Spring 2021

The Relationship Between Enabling District Structure And Principal Self-Efficacy in South Carolina

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENABLING DISTRICT STRUCTURE AND PRINCIPAL SELF-EFFICACY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

Educational Administration

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2021

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Judy and our children Elizabeth, Caroline, and Lauren whose love, sacrifice, patience, support and inspiration made the attainment of this goal possible.

I also dedicate this work to my father who instilled in me a passion for school leadership and provided me a living example of humility, work ethic, and a servant heart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At this point in my academic journey, it is appropriate that I acknowledge the people who have been instrumental in making my professional growth possible. The completion of this process would have been impossible without their efforts.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Peter Moyi for his advice, expertise, patience, and willingness to challenge me to continuously engage the process. I also am indebted to Dr. Ed Cox, Dr. Spencer Platt, and Dr. Steven Liu for their time, guidance, and encouragement as members of my committee.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Robert Maddox and Dr. Linda Lavender for their example of educational leadership, guidance, and encouragement. I also must acknowledge the support of my fellow principals and district colleagues who were a constant encouragement, participated in pilot studies, and provided requested feedback and advice. A special thanks to Ms. Hayley Colvard, Mr. Greg Feeback, Ms. Leslie Hightower, Dr. Hannah Hoilett-Frierson, Mr. Shaun Jacques, Mr. Jay Lindler, Dr. Marcia Seawright, Ms. Katelyn Singleton, Dr. Mary Thomas, and Mr. Dave Toole for sacrificing time to critique my work and providing valuable feedback.

My deepest appreciation and thanks go to my parents for their encouragement and support throughout my academic career. Thank you for your sacrifice and commitment to teaching me to pursue knowledge to serve others. Most importantly, thank you for teaching me to seek God's wisdom and knowledge above all else.

ABSTRACT

The role of the school principal is ever expanding in both scope and complexity. School districts must consider how to recruit, develop and retain principals to lead their schools. Principal self-efficacy (PSE) is primal to the leader's overall positive effect on teaching and learning, yet the antecedents of PSE are not fully defined. This quantitative study used social cognitive theory to investigate the potential influence of enabling district structure (EDS) on the development of PSE within South Carolina public-school principals. Due to increased focus on consolidation of the state's schools, the study also explored the potential relationship between EDS and district size. This study found a moderate, statistically significant relationship between the degree to which a district is enabling (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE). A small, negative, statistically significant correlation was found between district size and EDS. Results support limited prior research suggesting EDS may be an influential antecedent of PSE and that EDS may be inversely impacted by district size. These findings support the need for increased study of the role both principal self-efficacy and enabling district structure play in the performance of the 21st Century school principal.

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INTRODUCTION

The Principal's Role

The 21st Century principal's role is complex and multifaceted (Lovely, 2004; DiPaolo & Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). Principals must establish and maintain the school's vision, attract and retain quality employees, engage all stakeholders in the process of continual development, and create a culture of collaboration and innovation (Leithwood et al. 2004). Resource management, community outreach, and ensuring an orderly and safe environment are also the principal's responsibility (Marzano et al. 2005). Effective principals analyze performance data, monitor instructional practices, recognize and reward teachers and students for goal-based achievements, and maintain active participation in creating and implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessments (Marzano et al. 2005; Shatzer et al. 2014).

Impact on student achievement. The critical importance of principal leadership on school improvement is clearly defined in the literature (Leithwood et al. 2004; Marzano et al. 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Louis et al. 2010; Branch et al. 2013; Fullan, 2014). Among school level factors, the principal's impact on student learning is second only to the effect of the teacher (Leithwood et al. 2004). Research indicates that principal leadership can positively increase a typical student's performance by up to seven months within a single year (Branch et al. 2013). Schools may have some

ineffective teachers and still collectively succeed, yet an effective principal is a crucial ingredient within any school's journey to transformation and sustained improvement.

Effective principal practice. The indirect impact of principal leadership on student learning is primarily achieved through strategic utilization of basic leadership practices including developing a compelling vision, developing personnel, designing effective structures, and managing effective teaching and learning (Leithwood et al, 2004). Leithwood & Jantzi (2008) assert that it is the principal's ability to understand the community's uniqueness and respond flexibly to the professional and personal needs and attitudes of one's faculty and staff that distinguish the most effective principals from their counterparts. Such situational leadership establishes and nurtures genuine trust between the principal and the faculty, promoting transparency, vulnerability and coherence within the school structure (Fullan, 2014, Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Effective principals can "press for progress within supportive and focused cultures" (Fullan, 2014, pg. 2).

A principal's effect on student achievement can only be maximized through one's influence and support of school faculty and staff (Fullan, 2014). Principals who desire to engage and sustain transformation of both practice and results within their schools must cultivate teacher leadership throughout the organization, ensure a collaborative vision of high expectations for achievement for all stakeholders, and challenge teachers to engage research-based innovative practices within an interdependent culture that monitors both implementation and results (DuFour 1999; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Effective school principals must "orchestrate rather than dictate" when engaging the professionals' collective power within their buildings (DuFour, 1999, pg. 17).

This reality removes the 21st Century principal from the role of transactional leader or principal teacher focused on the fundamentals of traditional school leadership such as establishing a clear mission, ensuring a safe and orderly environment, promoting positive home-school relations, and protecting instructional time that characterized the principal of the previous century (Leithwood, 1992; DuFour, 1999; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Lashway, 2000; Lezotte, 2012; Mendels, 2012). Today's principal must engage all these roles while primarily being "leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instruction" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, pg. 6). Such leadership responsibilities require today's principals to possess, nurture, and sustain the very skills that they seek to teach the students within their schools. Namely, an effective principal must have a healthy self-efficacy for the myriad of responsibilities, skills, and practices that the principal must employ daily.

Statement of the Problem

District culture and leadership practices have been found to have a significant impact on principal efficacy, yet a clear understanding of specific antecedents has not been clearly established. "Future research would do well to inquire more deeply into the leadership behaviors of district administrators that nurture a sense of efficacy and confidence on the part of school leaders" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 521). Understanding the potential impact of district structures on principal self-efficacy may help district leadership place primary focus on policies, initiatives, and practices that nurture and develop principal self-efficacy across the multitude of specific leadership tasks and responsibilities principals face. "One of the most powerful ways in which districts influence teaching and learning is through the contribution they make to feelings of professional efficacy on the part of school principals" (Louis et al. 2010, pg. 127).

A principal's self-efficacy (PSE) has been positively related to a principal's willingness to engage challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, and "second-order" change practices within his or her school (Bandura, 1997, McCormick, 2001, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Although many studies have investigated the impact of principal self-efficacy (PSE), few have sought to identify PSE antecedents that can be influenced by the educational community (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis et al. 2010). An enabling district structure (EDS) facilitates empowered school leaders who demonstrate ownership of results and a willingness to collaborate, innovate, and create unique solutions to complex issues (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

"Trust, truthfulness, and limited role conflict are hallmarks of enabling organizations; indeed, they are central to enabling schools regardless of size, SES, and urbanicity" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 314). Within the current atmosphere of high-stakes accountability in public education, an urgency exists to transform educational practices and attain positive results across South Carolina's schools. The assignment of accountability grades for individual schools, state and federal requirements for low-performing schools to engage specific programmatic interventions, and a defined teacher and administrator shortage within South Carolina's public-schools exacerbates the challenge school leaders currently face (State of South Carolina, 2017; Morgan, 2018; Self, 2018). As this urgency for immediate results is prone to stifle autonomy and ingenuity while perpetuating mechanical and fragmented initiatives; this is an appropriate time to explore the potential effects of enabling district structure on a principal's sense of self-efficacy (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Wallace Foundation, 2013; Fullan, 2015).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential relationship between enabling district structure (EDS) and the principal self-efficacy (PSE) of South Carolina's public-school principals. Landy (2013) conducted research that "established EDS as an influential construct" and found a "significant relationship" between EDS and PSE in a sample of 397 New York principals (p. 98). Landy (2013) recommends repetition of the study with additional, varied principal samples to help "validate the findings" and "enhance the generalizability of claims made about EDS" (p. 98).

In addition to the primary purpose, this study seeks to explore further how the district size, defined by the number of schools in the district, may affect district structure and the relationship between EDS and PSE (Landy, 2013, p. 99). Landy's study of New York's public-schools found that the number of schools in a district affected the degree of the relationship between EDS and PSE (Landy, 2013). District size also had a significant negative correlation to EDS in general. Districts with larger numbers of schools were perceived as having more hindering structures by the district's principals (Landy, 2013).

Although Landy's findings regarding the relationship between district size and EDS require larger samples to be generalizable, the finding does reflect the result of similar research focused on correlations between district size and principal self-efficacy. In a six-year mixed-method study of 43 districts across nine states, Louis et al. (2010) found that "district size is a significant moderator of district effects on school-leader efficacy; the larger districts, the less the influence" (p. 127). Considering a decades' long, on-going consideration by the South Carolina legislature to consolidate smaller school districts, investigating the relationship between school district size and EDS and the

influence of district size on the relationship between EDS and PSE proved a beneficial secondary inquiry (Linder-Altman, 2015; Lloyd, 2016; South Carolina Policy Council, 2018; Schechter, 2019).

Research Questions

Two questions framed and guided this research:

1. What is the relationship between enabling district structure (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE) in South Carolina?
    a. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding managerial leadership responsibilities?
    b. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding instructional leadership responsibilities?
    c. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding moral leadership responsibilities?
2. What is the relationship between school district size and enabling district structure (EDS) in South Carolina?
    a. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding district size?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were constructed based on the two research questions of the study.

1. H_0: EDS does not affect principal self-efficacy.

   H_1: EDS affects principal self-efficacy.
2. H_0: District size does not affect EDS.

   H_1: District size affects EDS.

The purpose of this study is to further the initial inquiry of Landy (2013) into the influence of enabling district structure on principals' self-efficacy and to further understand the potential relationship between EDS and district size. As the construct of EDS and its relationship with PSE and district size are still being defined through this study, the alternative hypothesis is nondirectional to permit the data to lead in either direction if the null hypothesis is rejected (Huck, 2012).

Background

School accountability in South Carolina. The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee's *2020 Vision* established in 2010 stated, "By 2020 all students will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society and contribute positively as members of families and communities" (SC EOC, 2014). Reflecting the national mandate for high-stakes accountability with public education as initiated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), *The 2020 Vision* set rigorous goals for eliminating achievement gaps across all demographics within South Carolina. Goals included a 95% passage rate on state standardized tests and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) along with 88% of South Carolina students graduating within 4 years of entering high school and 95% of adolescents earning a diploma or its equivalent by the age of 21 (SC EOC, 2014). *The 2020 Vision* further extended the responsibility of K-12 public education into postsecondary education and career readiness by setting a target for 85% of South Carolina high school graduates to enroll in college or be employed by 2020 (SC EOC, 2014).

A decade of stagnation. Despite the presence of high-stakes accountability structures, South Carolina's progress towards the EOC's 2020 Vision has been stagnant.

Only 67.4% of 2012 high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary than baseline data of 67.1% in 2008 (SC EOC, 2014). While the number of individual schools rated "at-risk" dropped from 83 to 47 over five years, the EOC found that "41 percent of SC students attending two-year colleges need remediation in English and mathematics" (SC EOC, 2014). Longitudinal results of student performance find a continuing lack of progress. South Carolina fourth grade students scoring proficient in mathematics regressed from 36% in 2007 to 32% in 2017 while the state's eighth graders similarly saw a drop from 32% proficient in 2007 to 26% in 2017 (SC EOC, 2019). Initial results of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in 2017 highlighted the issue of early childhood education in South Carolina as 36% of the state's 54,927 kindergarten students demonstrated "overall readiness" on the measured domains of language & literacy (34%), mathematics (31%), physical well-being & motor development (48%), and social foundations (45%) (SC EOC, 2019).

South Carolina's revised goals. South Carolina's Department of Education (SCDE) established a new school improvement framework in 2017 in response to the federal government's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) in the form of the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA). The SCDE submitted a consolidated state plan to the federal government as required by ESSA that identified two "transformational goals" for student performance. First, "By 2035, 90 percent of students will graduate 'college, career, and citizenship ready' as outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*" (State of South Carolina, 2017, pg. 11). Second, "Beginning with the 2020 graduating class, the state, each district, and each high school should increase by five percent annually the percentage of students who graduate ready to

enter postsecondary education to pursue a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation in mathematics or English. (State of South Carolina, 2017, pg. 11).

Comprehensive benchmarks were established to assess a student's progress towards these goals throughout their K-12 educational journey and hold schools accountable for each child's success. These benchmarks include the percentage of students entering kindergarten demonstrating readiness to learn, the percentage of 3rd, 5th, and 8th graders meeting or exceeding targets on state standardized tests in the subjects of language arts and mathematics, the percentage of high school students graduating within four years, and the percentage of high school graduates "earning a living wage" five years after graduating high school (State of South Carolina, 2017).

South Carolina's transformational strategies. These self-proclaimed "ambitious" goals and corresponding comprehensive, longitudinal progress measures require South Carolina's public-schools to engage in transformational instructional practices that meet every student's needs (State of South Carolina, 2017). Within their ESSA plan, the SCDE identified three foundational strategic initiatives to engage schools over the next 17 years – or the equivalent time for a generation of 2018 newborns to complete their K-12 journey. First, schools are expected to engage personalized and competency-based learning models that are inclusive in both reach to every student and require equitable demonstration of mastery. The SCDE defined a target of every school district developing one school that demonstrates a mature system of personalized, competency-based learning to include established academic and skill-based competencies, personalized learner profiles, differentiated curriculum pathways, and

flexible learning environments that promote authentic student agency (State of South Carolina, 2017).

Second, schools must create "expanded learning" opportunities that provide learning material outside of the traditional brick and mortar school. Opportunities for all students regardless of socio-economic status or location within the state should be provided access to career and technical education, virtual schooling, advanced coursework, opportunities in languages and the arts, and the availability to enroll in dual credit courses that provide a stepping stone into college (State of South Carolina, 2017, p. 2). These expanded learning opportunities require schools to engage early-childhood programs and enhanced computer software within a student-centered classroom environment. The SCDE identifies expanded vision of school leaders and the provision of both instructional and technical professional development as vital to this initiative.

Targeted support is vital to the third strategic focus identified as "school improvement" which focused on providing tiered support for schools identified as "high-need" based on their status as being found in the bottom 5% and 10% of state schools when assessed with a comprehensive school report card system. Schools within the bottom 5% are provided "transformation coaches" and targeted funding to engage in evidence-based school improvement strategies with the SCDE's oversight. Additional schools in the bottom 10% are provided additional funding, collective professional development opportunities, and required to submit school improvement plans focused on the SCDE's compilation of identified school-improvement strategies.

Transformational principals. These realities have placed renewed emphasis on the role of the principal in the process of initiating, developing, and sustaining

transformational instructional practices within South Carolina's schools (SC Expanded Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance, 2017). South Carolina's Council on Competitiveness in partnership with the state's Education Oversight Committee created an educational initiative called TransformSC in 2013 to facilitate innovative educational practices in South Carolina schools that would promote growth towards the goals summarized in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* (www.sccompetes.org/transformsc). Members of the TransformSC network of schools must commit to "a process of intensive learning system redesign" that will radically transform their school's practice and product (www.sccompetes.org/transformsc).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) in their meta-analysis of principal leadership found that transformational practices as prescribed by TransformSC and identified within the SCDE's 2017 Consolidated Improvement Plan are positively correlated to four unique "second-order" leadership responsibilities. "Second-order" change, fundamental departure from the status quo that initiates and sustains transformational practices, require principals to: 1) promote strong belief among the faculty in the potential of the initiative; 2) nurture sustained intellectual discussion based on research; 3) encourage risk taking and failure; 4) maintain flexibility in relationships, expectations, and accountability as the initiative develops (Marzano et al, 2005, p. 70-72). A principal accepting such a change agent role must possess high self-efficacy, or belief in his or her own abilities to successfully perform specific leadership practices (Bandura, 1997; Fullan, 2014).

Principal Self-Efficacy

A leader's self-efficacy, or confidence in one's ability to accomplish a specific task and subsequent willingness to engage in such non-prescriptive, response-oriented actions, is primal to the principal's overall positive effect on teaching and learning. McCormick (2001) summarizes this reality in asserting, "Every major review of the leadership literature lists self-confidence as an essential characteristic for effective leadership" (p. 23). Principals with high levels of self-efficacy are more willing and able to engage challenges, set high goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and promote transformational practices within their school (Bandura, 1997, McCormick, 2001, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The positive effects of principal efficacy have been found to be substantially higher in schools that present greater challenges and have exhibited a history of poor performance (Leithwood et al. 2004). Thus, the development of school principal efficacy is paramount to helping today's principals transform schools.

Measurement of principal efficacy. Multiple tools have been constructed to capture and measure the self-efficacy of school principals (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Smith, et. al. 2006; Louis et al. 2010). The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) is employed for this study due to its validity and reliability having been utilized extensively in research over the past fifteen years. Furthermore, in addition to an overall measure of self-efficacy, the PSES provides efficacy measurements in the subcategories of management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. These subcategories allow for further probing of the multi-faceted responsibilities and skills that are necessary for successful school principals to engage confidently.

The District's Role

As the role of the 21st Century school principal evolves, the importance of the school district's role in supporting and enabling school leadership to engage in the dynamic process of school reform has received renewed attention (Leithwood et al. 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis et al. 2010; Gates et al. 2019). Principals need training and resources that allow for the distribution of leadership across multiple stakeholders to facilitate and maximize the principal's focus on instructional leadership (Louis et al. 2010; Gates et al. 2019). Accountability structures and professional development for school principals should be designed to address each school's differentiated needs and realities along with the experience and strengths of the individual principal (Louis et al. 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2013; Gates et al. 2019).

Effective district practices. District leadership that comprehensively focuses components of the district office bureaucracy on curriculum and instruction while also establishing constructive relationships with school principals empowers the 21st Century school leader to develop a transformative culture that promotes student learning (Honig & Hatch, 2014). Principals who view their work as a purposeful contribution to a professional learning community including district leadership, colleagues, and instructional staff have communicated increased confidence in their ability to engage the challenges of school leadership (Louis et al. 2010). Establishment of clear learning goals by district leadership that balance accountability with differentiated supports to include modeling, mentorship, and continual feedback have been found to increase both principal confidence and willingness to engage in transformative practices (Louis et al. 2010; Honig & Hatch, 2014). When a district's structure and corresponding practices both

communicate collective responsibility and engage all stakeholders in a culture of partnership focused on systemic priorities, school principals have the autonomy, support, and corresponding resources to implement necessary innovation (Ikemoto et al. 2014).

Organizational structures. Such identified best practices within school district leadership align with Adler's (1996) theoretical construct of organizational bureaucracy defining a continuum of practice between coercive leadership and enabling leadership. Coercive structures engage a culture of compliance which rely on rigid expectations, procedures and protocols to replicate desired actions and products from all employees across the system (Adler & Borys, 1996). Conversely, enabling organizations foster commitment through variable degrees of systemization within a decentralized environment that empowers employees to actively engage in creative problem solving and innovative practices within a systemic framework (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Enabling district structure. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) engaged Adler's theory to explore the impact of bureaucratic structures within schools through their enabling school structure (ESS) model that combined the independent elements of formalization and centralization along Adler's continuum. Formalization is defined as "the degree to which the organization has written rules, regulations, procedures, and policies" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 297). An organization that engages a high degree of formalization emphasizes employee compliance with rules instead of employee commitment to principles (Hoy, 2003). Enabling formalization emphasizes principle-centered, evidence-based guidelines that promote professional judgment, site-based autonomy, and creative problem solving (Hoy, 2003).

Centralization is defined as "the degree to which employees participate in decision making" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 299). An organization that has a highly centralized bureaucracy has only a few decision-makers at the top of the hierarchy who must be engaged in all situations (Hoy, 2003). Enabling centralization emphasizes collective problem solving and decision making that communicate leadership's value and trust in employees across the hierarchy (Hoy, 2003).

Measuring district structure. Utilizing a 12-item scale (ESS Form), Hoy and Sweetland (2001) investigated the construct of school structure and found that a school's bureaucracy could be quantified on a continuum ranging between "enabling" and "hindering". An enabling school structure results in high levels of trust between administration and teachers, a willingness to embrace innovative practices, flexible approaches to problem solving, and a strong collaborative and empowered professional community (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Hoy, 2003). Conversely, a hindering school structure focuses on autocratic control and compliance following "the underlying assumption…that teacher behavior must be closely supervised and tightly regulated" (Hoy, 2003, p. 91).

With Bandura's (1989) triadic reciprocal causation model as a foundation, this study sought to build upon Hoy and Sweetland's (2001) concept of enabling school structure (ESS) to examine the potential impact of enabling district structure (EDS) as an environmental antecedent to principal self-efficacy (PSE). For this research the conceptual framework of enabling school structure was transferred to the district bureaucracy. In the same way that school administration and policies directly impact the school structure, the school superintendent and bureaucratic framework contribute to the

district structure. Landy (2013) initially adapted Hoy & Sweetland's ESS Form (2001) to evaluate school district structure and its relationship to principal self-efficacy through a quantitative, correlational study of New York public-school principals. This research sought to extend and potentially validate the work of Landy (2013) by investigating the potential impact of the construct of enabling district structure on South Carolina principals' self-efficacy.

Potential Significance

This quantitative research seeks to provide further clarification and validity to the research seeking to determine the relationship between district structure and principal self-efficacy. Antecedents of principal self-efficacy are an understudied construct and important to identifying and understanding factors that can impact a key to the principal's ability and willingness to engage in sustained transformational leadership within schools (Louis et al. 2010). School district leaders within South Carolina could utilize the results of this study to consider the role of enabling district structure on the efficacy, and, subsequent effectiveness, of school administrators. The study does not attempt to determine how such a potential relationship between EDS and PSE would occur, but does seek to determine if there is a significant relationship between the two and to what extent EDS contributes to the variance of PSE within a sample of South Carolina's principals.

