and provide the environment where that sense of wonder." Dr. Lewis

described the disjointedness of learning within high schools. She believed there is a significant amount of educational research that does not get implemented because educators are concerned with state assessments. Dr. Lewis suggested if she could be Queen of Education, she would implement a process where each student would have his or her own individualized educational plan. She described leadership as a catalyst to cultivate an effective learning community.

Leadership that allows the administrators and the teachers to do exactly what we want the children to do. So we want the children to explore and to grow and to keep learning, we want our adults to do that too. So we need to provide those environments. And if you're a micromanager, that doesn't really work. Or if your goal is only on test scores, that's not going to work either, because then you create a sense of paranoia about job security on the teachers' parts. ... human being, ... when I started my leadership work and really kind of seeing who I am and who I want to be as a leader, I've developed a very transparent and honest approach to everything I do. ... My door is always open. I feel like it's the recognizing that we deal with human beings; we don't just have chess pieces that we can move around on the board. ... So, I think it's just that human piece and, you know, you're not a person who's responsible for test scores, you're a person who's responsible for growing adults.

All research participants described their personal efficacy through their daily practices. They provided ideas about equity, communication, support, consistency, and collaboration. These ideas translated into the following examples: principals encouraged informal and formal conversations, book studies, school committees, and professional development as a part of their daily routine. Mr. Manley commented on how he perceived his role:

Personal efficacy and my role as a leader to help create a building that has very strong and high collective efficacy. You know, kids do not learn and do not grow if teachers do not believe in them. So efficacy is very important, but in tandem with efficacy is the complexities of the principalship. You know, it's great if you believe that kids can learn, but ultimately you need to have the skill set to help kids learn, so that moves into philosophies of professional development and ultimately the mindset of people that live in an organization. The people that have a fixed mindset typically are not real enthusiastic about professional development.

They also might have efficacy issues. My experience with people that have a growth mindset are much more inclined to want to develop as educators, and also more inclined to have a higher degree of a personal efficacy.

Dr. Lewis described the concept of restorative practices and how they can support teacher and student growth. Equity and restorative practices are explained through Dr. Highland's comments on adults, "not just accountable, but present in that moment ... hearing and listening." Adults should understand the significance of listening to support teaching and learning. According to the research participants, all types of accountability measures are significant to student achievement. For example, Dr. Highland described the benefits of federal accountability. She remarked, "until we started looking at those practices and those policies ... the whole nation got on board ... to pass certain standards. ... bringing accountability to the forefront of the [educational] conversation ..." The participants communicated through words or examples the need for principals to model how adults can be engaged and dedicated to supporting all students. Dr. Lawson discussed the importance of providing resources and supports for students in real world situations. Mr. Willis decreed the following, "if poor instruction is going on, normally collaboration is not happening, professional development isn't happening to the degree it needs, and teachers aren't holding each other accountable to that practice, which I think is important." Therefore, principals should establish resources and structures to support teachers in their professional growth and development. The research participants provided the following documents to support teachers. These documents include Staff Handbooks, Course Syllabus Template, Danielson Framework, Talent Ed Rubric Evaluation Process, Evaluation document, and Observation and Evaluation Standard 7. Each staff handbook described the expectations and procedures for school operations. Dr.

Lewis shared a course syllabus template provided to teachers to support communication of the instructional program within the school. The other documents addressed the observation and evaluation process for school improvement.

**Personalized professional development opportunities.** Each school community designed its professional development according to the contextual and relational factors. Some principals constructed a progressive personalized professional development environment over several years. There were several principals, who utilized personalized learning experiences. A few principals used the traditional model for professional development. One principal implemented the expert teach the entire school the same instructional topics. Each principal considered student needs, teacher readiness, and school resources to develop professional development opportunities. Professional development can take multiple forms based on instructional needs. Mr. Willis offered a type of professional development through conversations:

For example, [if] data review is a weakness instructionally, then we wouldn't have professional learning around how do you invent technology in the lesson. ... Strategically, how are you giving common planning for teachers to share content, to let them have those conversations? I mean, teachers, when you ask them what do they need, it's always time, and so how do you invent that time? And then you have to work with teachers on what an effective meeting looks like around that initiative. ... and see where the area's weaknesses are, you try and attack that area.

Mr. Manley wanted to provide convenient professional development for his staff. He wanted the trainer to come to the school versus sending staff to multiple separate training opportunities.

My team knew they needed to work on differentiating, and then my job was to find the right person to work with my team and get that person here so I didn't have to send people out, which also saves money.

All twelve of the participants believed they should empower teachers and students to collaborate with them to establish goals, monitor those goals for completion, and complete those goals in a timely manner. Namely, Dr. Lawson expounded on how his school community created a professional development playlist for personalized professional development opportunities. In this document teachers were given a flexible “playlist” of options to individualize their professional development based on their personal interests and experiences. Dr. Lawson believed this professional development document facilitated an opportunity to, “empower our students ... empower our teachers as well so that if they set the goal, they achieve their goal, and if they need help in achieving the goal they set, then that's what we [principals] are here to do as well.” Dr. Lawson believed if teachers are empowered, they will create an environment for student empowerment. Mr. Richards introduced another personalized professional development entitled “Passport to Professional Development.” Mr. Richards described “[it as] 11 different topics ... teachers individually pursue these different areas based on their own personal need.” Mr. Newsome introduced the idea of instituting professional development through a series of collective school self-studies sessions. Teachers and principals constructed self-studies based on instructional and behavioral challenges. During this series of collective school self-studies, educators examined the lack of academic student progress, establishing culture, daily instructional schedule, and grading practices. Mr. Richards promoted lifelong strategies by modeling participation in mentorship opportunities, attending conferences, and reading various educational materials. Also, he commented the importance of situational awareness:

Different people need and you have to be comfortable with not everyone being at the same place at the same time. That's kind of my progression rollout there. ...

And so, for some of our teachers, they are relatively new teachers and classroom management is what's hindering their instruction. So they need support and resources with that. Some others ... authentic project-based learning experiences.

Dr. Lawson elaborated on structuring and engaging in personalized learning opportunities for teachers and students. Through modeling teacher voice and teacher choice, these participants believed teachers may be willing to replicate student voice and student choice in their classrooms. Mr. Howard described his professional development at the beginning of the school year. He felt it was imperative to set the direction and tone for the upcoming school year. According to the research participants, professional development should address teachers and students' needs.

**Equitable Interventions.** Principals and teachers should create an environment where the needs of all learners are met. Mr. Howard believed students should have the tools to access the technological resources. For instance, students need to understand the application of resources. He believed equity is more than providing technological resources:

Every child should have equity within their learning, meaning that I believe in one-to-one, but I don't just believe in giving every kid a device. I believe in giving every kid a device and making sure that every kid has access to that device, and they have been properly tutored on how to use that device and have the ability to use it.

The twelve secondary principals described elements of equitable actions or interventions. Some participants were vocal about their desire to implement equitable interventions within their school community. Equity was a large component of Mr. Howard's interview. Other participants described equitable characteristics, Dr. Highland acknowledged "love and compassion ... empathy ... acceptance and non-judgement are all at the heart of my [her] philosophy for learning and for growing and being

successful.” These principals expressed the significance of being actively engaged in conversations with teachers. The participants expressed the importance of implementing practices to benefit student. Mr. Howard described that some educators do not take personal responsibility for their words, actions, or deeds. He stated that accountability is doing what is being asked and following procedures. He looked for opportunities to build relationships with teachers and students, but he will challenge teacher actions that question equity and integrity. He described his leadership approach in an honest manner:

Your goal is to make sure that every kid is successful in your class, and you still have kids who don't quite make it, and no matter what you do for them they don't make it. Being a principal it's the same thing. You think all you gotta do is say, we're going to do this this year and it's done, but then you've got to make sure that you stay with it every step of the way because what I'm passionate about isn't necessarily what every teacher in this building is passionate about.

Mr. Howard believes, “accountability is everything. I feel like we've lost that in society. ... people don't hold themselves accountable anymore.” He spoke about the tremendous gains the school community had made under his leadership, but he believed it is not enough. Mr. Richards added the need for categorization of accountability. He expressed there are multiple levels to accountability. Most of the research participants understood the significance of accountability with equity.

Dr. Wilson utilized PBIS and the school pledge to develop an equitable environment:

So we have a pledge we say every day. ... they know that but then there's some other things that are lacking. ... So when we got to be a part of PBIS we had already had some structures in place. So we developed, pulled from the pledge four keys to rate of success: Believing in yourself, learning as much as you can, respecting others, and taking responsibility for your actions. So we do that, so the first day of school they have to go through those lessons.