The secondary foci on the relationship between district size on enabling district structure and the impact that school district size may have on the relationship between EDS and PSE may contribute to the on-going discussion within South Carolina regarding the potential positive and negative effects of district consolidation. In 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education released a school district efficiency study that found the state could save between $35 million and $90 million by having school districts

modernize facilities and infrastructure while also consolidating or collaborating on essential services such as finance, human resources, transportation, and administration (Alvarez & Marsal, 2017). South Carolina's legislature approved a proviso in the 2018-19 state budget that gave the South Carolina Department of Education and the State Superintendent of Education authority to require the consolidation of services within thirteen rural school districts serving less than 1,500 students (South Carolina Policy Council, 2018).

In 2019, three school districts in Orangeburg County concluded a much publicized and contentious consolidation into one county-wide school district (Schechter, 2019). The South Carolina Department of Education provided rural districts with small, stagnant populations the opportunity to apply for funding to assist district consolidation across a three-year period concluding in 2022. In August 2019, eight small districts each submitted applications requesting over $200 million of financial assistance to partner with each other and consolidate into four districts (Adcox, 2019).

As the focus on consolidation continues to sharpen in South Carolina, state educational leaders and district leaders could utilize the results to consider the potential impact of district size on the degree to which a district has an enabling structure. The investigation of relationships between EDS and demographic factors including principal educational levels, principal experience in education and within their current district, school grade bands, and school socio-economic status may contribute to deeper understanding of the construct of enabling district structure.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory. Social cognitive theory as presented by Albert Bandura is the foundation for this study. Social cognitive theory asserts humans can determine their actions and, thus, intentionally seek to influence the outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Such intentional actions, classified as "human agency", are shaped by the individual's interaction with other individuals, societal structures, and norms that permeate our interdependent human experience (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is the most influential engine of human agency within the social cognitive construct (Bandura 1977).

Triadic reciprocal causation model. Bandura (1977, 1989, 2012) proposed that human agency occurs within a triadic reciprocal causation model composed of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors that interdependently shape human actions. Figure 1.1 illustrates Bandura's model. Environmental factors are the influence of society on the individual's emotions, opportunities, and knowledge acquisition. Personal factors include biological and personality traits, expectations, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and goals. Behavioral factors consist of an individual's habits, skills, competencies, and past actions. The triadic reciprocal model claims each of these factors continuously and simultaneously interact to shape personal agency in each unique situation one experiences. "Human functioning is a product of the interplay of intrapersonal influences, the behavior individuals engage in, and environmental forces that impinge upon them" (Bandura, 2012, p. 11).

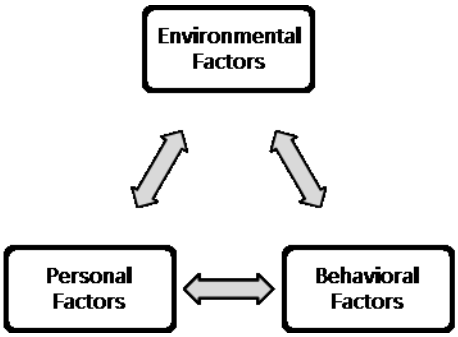

Figure 1.1. Illustration of the triadic reciprocal causation model (Bandura, 1977).

This study focuses on the potential influence of an environmental factor, enabling district structure, on a personal factor, the principal's self-efficacy, to shape leadership behavior. This potential relationship is illustrated by Figure 1.2. A second environmental factor, the number of schools in the district, is also examined in relation to the relationship between EDS and PSE.

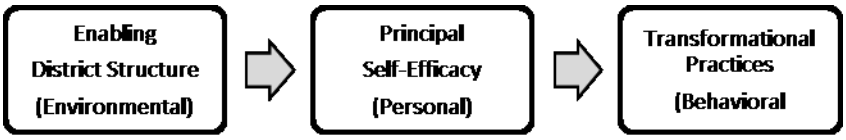

Figure 1.2. Illustration of Bandura's (1977) triadic causation model as used in this study

Such a unilateral focus does not discount the reciprocal effect of personal factors such as attitudes, emotions, and self-efficacy on district-level actions that might influence the degree to which district hierarchy enables and empowers a principal. Principals that experience success with second-order change initiatives or who have colleagues that master transformative practices may potentially develop more efficacy and have district structures that become more enabling. Within Bandura's triadic reciprocal model, such interdependent effects are represented and have an impact on human agency and may certainly have relevance in the relationship between EDS and PSE (Bandura, 1989). However, the primary intent of this study is to explore enabling district structure as a

potential antecedent of principal self-efficacy due to the established influence of self-efficacy on a principal's willingness to engage in transformational practices.

Definition of Terms

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate: Defined target for South Carolina's systemic improvement to meet the needs of 21st Century learners. The profile connects rigorous knowledge, critical cognitive skills, and essential characteristics within a student-centered environment that promotes a personalized system of competency-based learning.

Social Cognitive Theory: Theoretical view that people can have purposeful effect on their own behavior and development through formulation of beliefs, self-control, self-reflection and purposeful response to the conditions they encounter (Bandura, 1977). Such purposeful actions are classified by Bandura (1977) as *human agency*.

Triadic Reciprocal Model: Theoretical construct developed by Bandura (1989) illustrates the interdependent factors that are the foundation of Social Cognitive Theory. Human behavioral influences, personal factors (beliefs, feelings, biology), and environmental influences interact within a continual, reciprocal framework resulting in human development.

Self-Efficacy: Confidence in one's ability to accomplish a specific task (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) proposes that efficacy is the most influential personal factor that influences human agency.

Principal Self-Efficacy: A principal's belief in his or her capability to successfully perform specific principal leadership roles to achieve desired results (Tschannen-Moran

& Gareis, 2004). A principal may have high self-efficacy with one role or situation and low self-efficacy in another.

Enabling District Structure: Applying Hoy's (2003) research of enabling school structures to the district level, EDS is the presence of school leadership, rules, and protocols that enable principals to lead their schools with autonomy through sustaining a culture of critical thinking and problem solving within a collaborative professional community.

Second-order change: Organizational change that is a fundamental departure from the status quo to initiate and sustain transformational practices (Marzano et al, 2005).

Methodology

This quantitative study used descriptive statistics to analyze the measures of central tendency and variability of enabling district structure (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE). A series of Simple correlations was employed to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between EDS and PSE and between EDS and the PSE subcategories of Managerial Leadership, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership. Multiple regression was utilized to analyze the predictive influence of enabling district structure on principal's self-efficacy controlling for a variety of personal and district demographic factors. A secondary question was examined using Simple correlation and simple linear regression to examine the extent of the relationship between district size and EDS.

Data was collected utilizing two previously validated surveys, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) designed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), and the

Enabling School Structure Form (ESS Form) developed by Hoy (2003). The ESS Form was modified to inquire about district structures mirroring the work of Landy (2013) by changing "school" to "district" and "teacher" to "principal". Permission to utilize each instrument was acquired from the authors, including the modification of the ESS Form. The modified instrument is referred to as the EDS Form.

Participants were asked to provide seven additional demographic factors including the number of schools in the principal's district, experience within education, experience as a school principal, principal tenure within the current district, highest educational level achieved, grade levels within current school, and school's percent of students on free and reduced lunch. All responses were completely anonymous and voluntary. No effort was made to link responses to any participant, school, or district.

Participants were solicited from all 81 traditionally structured public-school districts within the state of South Carolina. Five school districts were excluded from the study based on local school board policies or research application requirements that could not be completed within the scope of the research time frame. Principals from the state's public charter school district, public virtual school district, and Department of Corrections school district were not included in the study's population due to the variance of district structure, educational environment, methodology, and principal utilization within each as compared to traditional public-school districts.

A total population of 1,014 public-school principals received a request to participate in the study. Surveys were administered utilizing an on-line data collector, *Survey Monkey*, over four weeks in January and February of 2017. Participants received an initial email request and follow-up reminder emails each of the three subsequent

weeks of the study. Statistical analysis was conducted on the response data including Pearson Product Moment Correlation and simple Simple linear regression. Participants submitted 360 surveys of which 332 were fully completed, a response rate of 32.7% of the population. As a comparison, Landy's (2013) survey of 2,478 public-school principals produced 397 completed surveys for a response rate of 16.3%.

Limitations

There were multiple limitations within this research. First, the study's data was self-reported by a volunteer sample of South Carolina principals, and therefore limited to the experiences and perceptions of each participant and open to potential participant bias. Second, the data was limited to the individuals who submitted the survey, resulting in both response and non-response bias. Principal self-efficacy research would indicate that principals with higher levels of efficacy would be more likely to submit the survey due to higher degrees of organization, enthusiasm for the study's content, and confidence in sharing their perceptions (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Third, the utilization of an electronic data collector sent through email could have limited participation due to email filters or other similar factors that limited accessibility of the survey to potential participants. Fourth, some districts could have formal or informal policies that restrict their principals from survey participation. Fifth, the study's quantitative construct did not allow for participants to share qualitative, descriptive answers and feedback regarding their ratings of district structure and self-efficacy. Sixth, the population for the research was limited to the population of public-school principals in traditional school districts within South Carolina during the spring of 2017 thus limiting the generalizations that can be made based on the research findings.

Seventh, limitations are present in the data analysis methods utilized. Correlations identify the presence of a linear relationship between variables, but is not able to determine causation (McClave & Sincich, 2009). Regression analysis clarifies the degree of the relationship between two variables including the degree of variance in the dependent variable can be predicted from one or more independent variables (Huck, 2012). In this study, multiple independent variables are identified, quantified, and analyzed through multiple regression to determine influence on the dependent variable, PSE. Though these independent variables were identified through their inclusion in prior research studies focused on potential antecedents of PSE, there may be other variables that were not studied which additionally influence principal self-efficacy.

Delimitations

The researcher's utilization of a voluntary, nonprobability sampling methodology across the population of South Carolina public-school principals was a purposeful delimitation of the study. Engaging participants within a bureaucratic environment to provide vulnerable perspectives about their own performance and that of others is a challenging and limiting factor (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Fullan, 2015). The use of participant anonymity, leading to potential bias (sample, response, and nonresponse) and the potential for multiple submissions from a principal, was intentionally engaged to promote high participation and honest responses about sensitive variables.

Organization of the Study

This chapter presented an overview of the study to include the context, purpose, research questions, significance, theoretical framework, and methodology. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature and research relevant to the study. Chapter 3 reviews

the research design and methodology of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study to include interpretation of the results, a discussion of the findings, and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory asserts that human agency, the ability of human beings to purposefully regulate their actions to achieve desired goals, lies at the intersection of one's personal factors, behavioral factors, and environmental factors. This study investigated the potential influence school district structure (environment) on South Carolina principals' perceived self-efficacy (personal). This literature review seeks to provide understanding of the study's context, purpose, and variables through the lens of social cognitive theory and the constructs of self-efficacy and enabling structure.

The chapter begins with an overview of the principal's crucial influence on sustained school transformation within the changing context of American public education. An examination of Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, concept of self-efficacy, and triadic reciprocal causation model follows. The three components of the triadic reciprocal causation model – behavioral, personal, and environmental factors – are then explored within the context of this study. A summary of relevant research on the concept of principal self-efficacy highlights the need to explore potential antecedents of this influential personal factor. Next, an environmental factor, the construct of enabling structure is defined, explained in the context of the school district setting, and examined as a potential influential antecedent of principal self-efficacy. Finally, the concept of transformational practices as a behavioral factor that are required of successful principals

within the modern school is explored within principal leadership research and professional guidelines.

The 21st Century Principal

The arrival of the 21st Century marked the genesis of a culture of high stakes accountability throughout the American public education system spearheaded by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. As states, districts, and schools were held accountable for individual student success measured by performance data including standardized test results, graduation rates, and student attendance, research on the antecedents of such success escalated. Consensus was quickly reached regarding the primal role of the school principal as an instructional leader and the necessity of a change from the transactional role of the 20th Century school leader (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Marzano et al. 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Leithwood et al. 2008; Louis et al. 2010). "Clearly, accountability is not just another task added to the already formidable list of the principal's responsibilities. It requires new roles and new forms of leadership carried out under careful public scrutiny while simultaneously trying to keep day-to-day management on an even keel" (Lashway, 2000, pg. 13).

Impact of the principal. As the role of the principal within public education experienced transformation, the principal's impact on school performance also came into focus. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) published a much-cited review of current research that asserted, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 7). Perhaps more important was the finding that the role of leadership is magnified in schools with greater needs. "Indeed, there are virtually no documented

instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst" (Leithwood et al. 2004, p. 7).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 empirical studies on school leadership practices across three decades. The sample included all K-12 studies since 1970 from the United States or a similar culture that examined principal leadership and student achievement on standardized or state level assessments and provided the opportunity to calculate effect sizes of the relationship (Marzano et al. 2005, pg. 28). The analysis found the average correlation between leadership behavior and student academic performance across all of the studies to be .25. The researchers explain that a correlation of .25 associates an increase of one standard deviation in a principal's leadership practices with a .25 increase in student achievement on a normal curve (Marzano et al. 2005, pg. 129). Of note, the analysis also found that the more precise the research design and methodology, the stronger the correlation between leadership practices and student achievement (Marzano et al. 2005). This research supported the findings of Leithwood et al. (2004) that the effect of leadership attributed to one quarter of the total effects of the school on student learning.

Subsequent research continues to support the importance and impact of the school principal on a school's student achievement. One study utilizing value-added performance measures claimed, "while highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount" (Branch Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013, p. 63). Of specific interest in this study is the

researchers' attempt to control for demographic and situational factors by comparing value-added student performance results from the same schools across multiple principals. Such empirical measurements of principal impact utilizing student standardized test results, graduation rates, teacher turnover rates, and stakeholder survey data fuel the quest to define what practices "effective principals" engage in and to qualify the degree in which they perform these functions (Mendels, 2012).

Leadership Crisis

As the focus on the importance of the school leader has sharpened, high-stakes accountability systems have led to an increasing number of "high risk" schools and the absence of quality leaders willing to take on these challenges (Roza, 2003; Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman, & White, 2003; Fink and Brayman, 2006, Reeves, 2008). Beteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2011) claim that annual principal turnover rates range from 15 to 30 percent across the United States and are higher in schools classified as "at risk" due to student achievement results. The Learning Policy Institute cites 2017 data finding that the average principal tenure was four years but that 35% of principals serving at a specific school for less than two years (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Principal transitions within the profession are more likely to occur at low performing schools due to high-achieving principals moving to higher-achieving schools, poor achievers transitioning to other low-achieving schools, or principals leaving the principalship due to burnout (Beteille et al. 2011; Branch et al. 2013; Tyre, 2015). A national study of principal tenure found that the overall turnover rate was 18% annually, while high-poverty schools experienced a 21% turnover (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Recruitment and retention. The presence of increased principal turnover, especially at low performing schools, is a challenge to the educational reform efforts that South Carolina's schools are being asked to engage. Not only does research find that principal turnover is highest in underperforming schools, but these schools also are found to have less experienced principals, high rates of teacher turnover, higher rates of novice teachers, and continued low performance (Beteille et al. 2011; Branch et al. 2013; Tyre, 2015, Levin & Bradley, 2019). As a result, such schools are located on a perpetual cycle of transition that severely limits the potential for a breakthrough in student performance and cultural redefinition (Beteille et al. 2011, Levin & Bradley, 2019). Due to this reality, South Carolina has crafted an alternative route to administrative certification for experienced leaders from outside the educational field with the intent to help at-risk districts address administrative shortages with leaders willing to engage transformational practices (SC State Board of Education, 2011). However, increasing the pool of potential candidates by recruiting leaders from outside the profession does not address reasons principals choose to leave the role.

The Learning Policy Institute's 2019 analysis of 35 major studies on the issue of principal turnover identified five reasons for principals to change employment outside of retirement or dismissal. Principals leave due to 1) Lack of effective preparation and professional development within the role; 2) Poor working conditions to include active support, complex issues, time requirements, challenging interpersonal relationships, and a disciplinary climate; 3) low and noncompetitive salaries; 4) lack of autonomy and authority to make decisions in areas of budgeting, personnel, and student discipline; and,

5) the presence of federal and state accountability policies that "create disincentives for principals to remain in low-performing schools" (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

The role of the school principal is ever expanding in both scope and complexity. As the vital impact that principal leadership has on student achievement and sustained organizational transformation has been defined, the pressures of the role are leading to a reduction in individuals willing to embrace the leadership challenge. School district leaders must consider how to recruit, develop and retain highly effective change agents to lead their schools.

Impact of federal and state accountability. The existence of increased federal and state accountability structures promotes a results-oriented focus intended to attain significant academic gains quickly; practices that are detrimental to the leadership practices and mindset that are most effective in engaging the transformational change necessary for sustained student performance improvement (Lashway, 2000; Reeves, 2006; Beteille et al. 2011; Fullan, 2014; Kirtman, 2014). Reeves (2006) describes such fixations as "the Results Paradox", explaining, "The more myopic the focus on results, the lower the probability that the results will improve." Fullan (2014) agrees, claiming, "With this type of approach, an autocratic principal can extract short-term results, but in the course of doing this will alienate teachers...and will never be able to generate in teachers the motivation and ingenuity for them to be able to go the extra mile. Programs will come and go, as will individual principals" (p. 85).

Effective principals must engage in transformational change within their schools while inspiring and engaging their teams in a process of collective leadership and focused, professional learning (Wallace Foundation, 2013; Kirkman, 2014). Principals

must be able to protect the faculty from focusing on the outside pressures brought by a culture of high-stakes, accountability driven regulations and instead empower the team to engage systemic changes in an internally-driven culture focused on moral purpose and collective accountability (Fullan, 2014; Kirtman, 2014). Leaders within at-risk educational settings must be able to protect themselves from burnout and resist the temptation to flee to schools with better resources and higher performing students (Reeves, 2005; Branch et al. 2013; Kafele, 2018).

Evolution of the Principal's Role

Following the lead of business leadership theorists such as Burns (2003) and Bass (1990), educational leaders began proposing that principals no longer could simply serve as a transactional leader or principal teacher focused on the fundamentals of traditional school leadership such as establishing a clear mission, ensuring a safe and orderly environment, promoting positive home-school relations, and protecting instructional time (Leithwood, 1992; DuFour, 1999; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Lashway, 2000; Lezotte, 2012; Mendels, 2012). While the traditional principal was tasked with ensuring a focused, well managed learning environment with employees working towards a central goal, Leithwood (1992) asserted that such leadership and the resulting culture focused on competition and a coercive, top-down power model would not achieve cultures that were sustainable and productive in meeting the challenges faced by schools as the 21st century arrived. Leithwood (1992) proposed that school principals would rather need to become transformational leaders who engage, inspire, and empower their teachers and students.

Transformational practices. Transformational leaders enhance employee motivation through promoting collective focus on moral purpose, sources of internal motivation, and high levels of collaborative problem-solving (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Louis et al. 2010). Balyer (2012) conducted a qualitative study of principals' transformational characteristics including idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation as defined in the "additive effect" of transformational leadership described by Northouse (2016). Balyer (2012) found that teachers following a transformational leader possess increased job satisfaction, experience an accepting school culture, and are motivated to achieve high standards of performance.

Recent proponents of transformative practices have accentuated the need for leaders to engage their employees through ensuring leadership vulnerability, inspiring select individuals through collective discourse, and reducing the presence of high stress from systemic change by engaging in focused, on-going gradual innovation (Louis et al. 2010; Lee, 2014; Fullan, 2014, Kirkman, 2014). Whether categorized as transformational leadership, distributive leadership, collective leadership, or inspirational leadership, the need for principals to actively engage in the process of empowerment and collective autonomy focused on innovative practices remains a key leadership target especially in schools with the greatest needs (Leithwood et al. 2004; Louis et al. 2010; Marzano et al. 2005; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Leithwood et al. (2004) asserted that high-leverage principal practices necessary to transform public education included creating a moral purpose that is clearly reflected in the school's mission, engaging teachers in participatory decision making, ensuring

constant calibration of practices with evidence-based research, and promoting the continuous monitoring of results. The Wallace Foundation (2013) echoed these responsibilities, "(Principals) can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to district rules, carrying out regulations and avoiding mistakes. They have to be leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instruction" (p. 6). Wallace's decade of research into the responsibilities of the 21st Century principal accentuate the necessity of cultivating leadership throughout the organization, ensuring a collaborative vision of high achievement expectations for all stakeholders, creating a climate of trust and interdependence throughout the faculty, and challenging teachers to engage research-based innovative practices and then monitoring implementation (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

First-order change. In *School Leadership that Works,* Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 practices of school leaders that are positively correlated with student academic achievement. Through further analysis, Marzano et al. (2005) grouped the practices according to their effect on the desired change within the system. Two types of change were identified. "First-order change" is described as "incremental" and the implementation of "the next most obvious step to take in a school or a district" (Marzano et al. 2005, pg. 66). Such transactional leadership is not aligned with the transformation of both school structure and instructional practice envisioned by the South Carolina Department of Education, the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, and TransformSC as necessary for the South Carolina's schools to meet the challenging goals detailed in South Carolina's Vision 2035 (Scoppe, 2016; SCDE, 2017).

Second-order change. Conversely, Marzano et al. (2005) identified seven leadership responsibilities that are vital to the implementation of "second-order change" or change that "involves dramatic departures from the expected" and presents "a dramatic shift in direction…requiring new ways of thinking and acting" (pg. 66). The authors claim successful systemic change originates from school principals primarily focusing on these seven responsibilities while developing shared leadership with the other fourteen responsibilities identified (Marzano et al. 2005). The "second-order" responsibilities are, in priority order, (1) knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (2) the ability to be an optimizer that drives innovation with all staff; (3) the knowledge and ability to stimulate intellectual, research-based discussion; (4) the ability and vision to be a change agent; (5) the ability to continually monitor and evaluate performance; (6) the willingness and ability to be exhibit flexibility in approach and leadership; and (7) the ability to act consistent with ideals and beliefs shared with team members (Marzano et al. 2005, pg. 71-72). Systems and principals desiring transformation must strategically prioritize and engage these responsibilities.

Principal competencies. Kirtman (2014) asserts that sustaining transformational change requires school leaders to develop and practice seven competencies that promote long-term, systemic empowerment. Kirtman defines high performance leadership as the process of "build(ing) leadership capacity that results in meeting and exceeding the goals of the school system based on the needs of the local, state, and global communities" (Kirtman, 2014, p. 3). Effective leaders of sustained transformational change in schools, (1) challenge the status quo; (2) build trust through clear communications and expectations; (3) create a commonly owned plan for success; (4) focus on team over self;

(5) have a high sense of urgency for change and sustainable results in improving student achievement; (6) commit to continuous improvement for self; (7) build external networks and partnerships (Kirtman, 2014, p. 6-8). Kirtman's competencies describe a leader of "second order change."

Engaging in transformational, second order change challenges even the most effective principals and requires complex understanding and application of organizational change principles (Fullan, 2001; Marzano et al. 2005; Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins, 2008, Reeves, 2006; Fullan, 2014; Schmoker, 2016). Marzano (2005) warns that attention to second-order change, while necessary for transformative innovation, can adversely affect a school's culture, communication with all stakeholders, and the perceived "safety" of order and routine within the school; leading many teachers to feel precipitously located on what Fullan (2001) describes as the "edge of chaos" and principals returning to the safety of a coercive approach focused on external commitment and short-term results.

Professional standards for principals. With refinement of the principal's role within 21st Century Education, accountability standards were redesigned to clarify effective principal leadership. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration adopted professional standards for school principals in 1996 that reflected a renewed focus on the principal's responsibility for ensuring improved teaching and learning within every classroom (CCSSO, 2008). The CCSSO's panel of educational researchers, practitioners, and members of the higher education community proposed that "strong school leaders" demonstrated mastery of six specific practices. These practices included, (1) developing a shared vision for learning; (2) developing a culture conducive to learning; (3) effectively

managing the organization and resources; (4) collaborating with the community to meet diverse needs; (5) practicing ethical behavior; and (6) understanding and responding to political, social, legal, and cultural contexts (CCSSO, 2008, p. 6). These six standards became the foundational elements of principal evaluation for 45 states across the nation including South Carolina (CCSSO, 2008).

In 2015, the National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA) published new standards for school leadership with a "stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning…to help ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century" (NPBEA, 2015, pg. 2). Central to the new professional standards are instructional leadership, prioritizing effective human relationships to promote learning, and the necessity of a principal to both embrace and facilitate innovation throughout the institution (NPBEA, 2015). Ten standards are identified including, (1) Mission, Vision and Core Values; (2) Ethics and Professional Norms; (3) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness; (4) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; (5) Community of Care and Support for Students; (6) Professional Capacity of School Personnel; (7) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff; (8) Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community; (9) Operations and Management; and (10) School Improvement (NPBEA, 2015).

NPBEA emphasizes the interdependence of the ten standards within school cultures spearheaded by "tenacious change agents who are creative, inspirational and willing to weather the potential risks, uncertainties and political fall-out to make their schools places where each student thrives" (NPBEA, 2015, pg. 4). Comparison of the previous professional standards (1996, 2008) and the new standards communicates the

increasing complexity expected of principals and the necessity of an effective principal to engage transformational practices while developing a culture where diverse stakeholders are valued and empowered.

Summary. The increased complexity of the principal's role coupled with enhanced accountability structures provides a clear challenge for individuals seeking to engage the practice of school-based instructional leadership. The principal's influence on school culture, employee quality, teacher retention, and, most importantly, student achievement is evident. It is vital that a principal develop both the skills and the confidence to engage the multi-faceted elements found within the principalship if one is to experience sustained success. This study utilizes the construct of social cognitive theory to investigate the potential influence district structure has on the principal's development of the critical factor of self-efficacy as one engages the task of the school leadership.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory asserts humans have the capacity to determine their actions and, thus, intentionally seek to influence the outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Bandura proposes that such intentional actions, classified as human agency, are shaped by the individual's interaction with other individuals, societal structures, and norms that permeate our interdependent human experience. The ability of humans to exercise personal control over their own actions for the purpose of attaining desired results is the foundational principle of social cognitive theory (Bandura 1977).

Bandura's theory extends prior social and behavioral science theories that proposed human actions are simply a learned response to external stimuli or the product

of the unconscious mind. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning proposed that human behavior is the result of experienced consequences that serve as "reinforcers" or "punishers" directly impacting the potential for the behavior to be repeated (McLeod, 2018). Freud focused on explaining human behavior as the result of the unconscious mind and the unique life experiences that each person has experienced (McLeod, 2018). The use of Bandura's social cognitive theory as the construct for this study is purposeful as the foundational premise of human agency conveys an individual can influence his actions and engage a locus of control in responding to both internal and external factors. As has been discussed, the modern-day principal must engage a challenging and complex role that engages a multitude of stakeholders, requirements, and stressors. Successful principals must also be able to overcome social, personal, and emotional obstacles to engage, equip, and empower teachers and students to perpetually transform practices and beliefs to experience sustained success. Bandura's social cognitive theory with its foundational concept of human agency represented by the triadic reciprocal causation model is an appropriate construct to engage this study.

Triadic reciprocal causation model. Bandura proposed that human agency occurs within a triadic reciprocal causation model composed of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors that interact to shape human actions (Bandura, 1989). Personal factors include biological and personality traits, expectations, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and goals. Behavioral factors consist of an individual's habits, skills, competencies, and past actions. Environmental factors are the influence of society on the individual's emotions, opportunities, and knowledge acquisition. The triadic reciprocal model claims each of these factors continuously and simultaneously interact to shape

personal agency in each unique situation one experiences (Bandura,1997). “Human functioning is a product of the interplay of intrapersonal influences, the behavior individuals engage in, and environmental forces that impinge upon them” (Bandura, 2012, p. 11).

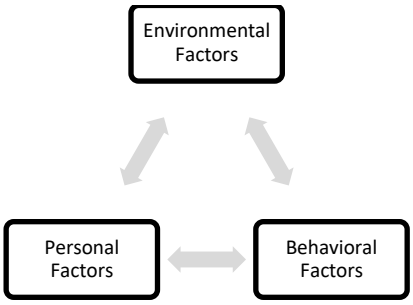

Figure 2.1. Illustration of the triadic reciprocal causation model (Bandura, 1977).

Reciprocal interactions between personal cognitive factors, behavioral factors, and environmental factors are dynamic and unique to each situation even for the same person (Bandura, 1989). For example, a person’s level of self-efficacy, or confidence in his or her ability to accomplish a specific task, differs across specific tasks dependent on personal attitudes (personal), specific skill acquisition (behavioral), and social influences (environmental). Utilizing the Triadic Reciprocal Causation model, social cognitive theory posits that human behavior is a result of both internal and external factors that center on each person’s ability to take intentional actions to influence outcomes (Bandura, 1989, 1997).

Adaptation of model for this study. This study uses Bandura’s triadic model as a foundation to explore the potential influence of district structure on a principal’s self-efficacy in South Carolina. As principals perform their roles at individual schools within the established structure of the school district, the degree to which that bureaucracy is enabling or hindering their efforts may have a significant impact on principals’

confidence in their ability to successfully engage the transformational leadership practices necessary for success in the modern public-school. Figure 2.2 illustrates this causal relationship with enabling district structure as the independent variable and principal self-efficacy as the dependent variable.

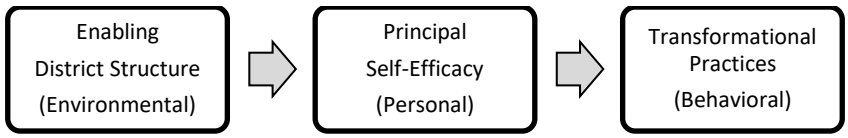

Figure 2.2 Illustration of triadic reciprocal causation model applied to this study.

Summary. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of cognitive processes within the interaction of both internal and external stimuli (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2002). Bandura (2009) emphasizes that each human has the potential to proactively engage and shape their destiny by creating knowledge through observing others, analyzing experiences through self-reflection and reasoning, and constructing plans for future action based on these actions. "People are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them" (Bandura, 2009, p. 179). The ability to generate an intentional effect on one's destiny through self-initiated action grounded in self-regulation and self-reflection is the core of social cognitive theory (Pajares, 2002).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the most influential catalyst of human agency within the social cognitive construct. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments (p. 3)." Perceived competency in a specific situation permeates cognitive processes and is a primary regulator of motivation, self-regulation, and subsequent engagement. Efficacy

beliefs not only impact a person's expectations and willingness to engage a task, but have been found to be highly predictive of behavior (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy and self-esteem. It is important to emphasize that self-efficacy is situational and is not identical to self-concept or self-esteem (Pajares, 2002). Perceived self-efficacy varies within the same individual dependent on the task or situation being addressed. In contrast, self-concept is the collective view an individual has of their worth and competence based on internal and external indicators and is not task specific. Research has determined an individual's self-concept is not highly predictive of behavior in isolation of one's self-efficacy (Pajares & Kranzler, 1995). Self-esteem reflects self-worth and is also not correlated to efficacious beliefs about specific tasks (Bandura, 1997). An individual may have a positive self-esteem while also possessing low self-efficacy in regards to specific tasks. Through self-regulation, one may avoid these tasks specifically to maintain and reinforce high self-esteem (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2002). Perceived self-efficacy is specific to individual tasks and is a belief in the ability to perform the task towards a desired outcome independent of collective views of competence or feelings of self-worth (Bandura, 1997).

Impact of self-efficacy. A person's level of self-efficacy affects their expectations for success, specific goals, and perceptions of factors that can help or impede progress (Pajares, 2002; Bandura, 2009). When individuals encounter barriers, those with strong efficacy demonstrate grit and persistence towards achieving the goal; while those with weak self-efficacy for the task set lower goals, or give up more quickly (Bandura, 2009). Individuals with low self-efficacy for a task will often not undertake potential actions because their self-analysis inhibits serious consideration of success

(Bandura, 2009). Conversely, individuals with high self-efficacy maintain a locus of control over situations. For example, in responding to failure, the highly efficacious individual will self-reflect on factors of effort and execution and, subsequently, seek to increase skill acquisition, fidelity of implementation, and sufficient auxiliary support (Bandura, 1997). Failures may even result in increased efficacy if limited in scope and embedded within successful practice (Bandura, 1997).

Sources of self-efficacy

Mastery experiences. Bandura (1986) identifies four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological states. Mastery experiences are authentic, personal engagements that result in desired outcomes (Bandura, 1986). Achieving success through intentional forethought, planning, and execution increases personal motivation and belief in one's ability to replicate results. Regardless of additional environmental or social factors that played a role in the outcomes, self-efficacy is most directly nurtured and developed through personal experiences of accomplishment (Bandura 1986, 1997). Authentic instances of failure experienced in the initial stages of learning or replicated throughout the continuum of learning produce the greatest damage to self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1986).

Vicarious experiences. Due to the potential of failure in personal experiences, vicarious experiences can have a more limited, but positive effect on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Humans learn through the experience of observing mastery performances and modeling others. Seeing effective practice allows one to visualize the possibilities of what can occur and develop an understanding of potential risks and rewards without initially engaging in the practice. Vicarious experiences are most

effective when individuals are at the novice level and can observe repeated examples of mastery that are broken down into tangible steps (Bandura, 1986). Bandura (1986) asserts that such exemplars during the initial engagement of practice can sustain an individual's self-efficacy enabling the individual to maintain motivation and perseverance necessary to achieve success on the task.

Social persuasion. Social persuasion's positive impact on perceived self-efficacy is significantly less than mastery and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1986). Verbal persuasion from respected stakeholders can reinforce motivation and determination necessary for an individual to both choose and maintain engagement in a challenging task (Bandura, 1986). Such persuasion must be both realistic and accompanied by relative success over time or the credibility of the persuader and the motivation of the individual may be damaged, leading to decreased personal efficacy levels. Bandura warns, "It is probably more difficult to produce enduring increases in perceived efficacy by persuasory means than to undermine it" (1986, p. 400).

Other forms of social persuasion include task assignment, goal definition, and performance evaluation (Pajares, 2002). Assignment of respectful tasks that are both challenging and attainable cultivates self-efficacy; however, providing inappropriately calibrated tasks can implicitly communicate a lack of belief in an individual's competency level which can result in decreased efficacy (Bandura, 1986). To sustain and enhance perceived personal efficacy, appropriate goals must be established and critical feedback must be authentic, specific, and focused on the skill capacity of the individual (Bandura, 1997).

Physiological states. An individual's attention to physiological states are the fourth source of perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Health deficiencies, involuntary physical responses to stressors such as negative past experiences, and allowance of mood to exacerbate invalid mental judgments of both attitude and ability are examples of negative influences on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). As with mastery experiences and self-esteem, individuals may avoid certain situations to not engage heightened stress or personal health status (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, the absence of aggravated physiological states may not in itself be an indicator of high self-efficacy but rather of reinforced low self-efficacy. In contrast, individuals who maintain healthy habits, engage productive stress, and self-regulated attitudes can enhance perceived self-efficacy in a specific situation (Bandura, 1997).

Interaction of sources. Each of these four sources of self-efficacy highlight the cognitive processes involved in determining the impact of efficacy on human agency. Bandura (1986) asserts that one can't diagnose the level of perceived self-efficacy an individual has for a given situation or task simply by considering any one of the four sources. Each source has a reciprocal, interactive effect and has the potential to enhance or deter an individual's perception of competence in a specific situation. In alignment with the reciprocal interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in determining human behavior, likewise each source contributes to everyone's cognitive development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

Principal Self-Efficacy

A principal's self-efficacy, or confidence in his or her abilities to perform specific practices, has been positively related to a principal's willingness to engage challenges, set

high goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and promote transformational practices within his or her school (Bandura, 1997, McCormick, 2001, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The positive effects of principal efficacy have been found to be substantially higher in schools that present greater challenges and have exhibited a history of poor performance (Leithwood et al. 2004; Smith et al. 2006).

Outcomes of principal self-efficacy. Highly efficacious principals demonstrate the ability to cast an appropriately challenging vision, set attainable organizational goals, maintain focus on primary objectives, adopt innovative strategies, and demonstrate a willingness to adapt strategies based on data (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Principals with positive self-efficacy exert more effort, perseverance, and resiliency in the face of adversity (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). "When faced with obstacles, setbacks, and failures, those who doubt their capabilities slacken their efforts, give up, or settle for mediocre solutions. Those who have a strong belief in their capabilities redouble their effort to master the challenge" (Bandura, 2000, p. 120).

Principal efficacy impacts both the mindset the leader brings to challenging circumstances and the action one takes. High degrees of self-efficacy allow principals to resist internalizing failures and, subsequently, maintain an environment focused on intrinsic motivation and personal power within the school setting (Lyons & Murphy, 1994). Conversely, principals with low perceptions of self-efficacy internalize and exacerbate stress and conflict within the organization leading to coercive environments focusing on compliance and proclivity to blame external factors for low performance levels (Lyons & Murphy, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Principals with high efficacy establish an equitable learning environment that maintains high instructional

expectations for all students through effective cognitive engagement; while principals with low efficacy tend to focus primarily on student discipline and behavioral engagement (Bandura, 1997).

Measuring self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) developed a principal sense of efficacy scale (PSES) to measure a principal's perception of their self-efficacy. The scale consists of 18 questions that all begin with the stem: "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..." (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p. 579). Principals respond utilizing a nine-point Likert scale ranging from "1: None at All" to "9: A Great Deal." The statements are grouped into three six-statement subcategories measuring efficacy of management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. Table 2.1 shows the categorization of the eighteen statements within the three categories. An overall self-efficacy measure is obtained by calculating the mean of all statements while measures for the subcategories are calculated by obtaining the mean of each set of six factors.

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) constructed the PSES by patterning it after a Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale designed and validated by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). Scale items were originally adapted from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) professional standards for school principals. Items were peer reviewed by a panel of professors and a current school superintendent to determine appropriateness (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). A field test of the PSES was conducted with a panel of former principals to ensure that the tool was accessible to school principals.

Table 2.1. Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you…"
Efficacy for Management Handle the time demands of the job Handle the paperwork required of the job Maintain control of your own daily schedule Prioritize among competing demands of the job Cope with the stress of the job Shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school
Efficacy for Instructional Leadership Motivate teachers Generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school Manage change in your school Create a positive learning environment in your school Facilitate student learning in your school Raise student achievement on standardized tests
Efficacy for Moral Leadership Promote acceptable behavior among students Promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population Handle effectively the discipline of students in your school Promote a positive image of your school with the media Promote the prevailing values of the community in your school Promote ethical behavior among school personnel

Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2004) used the PSES to conduct a study of principal self-efficacy of Virginia's 1,925 public-school principals. The study produced a 28% response rate for a sample size of 544. The researchers established the construct validity of the PSES by comparing results with two other previously utilized measures of principal self-efficacy and discovering similar correlations (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). The PSES has been utilized in a multitude of subsequent studies and dissertations to measure perceptions of principal self-efficacy, quantify its impact on school performance, and identify common demographical factors of highly efficacious principals.

Principal Self-Efficacy Research

Lehman (2007) conducted a study of the potential relationship between principal self-efficacy and fifth grade reading achievement through collecting PSES results from a sample of 336 elementary school principals in Wisconsin. Through conducting a statistical analysis individual PSES results and student achievement scores, Lehman found a positive direct correlation between scores and principal self-efficacy. Analyzing the PSES subscales of management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership, Lehman found that instructional leadership was the only factor that was a significant predictor of student reading achievement.

Lehman investigated principal and school demographic variables to determine if they could be statistically identified as predictors of principal self-efficacy within the sample including gender, total educator experience, principal experience, education, faculty size, school socio-economic status, school size, school location, and school rating through the No Child Left Behind legislation. Through regression analysis Lehman determined that socio-economic status and schools within urban locations were found to have inverse effects on principal self-efficacy (Lehman, 2007, pg. 72). Principals serving schools with higher poverty and located within urban areas had lower perceptions of self-efficacy.

Lehman reflected that within the construct of Bandura's triadic model principal self-efficacy could both cause lower student achievement results and also be negatively influenced by of the challenge of leadership within high poverty, urban, and low performing schools (Lehman, 2007). Lehman recommended that future research be conducted on the influence of principal self-efficacy on other factors that a principal

might influence including professional collegiality, parental partnerships, and empowering school cultures (Lehman, 2007). A final recommendation asserted that "programs designed to increase principal self-efficacy beliefs should be developed" (Lehman, 2007, p. 88).

Santamaria (2008) investigated the potential influence of a school's performance status as defined by the No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation on the self-efficacy of principals of Title 1 K-12 schools in California. Santamaria's data collector to include the PSES survey was completed by 549 principals. Results found that principals of schools receiving targeted assistance from the state due to low student academic performance had "significantly lower" self-efficacy than principals in non-targeted schools (Santamaria, 2008, pg. 62). In addition, the longer the school's placement within the targeted assistance category, the lower the self-efficacy of the principal specifically for younger principals and principals with less experience (Santamaria, 2008). These findings supported Lehman's finding that levels of principal self-efficacy were directly correlated to student performance levels.

Santamaria also investigated a series of demographic factors as potential predictors of principal self-efficacy including principal age, experience in education, school grade level, and the percentage of English learners within the school. Results found the greatest potential predictor of a principal's self-efficacy was the principal's age with older principals reporting lower levels of self-efficacy (Santamaria, 2008). Experience within the field of education was found to be a positive predictor of self-efficacy along with the number of English learners within the school. Finally, Santamaria

(2008) found that the higher the grade level of the school, the higher the reported self-efficacy of the principal.

Relevant to this study, Santamaria recommended that future research could be conducted by comparing principal self-efficacy and the self-efficacy of district leaders (Santamaria, 2008). Santamaria hypothesized that if such a study would uncover different efficacy levels between district administrators and site-based principals it could highlight the importance of the district bureaucracy on the development and nurturing of principal's confidence in performing their roles (Santamaria, 2008). On a broader level, Santamaria's focus on investigating the potential impact of the federal NCLB legislation and its school labels based on student achievement on PSE continued to form the genesis of research seeking understanding of potential antecedents of principal efficacy.

Lovell (2009) utilized the PSES with a sample of 387 Georgia principals to investigate the relationship between principal self-efficacy and school effectiveness as measured by schools' standardized test scores and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) status as determined by the No Child Left Behind legislation. Lovell (2009) did not find statistically significant relationships between self-perceptions of principal efficacy and standardized test results. Statistically significant positive correlations were found between principal self-efficacy and both tenure and school AYP status. Principal self-efficacy increased as their administrative experience increased and principals working in schools meeting AYP goals had higher efficacy than principals in the Not Met AYP status (Lovell, 2009). Lovell (2009) did not find significant relationships between principal self-efficacy and other demographic variables such as ethnicity, school size, and Title 1 status. Of significance to this study, the researcher recommended "policy and practice can be

impacted by proving school administrators with professional development aimed at increasing awareness of self-efficacy" (Lovell, 2009, p. 79).

Autry (2010) investigated the potential impact of principal self-efficacy on the collective efficacy of the faculty of sixteen independent private schools in Washington, D.C. Principal efficacy was measured by the PSES while teacher collective efficacy was measured by the Collective Efficacy Scale constructed by Goddard (2002). Collective efficacy is defined as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). Autry (2010) found that a principal's Instructional Leadership efficacy was the singular PSE construct to have a significant impact on the variance of teachers' collective efficacy. This result correlated with Lehman's (2007) finding of instructional leadership efficacy, as defined by the PSES, having higher influence than efficacy for both managerial leadership and moral leadership.

Schrik (2017) engaged the PSES to investigate the impact of principal self-efficacy and principal outcome expectations on student standardized test performance for a randomly generated sample of 205 Illinois elementary school principals. As part of his study Schrik analyzed the differences in principals' self-efficacy by multiple demographic factors including gender, experience, education, school location, poverty, and school type. Schrik (2017) found that higher levels of self-efficacy were present in female principals, more experienced principals, and principals with higher levels of educational attainment. Principals of students attaining higher levels of performance reported higher self-efficacy while efficacy of Moral Leadership was the highest reported subcategory within the PSES (Schrik, 2017).