Furthermore, Dr. Highland commented on how external accountability fosters equitable practices. She emphasized the need to model empathetic actions, “love and compassion

... acceptance” and principals should have a clear vision with a strong team to embrace and implement change. Mrs. Allen described a document for equitable interventions. In this document, principals and teachers identify and establish a student plan for success. The document facilitated a plan of action for individual student success. Mr. Manley communicated how professional experiences and opportunities establish an equitable community through conversations. Mr. Manley stated there should be restorative practices to change negative behavior within school communities:

I spend a lot of time with my staff, helping people understand that discipline is about at times giving appropriate consequences to bring about changes in behavior, but it is not about taking off an appendage of a little 12-year-old. They're kids, they need to be taught. So I'm not really tolerant of teachers who want to tar and feather or, you know, really, really punish kids in that regard. I'm interested in helping kids change behavior. So at times there's the traditional suspensions, but at times there's work with counselors. At times there's work with administrators. We're many times working with parents. Our goal is to keep kids in school, not to be suspended or kicked out of school.

Employing these concepts establishes an environment for learning. Equity expresses the need to demonstrate compassion and awareness. Restorative practices allow people to learn from their mistakes and consider others when dealing with challenging situations.

## **Theme 2: Collective Accountability and Continuous Improvement Efforts**

The second theme was collective accountability and continuous improvement efforts. My research participants shared similar ideas about collective accountability. They described collective accountability as the collaboration between principals and teachers to address accountability measures. Both principals and teachers established an active role in supporting the school practices. The research participants provided their personal accounts of collective accountability based on their school practices and leadership experiences. Internal accountability consisted of principals and teachers

developing shared expectations and school-level practices. Theme 2 was developed through collaboration based on four sub-themes: collective accountability, flexible structures, clear expectations, and personal desires.

**Collective accountability.** The research inquiry encouraged principals and teachers to take responsibility for the collective outcome. In most participants' descriptions, collective accountability was described as a shared responsibility for principals and teachers to communicate, collaborate, and act as a unit. Whereas, internal accountability dealt with the utilization of school-level practices. Collective accountability dealt with principals and teachers working together to construct teaching and learning. Ten of the 12 principals described concepts of collective accountability within the school community. Dr. Wilson communicated that "everyone from administration down to the cafeteria workers understand that they are vital to the purpose of what we do every day ... they are important keys. We are family ... that's what we've shared since I've been here". Dr. Miller expressed the importance of communication to support accountability:

Communication is definitely a key to success of accountability. So, if there's a certain protocol that we use, I want to be transparent. I want everybody to know what the protocol is so that there aren't any questions as to why we made this decision or why that happened.

Dr. Wilson explained, "you empower others by letting them know that you are valued. You come to the table with something. And that's how I had to start." Dr. Wilson asserted the importance of eliminating tricks and providing consistency for teachers and students:

We need to work on, giving them some research-based instructional strategies. No tricks. Because see, our kids ... need more than a trick. We need

consistency. ... You've got to live that thing to the point where you see others doing what you do.

Mr. Wright suggested schools that struggle are schools that do not have candid conversations. He asserted these candid conversations do not happen because there is fear of being criticized. He illustrated the importance of shared accountability in his educational experience. Mr. Wright's explanation of shared accountability was like collective accountability. On the other hand, Mr. Newsome utilized a document to facilitate effective meetings entitled Meeting Wise Agenda. This document was used to guide the purpose of the meeting, the process of the meeting, the preparation of the meeting, the pacing of the meeting, the meeting norms, and the meeting minutes. Mr. Willis expressed the importance to connect the mission, vision, values, and goals to collaboration and communication:

Getting teachers to understand and continually be exposed to what is our mission, what is the vision of the school division, the values of the school division, and how does that apply to the goals that we have. There's one structure again that people continually need to understand, what are they doing and where does it fit? ... So I always believe it is important to clarify those things on a consistent basis, whether it's on individual conversations with teachers or in whole group faculty meetings or administrative meetings with your team, with parent open houses, ... principals aren't even aware what those look like, still align up with that mission. So if I have an instruction and leadership team, for example, which we have, the structure of those meetings is going to support what we're trying to do in an individual classroom basis all the way from a school basis.

All twelve principals expressed the sentiments of empowering their teachers and students. Mr. Manley explained the importance of "building a sense of commitment to the mission and vision of the organization." Mr. Manley believed in the commitment "accountability is something that happens naturally because people are committed and understand expectations and where the organization is going." Mr. Richards clarified the importance of principals surrounding themselves with competent individuals:

the role of the principal, you can't do it all, so part of that accountability is really, you know, it's surrounding yourself with a lot of other individuals, it's building that capacity, but then it's monitoring and supporting to make sure that all that stuff gets done.

Mr. Richards stated, "...building trust begins with being consistent, and so through actions and words, if you're not consistent, you lose that trust and you lose their respect. And so the consistency doesn't always mean, like, I'm going to say yes." Dr. Miller desired to establish a collective perspective by inviting teachers, students, and parents to serve on different school committees. She made it a priority to include diverse types of individuals on various leadership and committee opportunities. She exclaimed, "... as the leader of the school [I made] sure that voices are heard." She recognized the power of diverse perspectives. Mr. Howard published two documents capturing the norms of the school for staff members and students. Mr. Richards described the importance of establishing norms. He expounded about consistency and what people can do with consistency.

[Consistency] then builds trust. ... when you operate that way[,] people know exactly what they're going to get from you. And they know that if there is a decision to be made, that there's going to be others involved in the decision-making process, there's going to be opportunities for input, there's going to be opportunities for feedback.

Mr. Wright extended Mr. Richards thoughts about consistency:

Simple as if we decide that this is what should be done, and this is when it should be done, and it gets done. And if it doesn't, then there's some consequences for that. And that means, if it does get done, then there's positive consequences too, but if it doesn't then there has to be some kind of -- a consequence can be a dialogue about, okay, how can we do this better next time, and that conversation. I think the fundamental part of trust is you do what you say you're going to do. So if I'm the principal of a school or a leader of a team, and I say I'm going to do X, Y, and Z, and I don't do it, then people aren't going to hold each other accountable, because I didn't hold myself accountable. So I think accountability is really about as simple as doing what you say you're going to do and doing it consistently.

Mr. Wright described his perspective on accountability and leadership. Dr. Highland asserted teachers need to utilize data for instructional decisions. She stated teachers should receive specific feedback to enhance their educational practices. Mr. Richards explained, “[the significance of] building capacity. There are always different angles and different perspectives ... accountability ... you really get different perspectives before decisions are made on different things.” Mr. Wright described the role of accountability and perspective concerning the hallway sweep. The school utilized two documents to govern the hallway sweep one was a summary and the other document described the components of the hallway sweep. Mr. Wright reflected on his hallway initiative:

The hall sweep thing ... most successful because after I said this is what we're doing, I had meetings with them to refine it, with a small group of teachers to refine it, so they were all on board. ... 150 tardies to process, which was a lot for one day ... need to process these in two days. Two days, because if the kids don't feel the consequence immediately, then they are going to continue to do what they're doing. So in the three months, like I said, it was over 1,000. ... I took the same data of tardiness, it was down 72% from what it was before. So I know that was successful because I saw the data change and I saw less kids out in the hallway. That one went down and the behavior, the amount of referrals went down by 48% in the same amount of time, because teachers were calling home more and giving out detentions, and not writing as many referrals. ... So it was definitely about shared goals I think leads to shared accountability. ... You gotta have shared goals. You have to agree on what that looks like and what that feels like, and how we're going to approach it, and then you can now share the accountability.

Dr. Miller asserted, “In our goal to get things done, sometimes we rush, rush, rush, and we forget that we need to include people or stakeholders ... in the decision-making.” Dr. Lawson shared a staff survey overview with me. The staff survey analyzed the collaborative working relationships in the school. The survey was completed in March 2017. There were 37 staff members, who completed the survey. There were 87 statements on aspects of positive school climate. There were 13 statements on

collaborative working relationships. The administrative team scheduled a faculty meeting for staff members to analyze the data. Collective accountability required principals and teachers to take responsibility. Principals created an environment for teachers to participate in school practices. As principals created collective accountability, teachers took ownership in daily school practices.

**Flexible structures.** Flexible structures were developed to involve individuals and provide expectations for internal accountability. Flexible structures were documents, protocols, and practices. All 12 principals used various documents to serve as frameworks for school practices. Mrs. Allen believed it is imperative to:

involve people, and sometimes you have to make decisions on the fly, because we're bombarded with decisions all day, but for really huge matters, I would say looking at it from a big picture, but also involving other people and getting input, and I can always also rely on, say, my director or other principals.

Mr. Willis described the significance of organizational structure, “something that's missed quite often, is structures and an organizational structure and framework for people to work within that creates a level of consistency, creates an [opportunity] for people to understand where they operate within that structure.” Organizational structures provided a level of consistency within the school community. Mr. Willis shared a document with the school's mission, school's vision, district's core values, school improvement SMART goals, and school concept map. The concept map provided a visual to understand the school's general focus towards continuous improvement and school achievement. The mission statement was listed at the top of the concept map. Next, there was a section for the vision with core values and how the core values connected to the school community. The manifestation of the core values was significant documents, conversations, or strategies. The concept map allowed the principals, the teachers, and

the specialists to understand the direction of the school's strategic actions. The concept map identified the major flexible structures within the school community. Mr. Willis described the effects of the document:

engaging environment for every kid, every day that they can achieve. And then the values that ... expects of their employees, which I think are important, because as human beings we don't always exhibit those values in our behavior, but to bring that back to light that that's why we do collaborative planning, for example, because value is we do great work together.

The research participants appreciated the value of collaboration and communication. Mr. Wright expressed the importance of communication as the organization:

to be effective, in my experiences I've been in schools that I thought have been very effective and schools that haven't quite met the mark for kids and families and communities, and I think it's about this idea of communication as the organization. ... So that means that everything that's happening people are aware of, all the teachers are engaged in the process, all the families are engaged, and how to get there, and there's clear, focused direction from the leadership of what we need to do and how we're going to do it. And people are on board to contribute.

Through consistent communication and collaboration principals and teachers developed flexible structures and school practices. Mrs. Allen communicated how the master schedule was a flexible structure to facilitate communication and collaboration:

master schedule is the key to the instructional framework, and the fact that teachers have common planning with their grade level subject leads, and everybody does the same grading and expectations for all teachers, so one teacher isn't off on an island doing their own thing. Everybody's doing the same thing. Of course, they have their own autonomy in their classroom ... I can't think of any instructional challenges that they wouldn't be able to handle, because they do everything together, and the fact that nobody's off on an island on their own gives them strength.

Dr. Wilson identified the use of professional learning communities (PLCs) to develop and monitor school improvement efforts. Dr. Wilson's document supported Mrs.

Allen's account on how master schedules can be used to implement common planning. Usually Dr. Wilson's school conducted PLCs twice a week with no interruptions. The school had a document with the published meeting dates. In their PLC guidebook she told a vivid story about the school's perspective on PLCs. The document opened with a community motto about believing. This motto encouraged embracing possibilities and understanding that challenges arise, but educators in this school believed in themselves, processes, conversations, and supports. Next, there was a PLC chart with meeting information: the bell, day, room number, and PLC lead. Both Mrs. Allen and Dr. Wilson utilized PLCs to improve school practices. PLCs were implemented to support school improvement plans. Mrs. Allen acknowledged that significant gains were made by following their school improvement plan. Dr. Wilson stressed the importance of implementing the school improvement plan, "with fidelity, because if you do cutbacks and tricks it doesn't work." Dr. Wilson recalled PLCs as a flexible structure to use:

I was going to increase it [to] two, they were like, ughhh, but then they understood we were in crisis mode at the time, so we had to meet and we had to get on board with it, and if you make it aware and everyone understands that sacred time, we're on the same page. So, what everyone needs and we talk about the whole approach, where it came from. I got the training at ..., we were talking about, you know, what's the important pieces of that, and we went through a whole series of videos and pieces like that, and the critical questions from before when it comes to that, and we revisit that with the new people when necessary. The expectations as far as when we meet, how often, making sure they have a goal, and collection of data which I'm really flexible, because this is really, each team has its own autonomy, so it's up to them how they want to deal with that piece of it.

Mr. Wright agreed that PLCs could be useful to increasing communication and collaboration. He described a PLC protocol that he utilized at his school as they developed their PLCs. The research participants expressed the importance of establishing

ways to facilitate working together. Dr. Lewis described two consultancy and tuning protocols that her school utilized as flexible structures to foster collaboration and communication. Dr. Lewis expressed her excitement for new perspectives and structures from her future colleagues:

new perspectives and maybe new structures, because sometimes I feel like we were reactive more than being proactive, even though we had those times to plan and we did plan for things that were coming up, it was more of a reactive piece.

**Clear expectations.** All twelve participants agreed that principals should implement clear expectations for their school community. The research participants connected clear expectations to accountability because clear expectations create discussion and establish practices. The research inquiry indicated clear expectations were necessary along with a balance of high expectations and realistic expectations. Mr. Wright understood the role of communication and collaboration within school practices. Mr. Wright described communication and how it functioned in a school community:

communication creates the organization. People talk about communication, how you send information out and get information back, but that consistent conversation about expectations, what it looks like, giving them examples of what it looks like, getting their feedback on how to make it better. That constant iteration and conversation is what creates the organization, and to me that's what meeting people where they are is. It's not giving up on that discussion, because once we stop talking, then things stop getting better.

Mr. Wright's description about communication supported the notion of high expectations. Mr. Howard exclaimed, "I have very high expectations of myself, and I have very high expectations of the people who work with me and for me." At the same time, Mr. Richards asserted, "relentless restlessness, like I always want to improve, and so you have to balance your high expectations with realistic expectations with students and staff." Mr. Wright believed it is an imperative to identify expectations:

expectations and say this is what we're doing, because this is what's right, and then you hold it to yourself because you're going to get questions at every moment, and then you engage them in the conversation. Because they want it too, they want it too. They just don't know how to get it. Then principals should communicate the expectations to their school community.

Mr. Newsome described, “the idea that people understand the expectations and what role [the principal] will play in terms of providing support.” Mr. Newsome explained the significance of principals understanding clear expectations. Furthermore, Dr. Miller stated the significance of balancing being approachable and communicating school expectations:

You need to be kind to people because everybody's not on the same page and everybody's not at the same place. So if you're not approachable, then they will never get to where you want them to be. ... but you also have to be serious about the job so they understand that, yeah, I'm smiling because that's who I am as a person, but I do have expectations of you when it comes to making sure you're doing that learning plan; making sure that you're circulating around the classroom so that we don't have an issues.

Mr. Willis extended this concept of making expectations known to teachers. Sometimes challenging conversations are required:

clearly communicate [,] the expectations when it comes to what behaviors are allowed and not allowed. And then you have to follow up with a level of response to it. You know, from a teaching standpoint, are you willing to have difficult conversations with people that maybe have never had a challenging conversation in their 20 years of education? ... I've never received this level of evaluation. I've always received higher, I would usually say, you know, last year I was exemplary as a husband and this year I'm on a plan of action. And so many teachers would laugh at that because then it made them recognize, like, I can be exemplary one year and be deficient the next.

Mr. Willis elaborated about the shifts of being exemplary and the next year being a deficient; however, he feels it was necessary to clearly communicate expectations, needs, and actions. Mr. Willis shared a document concerning the profile of a graduate. This document described soft skills for high school graduates to be successful post high

school. He planned to use this document to guide communication and collaboration. Mr. Manley described the need for clear communication. The research participants implemented practice to: identify goals, examine data, create goals, and support effective teaching and learning. Mr. Manley believed that accountability cannot exist in isolation:

if people have a clear understanding of the goals and the mission of the school, if people are collaboratively working to set goals and look at data and build goals for the upcoming year, I think that it can have an incredibly positive effect to helping the school be more focused on teaching and learning, and can increase success. But I think that when accountability is the focus of an administrator, without clear expectations, without people understanding how it fits in, it has the danger of becoming a sort of perfunctory thing within a school or something that people are fearful of, and something that potentially can inhibit relationship and decrease trust between administration and teachers.

The research literature and inquiry expressed the principal is the chief school leader, so the principal should have clear expectations from their school supervisors and community members. Mr. Newsome shared the significance of principals being provided with clear expectations and flexible structures for reflective thought:

some structures, but it didn't have these built-in measures that would tell me, okay... you're doing the right thing. I didn't have that, so it was like getting to the end of the year and saying, okay. Did this work? But we didn't really have any tangible goals, so for me that was hard. People would probably say, I want to be in a school with less policy and less restrictions and I can just lead. But that was me, and I got here and I was like, oh my gosh! Wait a second. ... I really struggled without those built-in accountability measures.

According to Mr. Newsome once principals have established clear expectations for themselves, and their teachers then they need to establish roles and provide responsibilities for desired outcomes. Furthermore, he believed accountability is not a punishment, but a tool to communicate progress. Clear expectations provided a mechanism for accountability:

understanding kind of the path, what is it that we're trying to accomplish, and what role do the stakeholders play along that path. Along that road, what role does

everyone play? Is everyone clear on their role, and then what are we using to kind of measure success? What types of supports are built in? So I think it's kind of interrelational, and so accountability is not a punishment, it is a mechanism for communicating where we are, where we were, and where we need to be in terms of achieving goals.

Clear expectations have promoted consistent practice within their schools. Principals and teachers understood their roles and responsibilities involving internal accountability.