These results highlight that while significant relationships between a principal's perception of self-efficacy and the student achievement within the principal's school are found throughout the research, the relationship of efficacy to demographic factors of the principal or the school have been inconsistent and noncongruent. Beyond discovering and understanding performance outcomes, school characteristics, and personal factors that are correlated to principal efficacy lies the largely unexplored landscape of principal efficacy antecedents.

Antecedents of Principal Efficacy

Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2005) utilized their Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) to investigate potential antecedents of principal self-efficacy on public-school principals in Virginia. The researchers received responses from 558 of Virginia's 1,925 principals for a response rate of 29%. In addition to the PSES, principals were asked to provide demographic factors including their race, gender, administrative experience, school grade levels, school setting, socio-economic status of the school. Principals also rated the quality of their principal preparation programs from low to high on a five-point Likert scale and the usefulness of those programs within their current positions on a four-point scale ranging from "not useful at all" to "extremely useful." Finally, participants were asked to rate the "availability" of instructional and financial resources, the "quality" of facilities and the "quality" of support from various stakeholders on a five-point Likert scale ranging from low to high. Sources of interpersonal support investigated were the superintendent, central office, teachers, staff, parents, and students.

Bi-variate analysis found insignificant relationships between principal self-efficacy and the individual factors of gender, race, administrative experience, school grade levels, school setting, and school socio-economic status (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Analysis of principals' evaluation of the quality and usefulness of their preparation programs found a positive significant correlation to principal self-efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). The amount and availability of teaching and financial resources as well as the quality of instructional facilities were all positively correlated with principal self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Significant positive correlations existed between all sources of interpersonal support with the strongest correlation to principal self-efficacy found in the principals' perceptions of teacher support. The correlation between principal self-efficacy and superintendent support and district office support were identical and, though significant, were the weakest of the six supports investigated (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005).

The researchers asserted that the positive correlations of principal self-efficacy to the availability of resources and the quality of facilities provide impetus for district leadership to value these environmental factors. Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2005) further posited that the relationship between principals' assessment of preparation programs and self-efficacy should cause district leadership to understand the importance of providing quality, on-going professional development that includes opportunities for expert modeling, guided learning, and personal coaching experiences that can positively impact leader efficacy. The presence of positive correlation between interpersonal stakeholder relationships and principal self-efficacy suggested that such relationships are a conduit for both verbal persuasion and development of physiological states that produce

positive self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). The researchers emphasized the need for further inquiry into the role of district leadership as an antecedent of principal self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005).

Virga (2012) conducted a mixed methods study of 40 high-achieving elementary schools from a single school district in a mid-Atlantic state. The researcher used the PSES and a survey collecting demographical information including gender, race/ethnicity, experience, school enrollment, and free or reduced lunch eligibility. Virga did not find the existence of significant relationships between principal self-efficacy and principal or school demographics. However, using Bandura's social cognitive theory, Virga engaged principals in qualitative interviews focused on the presence and influence of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states on the principals' personal perceptions of self-efficacy within the principalship. Qualitative results revealed that the principals consistently attributed their self-efficacy to their experiences in the district's leadership development program (Virga, 2012). Virga concluded, "Today's school leadership development programs need to be deliberate and explicit in building the self-efficacy of persons that they are preparing for the daunting responsibility of serving as school principals" (2012, p. 149).

Additional research of principal efficacy antecedents have primarily focused on participation in principal professional development and leadership programs. Versland (2013) examined the utilization of leadership programs to help school districts identify, recruit, and train principals from within their own ranks. The researcher engaged 10 principals from rural school districts in the northwest United States in extended interviews regarding their development of self-efficacy. Four of these principals had been

identified and recruited under “grown your own” leadership programs within their own district. Through personal conversation with these principals Versland discovered that three experienced a loss of efficacy during their initial leadership experiences while they were completing their principal preparation program.

Versland (2013) found that lack of mastery experiences within educational leadership, lack of exposure to vicarious leadership experiences due to the isolation of experience within a singular rural district, and the impact of negative social persuasion through both the selection process and isolation from former teacher peers were all factors that influenced the decrease in principal efficacy among these individuals. This research accentuates the challenge of investigating antecedents to principal self-efficacy within a large scope of individuals and the veracity of Bandura’s assertions that self-efficacy is a personalized construct that is unique to each individual (Bandura, 1997).

Airola, Bengston, Davis, and Peer (2014) conducted a mixed-method inquiry of the Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program for low-performing schools by using the PSES and participant interviews to investigate the development of the efficacy of 27 principals as they progressed through the program. Results found a statistically significant relationship between the principals’ self-efficacy and the years of participation within the program. Principals identified the development of trust with the Leadership Academy staff, focus on developing shared leadership within the school, and support and strategy development that helped the principal focus on instruction were primary factors for increasing their efficacy.

Garrett (2018) examined the relationship between district-provided administrator professional development focused on culture/climate or instruction and principal

perceptions of self-efficacy within an urban Kentucky school district. Garrett found weak insignificant relationships between the number of hours of administrative professional development participated in by principals and their self-efficacy as measured by the PSES. Garrett posited district leadership should actively consider the importance of administrator professional development in developing self-efficacy in school leaders. "Intentional and purposeful planning must occur to ensure principal engagement in mastery and vicarious experiences and encounters with positive social persuasion to initiate and produce the desired increases in self-efficacy" (Garrett, 2018, p. 108).

In 2004, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis asserted, "Enhancing leadership self-efficacy should be an important objective for those responsible for improving the quality of leadership in school" (p. 583). However, research focused on the antecedents of principal self-efficacy remains limited. A search of the two major education databases, Education Source and ERIC, finds 310 results for "principal efficacy" between 2004 and 2020. However, the results shrink to a combined 17 articles when the words "source", "antecedent", or "cause" are independently added to the search. Of those 17 results, only 4 address inquiry into potential sources of principal self-efficacy (EBSCO, February 1, 2020). Though much research of the concept of principal self-efficacy has been conducted, researchers have just scratched the surface in establishing a clear understanding of how to positively engage and nurture it within the educational arena.

District Influence on Principal Efficacy

Leithwood & Jantzi (2008) conducted a comprehensive literature review that found "there has been very little effort to understand school district antecedents of school-level leader efficacy" (p. 505). The researchers found that commonly researched

antecedents such as gender, race, tenure, and education level of the principal had provided evidence that was inconsistent or lacked statistical significance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 503). Collectively the review found only 15 empirical studies focused on school leadership self-efficacy in general and identified the previously descripted study of Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2005) as the only educational study focused on district structures as an antecedent to principal efficacy (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Leithwood & Jantzi (2008) asserted that "district conditions are likely to be antecedents of leader efficacy to the extent that they influence one or more immediate sources of efficacy identified by Bandura" (p. 506). Districts can influence exposure to mastery and vicarious experiences through collaboration, shadowing and professional development opportunities; provide verbal persuasion through performance evaluations; and, influence the physiological state of principals through established cultural and inspirational factors (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). The researchers investigated four district-level actions that could potentially influence principal efficacy: setting organizational direction; developing people; redesigning the organization; and managing the instructional program (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 507-508).

After completion of research involving 96 principals and 2,764 teachers across nine states, Leithwood & Jantzi (2008) found that all four of the district-level actions were positively correlated to the development of principal efficacy. The researchers asserted that actions focused on organizational redesign have the highest potential impact on positively impacting principal self-efficacy (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Such actions include purposeful development of collaborative cultures, shared decision making, and developing high trust relationships across the organization (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson (2010) extended the previous work by Leithwood & Jantzi (2008) to identify factors that promote student achievement. The research found that district leadership had the most pronounced impact on student achievement when the leadership invested in the professional development and empowerment of both principals and teachers within an enabling and collaborative environment focused on collective engagement of specific, data-driven goals (Louis et al. 2010). Without a holistic approach focused on understanding and developing clear lines of communication and understanding, district efforts could become an obstacle rather than a support (Louis et al. 2010). For example, district led professional development "had a negative effect when it failed to acknowledge different needs among schools" (Louis et al. 2010, p. 3). Similarly, focus on student performance data and standardized test results had a negative impact "if principals didn't believe that they and their staffs were up to what was expected of them" (Louis et al. 2010, p. 3).

District conditions that impact principal self-efficacy may result in more tangible surface-level results that mask the underlying issues. Levin & Bradley (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of 35 studies addressing the issue of principal turnover and principals leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement or dismissal. The authors proposed five specific solutions to address the issue of principal recruitment and retention to include, 1) engaging principals in high-quality professional development through both preservice institutions and job-embedded learning; 2) improving working conditions to include personnel, instructional resources, and issues with school climate and discipline; 3) improving principal salaries to include making salaries within high-need areas more equitable; 4) providing principals more authority and autonomy to make decisions at the

local school level; and, 5) reforming accountability policies that are punitive to personnel and require leadership changes as the result of low student performance (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Each of these concrete proposals correlate with factors that can be influenced by district leadership to positively influence the development of principal self-efficacy.

This study seeks to explore the influence that school district structure, an environmental factor, has on the personal self-efficacy of South Carolina's principals. Utilizing social cognitive theory, the self-efficacy of principals is influenced by the interactive effect of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological factors. School district structures are uniquely positioned to have direct impact on each of these factors that influence a principal's self-efficacy.

District Structures

Organizational structures. Adler (1996) theorized that all organizational bureaucracies can be placed on a continuum between two polar opposites: coercive structures and enabling structures. Coercive bureaucracies rely on high degrees of formalization and centralization to ensure all employees are compliant with rigid expectations, procedures, and protocols designed to replicate desired actions and products (Adler, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Participants within these autocratic environments demonstrate low levels of trust and communication with their superiors and believe that failure will result in punishment (Adler, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Employees in coercive bureaucracies not only possess low levels of job satisfaction and morale, but are also reluctant to engage in creativity, collaboration, or critical thinking to solve problems that arise within the course of their work (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Conversely, enabling organizations foster commitment through variable degrees of formalization within a decentralized environment (Adler, 1996). Protocols and procedures that facilitate effective functions within the environment are not focused on compliance but rather on enabling employees to manage individual routines and maximize creative, consistent engagement with challenging tasks and innovations (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Characteristics of enabling bureaucracies include constructive dialogue throughout the organizational structure, high levels of collaborative engagement, and a celebration of both success and failure as a means towards on-going improvement (Adler, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Employees within enabling organizational structures demonstrate high commitment to the organization, willingness to engage challenges, increasing interdependence, and ownership of results (Adler, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Enabling school structure. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) utilized Adler's construct to further define school bureaucracies through an expanded matrix combining the independent elements of formalization and centralization to demonstrate the potential results of the intersection of each with Adler's elements of coercive and enabling structures. Hoy & Sweetland defined formalization as "the degree to which the organization has written rules, regulations, procedures, and policies" (2001, p. 297). Centralization is "the degree to which employees participate in decision making" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 299).

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) developed a model that defined four potential dimensions within which schools can transition: enabling bureaucracy; rule-bound bureaucracy; hierarchical bureaucracy; and hindering bureaucracy. An enabling

bureaucracy is characterized by rules and protocols that are empowering, helpful, and promote a culture of critical thinking and collective problem solving within the faculty. The direct opposite of the enabling bureaucracy is a hindering bureaucracy where rules and protocols create an atmosphere of compliance and mechanized performance around rigid expectations reinforced through punitive measures.

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) proposed two additional potential structural dimensions exist that mix enabling formalization or centralization with the coercive or hindering component. A hierarchical bureaucracy may possess a degree of enabling rules and structures, but the potential empowerment of these components is overridden by a hindering autocratic administration. The opposite structure is a decentralized culture of leadership that may be spread across the system but is neutralized by a formalized policy structure that controls leaders and doesn't permit empowerment and creativity.

Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) conducted a series of empirical research studies to measure the construct of enabling structure within schools. The first study was conducted with 61 teachers from 61 different school districts enrolled in an educational administration program at an Ohio university. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always" to rate 24 items describing the extent to which the described behavior was found in their school (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). The 24 items were designed to measure the four proposed dimensions of enabling school structure as proposed in Hoy & Sweetland's model with specific items measuring each dimension.

Results did not support the four-dimensional model, but rather confirmed that enabling structure was a two-dimensional construct (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Schools with enabling laws also had enabling leaders while schools with hindering structures

possessed both coercive rules and centralized decision-making. Hoy & Sweetland (2001) posited, "School bureaucracy varied along a single continuum with enabling bureaucracy at one extreme and hindering bureaucracy at the other; enabling bureaucracy was a bipolar construct" (p. 304). Results found the higher the measure of enabling bureaucracy, the teacher was less dependent on the institution's hierarchy or rules (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Figure 2.3 illustrates this two-dimensional construct.

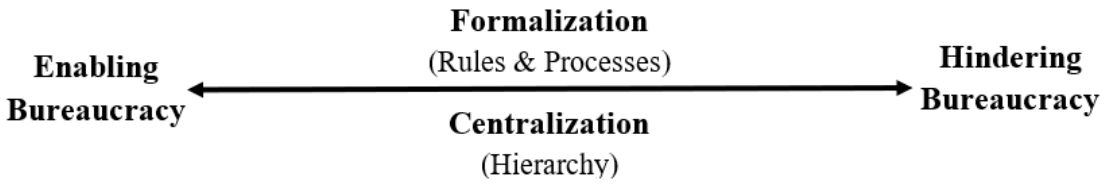

Figure 2.3: Enabling School Structure Model (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001)

The researchers conducted a second study to further validate the construct of enabling school structure. The second study used the 24-item form to collect data from 116 public-school teachers from a diverse sample of schools and enrolled in educational administration graduate programs across Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) conducted a factor analysis that found that the internal consistency reliability of the items (range .53 to .81; alpha = .96) was consistent with the prior study and validated the form as an effective measure of enabling structure.

Hoy and Sweetland reduced the number of items on their Enabling School Structure form from 24 to 12 due to the determination that ESS is a bipolar construct rather than having multiple dimensions. Items selected had the highest factor loadings while ensuring representation of both enabling and hindering elements of formalization and centralization. The researchers conducted a third study with 97 Ohio high schools using a minimum of 15 teachers per school. Schools represented a diverse sample of both

location (i.e. rural, urban, suburban) and socio-economic status. Results of this study found the 12-item ESS Form to be a valid and reliable measure of the construct of enabling bureaucracy within schools (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Table 2.2 shows the 12-item ESS form sorted by structure dimension.

Table 2.2 ESS Form by Structure Dimension (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001)

Structure Dimension	Question
Enabling Formalization	1. Administrative rules in this school enable authentic communication between teachers and administrators.
	2. Administrative rules help rather than hinder.
	3. Administrative rules in this school are guides to solutions rather than rigid procedures.
Coercive Formalization	4. Administrative rules in this school are used to punish teachers.
	5. In this school red tape is a problem.
	6. Administrative rules in this school are substitutes for professional judgment.
Enabling Centralization	7. The administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their job.
	8. The administrative hierarchy of this school facilitates the mission of the school.
	9. The administrators in this school use their authority to enable teachers to do their job.
Hindering Centralization	10. The administrative hierarchy obstructs student achievement.
	11. The administrative hierarchy of this school obstructs innovation.
	12. In this district the authority of the principal is used to undermine teachers.

Enabling school structure results in leaders and rules that help teachers rather than hinder them. “Enabling structures are characterized by principals who help teachers solve problems, encourage openness, and support teachers to do their jobs without undue concern for conflict and punishment” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 316). An enabling

school structure results in high levels of trust between administration and teachers, a willingness to embrace innovative practices, and a strong collaborative and empowered professional community (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Hoy, 2003). Conversely, a hindering school structure focuses on autocratic control and compliance following "the underlying assumption…that teacher behavior must be closely supervised and tightly regulated" (Hoy, 2003, p. 91).

Schools possessing a high enabling structure limited internal conflict, reduced internal political factions, and a lack of reliance on leadership hierarchy and rules to achieve success (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Educators within high enabling structures see problems as challenges to be collectively engaged and solved rather than barriers to be analyzed and deconstructed to assign blame (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Team members within an enabling school culture demonstrate an empowered mindset that promotes high levels of engagement, professional growth, and the embracing of accountability (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). Factor analysis found the higher a school's ESS score, the less teachers felt powerless within their role (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Thus, the construct of ESS is connected to the development of teacher efficacy, engagement, and empowerment. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) assert, "Such organizations should have high collective efficacy. Collective efficacy should give teachers purpose, encourage them to plan and take responsibility for student achievement, and foster persistence in teaching to overcome temporary setbacks" (p. 317). Just as the rules and hierarchy within a school create a bureaucratic structure that can move between enabling and hindering, school district leaders must consider the impact that formalization and centralization can have on the efficacy, engagement, and empowerment of principals.

Enabling district structure. Louis et al. (2010) proposed that district-level leadership should develop structures that invest in clear expectations and communication, continuous awareness of individual needs, autonomy for school leaders, and a collaborative culture that focuses on investment in the professional development of principals. "One of the most powerful ways in which districts influence teaching and learning is through the contribution they make to feelings of professional efficacy on the part of school principals" (Louis et al. 2010, p. 127). Such findings illustrate the potential impact of the district bureaucratic structure on the personal efficacy of school leaders.

As a result of their research on the influence of district leadership on principal efficacy, Louis et al. (2010) provided five "implications" for districts to consider: 1) set and maintain high goals for student achievement and instruction and provide resources to help principals achieve the goals; 2) engage principals and teachers in collective decision making; 3) ensure that district leadership is stable; 4) provide principals autonomy with the selection and hiring of quality teachers; 5) ensure the development of school improvement plans that are coherent with state and district standards, but providing school leadership autonomy of how to achieve the school's goals (p. 164). This focus on transparent, meaningful, quality goals and a collaborative, trusting and empowered process for attaining transformation within the school setting reflects Hoy and Sweetland's model of an enabling bureaucracy.

For this research the conceptual framework of enabling school structure was transferred to the district bureaucracy. In the same way that school administration and policies directly impact the school structure, the school superintendent and bureaucratic framework contribute to the district structure. Landy (2013) initially adapted Hoy &

Sweetland's ESS survey to evaluate the enabling structure of the school district and its impact on principal self-efficacy. Landy (2013) conducted a qualitative, correlational study to determine the presence of statistically significant relationships between New York public-school principals' sense of self-efficacy and their perspectives of the extent to which their district was enabling.

Utilizing the Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005) and the adapted Enabling School Structure survey (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001), Landy (2013) found positive significant correlations between EDS and PSE in a sample of 397 New York public-school principals. Landy (2013) utilized simple linear regression to also determine that EDS and PSE were "moderately and significantly predictive of each other" (p. 88). Landy (2013) hypothesized that principals' perceptions of self-efficacy may be positively influenced by the successful experiences of colleagues within the district and the degree to which principal perceives that one's own success and that of colleagues results in a more enabling and non-coercive culture.

Investigating the efficacy subscores within the PSES tool, Landy (2013) found that Managerial PSE had the strongest correlation to EDS with both Instructional PSE and Moral PSE having small, but significant, correlations. Additionally, EDS and Managerial PSE were "again highly predictive of each other" (Landy, 2013, p. 89). The researcher hypothesized that the strong correlation of EDS and Managerial PSE may arise due to the reality that both state and federal accountability legislation has transitioned many accountability requirements from districts to schools with principals bearing the primary responsibility for these responsibilities (Landy, 2013).

Landy (2013) posits that such focus on the managerial aspects of accountability mandates can lead to increases within Managerial PSE at the expense of a focus on the Instructional and Moral aspects of the principal's role. As federal and state accountability structures increase the pressure for districts and schools to make gains in student performance, Landy (2013) hypothesized that districts may provide less autonomy to principals within the crucial component of instructional leadership and may have become more standardized and district-centered in the planning and implementation of instructional initiatives.

Landy (2013) also investigated the potential influence of district size on perspectives of district structure and found a significant, negative correlation indicating "that increased district size was associated with decreased measures of EDS, and that decreased district size was associated with increased measures of EDS" (p. 95). Significant correlations were not found between district size and PSE or with any of the three PSE subcategories. Landy (2013) ran correlation analyses and simple linear regression analyses between the extent that district structures are enabling (EDS) and PSE within districts of similar sizes. Schools were split into 5 groups to account for district size: 0-5 schools; 6-10 schools; 11-15 schools; 16-20 schools, and 21 or more schools. A significant correlation between EDS and PSE was only found in districts with 0-5 schools and with 6-10 schools (Landy, 2013, p. 95-96). EDS was found to be most predictive of PSE within districts of 6-10 schools "accounting for 18% of the variance in PSE" (Landy, 2013, p. 96).

Landy provided two potential hypotheses for the influence of EDS on PSE within school districts of 0-5 and 6-10 schools with the highest predictive value being found in

the latter. First, “It is possible that the rules and procedures that are enabling in districts of 6-10 schools become more hindering when they become more prescriptive or greater in number, as might be expected in larger districts” (Landy, 2013, pg. 96). Secondly, Landy asserts that the data might be a function of the number of principals who responded from each district size group. With only nine principals responding from districts with 21+ schools, Landy (2013) states that the data “negates any degree of confidence with which a generalization could be proposed” (pg. 96). Consequently, Landy (2013) recommends that although her finding of a significant negative correlation between district size and EDS supports the research of Louis et al. (2010), it is necessary for future research to be conducted on the role of district size as an antecedent or predictor of EDS or PSE.

Curry (2014) conducted a mixed-method study that utilized Landy’s work on EDS to further investigate the impact of district level professional learning experiences on principal self-efficacy within a single North Carolina school district. Curry (2014) used the PSES to measure the self-efficacy of 21 principals in a rural North Carolina district and identify 12 principals with the highest PSE scores to engage in a qualitative inquiry regarding the impact of district structures on their self-efficacy. Results found that district efforts to build high trust cultures that focused on solving relevant issues through a collaborative process were essential to improving principal self-efficacy (Curry, 2014). Enabling district structure was identified as a contributing factor to PSE through the district’s implementation of collaborative professional development sessions, specific support meetings between district leadership and principals, a clear structure and

access to support, and a high trusting culture promoted from district leadership (Curry, 2014).