**Personal desires.** The research participants described personal desires for being an educator. Mr. Howard expressed, “Education is a calling.” Dr. Lawson proclaimed, “making sure that we are supporting the teachers as they seek to accomplish their goals, and at the same time we are setting our own goals as an administrative team. We are setting individual goals, and we're also setting goals that we have as a group.” Mrs. Allen elaborated on her personal approach to decision-making within the school community. She emphasized the importance of feeling content with her decisions. Mrs. Allen shared, “decisions that I make, can I look myself in the mirror and know that I have done the right thing at the end of the day, because I have to live with myself.” Both Mr. Manley and Dr. Lawson discussed components for striving towards their personal professional desires for their school community. Mr. Manley stated, “personal efficacy and my role as a leader to help create a building that has very strong and high collective efficacy.” Dr. Lawson shared his personal philosophy on accountability and empowerment:

if I were to leave this organization tomorrow, can this organization still continue to thrive without me being there, and I think about that all the time. Have I provided our staff members with the tools necessary so that if I were to leave could they continue on, or would they be lost? Maybe that's my own personal accountability piece ... that they feel empowered that if they want to try something, go ahead and try it out. They don't need to wait for me to give them an okay to go do it. That's kind of an empowerment piece there, but I think it also holds them accountable as well.

Dr. Lawson emphasized, personal accountability is the simple key to accountability, “if you say I’m going to ... [make] a goal, [stick] with [the] goal, and [complete] what it is that they said they wanted to do.” Dr. Lawson believed principals should hold themselves accountable to school progress:

if we're going to expect to hold our teachers accountable, we should also hold ourselves accountable, and we hold ourselves accountable to each other having monthly discussions ... are we making progress toward the goals that we said we were going to move towards when we set these goals earlier in the year, going through our school improvement plan.

When I asked Mr. Willis about how he intentionally creates an atmosphere of respect, his response was:

I just think the biggest part of leadership is you just model behaviors. ... when you're leading, you gotta be who you are, you know, and it will always come out. Who you are will come out at some point in your leadership, typically when times get stressful or when you feel the pressure, that's where people reveal themselves. I mean, you know, I always talk about people always used to say sports are great because they develop character. Well, I always went the route of it reveals character. You know, leadership situations reveal it.

Mr. Willis communicated “it is important to clarify those things on a consistent basis, whether it’s on individual conversations with teachers or in whole group faculty meetings or administrative meetings with your team.” Mr. Willis stated the importance of knowing the professional capital within the school:

How do you drive people forward to do the best they can do? ... as a coach, have to look and go, what's the skill set of every member of my team? Like, what's their strength and how do I promote that strength? And then encourage them to utilize that strength and take risks within it to make decisions. ... You have to fully know the members of your team and what they're capable of doing, and steering them into those areas where they can succeed in that area. ... look for that person that can fill it. So, you know, if I need a jump shooter, I don't go look for a guy who drives to the basket. I go search for somebody who can shoot from outside. I mean, that's one way of looking at it, so you're continually analyzing strengths and weaknesses of your current team, encouraging them to express that strength, constantly communicating with your folks and you're constantly accentuating what their strengths are. And then you are also not always telling

them they have to fix their weakness. You're pairing them up with somebody who can overcome that weakness in them.

Mr. Willis shared an anecdotal principle: some teachers will attribute their poor results to the types of students that were in their class; however, if their results were considered successful, they attribute it to their teaching and structuring of the curriculum. He believed you cannot have it both ways: either students were responsible or teachers were responsible. Mr. Newsome described how his own experience contributed to his leadership approach especially his participation in sports. From his personal experience as a basketball player, he appreciated how the coach communicated the necessary action he wanted from him on and off the basketball court:

When I played basketball, I happened to be pretty good and so for me, I needed the coach to be very clear on what my role was when I was on the court. So sometimes the coach might say, you know, you're underperforming, and I'm like, well, what is it that you need me to do, because I want to be the one who shoots the ball all the time and then I have to deal with disgruntled teammates. So I needed to be clear, and now that I'm in the position of a principal, I really try and make it clear what I, what our organization, what our school needs so that everyone feels success. So that everyone feels that they've made a healthy contribution, and everyone feels like they're getting good, substantive feedback. So I try to use those principles that I received as a player in my role as a principal.

Mr. Newsome applied his life experience to his leadership approach to ensure his communication provided support and specific feedback to support school community needs. Mr. Newsome understood communication and collaboration are needed to establish respect.

### **Research Question 1: Interpretations**

All twelve research participants provided varying degrees of insightful thoughts and interpretations concerning the exploration of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. The participants' primary focus was

on their school community, but the following participants expressed their personal desire to involve individuals in their personal professional growth. Dr. Miller described the need for diverse thoughts and voices within the school community. Dr. Miller had elements of what Mr. Wright referred to as “communication of the organization.” Both Dr. Miller and Mr. Newsome demonstrated words and actions are significant to internal accountability. Internal accountability always promoted actions and opportunities for teacher growth and student achievement. Dr. Miller recognized the importance of involving others in their individual and collective growth. Mr. Newsome took elements of various conversations and looked for opportunities to apply the elements of the conversation to action within his community. Dr. Highland asserted the importance of creating an environment for self-actualization and application through modeling. Mr. Howard had a passion for all educators to understand, acknowledge, and apply equitable practices. These elements were explored during the data collection and analysis processes to understand how secondary principals interpret internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

### **Research Question 2: Practices**

All twelve research participants provided varying examples and resources to inform educational praxis. I gained an exhaustive amount of information concerning internal accountability from all twelve participants. However, the following participants demonstrated in their interview key examples of internal accountability. Mr. Manley encouraged his school community to embrace a growth mindset looking to support students “for their future, not our past.” He established clear expectations with structures for invigorating and inspiring innovative practices and experiences. Mr. Richards

described accountability as a multiple layer concept that requires collaboration and communication. Mr. Willis provided specific examples about instructional, behavioral, and administrative practices established from his experience as an athletic coach. Through these practices both Mr. Willis and Mr. Richards developed structures and participated in conversations about allocating human and school resources. Dr. Wilson had well defined structures and practices in place to address instructional, behavioral, and administrative needs. For example, she had a PLC guidebook to support her PLCs, PBIS behavioral interventions, school pledge elements throughout the school practices, and necessary conversations to address celebrations and mistakes. Mrs. Allen described various structural supports: for example, master schedule, PBIS structures, academic and behavioral interventions, and school practices. Dr. Lawson described opportunities for empowerment through goal setting and personalized and blended learning for both teachers and students. Dr. Lewis provided documents and thoughts about teacher growth opportunities and treating individuals as human beings.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the findings from my research inquiry on internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. Through this research study, I was able to explore twelve secondary principals' perspectives and experiences on internal accountability. Chapter 5 presented possible recommendations, implications, and future studies concerning internal accountability.

## **Chapter V: Interpretations, Implementations, and Conclusions**

This research inquiry discussed internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. There were two research questions used to frame this research study: 1.) How do secondary principals, if at all, interpret internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? 2.) How do secondary principals, if at all, utilize internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities? The sub questions were used to align the interview questions to the research questions (Appendix J). The first theme was internal accountability with an emphasis on students. Internal accountability should be student-centered with teacher supports, personalized professional development opportunities, and equitable interventions. The second theme was internal accountability through collective accountability. Collective accountability was demonstrated through flexible structures, clear expectations, and personal desires to support student achievement. Both themes demonstrated varying degrees of internal accountability through interviews and documents. Interviews and documents provided an opportunity for research participants to share their views on leadership, trust, and capital. Each school community demonstrated its personal degree of internal accountability. Most of the participants relied heavily on communication and collaboration through conversations, practices, documents, and experiences. Chapter 5 provided an opportunity to explore two themes: student-centered environment and collective accountability.

Liou and Daly (2014) argued principals should construct levels of internal accountability by communicating and collaborating. Through this research inquiry, I

realized that being an accumulator of knowledge is not enough, but the application of knowledge is essential. Although research participants shared theoretical concepts, each participant took a different approach to develop internal accountability. I used adaptive leadership as the theoretical framework to explore internal accountability. Adaptive leadership represented an interactive process based on school contextual and relational factors. The three theoretical components are adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. The conceptual framework organized these theoretical components for this research study.

### **Interpretations**

The twelve secondary principals had different ways of approaching internal accountability. My research inquiry revealed the importance of principals' willingness to actively engage with teachers and students in conversations and practices. Through collaboration and communication principals authenticated their ability to establish leadership, trust, and capital. Each research participant stated the need for collegial interactions, the need for communication within the organization, and the need to address student needs.

Sustainable collaborative efforts require people to embrace and understand their roles and responsibilities for school achievement. Principals can support teachers when principals understand and contribute to daily practices and shared expectations. Moreover, through shared expectations teachers and students can achieve at their highest potential because they understand the expectations and structures. Moran (2005) explained two elements needed to build social capital. Both structural and relational embeddedness are required to develop structures and exchanges between principals and

teachers. The research participants provided school documents, shared school practices, and described protocols utilized to establish internal accountability. Some research participants described ways to empower teachers and celebrate teachers. When teachers are empowered, they can cultivate an environment for students to use their student voice. Principals should demonstrate a personal desire for developing a positive culture or building relationships before they implement instructional practices. Principals with high expectations should construct a learning environment conducive for student and professional growth. Research participants described their perception and cultivation of forming a learning environment conducive for professional and student growth. Through formal and informal conversations, collective accountable practices, and accessible school documents, principals illustrated elements of internal accountability. The research participants strived to implement administrative, behavioral, and instructional practices with clear roles and responsibilities for teachers and students. Principals are challenged to establish a vision that can be articulated to teachers and students. In addition, teachers have to feel comfortable to “fail forward” within their school community and explore diverse practices for sustainable growth (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Forsyth, et al., 2011; Fullan, 2014; Hoy et al., 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). The research participants recognized the necessity of empowering teachers and students, the need to seize any opportunity for growth and development, and the importance of encouragement within their daily practices.

Principals described unwritten and written norms. When norms are established, then there are consistent actions for principals, teachers, and students to

model. Principals should identify the primary attributes of their leadership, trust, and capital.

As principals cultivate a stimulating learning environment with the necessary effective practices, there should be a focus on all students and collective efforts. Principals guide the development of expectations and encourage a sense of commitment to the school's mission and vision. A few of the research participants described that accountability is not synonymous with compliance. Compliance does not foster sustainable actions because it is cultivated out of fear and mistrust. Two research participants stated examples of compliance. For instance, one research participant expressed the importance of teachers doing what they are told to do. Compliance alone does not construct sustainable collective accountability. Principals should ensure schools practices are implemented without coercive measures (Elmore, 2002). Principals' personal desires guide collective accountability measures, flexible structures, and clear expectations. The research participants described the importance of utilizing goals to transform their learning environment. Principals should have a vested interest in fulfilling their educational calling.

**RQ1.** Research question 1 explored the essence of internal accountability. Theme 1 assisted with answering research question 1. Principals understood the need to address external accountability measures. The participants acknowledged external policies but did not discuss it as a pressure. There were several research participants that described external accountability measures and how it impacted their daily practice. Some of the research participants shared thoughts about testing, curriculum, and data. They used external accountability to foster school-level practices.

Nine of the 12 participants recognized the power of providing teacher supports for student achievement. Principals provided specific examples of teacher supports: technological elements, relational strategies, instructional practices, instructional conversations, and emotional strategies. This study suggests the importance of principals examining teacher supports. The research literature discussed the concept of principals cultivating abilities and enhancing capacities within their school communities (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Elmore, 2000a/b; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). My research study confirmed the need for principals to cultivate abilities and capacities within their schools. Research participants described the need for teachers to feel confident as they grow professionally and support student achievement. Both the research participants and the research literature revealed the importance of cultivating personal and collective teacher efficacy. School improvement requires principals to understand their role in the school improvement process and to provide opportunities for teachers to understand their roles and their responsibilities to the school community (Danielson, 2009; Heifetz et al., 2009). Collectively, participants articulated the importance of supporting teachers' professional growth and students' achievement. As principals establish relational trust, there should be reciprocal interactions and shared expectations. Research participants described strategies to establish internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

Research participants expressed the significance of quality professional development. Personalized professional development opportunities allowed teachers to address areas of improvement to support diverse abilities and capabilities among the instructional staff. Some of the participants believed in modeling for teachers and

students. There were several, who believed learning should be personalized and not a one size fits all. When principals establish collaborative structures, there can be constant communication and collaboration between principals and teachers (Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Most of the participants showed the connection between coaching, mentoring, collaborating, evaluating, and communicating as it relates to building capacity. Effective internal accountability is established through collaboration. With an effective internal accountability framework there can be sustainable structures, systems, and practices. Internal accountability includes: leadership, trust, and capital.

It is imperative for principals to promote meaningful professional development opportunities (Elmore, 2002). The research literature described the need for effective professional development and, the research participants provided some actionable steps to establish personalized professional development opportunities. Youngs and King (2002) described elements of professional capital. Youngs and King (2002) stated the need for teacher knowledge skills and dispositions, professional community, and program coherence. My research inquiry supported the benefits of allowing teachers to embark on professional development opportunities at their own pace. Students will experience benefits because their learning environment will change as a result of the professional development. Lastly, equitable practice should be considered when incorporating internal accountability. The research literature stressed the need for equitable practices to support continuous improvement (Danielson, 2009; Elmore, 2000a/b; Fullan, 2014; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). Principals expressed students deserve the most effective learning

environment. My research inquiry encouraged the importance of establishing practices and structures. Establishing practices and structures will minimize inappropriate behavior. Principals and teachers should use mistakes as teachable moments. As principals and teachers foster a “failing forward” culture then there can be more equitable interventions (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Costa & Garmston, 2002).

There should be intentional shared practices to stimulate effective practices (Youngs & King, 2002). Once principals share their vision and mission, then teachers and principal can examine school needs and corrective strategies (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hattie, 2012; McNulty & Besser, 2011). Principals should implement practices that will enhance school growth and implement effective supports. As principals and teachers develop these supports and practices, they can enhance internal accountability.

**RQ2.** Research question 2 explored the use of school-level actions and practices concerning internal accountability. Participants provided an opportunity for me to explore the actions and practices of internal accountability through their interviews and documents. School teams should implement sustainable actions not temporary actions. Both the research literature and inquiry encouraged principals to be facilitators, collaborators, and supporters of effective administrative, behavioral, and instructional practices (Danielson, 2009; Devos & Bouckenoghe, 2009; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Spillane, 2003; Teague & Anfara, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014). Participants described attributes of collective accountability through elements of adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. There are developing levels of collective accountability within the twelve school communities.

The research literature expressed the need for principals to communicate their vision and mission daily (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Sergiovanni, 1989a/b; Teague & Anfara, 2012). All principals found value in having documents that all stakeholders can reference. The documents can assist in establishing accountability and serve as a reference for the school community. With a clear focus, principals and teachers can establish practices and supports to build internal accountability (Leis & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016; Sergiovanni, 1989a/b). Internal accountability should be practiced daily (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Fullan, 2003b; Knobloch & Jefferson, 2008; Torres, 2016) with defining roles and responsibilities. Both the research literature and this study provided limited understanding concerning established clear expectations, protocols and practices. Research participants communicated the need to involve the necessary principals, teachers, students, parents, and specialists in the decision-making process. Both the research literature and inquiry do not address protocols and practices on how to implement decision-making processes. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) described the concept of centralized authority concerning decision-making. They defined high centralization as authority being in the hands of a few school officials. Low centralization deals with principals diffusing decision-making authority to more than a select group (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Collaborative decision-making could be through a survey, a conversation, a protocol, a committee input, or other forms of communication. The research participants described moderate levels of centralization some of them were low and others still had elements of high centralization. Schools should implement some type of structure for clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities, but these structures should be fluid. Flexible structures allow principals

and teachers to build internal accountability. Both the research literature and inquiry showed there are multiple ways to create and use flexible structures. Research participants provided examples of flexible structures through their interviews and documents.

Another aspect of flexible structures is the ability to provide constructive feedback and reflective insight (Eisner, 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Cuban (1984) described the classification of secondary structures and how the learning environment is constructed. This classification and construction present some barriers to a sustainable learning environment. Adaptive leadership is the catalyst to the conceptual framework. Based on the research participants, adaptive leadership is operationalized through observations, conversations, interventions, and solutions. In the interpretation section, there were thematic summaries addressing the two research questions concerning internal accountability. The sub themes are interrelated among student-centered approach, effective learning environment, and collective accountability for continuous improvement.

### **Implications**

Both the research literature and inquiry demonstrated that principals cannot do it by themselves. Adaptive challenges require collaborative efforts and structures from school communities. Principals and teachers should have a personal desire to foster a learning environment established in collaboration and communication (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Liou & Daly, 2014; Sergiovanni, 1989a/b; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Federal mandates require school to implement effective practices. External accountability measures contribute to school outcomes and resources, but principals and

teachers should collaborate to develop and communicate effective internal accountability practices. With effective internal accountability practices, schools can govern themselves with sustainable efforts. Subsequently, principals should consider the daily requirements needed for an effective learning environment. Principals and teachers should identify and embrace their personal call to education. Then principals and teachers should continue to strive for excellence when challenging situations arise. Principals should develop comprehensive school improvement plans and practices that involve all principals, teachers, and specialists.

**Practice.** This research inquiry provided several implications for educational practices. These implications encourage the following recommendations. First, principals should create a “failing-forward” culture for their school community. Second, principals should implement concrete practices based on shared expectations. Third, school districts should create a school improvement component based on equity. Fourth, schools should examine the benefits of personalized professional development. Fifth, principals should utilize flexible structures to guide collective accountability for decision-making. Also, they should mandate the use of structures and reiterate the significance of organizational structures. Principals and teachers need decision-making processes to organize school structures and practices. Once there is collective decision-making, then schools can have effective social exchanges and collective efficacy. Sixth, principals should have a forum to express clear expectations. A principal could implement “morning meetings” or “restorative circles” for teachers and students to communicate and collaborate.