The significance of this study is that it utilized the concept of EDS as proposed by Landy (2013) as a "viable and influential construct related to principal efficacy" (Curry, 2014, p. 22). Curry (2014) defines EDS within her study as "the structure at the district level that supports principals and includes a focus on quality, district culture, use of data, job-embedded professional development for teachers, targeted improvement, and an emphasis on team work" (p. 22). These components reflect district practices that contribute to principals' sense of efficacy as defined by Louis et al. (2010) and components of the EDS Form utilized by Landy (2013) to measure the construct of EDS. Thus, Curry's work further establishes the enabling district structure as a potential antecedent of principal self-efficacy.

This study sought to extend and potentially validate the work of Landy (2013) and Curry (2014) by further investigating the concept of enabling district structure by analyzing the potential impact of South Carolina principals' perceptions of such structure on their personal self-efficacy within the role of the principalship. South Carolina's Department of Education has crafted a self-described "transformational goal" for the state's public-schools within the state's 2017 Consolidated State Plan filed with the federal government in accordance with the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015*. South Carolina desires, "By 2035, 90 percent of students will graduate 'college, career, and citizenship ready' as outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate"* (State of South Carolina, 2017, p. 15). With 2015-16 South Carolina achievement data showing that only 5% of third through eighth grade schools had 70% or more of students "meeting

expectations" in ELA and only 6% of those same students meeting the identical criteria in mathematics, such a goal is clearly "transformational" in nature (State of South Carolina, 2017, p. 17).

Conclusion

Bandura's (1989) Triadic Reciprocal Causation model, grounded in social cognitive theory, asserts that human function is a result of the intersection of behavioral, personal, and environmental factors. Utilizing this model as a foundation, a field of educational research has focused on the potential of district leadership structure to influence the principal's ability to engage in effective managerial, instructional, and moral leadership which indirectly promotes school and student achievement. Related research on the antecedents of principal self-efficacy has primarily focused on principal demographic factors, school level factors, and principal professional training and development (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis et al. 2010).

Research on the influence of district leadership and structures on principal self-efficacy is limited but has demonstrated promise. "Future research would do well to inquire more deeply into the leadership behaviors of district administrators that nurture a sense of efficacy and confidence on the part of school leaders" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). The concept of enabling school structure (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001) includes components of significant district leadership activities found to positively impact principal self-efficacy within a culture of mutual trust and collaborative decision making. Landy (2013) proposed employing the elements of enabling school structure (ESS) to examine the potential impact of enabling district structure (EDS) as an environmental antecedent to the personal factor of principal self-efficacy. Positive correlations were

found between these two factors with EDS having a statistically significant influence on principal self-efficacy (Landy, 2013).

This study sought to extend and potentially validate the work of Landy (2013) and Curry (2014) by investigating the potential impact of district structures on South Carolina principals' perceived self-efficacy to engage the multi-faceted principal role. South Carolina's public-schools are experiencing an increasingly high-stakes culture focused on ensuring student performance through publicly defined school report card ratings in accordance with the state's implementation of the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.* The ability of school district leadership to develop and nurture a district bureaucracy that is enabling rather than hindering could potentially be a low-cost factor that maximizes principal efficacy and, subsequently, positively impacts the willingness of principals to engage and sustain transformational leadership practices even in the most at-risk schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of the study including the research questions, hypothesis, statement of the problem, and purpose of the study. A detailed description of the research design, study sample, data collection procedures, and data analysis follows. The chapter concludes with a description of the limitations of the study.

Overview

Principal leadership is critical to the public-schools' success in the 21st Century (Leithwood et al, 2004). The ability of the principal to engage the school in transformational practices through clarity of moral purpose, focused professional growth, empowered teachers, collaborative practice, and acceptance of collective accountability for the success of all students is imperative to the sustained, longitudinal success of the school (Louis et al. 2010; Fullan, 2014). A principal's self-efficacy is a crucial factor in the leader's ability to achieve sustained success, especially in the most at-risk schools (Bandura, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Louis et al. 2010).

This study explored the potential influence of South Carolina school district structure on principal self-efficacy. Could the degree to which a district establishes and engages an enabling bureaucracy impact the development of principal self-efficacy within the district's school leaders? As South Carolina districts seek to transform to meet the demands of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* (2013), should district leadership focus on nurturing principal efficacy through developing an enabling district

structure? As the South Carolina legislature and school leaders consider the consolidation of school districts, this study also seeks to determine if enabling district structure is affected by the number of schools within the district.

Research Questions

This study focused on the following two research questions:

1. What is the relationship between enabling district structure (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE) in South Carolina?
    a. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding managerial leadership responsibilities?
    b. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding instructional leadership responsibilities?
    c. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding moral leadership responsibilities?
2. What is the relationship between school district size and enabling district structure (EDS) in South Carolina?
    a. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding district size?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were constructed based on the two research questions of the study.

1. H_0: EDS does not affect principal self-efficacy.

   H_1: EDS affects principal self-efficacy.
2. H_0: District size does not affect EDS.

   H_1: District size affects EDS.

Landy's (2013) investigation of the relationship between EDS and PSE in a sample of 397 New York public-school principals found a positive significant and predictive relationship between EDS and PSE (2013, p. 88). Results also defined a significant negative correlation between district size and EDS; however, Landy asserted that this finding could have been unduly influenced by the limited number of respondents who represented the largest district size in the study (2013, p. 96).

The purpose of this study is to further the initial inquiry of Landy (2013) into the influence of enabling district structure on principals' self-efficacy and to further understand the potential relationship between EDS and district size. As the construct of EDS and its relationship with PSE and district size are still being defined through this study, the alternative hypothesis is nondirectional to permit the data to lead in either direction if the null hypothesis is rejected (Huck, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

District culture and leadership practices have been found to have a significant impact on principal efficacy, yet a clear understanding of specific antecedents has not been established. Understanding the potential impact of district structures on principal self-efficacy may help district leadership place primary focus on engaging practices that nurture and develop principal self-efficacy across the multitude of specific leadership tasks and responsibilities principals face with school transformation. An enabling organizational structure results in empowered employees who demonstrate ownership of results and a willingness to collaborate, innovate, and create unique solutions to complex issues (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Principal self-efficacy has been positively related to a principal's willingness to engage challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, and promote transformational practices within his or her school (Bandura, 1997, McCormick, 2001, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). With the urgency to transform educational practices and attain superior results within the current culture of high-stakes accountability in South Carolina, this is an appropriate time to explore the potential effects of school district structure on a principal's sense of self-efficacy.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the potential relationship between enabling district structure and South Carolina principals' efficacy within the role of a school leader. Landy (2013) conducted research that "established EDS as an influential construct" on principal perceptions of self-efficacy (p. 98). This study sought to address two recommendations from Landy: 1) repetition of the study with different principal samples to help generalize findings on the construct of EDS and its potential influence on PSE; 2) extend focus on the influence that district size, defined by the number of schools within a district, may have on EDS (Landy, 2013, p. 99). To further understand the potential influence of EDS on PSE, this research explored the potential influence of seven other demographic factors on PSE including years in education, highest educational degree earned, years as a principal, grade levels in current school, number of schools in district, the percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch, and years as a principal in the district.

Research Design and Instrumentation

This quantitative study used descriptive statistics to analyze the measures of central tendency and variability of enabling district structure (EDS) and principal self-

efficacy (PSE). A series of Simple correlations was employed to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between EDS and PSE and between EDS and the PSE subcategories of Managerial Leadership, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership. Multiple regression was utilized to analyze the predictive influence of EDS on PSE controlling for personal and district demographic factors commonly used in previous research of principal self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Lehman, 2007; Santamaria, 2008; Lovell, 2009; Schrik, 2017). A secondary question was examined using Simple correlation and simple linear regression to examine the extent of the relationship between district size and EDS.

Data was collected utilizing two previously validated surveys, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) designed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), and the Enabling School Structure Form (ESS) developed by Hoy & Sweetland (2003). The ESS was modified to inquire about district structures mirroring the work of Landy (2013) by changing "school" to "district" and "teacher" to "principal". Permission to utilize each instrument was acquired from the author prior to implementation.

The PSES (Tschannen-Moran, 2004) consists of 18 questions measuring the principal's sense of self-efficacy across three factors of the principal leadership: management, instruction, and moral leadership. Each factor was measured by six questions that are answered by the participant by selecting a response along a numerical 1-9 scale with the following descriptors: 1 = none at all, 3 = very little, 5 = some degree, 7 = quite a bit, and 9 = a great deal. A total self-efficacy score is calculated by finding the mean score of the 18 questions. Likewise, each subcategory is scored by calculating the mean score for the category's six questions.

To maintain congruence with Landy's (2013) prior work, for the purposes of this study the scale was reduced to five numerical responses (1-5) with the anchor descriptors of 1= none at all, 3 = some degree, and 5 = a great deal. The PSE was scored for Total PSE by calculating the mean score of all eighteen questions. Calculating the mean of the six questions for each factor similarly produces a self-efficacy score for each factor. Table 3.1 shows the categorization of the PSES statements into the three factors of managerial, instructional, and moral leadership.

Table 3.1 Principal Self-Efficacy Scale grouped by subfactors (Tschannen-Moran, 2004)

Factors	"In your current role as principal, to what extent can you…"
Efficacy for Management	Handle the time demands of the job. Handle the paperwork required of the job. Maintain control of your own daily schedule. Prioritize among competing demands of the job. Cope with the stress of the job. Shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school.
Efficacy for Instructional Leadership	Motivate teachers. Generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school. Manage change in your school. Create a positive learning environment in your school. Facilitate student learning in your school. Raise student achievement on standardized tests.
Efficacy for Moral Leadership	Promote acceptable behavior among students. Promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population. Handle effectively the discipline of students in your school. Promote a positive image of your school with the media. Promote the prevailing values of the community in your school. Promote ethical behavior among school personnel.

The ESS Form (Hoy, 2003) consists of 12 statements that describe the structure of a school. Participants responded to each statement on a 5-point Likert continuum ranging from 1 – Never to 5 – Always. Other choices along the continuum are 2 – Once in a

while; 3 – Sometimes; and 4 – Fairly Often. Six of the statements are scored as they are provided (ex. 2 = 2) while six of the statements are scored inversely (ex. 2 = 4). For example, "Administrative rules help rather than hinder" is scored on an increasing 1-5 continuum as the degree of the structure of formalization within the district increases as the score increases. However, responses to the statement "The administrative hierarchy of this district obstructs innovation" would be scored inversely as the lower the score on the 1-5 continuum signifies the centralization of the district is more enabling. The degree of enabling structure was calculated by determining the mean score of the 12 ratings. For the purpose of this study, the ESS was adapted to measure enabling district structure (EDS) by changing the word "teacher" to "principal" and the word "school" to "district". The modified form is referred to as the "EDS Form". Table 3.2 shows the modified EDS form utilized in this study grouped by structure dimensions.

The final component consisted of seven personal, school and district demographic questions including the principal's total years of experience in public education, highest level of education achieved, total years of principal experience, principal tenure in current district, grade levels within current school, and percentage of students on free/reduced lunch within current school, and number of schools within the principal's school district. The number of district schools was asked to investigate the extent of correlation between district size and EDS, the potential influence of district size on EDS as compared to other demographic factors, and the potential influence of district size on any relationship between EDS and PSE. All responses from principals were anonymous and the researcher was able to link responses to specific principals, schools, or districts.

Table 3.2 EDS Form by Structure Dimension (Adapted from Hoy & Sweetland, 2001)

Structure Dimension	Question
Enabling Formalization	1. Administrative rules in this district enable authentic communication between principals and district administrators.
	2. Administrative rules help rather than hinder.
	3. Administrative rules in this district are guides to solutions rather than rigid procedures.
Coercive Formalization	4. Administrative rules in this district are used to punish principals.
	5. In this district red tape is a problem.
	6. Administrative rules in this district are substitutes for professional judgment.
Enabling Centralization	7. The administrative hierarchy of this district enables principals to do their job.
	8. The administrative hierarchy of this district facilitates the mission of the district.
	9. The administrators in this district use their authority to enable principals to do their job.
Hindering Centralization	10. The administrative hierarchy obstructs student achievement.
	11. The administrative hierarchy of this district obstructs innovation.
	12. In this district the authority of the district is used to undermine principals.

Participant responses to demographic questions were collected as interval and ordinal scales depending on the variable. Interval and ordinal variables were converted to discrete interval scores to conduct statistical analysis methods. Interval variables possess a defined numerical distance between each level permitting the conversion of the ranges into a discrete set of smaller intervals (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). An example in this study is converting a principal's total years of experience in 5-year ranges into a 1-5 interval scale. Categories within ordinal variables follow a natural order even though they do not have a defined distance between the variables (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). An example in

this study would be principals identifying their highest educational degree (Master's, Specialist, Doctorate). Agresti & Finlay (2009) assert that conversion of ordinal variables to intervals allows the researcher to engage qualitative analysis of the data (p. 13). A sensitivity analysis was conducted with multiple converted variables to determine if conclusions differed significantly with utilization of other ranges. Table 3.3 shows the converted variables from each of the demographic questions.

Table 3.3 Converted Interval and Ordinal Values for Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	Original Value (Converted Interval Value)
Years Educational Experience	1-3 (1); 4-6 (2); 7-9 (3); 10-14 (4); 15-19 (5); 20+ (6)
Years Principal Experience	1-3 (1); 4-6 (2); 7-9 (3); 10-14 (4); 15-19 (5); 20+ (6)
Highest Educational Degree	Master's (1); Specialist (2); Doctorate (3)
Principal Tenure in District	1-3 (1); 4-6 (2); 7-9 (3); 10-14 (4); 15-19 (5); 20+ (6)
Current School Grade Structure	Elementary (1); Middle (2); High (3); Multi-Level (4)
Free & Reduced Lunch Percentage	0-10(1); 11-20(2); 21-30(3); 31-40(4); 41-50(5); 51-60(6); 61-70(7); 71-80(8); 81-90(9); 91-100(10)
Number of Schools in District	1-5 (1); 6-10 (2); 11-15 (3); 16-20 (4); 21 or more (5)

Population and Sample

The 1,188 principals from South Carolina's 81 traditional school districts during the 2016-17 academic school year comprised the population for this study. The state's public charter school district, public virtual school district, and department of corrections school district were not included in the study's population due to the variance of district structures within each of these non-traditional districts as compared to traditional school districts to include number of schools, bureaucratic structures, accountability regulations, and governing board oversight. For example, South Carolina's public virtual school district, South Carolina Connections Academy, currently has less than 15 teachers

working under the guidance of an Executive Director. While governed by a public-school board, this district and school structure is not consistent with South Carolina's traditional public-school districts.

District superintendents were contacted via email one week prior to the beginning of data collection. Superintendents were informed of the purpose, construct, and time frame for the study. Emphasis was placed on the anonymous nature of the study that would preclude even the researcher from identifying a specific participant, a participant's school, or a participant's district. Superintendents were requested to inform the researcher if their principals should be excluded from the study. Three districts requested to be excluded due to policies that prohibited outside research. Two districts requested completion of a research application process that prevented participation within the study's window for data collection. The exclusion of these five districts reduced the population of the study by 168, lowering the population of principals receiving requests to participate in the study to 1,020. Six email requests were returned due to the recipient's mailbox being unavailable. Thus 1,014 principals were sent a request for participation in the study.

Surveys were administered utilizing an on-line data collector, *Survey Monkey*, and sent to the email addresses of non-excluded principals as identified in the 2016-17 South Carolina Principal Database provided to the researcher by the South Carolina Department of Education. Anonymity of the participant and district was maintained through the absence of identifiable demographic information. Surveys were restricted to only one submission per computer through *Survey Monkey* to negate the potential of multiple surveys being submitted by a principal. Completion of the survey communicated the

individual's voluntary participation in the study. Participants were able to opt out of the study at any time, choose to not answer specific questions, and submit incomplete surveys. The study sample was composed of surveys submitted within the collection time frame that were completed for the investigated variables.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher administered surveys through on-line communication with 1,014 South Carolina principals. Participants received an initial email with an explanation of the survey, instructions, IRB permission letter, and the survey link. Each subsequent week over a three-week period an email reminder was sent to all participants requesting survey completion and including a final date for the collection period. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, these follow-up emails were sent to all original participants unless they requested to not receive the follow-up emails. Each of the four emails was purposely sent to participants on Saturday or Sunday of each week to avoid the multitude of emails principals receive during the workday and to potentially engage principals in completing the survey due to the absence of workday obligations.

Data Analysis

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between enabling district structure and principal self-efficacy; and, if so, does EDS have a significant predictive influence on PSE while controlling for other personal and district demographics. A secondary purpose was to determine if there is a significant relationship between district size and EDS and if district size influences the relationship between EDS and PSE.

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to calculate the means, range, and standard deviation of each sample to assess variability and the presence of a normal distribution. Simple correlational analysis was used to determine the strength of the relationship between EDS and Total PSE. Pearson correlations were also used to investigate the potential relationship between EDS and district size, as determined by the number of schools in a district. Several factors influenced the decision to use Pearson's correlational analysis. All variables were measured on a continuous scale and could be paired for the same participant in the sample independent of other participant responses (Huck, 2012).

Simple regression analysis was used to determine the degree of influence that a singular independent variable, EDS, had on Total PSE and each of the subcategories of PSE including Management PSE, Instructional Leadership PSE, and Moral Leadership PSE. The use of simple linear regression is justified in the analysis of the singular relationship between EDS and PSE, including each subcategory of PSE, due to EDS being the sole predictor variable engaging multiple dependent variables (Huck, 2012). Each subcategory of PSE utilizes item responses independent from other subcategories. Conducting a Simple regression with EDS and each subcategory allows for deeper analysis of the relationship and influence that EDS has on the construct of PSE.

Simple regression analysis was also used to investigate the relationship between EDS and Total PSE regarding district size. Simple regressions with EDS as the independent variable and Total PSE as the dependent variable were calculated for the sample responses for each grouping of schools. Analysis of the data allowed the

researcher to compare differences in the variability of PSE that could be explained by EDS when controlling for the district size.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the degree of influence of multiple independent variables, including EDS, had on PSE. Principal demographic factors used as independent predictor variables include a principal's years of experience in education, highest academic degree earned, years of experience as a principal, and tenure as a principal within the principal's current district. School and district demographic factors used included the grade structure within the principal's school, the socio-economic status of the school, and the number of schools within the principal's district.

Three regression models were used to analyze the degree of influence of the independent variables on PSE. Principal demographic variables were included in the first model. Following Bandura's (1977) triadic reciprocal causation model for influencing human agency, personal factors include self-efficacy while environmental factors and behavioral factors are the other interdependent components of the model. As personal principal self-efficacy is the dependent variable in this research, personal demographic variables were added first to allow for these personal variables to explain as much variability in PSE as possible before entering school and district variables, including EDS (Huck, 2012). School and district demographics were added to principal demographics in the second model. These environmental factors were used as additional control variables within the regression to maximize the degree of influence that can be explained in PSE prior to the addition of EDS. EDS was subsequently added in the third step of the

regression model allowing the researcher to determine the influence of EDS on PSE after all other personal and environmental factors included in this study had been engaged.

The level of significance for all statistical findings was set at 0.01 in congruence with Landy's (2013) investigation of EDS and PSE, the utilization of multiple data sets measuring participant perceptions, and the anonymity of the survey.

Analysis of Research Question 1

Descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis included calculating the means of the EDS form and the PSES, including total PSE and individual subcategories, in addition to the range and standard deviation (SD) of each sample to assess variability. The samples were also analyzed for presence of a normal distribution and the degree of skew and kurtosis. Such abnormalities to include potential outliers can affect the correlation between two factors and should be analyzed prior to conducting a Simple correlation (Huck, 2012).

Correlational analysis. Huck (2012) explains that Simple correlational methods are utilized when the researcher is determining "whether there is a relationship between two sets of scores, and how strong or weak a relationship is, presuming that a relationship does, in fact, exist" (p. 45). In this study the individual mean scores of the EDS Form and the individual mean scores of the PSES were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) in Excel to determine the correlation coefficient (r) of the set of means. A correlation coefficient is a value ranging from -1 to 1 and represents the strength of the relationship between two sets of values (McClave & Sincich, 2009). Such relationships can be described as direct (positive), indirect (negative), strong (close to the

ends of the continuum), weak (located around 0), or moderate (located between strong and weak) (Huck, 2012).

Correlations do not communicate that direct causation exists, only that there is a linear relationship where a change in one variable results in a corresponding change in the second variable (McClave & Sincich, 2009). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to investigate the potential presence of significant relationships between EDS and Total PSE; EDS and PSE – Management; EDS and PSE – Instructional Leadership; EDS and PSE – Moral Leadership. The utilization of PPMC is justified as the researcher must establish the presence of a linear relationship between EDS and each variable of PSE before seeking to determine the strength of any such relationships.

Simple regression analysis. Simple linear regression is utilized to clarify the degree of the relationship between two variables including the predictability of one variable (dependent) based on the value of the other variable (independent) and the proportion of variability of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable (Huck, 2012). The use of simple linear regression is justified in the analysis of the relationship between EDS and PSE, including each subcategory of PSE, due to the study utilizing EDS as the sole predictor variable while having multiple categories of a singular outcome variable (Huck, 2012). Conducting simple linear regression analysis utilizing EXCEL with EDS as the independent variable (x) and PSE as the dependent variable (y) calculated a regression coefficient (B) which was utilized to determine the predictive value of EDS on Total PSE and each subcategory of PSE by illustrating the rate of change of PSE as a function of the change in EDS (Huck, 2012).

The regression coefficient (B) represents the slope of the "line of best fit" which indicates a predictive line representing points of change that are as close as possible to each individual coordinate representing the intersection of a principal's perceived EDS score and the principal's PSE score. Simple regression was also utilized to determine the value of the coefficient of determination (the square of the correlation coefficient) which represents the proportion of variability in PSE (dependent variable) that is explained by the perceived level of enabling district structure (independent variable) (McClave & Sincich, 2009). This proportion of variability indicates the degree of correlation between the predicted scores as determined by the regression line to the actual scores of the study subjects (Huck, 2012).