**Policy.** This research inquiry provided several implications for educational policies. These implications encourage the following recommendations. Local policy recommendations are fundamental attributes and practices to support internal accountability. Local school districts and schools should develop procedures to support continuous improvement efforts. The research participants described the significance of honest and reflective communication between principals and teachers. Subsequently, principals should clearly communicate their expectations to their school communities. The research participants described multiple instances of collaboration and communication. Principals and teachers need frequent individual and collective encounters to reflect on their behavioral and instructional practices. Through these individual and collective encounters, principals and teachers can create actionable steps to improve their school community. Principals and teachers could construct a basic protocol to guide their discussions. School could create a document to reference concerns, solutions, and practices. This document would have the following subheadings: school expectations, team norms, actionable steps, meeting dates, and meeting minutes. These collective encounters could be interdisciplinary, grade level, or subject matter teams for diverse perspectives and refined steps. There should be defined roles within each team. As a faculty the school should discuss their collective expectations for student success. Then they should write the expectations down. Next, the team should develop team norms. Actionable steps should be realistic steps that the team can accomplish. Teams should send their documents to the administrative team or post in a shared folder. In the protocol, team members can establish other meeting times

to reflect or collaborate. There should be a section to capture meeting minutes, so members can review the process and make recommendations.

## Conceptual Framework

### A Way of Examining Internal Accountability

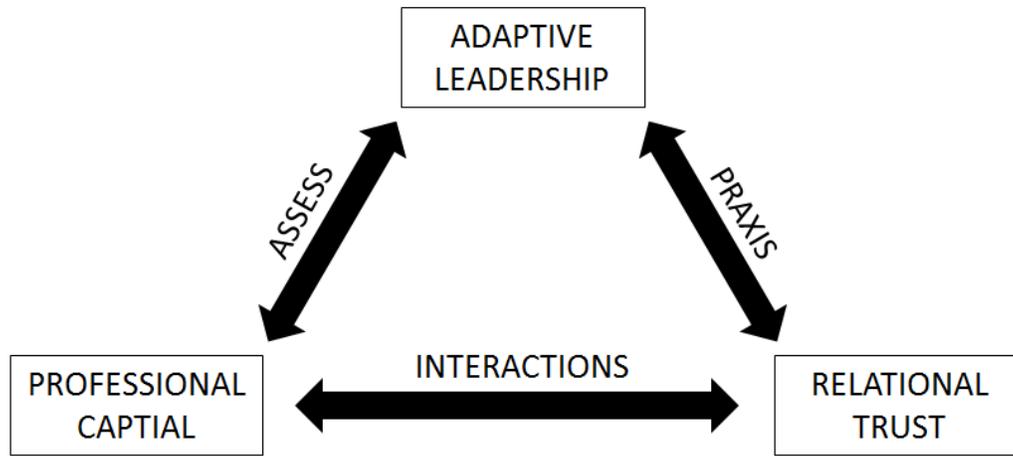


FIGURE 4

In Chapter 1, the conceptual framework utilized adaptive leadership as the mechanism to develop relational trust and professional capital for internal accountability. Then internal accountability can lead to supporting external accountability. There are non-directional practices taking place between leadership, trust, and capital. In Chapter 2, the conceptual framework was like the figure 1 in Chapter 1, but the characteristics of each component was added. Figure 4 above revealed there are simultaneous and non-directional exchanges taking place within schools to develop internal accountability. The various conceptual framework figures provided ways to organize research literature and research themes.

The research literature explained the significance of internal accountability, adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. Internal accountability provides school-level practices that principals and teachers utilize for school improvement. Adaptive leadership provided essential components to examine adaptive and technical challenges. Principals should assess the various adaptive and technical

challenges. Adaptive leadership requires principals to implement actionable practices and monitor collaborative actions to overcome technical and adaptive challenges. The participants who had actionable practices and collaborative actions demonstrated sustainable efforts. For instance, principals with structured professional development opportunities and teacher supports saw teachers and students growing in their mindsets and abilities. Assessment of adaptive leadership and professional capital cultivates levels of growth in capital and action. During the interview process the participants reflected on their use of internal accountability. Many of the participants shared practices examples of collaboration and communication especially about professional developments and meetings. Relational trust is the daily social exchange between principals and teachers that establishes respect, personal regard, competence, and personal integrity. The participants acknowledge the significance of trust; however, there were limited explicit practices concerning relational trust. I had to measure relational trust through the interviews and documents there were limited examples about relational trust in interviews and documents. This study revealed the significance of candid formal and informal conversations to establish internal accountability. Relational trust focused on interactions and praxis between principals and teachers. Professional capital focuses on human abilities, social exchanges, and collaborative decisions. The participants identify opportunities to enhance their school communities through elements of human, social, and decisional capital. Professional capital needs to be assessed by principals and teachers. Principals need to know how to assist their teachers. Teachers need to ask for opportunities to enhance professional capital. Principals and teachers should participate in interactions and develop practices to enhance human, social, and decisional capital.

The application of these components should be intentional and progressive. Principals described characteristics that can lead to the “sweet spot” described in Chapter 3. My research study provided several figures to understand internal accountability. The conceptual frameworks are ways to examine internal accountability. These frameworks support multiple ways to construct internal accountability. Also, these frameworks provide a foundation to understand internal accountability through leadership, trust, and capital. The abstract nature of internal accountability requires multiple conceptual frameworks to demonstrate the adaptable nature of internal accountability to each school.

### **Limitations**

In Chapter 1, there were limitations and delimitations; however, through the course of the research inquiry there were additional limitations. My research study was not approved until May 2018, which is the timeframe of the state approved testing, high school graduation, and the end of the school year. My research participants were secondary and grade level principals. A grade level principal is a principal over an entire grade level only. The grade level principal identified with the secondary principal and had valuable insight that contributed to the research literature. There were limited levels of descriptive details about current implementation strategies. There was limited empirical evidence concerning internal accountability. The document data source did not provide enough details about the incorporation of the documents into daily school practices. Some selected document items did not connect to leadership, trust, and capital. Overall, it was difficult to explore abstract ideas like adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

## **Future Research**

The development of this conceptual framework provided key elements to improve schools, but there needs to be an examination of extensive processes and procedures to further develop internal accountability. This study demonstrated theoretical and practical means, but there needs to be future studies to further address what the roles of the following are: espoused-theory vs. theory in use, adaptive leadership protocols, relational trust expectations, and professional capital attributes. I would keep the same two research questions but use different research samples like an entire administrative team, instructional team, central office team, and collaborative team. This research inquiry did not address things the participants struggled with concerning internal accountability. There should be future research or interview questions to examine struggles. I would like to understand the perspective of these possible samples and their perspectives and practices. Principals provided their perspectives and experiences, so now I can examine teams and how they construct and sustain internal accountability. Future research methods can consist of a case study, ethnography, portraiture, or mixed methods with a survey. In future studies, there should be additional document analysis sessions with focus groups, observations and interviews from teachers, students, and parents. School documents can capture elements of communication and collaboration. Focus groups would provide collective responses of their thoughts and actions about internal accountability. Also, focus groups would provide dialogue among the participants. Observations can identify essential practices and elements of internal accountability through a possible case study or mixed methods. Observations can provide visual experiences about internal accountability. The opportunity to observe PLCs, meetings,

professional development opportunities and other interactions to examine internal accountability. A quantitative study could further explore the correlation between student achievement and internal accountability (adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital) structures.

## **Conclusions**

Generally, this research design provided an opportunity to explore the collective voice of twelve secondary principals to share their perspectives and experiences of internal accountability. This research inquiry was developed to minimize the gap in the literature on internal accountability and encourage further dialogue. This research inquiry is one way to examine internal accountability. This research inquiry connected some theoretical and practical concepts of internal accountability. This research inquiry expressed internal accountability through interviews and documents. There were some things that surprised me concerning the interview process. For instance, I appreciated how candid the research participants were about their perspective and practice. The conclusion of this research inquiry was based on the research participants and the conceptual framework.

According to the research data, internal accountability can stimulate continuous improvement. Internal accountability should be based in trust to lead an adaptive culture and to cultivate professional capital. My desire was to inspire educators to acknowledge their individual roles and aspirations while collaborating with other educators. Ultimately, educators should create intentional actions, foster collaboration, and establish effective communication to have the greatest success with their colleagues, their students, and most importantly, their community.

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## **Appendix A- Recruitment Email for Secondary Principal Interviews (School District)**

You are invited to participate in an educational qualitative research inquiry conducted by Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, a doctoral candidate under the direction of Dr. Jennifer K. Clayton within the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University. Your school district and designee have granted me permission to contact you to participate in this voluntarily research study. Should you choose to participate, know that no one will have access to the raw data except for Dr. Clayton and me. All participants will be assigned pseudonym names to minimize risk.

My study is entitled: More than words: A basic interpretative approach to understanding internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. In this research study internal accountability is an opportunity cultivated by secondary principals to create a continuous improvement environment for secondary principals and classroom teachers to interact concerning administrative and instructional practices within a school building. I feel that your school, along with your knowledge and expertise, could be valuable to future research literature on this topic.