Multiple regression analysis. In this study multiple regression was used to analyze the influence of enabling district structure on principal development of self-efficacy while controlling for potential influence from other personal and district factors collected from the population sample. Factors were grouped categorically based on their similar attributes. Personal demographic factors reflecting acquired experience and knowledge (total experience in education, highest educational degree, total principal experience, and principal tenure within the district) potentially related to the development of principal self-efficacy were entered on the first step of the multiple regression. School and district demographic factors reflecting the working environment (grade level of current school, number of district schools, and percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch) were entered on the second step. The measure of enabling district structure was entered on the third step of the regression to determine the percent of

variability in PSE found in the sample beyond what can be explained by the other variables defined in the study.

Conducting multiple linear regression analysis utilizing EXCEL with EDS and other personal and district demographic factors as the independent variables (x) and PSE as the dependent variable (y) calculated a regression coefficient (B) which was utilized to determine the predictive value of EDS on PSE by illustrating the rate of change of PSE as a function of the change in EDS (Huck, 2012). The use of multiple regression is justified in the analysis of the relationship between EDS and PSE due to the necessity of controlling for the influence of other factors when seeking to determine the predictive influence of EDS on PSE (Huck, 2012). Engaging in three steps of regression allowed the researcher to control for personal demographic factors and district demographic factors separately by evaluating the predictive variability of each on principal self-efficacy prior to engaging the analysis of the influence of EDS on the dependent variable.

Analysis of Research Question 2

Descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis included calculating the sample population, EDS means, and standard deviation of the EDS mean scores for each of the five categories of district size determined by the number of schools within the district. Following Landy's (2013) research structure, respondents were asked to indicate the number of schools in his/her district with the choices of 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and 21 or higher. By dividing the respondents into these subgroups and then conducting data analysis, the researcher was able to calculate descriptive statistics for each subgroup to include EDS and total PSE means and standard deviations.

Correlational analysis. Calculation of a Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the extent of the relationship between district size and the mean EDS score from each respondent. The researcher converted the ordinal variables identifying district size subgroups to an interval scale to conduct the correlation (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). Significance was tested using the p-value of .01 consistent with the analysis of Research Question 1.

Simple regression. Simple regression was used to compare the strength of the relationship between EDS and PSE (correlation coefficient) and the predictability of the relationship between EDS and PSE (regression coefficient; coefficient of determination) across each stratified sample based on district size. The stratification of school district size into subgroups doesn't necessitate multiple independent variables which would allow for the utilization of multiple regression analysis. Rather these subgroups provide for a comparison of both the linear relationship and the predictability of the relationship between an identical predictor variable (EDS) on a single response variable (PSE) between samples defined by total number of schools by calculating the correlation coefficient and the coefficient of determination.

Limitations

There were multiple limitations within this research. First, the study's data was self-reported by a volunteer sample of South Carolina principals, and therefore limited to the experiences and perceptions of each participant and open to potential participant bias. Second, the data was limited to the individuals who submitted the survey, resulting in both response and non-response bias. Principal self-efficacy research would indicate that principals with higher levels of efficacy would be more likely to submit the survey due to

higher degrees of organization, enthusiasm for the study's content, and confidence in sharing their perceptions (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Third, the utilization of an electronic data collector sent through email could have limited participation due to email filters or other similar factors that limited accessibility of the survey to potential participants. Fourth, some districts could have formal or informal policies that restrict their principals from survey participation. Fifth, the study's quantitative construct did not allow for participants to share qualitative, descriptive answers and feedback regarding their ratings of district structure and self-efficacy. Sixth, the population for the research was limited to the population of public-school principals in traditional school districts within South Carolina during the spring of 2017 thus limiting the generalizations that can be made based on the research findings.

Seventh, limitations are present in the data analysis methods utilized. Correlations identify the presence of a linear relationship between variables, but is not able to determine causation (McClave & Sincich, 2009). Regression analysis clarifies the degree of the relationship between two variables including the degree of variance in the dependent variable can be predicted from one or more independent variables (Huck, 2012). In this study, multiple independent variables are identified, quantified, and analyzed through multiple regression to determine influence on the dependent variable, PSE. Though these independent variables were identified through their inclusion in prior research studies focused on potential antecedents of PSE, there may be other variables that were not studied which additionally influence principal self-efficacy.

Delimitations

The researcher's utilization of a voluntary, nonprobability sampling methodology across the population of South Carolina public-school principals was a purposeful delimitation of the study. Engaging participants within a bureaucratic environment to provide vulnerable perspectives about their own performance and the performance of others is a challenging and limiting factor (Fullan, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The investment with participant anonymity, leading to potential bias (sample, response, and nonresponse) and the potential for a multiple submission from a principal, was intentionally engaged to promote high participation and honest responses about sensitive variables.

Conclusion

This quantitative research seeks to provide further clarification and validity to the limited research determining the extent of the relationship between enabling district structure and principal self-efficacy. Through implementation of an on-line data collector, 1,014 South Carolina principals were provided the opportunity to anonymously complete two surveys measuring enabling district structure and personal self-efficacy. These two surveys, the EDS Form (Hoy, 2003) and the and Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran, 2004), have been previously found valid and reliable and were utilized with permission of the authors. Principals provided additional personal, school and district demographics to include years of experience in education, highest educational degree achieved, principal experience, tenure as a principal within current district, grade structure of current school, and the free and reduced lunch population of the principal's current school. A sample of 332 surveys were completed out of 382 surveys that

participants began. Descriptive statistical analysis, Simple correlational analysis, and multiple regression analysis utilizing Excel data software was conducted on the collected data to determine findings on two research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study utilizes Bandura's (1977) triadic reciprocal causation model within the framework of social cognitive theory to investigate the potential influence of an environmental factor, the extent to which a district possesses an enabling structure; on a personal factor, the principals' self-efficacy. Additionally, the research quantified the relationship between multiple demographical variables, including district size and principal tenure within the district, and district structure and principal self-efficacy. Descriptive statistics and Simple regression analysis were conducted utilizing Excel data software to address two research questions. This chapter provides an analysis of the data.

Research Questions

Two research questions were investigated:

1. What is the relationship between enabling district structure (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE) in South Carolina?
    a. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding managerial leadership responsibilities?
    b. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding instructional leadership responsibilities?
    c. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding moral leadership responsibilities?

2. What is the relationship between school district size and enabling district structure (EDS) in South Carolina?
    a. What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding district size?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were constructed based on the two research questions of the study.

1. H_0: EDS does not affect principal self-efficacy.

   H_1: EDS affects principal self-efficacy.

2. H_0: District size does not affect EDS.

   H_1: District size affects EDS.

Population and Sample

Utilizing the South Carolina Department of Education's 2016-17 principal database, a population of 1,188 principals were identified as potential participants due to their position as principals within South Carolina's 81 traditionally structured school districts. District requests for exclusion of their principals from the study (5 districts; 168 principals) and principals whose emails would not receive the emailed request (6 principals) resulted in 1,014 principals receiving a request for participation in the study.

A sample of 382 principals (37.7%) began a response to the survey with 360 (35.5%) completing the survey within the four-week data collection window from January 22, 2017 through February 17, 2017. Participants were informed that responses were voluntary and that the principal could skip any question they didn't want to answer. All responses from principals were anonymous and not even the researcher was able to link responses to specific principals, schools, or districts.

The survey consisted of three components. First, the Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) which calculates Total Principal Self-Efficacy (PSE) and subscores for Managerial PSE, Instructional PSE, and Moral PSE. A review of surveys found 343 participants completed all questions on the PSES for a response rate of 33.8% on the PSES. The second component was the EDS Form which calculates an overall score for a principal's perspective of the degree to which their district enables leadership. A review found 347 participants completed all questions on the EDS Form for a response rate of 34.2% on the EDS Form. Analysis found that 332 surveys contained both a completed PSES and a completed EDS Form for an overall response rate of 32.7%. These 332 surveys composed the study sample utilized to perform simple regression analysis to investigate the study questions.

The final survey component consisted of seven personal, school, and district demographic questions including the principal's total years of experience in public education, highest level of education achieved, total years of principal experience, principal tenure in current district, grade levels within current school, and percentage of students on free/reduced lunch within current school, and number of schools within the principal's school district. Of the 332 participants who completed both the PSES and EDS Form, all 332 participants provided the number of schools within their district. Therefore, the same study sample was utilized for both research questions.

Results for Research Question 1

Descriptive Statistics. Descriptive statistics of the study sample were calculated utilizing Excel data software. Total PSE (-0.61) and EDS (-0.64) were found to both have a moderate negative skew meaning that more variance was found on the left side of the

distribution with the mean score lower than the median score of the distribution (McClave & Sincich, 2009). A negative skew shows that more outliers are found on the lower end of the distribution as more respondents scored above the average score of all respondents. The kurtosis of EDS (-0.34) indicated that the distribution had a flatter, less peaked curve than the distribution of Total PSE which was slightly more peaked (0.49) than a normal distribution (Huck, 2012). Thus, EDS had slightly fewer values close to the mean while Total PSE had a significantly more scores distributed around the mean score. These results demonstrate that respondents had more variance in their evaluation of EDS than in their rating of their self-efficacy within the role of principal. Mean values, representing the average score of principals on the 5-point PSES scale, were highest for Moral Leadership efficacy (4.30) and Instructional Leadership efficacy (4.21).

Analysis of EDS (SD = .69) and Managerial Leadership efficacy (SD = .69) both demonstrate a greater standard deviation and, thus, a wider range of scores than principals' Total PSE, Instructional Leadership efficacy, and Moral Leadership efficacy. For example, about 68% of the participants scores for Managerial Leadership as identified by being within one deviation from the mean have a variance of 1.38 points on the 5-point scale (3.09 – 4.47) while the range of scores located within one deviation of the mean (3.60 – 4.60) for Total PSE is 1.00 points (Agresti & Finlay, 2009, p. 49). Table 4.1 provides primary descriptive statistics for the EDS Form and PSES.

Table 4.1 Mean Measures of Enabling District Structure (EDS) and Principal Self-Efficacy (PSE)

Variable	M	SD	N
EDS	3.88	.69	347
Total PSE	4.10	.50	343
Managerial PSE	3.78	.69	352
Instructional PSE	4.21	.52	353
Moral PSE	4.30	.50	356

Correlational analysis. This study seeks to determine the relationship between district-level structures and principal self-efficacy. Correlational analysis utilizing the measures of EDS and Total PSE along with the individual factors of Managerial Leadership efficacy, Instructional Leadership efficacy, and Moral Leadership efficacy was conducted to investigate potential relationships. Positive correlations were found between EDS and Total PSE and between EDS and all individual factors of PSE utilizing Pearson Product Moment Correlations with Excel data software. Correlation coefficients (r) are reported as a decimal between the values of -1.0, a perfect negative relationship where one value increases at the same rate as the other decreases, and 1.0, a perfect positive relationship where both variables increase at the same rate (Huck, 2012).

The extent of the relationship between two variables can be described based on the value of the correlation coefficient ranging from weak (closer to the middle value of 0) to strong (close to either end of the continuum) (Huck, 2012). Moderate relationships were found between EDS and Instructional PSE (r = .28) and Moral PSE (r = .35). Slightly stronger relationships were found between EDS and Total PSE (r = .40) and

Managerial PSE (r = .40). As positive correlations, EDS and PSE move in the same direction along the coordinate plane with an increase in one correlated with a degree of increase in the other. For example, as EDS increases by 1.0, Total PSE increases by 0.4.

Correlation coefficients do not indicate that one variable causes a change in the other variable. Rather, correlations simply indicate a direct relationship between the two variables (Huck, 2012). For example, Total PSE and Instructional PSE have the strongest direct relationship (r = .89) between all the elements measured. In comparison to a perfect correlation of 1.0, the strong, positive relationship between Total PSE and Instructional PSE shows that the high scores of both variables are substantially paired together across the sample (Huck, 2012). The p-value of each of the correlations was calculated to be below the pre-determined significance level of .01. Table 4.2 shows these correlations.

Table 4.2 Pearson Product Moment Correlations for EDS and PSE

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
EDS	1				
Total PSE	.40	1			
Managerial PSE	.40	.88	1		
Instructional PSE	.28	.89	.64	1	
Moral PSE	.35	.87	.60	.76	1

Simple regression analysis. Simple linear regression utilizing Excel data software was conducted on the study sample with EDS as the explanatory variable (independent) and both Total PSE and the individual factors of PSE as the predictor variables (dependent). Significance level (p-value) remained identical to the correlation

of each set of variables as the regression analyzes the same set of values. Therefore, all relationships met the designated significance level of <.01.

The linear regression is defined by the following equation, $Y = a + b * X$. For this series of regressions, the equation becomes PSE = a + b * EDS. The independent variable, EDS, is represented by X and the dependent variable, Total PSE or a PSE subcategory, is represented by Y. The value "a" represents the y-intercept, the predicted value of EDS when PSE is equal to zero. The variable b represents the slope of the linear relationship and is identified as the regression coefficient (B). The regression coefficient can be utilized to determine the change in Y, or dependent variable, for every one unit change in X, or independent variable (Huck, 2012). For example, in the linear relationship between EDS (IV) and Total PSE (DV), the value of B is 0.29. This equates to a positive relationship where each unit increase in enabling district structure results in a 0.29 increase in the principal's total self-efficacy score.

The coefficient of determination (the square of the correlation coefficient) represents the proportion of the total sample variability of the dependent variable (y) that can be explained by the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables (McClave & Sincich, 2009). The coefficient of determination is identified as R^2. Regression data found that EDS explained 16% of the variability in Total PSE, 16% of the variability in Managerial Leadership, 8% of the variability in Instructional Leadership, and 12% of the variability in Moral Leadership. The F-test values demonstrate that EDS is most reliable in predicting Managerial PSE, $F(1, 331) = 63.0$, $p < .001$. Table 4.3 shows summary data from each simple regression.

Table 4.3 Simple Regression Analysis for EDS (IV) and PSE (DV)

IV	DV	R	R^2	B	F
EDS	Total PSE	.40	.16	.29*	61.6*
EDS	Managerial	.40	.16	.40*	63.0*
EDS	Instructional	.28	.08	.21*	28.4*
EDS	Moral	.35	.12	.25*	45.4*

*p-value < .01

Multiple regression analysis. To further investigate the relationship that EDS has on PSE, a multi-step multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction of PSE from personal factors, school and district factors, and EDS. The linear regression equation for this multiple regression is $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 \ldots$ where Y represents the dependent variable, PSE, and X represents each of the various independent variables. Personal demographic variables were entered on Step 1, followed by school and district variables on Step 2, then concluding with EDS added on Step 3 of the regression model.

Personal demographic factors including a principal's total years in education, highest degree attained, total principal experience, and principal experience within one's current district found a model that was not statistically significant (p = .82). Each individual demographic factors were also not statistically significant including total years in education (p = .64), highest educational degree (p = .71), total principal experience (p = .86), and tenure as principal at current school (p = .68). These results find that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that these independent variables collectively or individually can be associated with variation in PSE and, therefore, lead to an acceptance

of the null hypothesis. The Coefficient of Determination R^2 associated with this regression finds that the personal variables account for less than 1% of the variation in the principals' PSE scores (R^2=0.005; p = 0.82).

School and district predictor variables (grade level of current school, number of district schools, and percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch) were added to the analysis in Step 2. This second regression again failed to reveal a statistically significant model (p = .37) and did not significantly increase the explained variance in Total PSE scores (ΔR^2=0.002; R^2=0.15; p = 0.37). Each individual school or district variable were found to be not statistically significant including school grade structure (p = 0.65), district size (p = 0.90), and the school's socio-economic status (p = 0.02). These results find that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that these independent variables collectively or individually can be associated with variation in PSE and, therefore, lead to an acceptance of the null hypothesis. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.002 for the regression model suggests that the combination of personal, school, and district demographical variables combine to account for less than 1% of the variation in principals' PSE scores.

The entry of EDS into the regression at Step 3 revealed a statistically significant model (p < 0.001) and significantly changed the predictability of Total PSE (ΔR^2=0.17; R^2= 0.19). These results show that EDS, as the final independent variable added to the regression model, explained an additional 17% of the variability in the principal self-efficacy scores beyond the insignificant variability that was explained by the first six factors. Each of the independent variables besides EDS continued to be not statistically significant and demonstrate insufficient evidence to conclude that a correlation exists between a change in the variable and a change in PSE. Controlling for the demographic

factors in Step 1 and Step 2, the regression coefficient (B = 0.31, p < 0.001) associated with EDS suggests that for each additional unit increase in EDS as measured by the EDS Form (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001), a principal's self-efficacy will increase by 0.31 units. Table 4.4 provides the coefficients (b), coefficient of determination (R^2), change in R^2 for each regression model, and the significance level (p-value) of each coefficient.

Table 4.4 Multiple regression analysis of predictors of principal self-efficacy

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3
Years educational experience	.01	.02	-.00
Highest degree	.01	.02	.05
Years principal experience	.01	.00	.00
Principal tenure in district	.01	.01	.02
Grade structure		-.01	-.01
Free or reduced lunch		-.03	-.03
Number of schools in district		-.00	.02
EDS			.31**
R^2	.01	.02	.19
R^2 change		.02	.17

*p-value < .01; **p-value < .001

Results for Research Question 2

Descriptive statistics. To investigate the potential relationship between district size and enabling district structure, principals were asked to designate the size of their district within a continuum of five groupings utilized for consistency with the work of Landy (2013). A descriptive analysis of the 81 traditional school districts within South Carolina finds the following distribution of districts utilizing the study's groupings: 22 districts have 1-5 schools, 23 districts have 6-10 schools, 13 districts have 11-15 schools, 5 districts have 16-20 schools, and 18 districts have 20+ schools. Four of the school districts who requested to be excluded from the study had 20+ schools while the remaining excluded district had 11-15 schools.

This data demonstrates that the EDS mean score reduces slightly as the size of the district increases. The standard deviation for each mean score illustrates that the greatest variance in EDS means is found in the 54 participants working in districts of 11-15 schools (SD = .84) and the variance of scores widens overall as the number of schools in the districts increase. Table 4.5 provides descriptive statistics for the EDS Form totals grouped by district size.

Table 4.5 Mean measures of EDS Form grouped by district size

District Size	N	EDS Mean	SD
1-5 Schools	35	4.17	.59
6–10 Schools	63	3.96	.61
11-15 Schools	54	3.85	.84
16-20 Schools	44	3.88	.66
21+ Schools	136	3.79	.67

Correlational analysis. The researcher converted the ordinal variables to an interval scale to investigate the relationship between district size and EDS. Agresti & Finlay (2009) assert that conversion of ordinal variables to intervals allows the researcher to engage qualitative analysis of the data. Calculation of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation utilizing Excel found a significant but weak, negative relationship (r = -0.15, p= .005) between the mean scores as defined by district size and EDS. However, the strength of the relationship does not find that district size and EDS are meaningfully related. Calculation of the Coefficient of Determination ($R^2 = 0.02$) finds that district structure would account for only 2% of a variance in principal self-efficacy (Huck, 2012).

Simple regression analysis. Simple Simple regressions were calculated for each grouping of schools to determine the extent of the relationship between EDS as the independent variable and PSE as the dependent variable. These calculations find a moderately positive relationship correlation between EDS and PSE across all groupings with the strongest significant correlations found in districts with 6-10 schools (R = .45, p < .01), 11-15 schools (R = .49, p < .01), and 16-20 schools (R = .45, p < .01).

The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) indicates the percent of the variability in the dependent variable (Total PSE) that can be explained by the independent variable (EDS). Weaker relationships were found on the two extremes of district size with the smallest district grouping having a correlation of .39 (p = .02) and EDS accounting for 15% (R^2=.15) of the variability in PSE. The largest districts, districts with 21 or more schools, had the smallest correlation to EDS (R = .36, p < .01) and accounted for only 13% (R^2=.13) of the variability in PSE. Table 4.6 provides the results of these regressions.

Table 4.6 Linear Regression Analysis for EDS & Total PSE, Grouped by District Size

District Size	N	R	R^2	B	F
1-5 Schools	35	.39	.15	.36	5.8
6–10 Schools	63	.45	.21	.43*	15.9*
11-15 Schools	54	.49	.24	.28*	16.6*
16-20 Schools	44	.45	.20	.36*	10.8*
21+ Schools	136	.36	.13	.23*	19.4*

*p-value <.01

Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between Enabling District Structure (EDS) and principals' self-efficacy (PSE) and to determine the potential influence of EDS on subfactors of PSE to include managerial leadership PSE, instructional leadership PSE, and moral leadership PSE. A secondary inquiry sought to determine the relationship between district size and EDS and to determine the potential influence of district size on EDS. The major findings are as follows:

1. Data demonstrated a significant moderate relationship between EDS and Total PSE, ($r = .40$; $p < .001$). EDS explained 16% of the variability in Total PSE and was highly reliable in predicting Total PSE, $F (1, 331) = 61.6$, $p < .001$.
2. Managerial leadership PSE mirrored the significant moderate relationship that of Total PSE to EDS, ($r = .40$; $p <.001$). EDS explained 16% of the variability in managerial leadership.
3. A significant moderate relationship was found between EDS and moral leadership ($r = 0.35$, $p < .001$). EDS explained 12% of the variability in moral leadership.