This study will include one 60-90 minute interview with two parts. Part one will be a series of semi-structured questions and part two will be a collaborative document analysis of at least 2-3 participant selected documents utilized to cultivate and sustain internal accountability within your school community. Through this document analysis, you can discuss the degree of internal accountability considered when developing and utilizing the selected documents. Please bring your selected documents to your scheduled semi-structured interview. I would need access and copies of these documents at this interview. The semi-structured interview will be recorded for transcription and accuracy, and the audio tape will be destroyed at the completion of this study. After each interview, there will be an opportunity for participants to check the transcript for accuracy. Please review the informed consent form attached to this email.

I am excited about the opportunity to work with you to enhance our educational profession. If you are interested in participating, contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or XXXXXXXXXXXXX to schedule your one 60-90 semi-structured interview.

Kind regards,

Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

## **Appendix A- Recruitment Email for Secondary Principal Interviews (Snowball Participants)**

You are invited to participate in an educational qualitative research inquiry conducted by Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, a doctoral candidate under the direction of Dr. Jennifer K. Clayton within the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University. Your professional colleague provided your name as a potential participant for this voluntarily research study. Should you choose to participate, know that no one will have access to the raw data other except for Dr. Clayton and me. All participants will be assigned pseudonym names to minimize risk.

My study is entitled: More than words: A basic interpretative approach to understanding internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. In this research study internal accountability is an opportunity cultivated by secondary principals to create a continuous improvement environment for secondary principals and classroom teachers to interact concerning administrative and instructional practices within a school building. I feel that your school, along with your knowledge and expertise, could be valuable to future research literature on this topic.

This study will include one 60-90 minute interview with two parts. Part one will be a series of semi-structured questions and part two will be a collaborative document analysis of at least 2-3 participant selected documents utilized to cultivate and sustain internal accountability within your school community. Through this document analysis, you can discuss the degree of internal accountability considered when developing and utilizing the selected documents. Please bring your selected documents to your scheduled semi-structured interview. I would need access and copies of these documents at this interview. The semi-structured interview will be recorded for transcription and accuracy, and the audio tape will be destroyed at the completion of this study. After each interview, there will be an opportunity for participants to check the transcript for accuracy. Please review the informed consent form attached to this email.

I am excited about the opportunity to work with you to enhance our educational profession. If you are interested in participating, contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or XXXXXXXXXXXXX to schedule your one 60-90 semi-structured interview.

Kind regards,

Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

## **Appendix A- Recruitment Email for Secondary Principal Interviews (Social Media)**

You are invited to participate in an educational qualitative research inquiry conducted by Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, a doctoral candidate under the direction of Dr. Jennifer K. Clayton within the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University. Your social media connection has qualified you as a potential participant for this voluntary research study. Should you choose to participate, no one will have access to the raw data except Dr. Clayton and me. All participants will be assigned pseudonym names to minimize risk.

My study is entitled: More than words: A basic interpretative approach to understanding internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital. In this research study internal accountability is an opportunity cultivated by secondary principals to create a continuous improvement environment for secondary principals and classroom teachers to interact concerning administrative and instructional practices within a school building. I feel that your school, along with your knowledge and expertise, could be valuable to future research literature on this topic.

This study will include one 60-90-minute interview with two parts. Part one will be a series of semi-structured questions and part two will be a collaborative document analysis of at least 2-3 participant selected documents utilized to cultivate and sustain internal accountability within your school community. Through this document analysis, you can discuss the degree of internal accountability considered when developing and utilizing the selected documents. Please bring your selected documents to your scheduled semi-structured interview. I would need access and copies of these documents at this interview. The semi-structured interview will be recorded for transcription and accuracy, and the audio tape will be destroyed at the completion of this study. After each interview, there will be an opportunity for participants to check the transcript for accuracy. Please review the informed consent form attached to this email.

I am excited about the opportunity to work with you to enhance our educational profession. If you are interested in participating, contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or XXXXXXXXXXXXX to schedule your one 60-90 semi-structured interview.

Kind regards,

Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

## Appendix B- Informed Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form

Title of research study: More than words: A basic interpretative approach to understanding internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jennifer K. Clayton at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study? As a secondary principal, you can provide valuable knowledge and expertise on internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital.

What should I know about a research study?

- You will receive an overview of the research inquiry
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to participate and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- Your employment will not be affected whether or not you chose to participate in this study
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or believe the research has harmed you, talk to: the Principal Investigator (PI), Jennifer K. Clayton, at XXX-XXX-XXXX or via email XXXXXXXXXXXXX or Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, at XXX-XXX-XXXX or via email XXXXXXXXXXXXX

The research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at 202-994-2715 or via email [ohrirb@gwu.edu](mailto:ohrirb@gwu.edu) if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.

Why is this research being done?

This research is being conducted to understand current secondary principals' interpretations and perceptions of internal accountability. Principals should foster a continuous improvement environment for secondary principals and classroom teachers to interact concerning administrative and instructional practices within a school building. Through this environment principals and teachers can actively diagnose, implement and reflect on personal and collective practices and abilities, formal and informal social exchanges, and collaborative decision-making through daily experiences.

How long will I be in the study?

No more than 3 hours during Spring 2018 to Summer 2018 depending on your schedule.

What happens if I agree to be in this research?

- one 60-90 minute interview will take place
- this one interview will be audio-recorded
- the audio-recording will be used to create transcripts of the interview
- audio-recorded will be deleted after the data collection and analysis process and all other
- documents will be deleted after five years
- research participants will interact with Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law, doctoral candidate
- research will be conducted in a location where the participants feel comfortable to
- communicate their experiences and perspectives

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

---

Printed Name of Subject

---

Signature of Subject/Date

---

Signature of person obtaining consent/Date

### **Appendix C- Confirmation Email Before Semi-Structured Interview**

I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me this week concerning fostering internal accountability within your educational setting for my dissertation research.

Please do not forget to bring your 2-3 participant selected documents to our interview.

Thank you in advance and I look forward to our interview.

Kind regards,

Sebrina A. Lindsay-Law

Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

**Appendix D- Semi-Structured Interview Protocol including Questions  
(Developing, Supporting, Reflecting)**

**May I have your verbal consent to participate in this interview?**

**Please complete the demographic information in this Google link.**

**Do I have your permission to record this interview and take notes?**

**Do you have any questions before we get started?**

**Part A**

**Hello. My name is Sebrina Lindsay-Law. Thank you for having me here today. This interview involves two parts. The first part is a set of questions, but rest assured there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to get your personal and professional experiences concerning internal accountability. Essentially, I want to understand how principals can foster a continuous improvement environment for secondary principals and classroom teachers to interact concerning administrative and instructional practices within a school building. The second part we will spend some time talking about a few documents that you use in engaging this work. There is no right or wrong response.**

**Developing**

1. Describe your educational background/philosophy? What do you believe is necessary for our educational institution to be effective?
2. What has contributed to your leadership approach and/or growth as a leader?
3. What was a memorable time you have concerning coaching? Can you describe this experience for me?
4. What does “accountability” mean to you?
5. What does “accountability” look like in your school community?
6. How do outside policies contribute to your daily practices?
7. What are some possible effects of accountability?

**Supporting**

5. Walk me through how you create an atmosphere of respect among all stakeholders in your building?
6. What leadership practices or approaches do you use to develop other professionals within your school?
7. What informs your approach to leadership?
8. What strategies do you use to make decisions for your school?
9. How does your school approach instructional challenges?
10. How does your school approach behavioral challenges?

## **Part B**

### **Reflecting**

**Thank you for gathering the documents which might show how you guide and lead internal accountability within your school building for this school year.**

**The nature of this section is different, as I want to dialogue with you regarding the ways you support internal accountability in your building.**

11. As you prepared for this interview, what documents did you select for this interview?
12. Can you tell me about the circumstances surrounding the development of these documents?
  - Look at the circumstances and rationales, how did these documents enhance accountability?
13. Will you use this interview experience to enhance your school growth? If so, how?

**Thank you for both your time and perspective. I was wondering if there are other secondary principals you would recommend for this research study? If so, could you please share their names and contact information with me today? This concludes our semi-structured interview. Have a wonderful day.**

## **Appendix E- Participant Thank you (Semi-Structured Interview)**

I appreciate your time and consideration during this process to examine the possible cultivation of internal accountability. My desire is for this research to enlighten the educational profession as it relates to instructional practice and continuous growth within the educational institution.

I have attached your transcript from your interview to this email. Would you please review your transcript? Please feel free to make any changes utilizing the comment or tracking tool in Microsoft Word or just an email with your updates. There is no need to edit for grammatical or spelling errors.

Once you review the transcript and have had an opportunity to make additional comments, corrections, or additions, please return the edited transcript to this email address. If I do not receive any edits within seven days, I will assume you do have any additional edits.

Best wishes always,  
Sebrina Lindsay-Law  
Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

## Appendix F- Interviewer Reflection

In a reflective environment, I will indicate my reactions and observations concerning the interview process.