4. EDS had the weakest relationship ($r = .28$), influence ($= .08$), and predictability, $F(1, 331) = 28.4$, $p < .001$) with instructional leadership efficacy.
5. Multivariate regression data found no significant presence of predictability on principals' perceptions of self-efficacy from personal, school, and district demographic factors including principal experience, principal educational level, school grade structure, number of schools in the district, and percentage of students receiving subsidized meals.
6. Multiple regression models found EDS explained an additional 17% of the variability in PSE beyond any influence from other demographical variables analyzed. Controlling for all demographic factors, each unit increase in EDS would result in a 0.31 increase in principal's self-efficacy score.
7. Descriptive statistics demonstrated that the mean EDS score reduced in size as the size of the district increased. Correlation calculations found a significant but small negative relationship between district size and EDS ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$).
8. Simple regression analysis for EDS (IV) and Total PSE (DV) grouped for district size found statistically significant relationships ($p < .01$) in all groupings other than the smallest category (1-5 schools). The strongest relationships were found in school districts with 6 – 10 schools ($r = .45$), 11-15 schools ($r = .49$), and 16 – 20 schools ($r = .45$). The largest category (21+ schools) had the lowest correlation between EDS and Total PSE ($r = .36$) and explained only 13% of the variability between the two factors.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential influence of district structure on the self-efficacy of South Carolina public-school principals. Using Bandura's (1989) triadic reciprocal causation model as a foundation, the researcher sought to build upon Hoy and Sweetland's (2001) concept of enabling school structure to examine the potential impact of enabling district structure (EDS) as an environmental antecedent to principal self-efficacy (PSE). Understanding of the relationship between EDS and PSE can help educational leaders within South Carolina's State Department of Education along with district superintendents and other district leaders understand the necessity of maintaining focus on practices that positively impact principal confidence and willingness to engage in the transformational, second-order change practices identified as vital to improving student achievement in South Carolina's schools (Marzano et al. 2005; Kirtman, 2014; Scoppe, 2016; State of South Carolina, 2017).

Summary of the Study

A purposive sample of South Carolina public-school principals completed two previously validated surveys measuring the degree to which their district structure is enabling (EDS Form, Hoy, 2003) and their personal self-efficacy within the role of principal (PSES, Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The researcher analyzed descriptive statistics and conducted Simple regression and multiple regression analysis to answer two research questions.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between enabling district structure (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE) in South Carolina principals?

This study found a moderate, statistically significant relationship between enabling district structure and principals' self-efficacy in fulfilling the role of a school principal ($r = .40$, $p < .001$). This means that a one-unit positive change in one variable would correspond with a .40-unit positive change in the other variable. Regression statistics demonstrated that EDS explained 16% of the variability in PSE ($R^2 = .16$, $p < .001$) and was found highly reliable in predicting PSE, $F(1,331) = 61.6$, $p < .001$). These findings result in an acceptance of the study's alternative hypothesis that EDS does affect principal self-efficacy.

This data reinforces prior findings by Landy (2013) on the positive relationship between these two constructs ($r = .29$, $R^2 = .09$, $p < .001$). This is an important contribution to the limited body of research regarding the impact of district leadership, structures, and practices on the development of principal self-efficacy. While available resources and demographical attributes of systems may fluctuate based on factors outside the control of district leaders, the ability to engage, nurture and sustain an enabling structure is a practice that is accessible to all.

Research Questions 1a, 1b, and 1c

What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding managerial leadership responsibilities?

What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding instructional leadership responsibilities?

What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding moral leadership responsibilities?

This study investigated the relationship between EDS and three subcategories of principal self-efficacy: Managerial Leadership, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership. Principals with efficacy for management are confident in time management, prioritization of responsibilities, coping with stress, and designing effective operational policies and procedures (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Instructional leadership efficacy includes confidence in a principal's ability to motivate teachers and staff around a compelling vision, engaging and managing change initiatives, creating and sustaining a conducive learning environment and producing student achievement gains on standardized testing (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Principals with moral leadership efficacy feel they are effective in promoting acceptable student behavior, nurturing school spirit, ensuring ethical behavior among school staff, and promoting a positive image of the school with community stakeholders and the media (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

This study found a moderate, statistically significant relationship between EDS and both Managerial Leadership ($r = .40$, $p < .001$) and Moral Leadership ($r = .35$, $p < .001$). Results found that EDS had a small, statistically significant relationship with Instructional Leadership ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis found that EDS explained 16% of the variability in Managerial Leadership, 12% of the variability in Moral Leadership, and 8% of the variability in Instructional Leadership. These results mirror Landy (2013) findings of statistically significant relationships between EDS and the three subcategories of PSE in a population of New York public-school principals.

Both Landy (2013) and this study found that EDS was most strongly related to and most predictive of the degree to which principal's communicated efficacy for Managerial Leadership and least predictive of a principal's efficacy for Instructional Leadership.

Demographic Elements and Principal Self-Efficacy. To further investigate the relationship that EDS has on PSE, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the influence of EDS on PSE as compared to the influence of personal and school or district demographical elements on PSE. Principal demographics investigated included principal's total experience in education, highest degree attained, total principal experience, and tenure within the principal's current district. These elements connect to all three of the factors found within Bandura's triadic reciprocal causation model influencing the development of human agency (Bandura, 1989). A principal's experiences within the classroom and within the role of principal shape beliefs, perceptions and attitudes (personal factors) while also impacting the development of habits, skills, and competencies (behavioral factors). A principal's pursuit of additional training and degrees along with the principal's ability to establish tenure within a district reflect a principal's attitudes and goals (personal factors) and the influence of other individuals and institutions on the principal's emotions and acquisition of knowledge (environmental factors).

The quantitative data from these descriptive demographics reflect potential influencers on a principal's development of self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) identified four sources of self-efficacy including mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological states. Each of these principal demographic elements can be potentially connected to one or more of these sources of self-efficacy. For example,

principals with established tenures would be expected to have demonstrated a level of mastery within the educational field such as a classroom instructor and as an assistant principal. Principals achieving higher levels of education to include Specialists or Doctorate degrees would be hypothesized to have had more vicarious mastery experiences through collaboration with and observation of other highly successful individuals within the educational arena. Leaders achieving long tenure as principals within a specific school district would be expected to be the recipient of positive social persuasion through both collaborative experiences, leadership opportunities, and successful performance reviews. Santamaria's (2008) study of the self-efficacy of California principals and Schrik's (2017) study of Illinois principals both found significant positive relationships between the educational attainment of principals and PSE. Schrik (2017) also found higher levels of self-efficacy in more experienced principals.

School and district elements investigated included the school's current grade level, size of the district as determined by number of district schools, and students in the principal's school receiving free and reduced lunch. Such environmental demographic variables have been investigated within prior principal self-efficacy research as discussed within Chapter Two. Results from these studies have been inconsistent. For example, while Lehman (2007) found an inverse relationship between socio-economic status and PSE from a sample of Wisconsin principals; Lovell (2009), did not find a significant relationship between PSE and a school's poverty level as defined by Title 1 status from a sample of Georgia principals. Lehman (2007) hypothesized that through the construct of Bandura's triadic reciprocal model that though a school's poverty level and the

subsequent challenges engaged could negatively impact the self-efficacy of the school leader, it was also possible that the principal's lack of efficacy could result in a lack of student performance. Santamaria (2008) found that the higher the grade level of the school, the higher the self-efficacy of the principal; yet, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2005) failed to find significant relationships between PSE and school grade levels, school settings, and socio-economic status.

Such findings led Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2005) to suggest further inquiry into the influence of district leadership and district structures on the development of principal self-efficacy rather than principal and environmental demographic elements. The collection and analysis of data on these personal and demographic elements within this study was intended to not only add to the body of research on the influence of such variables on PSE but obtain further perspective on the degree of the relationship of EDS and PSE in comparison to other variables. Multiple regression was utilized to conduct this analysis.

A series of regressions were conducted beginning with personal elements, then adding school and district elements, and finally adding the influence of enabling district structure (EDS) to the model. Both the principal and district/school demographics were found to not have a statistically significant relationship to principal self-efficacy and combined to account for less than 1% of the variance in the sample's PSE scores. The entry of EDS into the regression at Step 3 revealed a statistically significant model ($p < 0.001$) and significantly changed the predictability of Total PSE (ΔR^2=0.17; R^2= 19). These results show that EDS, as the final independent variable added to the regression model, explained an additional 17% of the variability in the principal self-efficacy scores

beyond the insignificant variability that was explained by the first six factors. These findings further accentuate the importance of district leadership seeking to promote principal performance maximizing focus on the degree to which their policies, rules, and structures provide systemic clarity and nurture empowered principals while limiting focus on degrees of principal experiences and school demographics.

Research Questions 2 and 2a

What is the relationship between the size of South Carolina's school districts and EDS? What is the relationship between EDS and PSE regarding school district size?

A secondary purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between district size and EDS; and, to determine if district size effects the relationship of EDS and PSE. Study participants designated the size of their district as defined by the study's groupings: 1-5 schools, 6-10 schools, 11-15 schools, 16-20 schools, and 21+ schools. An analysis of descriptive data found that the mean EDS score for a district reduced slightly as the size of the district increased. The highest EDS score (4.17 on a 1-5 scale) was found in districts with 1-5 schools while the lowest EDS score (3.79) was found in districts with 21 or more schools.

A small, negative, statistically significant correlation was found between district size and EDS ($r = -.15$, $p = .005$). This relationship indicates that as the number of schools within the district increases, enabling district structure decreases. The statistically significant correlation between district size and EDS in this study allows the researcher to reject the null hypothesis and find that district size does affect EDS. This finding reinforces the work of Landy (2013) who also found a small, negative, statistically significant correlation between district size and EDS in her sample of New York

principals (r = -.27, p < .01). However, the strength of the relationship does not find that district size and EDS are meaningfully related. Calculation of the Coefficient of Determination ($R^2 = 0.02$) finds that either of the variable would account for only 2% of variance in the other variable.

Simple regressions were conducted to determine the extent of the relationship between EDS and PSE when controlling for district size. Statistically significant relationships between EDS and PSE were found in all districts having 6 or more schools. EDS explained the highest percent of variability in Total PSE in districts with 6-10 schools ($R^2 = 0.21$, p < .001), 11-15 schools ($R^2 = 0.24$, p < .001), and 16-20 schools ($R^2 = 0.20$, p < .01). EDS had the lowest influence in districts of 21+ schools ($R^2 = 0.13$, p < .001), Districts with 1-5 schools demonstrated a moderate relationship between EDS and PSE, (r = .39, $R^2 = 0.15$), but the level of significance (p = .02) didn't meet the significance level for this study (p < .01).

Unlike this study, Landy (2013) found a significant correlation between EDS and PSE only in districts with 0-5 schools (r = .29, p < .01) and districts with 6-10 schools (r = .42, p < .01). Landy (2013) hypothesized that the lack of statistically significant correlations in the study could have been the result of low response numbers from principals with districts greater than 10 schools and recommended additional inquiry into the impact of district size on the relationship between EDS and PSE. With a greater number of responses from principals in larger districts and a smaller overall sample population, this study provides a new perspective on the potential influence of district size on the relationship between EDS and PSE.

Demographic Elements and Enabling District Structure

Additional principal and school demographic elements were collected through this study to investigate the relationship of such variables with the construct of enabling district structure. Due to the lack of past research on the concept and influence of enabling district structure, this study sought to develop understanding of potential antecedents of enabling district structure to provoke and support future inquiry in support of Landy's (2013) recommendations for future study. Correlations between EDS and principal experience in public education, experience as a principal, tenure as principal within the current district, principal's highest degree earned, school grade levels, school socioeconomic status, and district size were investigated. Principals' level of educational degree was the only factor found to have a significant correlation ($p < .01$) with EDS. A small, negative correlation was found ($r = -.14$) indicating that an increase in a principal's educational degree results in the principal's district being a less enabling bureaucracy.

Discussion of Results

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between enabling district structures (EDS) and principal self-efficacy (PSE). The potential role of enabling district structure as an antecedent of principal self-efficacy presents a possible high-yield, low cost investment in the ability of South Carolina schools to engage transformational practices to meet the rigorous student achievement goals established by the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate and the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (State of South Carolina, 2017). South Carolina's target goal of 90% of the state's high school students graduating "college, career, and citizenship ready" by 2035 by having every district and high school achieving a 5%

annual improvement in students meeting defined criteria between 2020 and 2035 requires that districts attain, empower, support and retain efficacious principals who are willing and able to create such empowering structures within their own schools (State of South Carolina, 2017).

EDS and Principal Self-Efficacy

Hoy and Sweetland's (2001) theoretical construct of enabling school structure (ESS) defining the intersection of formalization (written rules, procedures, and policies) and centralization (shared decision making) along a cultural continuum of hindering to enabling, provides a framework within which the limited research on district-level practices as antecedents to principal self-efficacy can be clarified and measured. The existence of a significant moderate positive relationship between the constructs of EDS and PSE as found in this study ($r = .40$; $p < .001$) is not a surprise. District level structures that enable leaders in a respectful, collaborative culture with clearly defined procedures, high expectations, but attainable data-based goals link the essential elements of EDS to Bandura's (1977) foundations of self-efficacy development.

Bandura (1977) proposed that self-efficacy is the product of four factors: mastery level experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological factors that engage the individual such as stress. A district's ability to engage principals in purposeful professional development, collaborative action research, trusting relationships, autonomy to address issues unique to one's school, and shared ownership of results would appear to be essential to developing positive self-efficacy within the district's leadership team. Thus, the theoretical construct behind the primary question for this study, a triadic reciprocal causation model involving the interdependence of environmental factors

(EDS), personal factors (PSE), and behavioral factors (high performing schools). The ability and focus of district leaders to engage, develop and systematically cultivate the efficacy of the district's principals is a worthy investment in the sustained success of teachers and students within the system.

EDS and Managerial Leadership Efficacy

This study found moderate, statistically significant relationships between EDS and each of the factors of PSE. This was to be expected based on the moderate correlation between EDS and Total PSE and the results of the parent study (Landy, 2013). Both Landy (2013) and this study found weaker relationships between EDS and Instructional Leadership and Moral Leadership than between EDS and Managerial Leadership highlighting the direct impact of district rules and bureaucracy have on the operational components of a principal's responsibilities. An area in need of further investigation is the emerging pattern from Landy (2013) and this study of near identical correlations when capturing the relationship between EDS and Managerial Leadership PSE and the relationship between EDS and Total Principal Self-Efficacy. Principals may primarily relate the influence of district leadership to variables of their role that they must manage rather than partners engaging in systemic collaborative efforts to enhance instructional and cultural performance.

Further analysis finds the overall mean for efficacy for Managerial Leadership is the lowest of the three factors ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .69$). The mean is significantly below both Moral PSE ($M = 4.30$, $SD = .50$) and Instructional PSE ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .52$). A review of the actual items on the PSES finds that managerial elements are six of the seven lowest rated by principals with only an instructional element, ability to raise student

standardized test scores (3.53 out of 5.00) interrupting the trend. Principals' rated their confidence in their ability to control their daily schedule (3.47), shape operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage the school (3.70), handle required paperwork (3.84), cope with job stress (3.84), prioritize among competing demands (3.90), and handle the time demands of the job (3.93) as their lowest areas of personal efficacy. All other indicators scored above a 4.00 with the instructional components of generating enthusiasm (4.59) and creating a positive environment (4.50) having the highest means and the moral component of promoting acceptable behavior among students (4.43) being third.

A review of the lowest scored factors for EDS find the bottom quartile to include: 1) In this district, red tape is not a problem (3.28 out of 5.00); 2) Administrative rules in this district are guides to solutions rather than rigid procedures (3.50); and, 3) Administrative rules help rather than hinder (3.52). This analysis of the descriptive statistics from the PSES and the EDS accentuate the high correlation between Managerial Leadership efficacy and EDS. Districts should consider how they are able to invest in the development of their principals' efficacy for management by analyzing the extent to which their formalized structures are clear, efficient, and able to be engaged and shaped by school leadership within an environment of mutual trust and shared accountability.

EDS and Moral Leadership Efficacy

Principals identified Moral Leadership as the leadership factor in which they felt most efficacious (M = 4.30; SD = .50). This result echoes Landy's (2013) study where a sample of New York public-school principals had a mean score of 4.19 for Moral Leadership efficacy. An analysis of the individual elements finds that principals rated

four Moral Leadership elements among the top six efficacious elements. These elements included: promoting acceptable behavior among students (4.43); handling effectively the discipline of students in your school (4.34); promoting a positive image of your school with the media (4.39); and, promoting ethical behavior among school personnel (4.35). The lowest rated element among this study's sample of South Carolina principals was efficacy in "promoting the prevailing values of the community in your school" which also had the greatest variance among respondents ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .79$).

Landy (2013) suggests that the Moral Leadership factor varies from both Managerial Leadership and Instructional Leadership in that the elements assessed are more subjective in nature. While compliance with policies and improvements in standardized test scores are quantitative, moral components such as positive school image, ethical behavior, and community values might be more qualitatively assessed. Regardless, the elements of moral leadership are essential for developing, cultivating, and maintaining a culture that is both conducive to learning and allows for positive engagement from all stakeholders including the community, parents, students, and faculty. Within the current political, racial, and cultural divides being experienced in South Carolina and the United States, the development of efficacy within principals to engage moral leadership and effectively communicate and collaborate with all stakeholders of a school community is paramount to the success of the school (Aguilar, 2019). The development of Moral Leadership efficacy within school principals deserves more attention and research now more than ever.

This study found a moderate relationship between EDS and Moral Leadership efficacy ($r = 0.35$, $p < .001$). EDS explained 12% of the variability in Moral Leadership

efficacy. It is also noted that principals' perceptions of Moral Leadership efficacy and Instructional Leadership efficacy were highly correlated ($r = 0.76$, $p < .01$). District leaders should consider ways in which they can intentionally develop the capacity and confidence of principals to engage this essential cultural factor that ties together Managerial Leadership and Instructional Leadership within the school setting. District leaders can enhance clarity, coherence, and confidence of principals within this factor through establishing, modeling, and maintaining high professional standards for leaders across the system (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Districts should also consider engaging principals in collaborative problem solving of systemic issues to both build leadership capacity and establish avenues for effective leadership succession within the system (Louis, et al, 2010; Curry, 2014; Fullan, 2003; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

EDS and Instructional Leadership Efficacy

District leaders should also consider how to improve active principal engagement in the development, implementation, analysis, and revision of strategic plans for systemic instructional performance. Principals in this study collectively rated personal confidence in their ability to raise student standardized test scores (3.53 out of 5.00) as their second lowest degree of self-efficacy out of 18 elements. Principal's self-efficacy in other elements of Instructional Leadership was significantly higher including: facilitating student learning (4.31); generating enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school (4.59); managing change in the school (4.22); creating a positive learning environment (4.50); and motivating teachers (4.11). In addition, study data found that Enabling District Structure was least predictive (8%) of a principal's Instructional Leadership efficacy.

The presence of principal efficacy to raise standardized test scores as an outlier within other defined elements of Instructional Leadership efficacy may be connected to the preeminent role that accountability for standardized testing has within public-school reform currently. While principals feel efficacious in their abilities in executing inputs such as creating a shared vision, supporting student learning, engaging change, and motivating teachers, principals have less confidence in their ability to positively influence the critical output of higher student standardized test scores. Perhaps just as challenging for district leaders, this study illustrates that these same principals don't link district structures as having high degrees of influence over their ability to meet these challenges.

Louis, et al (2010) highlight the importance of district leadership and practices focused on empowering principals and cultivating principal efficacy in their findings on the relationship between district use of data to establish and meet student performance targets. The researchers found that district emphasis on using student data targets to drive student achievement only occurred when principals were active agents in the design process and subsequently possessed the belief that accomplishing the task was not only possible but within their sphere of influence to achieve (Louis et al. 2010). Just as significantly, the authors posit that if districts engage data-driven goals and policies that do not engage principals and enhance principal efficacy, the initiative is likely to produce negative student performance results (Louis et al. 2010).

Just as principals must become "lead learners" within a school environment to maximize teacher engagement, build leadership capacity, and empower collective ownership of practices, processes, and results (Fullan, 2014), district superintendents and directors must build collaborative structures that empower principals to collectively

engage in strategic action cycles that inform collaboratively designed continuous improvement plans (Louis, et al, 2010; Kirtman, 2014; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Through engaging principals in the identification, design, implementation, and evaluation of practices and processes, district leaders will promote ownership for action and accountability for measurable results in student performance (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). While more challenging to execute than autocratic leadership, such empowerment and engagement of enabling structures will facilitate growth in both collective and individual principal efficacy for Instructional Leadership while also modeling effective leadership practices that can cascade throughout the layers of the organization.

EDS and District Size

A second focus of this study found a small, negative statistically significant relationship between district size and enabling district structure, $r = -.15$, $p < .01$. This result means that one variable in the relationship will decrease slightly as the other variable increases. This finding validates the work of Landy (2013) who found a similar negative correlation ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$). Though these findings demonstrate a weak overall relationship, results connect to the previous discussion regarding the established significant relationship between EDS and the PSE subcategory of Managerial Leadership. Larger districts may have more potential for engaging hindering and coercive bureaucracy and less opportunity for the development of shared leadership, clear priorities, and local control to meet the individual needs of schools.

Louis et al. (2010) emphasized findings of a negative correlation between principal self-efficacy and district size. Perhaps the construct of enabling district structure is the reason for this relationship between district size and PSE, if as this study found,

EDS has a significant influence on the development of principal self-efficacy. District leaders may want to consider how to intentionally develop smaller clusters of schools within larger districts to increase collaboration, ensure clear communication, and promote shared ownership of policies and procedures.

This study found that the relationship between EDS and PSE was strongest within districts with 6-10 and 11-14 schools. Consolidation of South Carolina's public-school districts has been a recurring topic of discussion over the past several decades. Advocates emphasize a reduction in repetitive services, potential financial benefits and more consistency among school curriculum and programs (Palmetto Promise Institute, 2018). The South Carolina State Legislature adopted Proviso 1.102 in 2018 empowering the State Superintendent of Education to consolidate administrative functions of any school district that contained less than 1,500 students, has been designated as financially unstable, or contains schools who have been identified in need of improvement by the state for more than three years (www.scstatehouse.gov). During the 2018-19 school year, the South Carolina State Department of Education required 13 rural school districts with less than 1,500 students to consolidate services with other districts (Schechter, 2019). Eight South Carolina districts applied for state financial assistance to consolidate with another district in August 2019 (Adcox, 2019). In light of this study, awareness of the potentially negative effect on enabling district structure and subsequent impact on principal self-efficacy should be considered by South Carolina districts and policy makers when engaging future district consolidation.