Participant Name/Number:	
Date of Interview:	
Describe the participant's attitude and body language towards the interview process.	
Describe any interesting circumstances and/or events that need to be considered. (i.e. time of day, interruptions, language concerns, and other components, etc.)	
Describe my perspective of the overall interview process today. (i.e. comfortable nature, probing usage, and other engaging characteristics)	

**Additional Notes:**

## **Appendix G- Research Design Adapted by Maxwell, 2005**

More than Words: A Basic Interpretative Approach to Understanding Internal Accountability through Adaptive Leadership, Relational Trust, and Professional Capital

### **Research Goals:**

- Explore the use of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within multiple school buildings within several school districts;
- Understand the active use of internal accountability by secondary principals to facilitate school capacity and continuous school improvement;
- Understand the current perceptions, perspectives, and practices of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital;
- Communicate possible shared or individual experiences and perceptions from secondary principals.

### **Research Question:**

How do secondary principals, if at all, interpret (explore thoughts and interpretations) internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital, within their school communities?

How do secondary principals, if at all, utilize (explore actions and practices) internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities?

### **Sub Research Questions:**

- What does adaptive leadership mean to secondary principals?
- What does relational trust mean to secondary principals?
- What does professional capital mean to secondary principals?

How can adaptive leadership enhance school communities?

How can relational trust enhance school capacity?

How can professional capital enhance school communities?

### **Research Methods:**

- Purposive Sampling- Access and Convenience
- Snowball Sampling
- Semi-Structured; Open-ended interviews (in-depth) with each participant
- Coding Process (Open, Axial, Process)
- Document Analysis
- Epistemology: Social Constructivism

### **Research Validity:**

- Triangulation (sources/perspectives)
- Member-checking (interviewee check the transcripts for accuracy)
- Peer Debriefing (at least one reader in the field of education)

- Peer Review (improve research proposal trustworthiness through discussing one's interpretations and conclusions with one's peers or colleagues)
- Low Inference Descriptors (phrased very similarly to the participants' accounts and the researcher's field notes)
- Audit Trail/Reflectivity (self-reflection by the researcher on his or her biases, procedures, and predispositions)

**Adaptive Leadership:**

Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009 (diagnosis, action, and reflection)

- Adaptive leadership is an interactive and iterative process guided by secondary principals to inspire and influence other leaders and teachers to achieve shared goals
- Courageous conversations about organizational learning and practice

**Relational Trust:**

Bryk & Schneider, 2002 (respect, personal regard, competence, and integrity)

- social exchange between secondary principals and classroom teachers
- understand roles and responsibilities between secondary principals and classroom teachers
- personal and collective accountability along with common expectations

**Professional Capital:**

Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012 (human, social, and decisional)

- Human capital (principal action is to acknowledge): investment to develop and enhance intrapersonal (internal praxis) skills within administrators, teachers, and students to build capacity and continuous improvement effort
- Social capital (principal action is to foster): interpersonal skills between principals and teachers collaborative culture based on active engagement and shared purpose
- Decisional capital (principal action is to comprehend and utilize): leaders are responsible for developing and implementing a systematic decision-making framework

## Appendix H- Data Planning Matrix

Research Questions or Goals	Explanations	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Possible Contact Information	Timeline
<i>What do I need to know?</i>	<i>Why do I need to know this?</i>	<i>Where will I find this data?</i>	<i>What kind of data will answer these questions or goals?</i>	<i>Whom do I contact for access?</i>	<i>Completion times</i>
<p><b>How do secondary principals, if at all, interpret (thought) internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities?</b></p> <p><b>How do secondary principals, if at all, utilize (action) internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities?</b></p>	<p>To understand how current principals, explain and understand internal accountability. This interpretation will guide current and future secondary principal’s instructional practice within their educational settings.</p>	<p>Principals-Interviews, Documents, Artifacts, and Research Memos</p>	<p>Semi-Structured Interviews Documents (Analysis)</p>	<p>Secondary principals</p>	<p>Spring 2018 to Fall 2018</p>
<p><b>What does adaptive leadership mean to secondary principals?</b></p> <p><b>What does professional capital mean to secondary principals?</b></p> <p><b>What does relational trust mean to secondary principals?</b></p>	<p>To explore current principal’s perceptions and interpretations concerning adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school settings.</p>	<p>Principals-Interviews, Documents, Artifacts, and Research Memos</p>	<p>Semi-Structured Interviews Documents (Analysis)</p>	<p>Secondary principals</p>	<p>Spring 2018 to Fall 2018</p>
<p><b>How can adaptive leadership enhance school communities?</b></p> <p><b>How can professional capital enhance school communities?</b></p> <p><b>How can relational trust enhance school capacity?</b></p>	<p>To examine current principal’s construction of internal accountability through their leadership style (adaptive), and relational trust, and professional capital within their school settings.</p> <p>To discover current principals’ practices and processes utilization of internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital to increase teacher effectiveness.</p>	<p>Principals-Interviews, Documents, Artifacts, and Memos</p>	<p>Semi-Structured Interviews Documents (Analysis)</p>	<p>Secondary principals</p>	<p>Spring 2018 to Fall 2018</p>

## **Appendix I- Consulted Databases, Search Terms, and Educational Theorists Databases**

Gelman Library System  
Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)  
ProQuest Research Library Plus  
Google Scholar  
Dissertations and Theses Online  
Teacher Reference Center

Educational Source  
JSTOR  
Academic Search  
Google  
Amazon  
Project Muse

### **Search Terms**

Qualitative research  
Instructional leaders  
Continuous improvement  
Instructional leadership  
Instructional feedback  
Instructional coaching  
Teacher evaluation  
Summative evaluation  
Theory and practice  
Theory in use  
Formative assessment  
Sensemaking theory  
Professional learning communities  
Leader-member exchange theory  
Instructional supervision  
Distributed leadership  
School change  
Data-driven leadership  
Learning walks  
Trust  
Social trust  
Human capital  
Professional capital

Reflective practice  
School improvement  
System reform  
Learning organization  
Instructional systems  
Principal evaluation  
Formative evaluation  
Social learning theory  
Espoused theory  
Knowing and doing gap  
Summative assessment  
Learning communities  
Situated learning theory  
Communities of Practices  
Principal  
Leadership  
Change agent  
Walkthroughs  
Observations  
Relational trust  
Social capital  
Decisional capital  
Adaptive leadership

### **Educational and research theorist consulted:**

Carl Glickman  
Linda Darling-Hammond  
Daniel Duke  
Robert Marzano  
Michael Fullan  
Blasé and Blasé  
Robert Frey

James Stronge  
Kim Marshall  
Pamela Tucker  
Charlotte Danielson  
Douglas Reeves  
Peter Burke  
Peter Senge

Peter Drucker  
Donald Schon  
Sharon Merriam  
Megan Tschannen-Moran  
Johnny Saldaña  
Barbara Schneider

Chris Argyris  
James Spillane  
Linda Lambert  
John Creswell  
Richard Elmore  
Anthony Bryk

**Appendix J- Data Coverage Matrix (to ensure all interview questions align with research and sub questions)**

**Research Question:**

How do secondary principals, if at all, interpret (explore thoughts and interpretations) internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities?

**Sub Research Question(s):**

What does adaptive leadership mean to secondary principals?

**Interview Question(s):**

1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12

**Sub Research Question(s):**

What does relational trust mean to secondary principals?

**Interview Question(s):**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12

**Sub Research Question(s):**

What does professional capital mean to secondary principals?

**Interview Question(s):**

1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

How do secondary principals, if at all, utilize (explore actions and practices) internal accountability through adaptive leadership, relational trust, and professional capital within their school communities?

**Sub Research Question(s):**

How can adaptive leadership enhance school communities?

**Interview Question(s):**

1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12

**Sub Research Question(s):**

How can relational trust enhance school communities?

**Interview Question(s):**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12

**Sub Research Question(s):**

How can professional capital enhance school capacity?

**Interview Question(s):**

1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

### Appendix K- Data Collection and Analysis Checklist

Check Completed	Date Completed	Task to Complete
		-send out recruitment emails to potential participants
		-review dissertation proposal to assist with the cohesive creation of data collection and analysis documents and matrices
		- create an audit trail to address major decisions in the research design
		-utilize the consent form and protocol to guide the semi-structured interviews
		-discuss at least 2-3 selected documents depending on the desire of the principal to share more documents but hopefully not less than two documents
		-complete interview reflection
		- write memo (as needed)
		- transcribe interviews as conducted
		- construct matrices once transcripts are completed
		- compare transcripts to other transcripts
		-identify codes (open, axial, and process) for individual and collective participants
		-evaluate connections to research design
		-develop a comprehensive list of codes
		-examine the artifacts used in the semi-structured interview
		-decontextualize and recontextualize codes and patterns
		- identify themes and revise categories
		- create diagrams to illustrate findings
		- identify major themes and recommendations