EDS and Demographic Factors

Finally, this study sought to add to the understanding of EDS by investigating potential correlations between EDS and principal and school demographic factors. The lone factor to have a statistically significant relationship to EDS was the principal's highest educational degree earned. Principal educational level was found to have a small, negative relationship with EDS ($r = -.14$, $p < .01$). This finding may indicate that as principals develop their understanding of theoretical frameworks and expand their perspectives outside of their own school, they expect to have more autonomy within their own school and more voice in district protocols and procedures. Districts may want to consider engaging principals with advanced degrees in shared leadership initiatives at the district level to build leadership capacity and levels of self-efficacy within such leaders.

Other factors including total educational experience, principal experience, principal tenure within the district, school level, and school socioeconomic status did not significantly correlate to EDS. The researcher hypothesized that district tenure may have a significant correlation to EDS based on relationships with district level leadership. However, the absence of such a correlation combined with the presence of the relationship between EDS and educational level accentuates the premise that experience is not necessarily a determining factor in leadership potential.

The absence of relationships between EDS and the principal and demographic factors investigated in this study reflect consistent findings regarding the absence of relationships between such factors and principal self-efficacy. School size and district size are the only such factors that have been found to be correlated (both negatively) to principal self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Smith et al. 2006; Louis et al. 2010).

This absence of relationship, particularly between EDS, PSE, and socioeconomic status, highlights an important potential outcome of this study when considering the urgent need for educational transformation within South Carolina.

Recommendations for Enhancing Enabling District Structure

EDS Enhancement Model. Bandura (1977, 1989, 2012) proposed that human agency occurs within a triadic reciprocal causation model composed of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors that interdependently shape human actions. Environmental factors are the influence of society on the individual's emotions, opportunities, and knowledge acquisition. Personal factors include biological and personality traits, expectations, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and goals. Behavioral factors consist of an individual's habits, skills, competencies, and past actions. The triadic reciprocal model claims each of these factors continuously and simultaneously interact to shape personal agency in each unique situation one experiences (Bandura, 2012). Figure 5.1 illustrates Bandura's model.

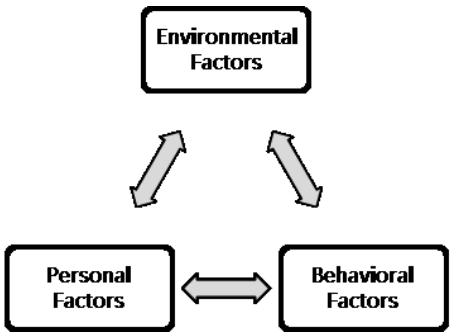

Figure 5.1. Illustration of the triadic reciprocal causation model (Bandura, 1977).

This study found evidence that enabling district structure, an environmental factor, has a positive influence on principals' self-efficacy, a personal factor. A principal's self-efficacy, or confidence in his or her abilities to perform specific practices,

has been positively related to a principal's willingness to engage challenges, set high goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and promote transformational practices within his or her school (Bandura, 1997, McCormick, 2001, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). This relationship is illustrated by Figure 5.2. A second environmental factor, the number of schools in the district, was also found in this study to have a small, negative relationship meaning that EDS decreased as the size of the district, determined by the number of schools, increased. This finding reflected prior research (Landy, 2013).

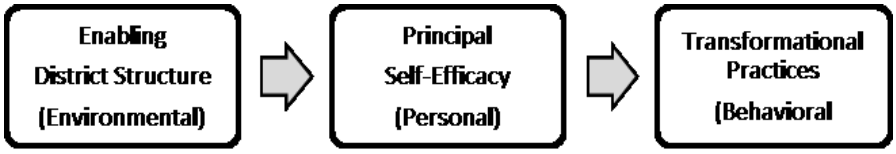

Figure 5.2. Illustration of Bandura's (1977) triadic causation model as used in this study

Using the triadic causation model as a foundation, a new model is presented to assist district leaders in creating, nurturing, and sustaining an enabling district structure with the purpose of enhancing principal self-efficacy and impacting principals' willingness to engage transformational practice. This model illustrates the importance for district leadership to engage three symbiotic elements: empowerment, interdependence, and accountability. Figure 5.3 illustrates this model.

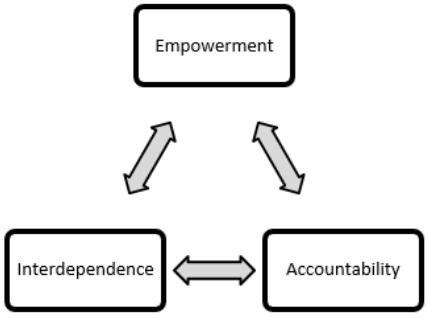

Figure 5.3. Illustration of the EDS enhancement model (Nutter, 2021).

District leaders must construct an environment within which empowerment is expected and embraced. District leaders must nurture interdependence through principal-centered collaboration that is meaningful and systemic. District leaders must invest in both formative and summative principal evaluation that is targeted and growth-oriented. As with Bandura's triadic causation model, each element fuels and is impacted by the development of the other two elements.

EDS Enhancement Model Practices. Core practices proposed within each element of the EDS Enhancement Model connect to Bandura's (1986) fundamental sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological states. Mastery experiences are authentic, personal engagements that result in desired outcomes. Vicarious experiences are observations of mastery performance and the subsequent modeling of those actions. Social persuasion is verbal feedback, task assignment, goal definition, and/or performance evaluation that reinforces an individual's motivation and determination to choose and maintain engagement in challenging tasks. Physiological states include personal habits, stressors, experiences, and attitudes.

Bandura (1986) asserts that one can't diagnose the level of perceived self-efficacy an individual has for a given situation or task simply by considering a singular source. Each source has a reciprocal, interactive effect and has the potential to enhance or deter an individual's perception of competence in a specific situation (Bandura, 1986). It is important for district leadership to consider this factor when engaging each of the core practices detailed in the EDS Enhancement Model as each practice engages one or more of these fundamental sources of self-efficacy.

The model's core practices also reflect progression towards an enabling bureaucracy on the continuum of formalization and centralization as conceptualized by Hoy and Sweetland (2001). Formalization is defined as "the degree to which the organization has written rules, regulations, procedures, and policies" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 297). Enabling formalization emphasizes principle-centered, evidence-based guidelines that promote professional judgment, site-based autonomy, and creative problem solving. Centralization is defined as "the degree to which employees participate in decision making" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 299). Enabling centralization emphasizes collective problem solving and decision making that communicate leadership's value and trust in employees across the hierarchy. Hoy and Sweetland's (2001) ESS model is illustrated by Figure 5.4.

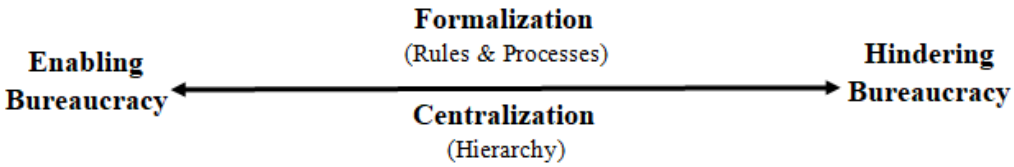

Figure 5.4: Enabling School Structure Model (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001)

The EDS Enhancement Model presents a pathway towards developing and sustaining an enabling bureaucracy within school districts that promotes individual and collective principal self-efficacy. The model consists of three symbiotic elements: empowerment, interdependence, and accountability. Core practices are identified within each of these elements that can promote the self-efficacy of a school system's principals by enhancing the district's enabling structure. The following is a brief description of each of these proposed core practices. Each practice is linked to Bandura's (1986) sources of self-efficacy and to Hoy and Sweetland's (2001) concepts of formalization and centralization.

Empowerment core practices. These core practices can assist district leaders in construction of an environment in which empowerment is expected and embraced.

Define foundational principles that inform rules and guide decisions. District leaders should ensure that foundational principles are clearly defined and articulated with school leaders. A principle is defined as a "comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Principles that are clearly defined and articulated by district leaders provide principals sound reasoning for corresponding rules and procedures as well as established guidelines in which to engage their own autonomous decision-making. Conversely, districts that provide school principals with a high degree of formalized bureaucracy through expansive lists of rules and procedures without consistently communicating and clarifying the foundational principles of these dictates establish a rule-bound community where principals manage implementation of rules and procedures rather than engage principle-centered problem-solving.

Principals may be more willing to embrace challenging decisions and unforeseen situations that require creative problem-solving when able to confidently ground those actions in systemic principles supported and communicated frequently by their supervisors' words and actions. As principals utilize principle-centered professional judgment to address situations they begin to layer degrees of mastery experiences that will positively influence their self-efficacy. Principles also allow school leaders to ground discussions of unique situations and solutions within a defined, common paradigm that promotes sharing of vicarious experiences among a cadre of principals and district leaders. Common principles and shared mastery experiences ultimately can promote

principal voice in systematic collaborative review and revision of rules and regulations and facilitate the ownership and institutionalization of these foundational truths.

Define clear roles and responsibilities for principals and district staff.

District leaders must assist principals in going beyond the limits of a printed job description or organizational chart. Annual orientations for all principals and district leaders should be conducted that clearly define the scope of the district's expectations for leadership responsibilities including how to prioritize and structure the multi-faceted elements of the principalship including instructional leadership, managerial leadership, and moral leadership. District leaders need to provide principals clarity as to the district structure and supports that principals are expected and encouraged to utilize including policies, protocols, and people.

Principals should not see the district bureaucracy as a hinderance but as a necessary and competent support for their schools, their stakeholders, and themselves. A principal who clearly understands the rules of the game and develops effective lines of communication with all the system's players can focus on strategy and execution rather than rule compliance or seeking ways to manipulate the system to achieve desired outcomes. It is the district's responsibility to combat both the ambiguity and complexity that naturally arises within the district bureaucracy and can directly lead to physiological factors such as unproductive stress and attitudes of competition, manipulation, or lack of appreciation which can hinder the development of self-efficacy. Ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities across the district bureaucracy prevents individuals from acting outside of their responsibility and promotes a dual mindset of self-leadership and

productive teamwork. These mindsets are a valuable antidote for prevention of a top-heavy, centralized bureaucracy where decisions are made and disseminated from the top.

Define degrees of autonomy within the principal's role and responsibilities.

Principals who have clarity of the system's principles, priorities, roles, and responsibilities are equipped to efficiently lead their schools. However, the final core practice of empowerment will allow principals to develop confidence and willingness to engage in the transformational, second-order leadership necessary within the current educational environment. District leaders must clearly define and articulate to principals the degrees of autonomy with which the principal is empowered to act within the different aspects of the principal's roles and responsibilities.

Covey's (2004) Seven Levels of Initiative or Self-Empowerment are a tool that has been used effectively to help principals understand degrees of autonomy. Covey's model transitions on a continuum that includes the following conditions for decision making: "1) Wait until told; 2) Ask; 3) Make a recommendation; 4) I intend to; 5) Do it and report immediately; 6) Do it and report periodically; 7) Do it." (2004, p. 133). While the optics of "Wait until told" and other levels at the lower end of Covey's continuum do not on the surface communicate empowerment, district leaders should understand that effective empowerment only occurs when principals build both self-efficacy and mutual trust with their superiors. Self-efficacy is not bravado, but rather confidence fueled by the repetition of successful mastery experiences.

Defining levels of autonomy and engaging authentic examples in collaborative discussion allows principals to act within the safety of a supportive structure while also gaining the benefit of vicarious experiences, expertise, and perspectives from their

district leaders that can enhance self-efficacy. Promoting the increased potential of mastery experiences by proactively defining degrees of autonomy for principals prevents situations where industrious and "gung-ho" principals may experience unnecessary physiological factors that hamper their self-efficacy due to mistakes and misinformed actions. District leaders who ensure principals understand degrees of autonomy promote principal ownership while also helping principals develop a healthy perspective of the ultimate responsibility to stakeholders carried by the superintendent. Clearly defined opportunities to discuss, analyze, or validate decisions allows district leaders valuable opportunities for social persuasion that affirms the principal's instincts, execution, and perspectives and, in so doing, builds the principal's self-efficacy.

Interdependence core practices. These core practices can assist district leaders in nurturing systemic interdependence through principal-centered, meaningful collaboration.

Connect principals for embedded informal communication and support.

The principalship, as with other executive positions, can be a lonely position as the principal is the only individual fulfilling that role within the specific location. This reality provides specific barriers to principals encountering Bandura's (1986) sources of self-efficacy. Principals working in daily isolation from other principals will find it more difficult to observe vicarious mastery experiences, engage in collaborative discussion about the unique challenges and perspectives of the principalship, and face the prospect of physiological challenges such as increased stress, loneliness, and self-doubt.

Monthly district principal meetings focused on top-down provisions of management and operational policies along with the occasional off-campus professional

conference are not enough to alleviate the impact of isolation on self-efficacy. Within an enabling structure, district leaders should look to purposefully connect principals in routine, on-going informal engagements including problem-solving conversations, peer observations or building visits, and mentor-mentee partnerships for novice leaders. Most importantly, district leaders should demonstrate trust and confidence in their principals by ensuring these connections take place while being comfortable with not being present themselves.

District leaders in systems that are on either end of the district size continuum should utilize this practice to specifically overcome potential issues with enhancing their enabling structure and ensuring development of principals' self-efficacy. Large districts should purposefully connect principals in smaller communities that allow for either grade-level specific connection (ex. elementary or secondary) or ensure connection across demographically and socio-economically diverse communities within the district. Leaders in small districts with single-feeder systems or limited schools may need to seek partnership with other neighboring districts to build a consortium where principals can have the opportunity to engage in informal professional discourse.

Collaboratively create systemic and personal goals.

Educational leaders at both the district and school levels are familiar with the myriad of plans required by the federal, state, and local bureaucracy. School improvement plans with extensive goal statements, strategies, timelines, and desired outcomes are often seen as hurdles to overcome and navigate rather than valuable tools to focus systemic and local school efforts to achieve defined success. State and federal report card ratings and corresponding school improvement funding have added layers of

additional programs with implementation plans and outcome measurements. The extent of these requirements leads to many districts engaging plans from the district office with little voice from principals and teachers. After construction, these plans are then disseminated to principals to communicate, productively engage, and produce results.

District leaders within an enabling structure should consider engaging principals in all stages of the creation of systemic goals. A "reverse funnel" approach that allows principals to identify specific needs within each individual school, collaboratively synthesize individual needs into systemic needs, and purposefully create collective goals allows principals to have voice and ownership in the identification, formation, implementation, and results. This approach is much more demanding and time-consuming, but such an enabling centralization deepens collective accountability and promotes positive engagement of all four of Bandura's (1986) sources of self-efficacy.

District leaders should also seek to engage principals in the creation of personal goals that are both aligned to district goals and to areas of interest and growth for the principal. Engaging principals in personal growth goals even outside of formal evaluation processes allows for district leaders to enhance valuable social persuasion through positive feedback, communications of trust and affirmation, and opportunities for principals to share their expertise with other leaders and stakeholders within the system. Principals who can find purpose in self-created, meaningful goals and professional development that are not only focused on their own improvement but are important to the system will understand that their leaders see them as an integral component of system success. Personal goals engaged with passion promote the possibility of mastery experiences for the individual and vicarious experiences for other principals.

Engage principal-driven action research cycles to achieve systemic goals.

District leaders should prioritize the use of embedded collective meeting time with principals for engaging in action research cycles to achieve systemic goals. Engaging in collaborative, purposeful work on rigorous, collectively-designed goals nurtures professional relationships and builds system capacity. When district leaders transition to having principals lead the development, engagement, and assessment of these initiatives rather than directing the work themselves, the potential for the work to have sustained and transforming impact across the district is maximized.

Action research is "a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action" (Sagor, 2000). Such research is a natural extension of the "backwards funnel" approach of goal development where the same individuals who developed goals now collaboratively identify short-term targets, develop a plan of action, implement the plan, and evaluate the results to determine the next incremental step necessary towards achieving the overall goal (Buskey, 2019). District leaders remain an important part of the action research cycles, but not in a traditional manner. By "leading from the middle" as an engaged co-learner by asking critical questions to challenge thought and encouraging risk taking while accepting responsibility for potential failure, district leaders will nurture a culture of collaboration, trust, and empowerment that is embraced and respected by the team (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Leaders who are willing to engage principals in this "action to theory" process rather than providing packaged or leader-created programs through a highly formalized and centralized top-down conduit change the paradigm for principals from being implementors of change theory to becoming effective agents of change practice that will

result in transformation that is not conditional on the leader's continued presence with the system. Placing principals in the lead with planning and engaging system improvement engages each of Bandura's (1986) sources of self-efficacy through developing principals' abilities to collectively create mastery experiences as the leader focuses on purposeful feedback and coaching within an enabling district structure.

Accountability core practices. These core practices can assist district leaders in establishing routine opportunity for targeted, growth-oriented accountability that promotes decentralized, systemic leadership.

Maximize formative feedback by routine observation and discussion.

The power of formative assessment is found in the low risk engagements and minute-by-minute communication that provides both the student and teacher opportunity to refine skills and solidify understanding (Brookhart, Moss, & Long, 2008). District leaders seeking to enhance an enabling district structure should seek to maximize formative assessment by routinely scheduling informal experiences where the superintendent or director shadows the principal with the mindset of seeking to understand and learn about the principal's challenges and subsequent decision making. When these opportunities are more frequent, other stakeholders begin to develop an understanding that the district and school leaders are engaged in the same professional learning communities that teachers are asked to engage.

It is important in these formative scenarios that the district leader truly take on the role of co-learner and focus on understanding rather than preempting learning by giving unsolicited advice or direction. Like the leader's role within action-research, the enabling leader should focus on providing positive reinforcement and praise, engaging

constructive feedback through strategic questioning, and communicating value of the principal by actively seeking the principal's perspective. Formative feedback in the classroom is intended to empower, inspire and engage the student (Brookhart, et al., 2008). Leaders who want to enhance their enabling structure should likewise invest valuable time in formative communication with their principals.

South Carolina's principal evaluation instrument, The Expanded Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP) emphasizes the use of school visits to gain an understanding of the principal's performance across all evaluation dimensions (SCDE, 2017). District leaders are encouraged to visit schools to observe the principal leading faculty meetings, professional development, leadership team meetings, observing teachers, providing teachers feedback, and conducting the general management of the school. Maximizing formative observation and collaborative discussion can allow the principal to develop the self-efficacy to engage these summative evaluation experiences with confidence and expertise. In short, great formative feedback during learning is an antecedent for mastery summative performance.

Prioritize rigorous, growth-oriented personal evaluation cycles.

Summative principal evaluation is vital for district leaders to ensure competent leadership at the school level. However, principals have cited their own evaluations as being inconsistent, irrelevant, invalid, not rigorous, and not indicative of the quality of their work (Guilfoyle, 2013; Stronge, et al., 2013). In the same way that principals should be involved in defining systemic goals and corresponding actions, enabling district leaders should invest valuable time to engage principals within a rigorous, growth-oriented evaluation each year that principals find meaningful.

Primary to this challenge is for district leaders to be committed to a growth-centered evaluation mindset. The evaluation process performed with fidelity, intentionality, and concern for the well-being of the principal is an excellent medium for district supervisors to provide principals with a vicarious mastery experience that can directly impact a principal's own mindset and approach to teacher evaluation. Within an enabling structure that has low centralization and formalization, the evaluation should be constructed to help principal's grow in all areas of performance while allowing principals as much autonomy and voice as possible in choosing areas of specific focus. Regarding nurturing principal self-efficacy, a principal working to develop an area of potential strength to the mastery level may be more beneficial than focusing primary efforts on an area of weakness. Engaging principal voice within the evaluation process communicates trust and commitment to the process and the principal.

A growth-oriented approach to principal evaluation requires not just principal voice in the process, but also a rigorous, standards-based evaluation of the comprehensive role of the principal. South Carolina's PADEPP evaluation instrument is consistent with many states in aligning with the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (SC Department of Education, 2017). The inhibitor to rigorous evaluation is not the instrument, but, rather the tyranny of the urgent that prevents both district and school administrators from committing to deep execution of the instrument to produce a meaningful and rich experience for the principal. For performance evaluation to be effective as a conduit of social persuasion in reinforcing a principal's motivation and determination to choose and maintain engagement in challenging tasks, it must include authentic feedback, focused

goals, and challenges that are accessible for the individual (Bandura, 1986). Summative evaluation prioritized by the enabling district leader will be rigorous, growth-oriented, personal, and a vicarious mastery experience for each principal.

Provide targeted training through mentors and mastery observation.

Rigorous evaluation can result in defined action steps necessary to address deficiencies within a principal's performance. District leaders should consider principal self-efficacy when determining formal and informal improvement plans. Professional development through in-person or virtual training, or reading professional literature can provide theoretical knowledge and anecdotal awareness for the principal, yet, not address actual skill development. Plans for improvement that are focused on compulsion and timelines for execution of defined skills create an autocratic, coercive relationship that places the primary focus of the principal on meeting the standard of the leader. These common approaches do not engage Bandura's sources of self-efficacy (1986) and reinforce a centralized and formalized bureaucracy.

Leaders within an enabling district structure will work with a deficient principal to maximize opportunities for observation of a high-performing leader who is able to communicate effectively not only the "What?" in the situation, but, more importantly, the "Why?" A positive mentor-mentee relationship combined with frequent observation of vicarious mastery experiences followed by practice and formative feedback of the principal's own skillset is more beneficial to both performance improvement and self-efficacy development than a one-size fits all remediation curriculum or a plan engaged by the evaluated principal in isolation.

District leaders should seek to consistently apply this strategy across all principals to protect the organizational health of the system. Such improvement partnerships can co-exist with other principals engaging in informal collaboration and areas of personalized goals for systemic improvement. This reality allows principals to be routinely collaborating interdependently across the system and ensure the deficient principal is not singled out while engaging in the targeted, mentor-mentee improvement cycle. Leadership improvement is not a matter of compulsion or compliance, but a function of personalized training provided by a competent and compassionate mentor who is willing to both challenge and support the principal as they work on targeted skill development. With observations of vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and an absence of undue physiological stressors, principals will be more apt to move towards experiencing their own mastery experiences and develop the self-efficacy necessary to effectively transform their own schools.

Summary

Investments in the conditions that lead to enabling district structure are not specifically contingent on monetary resources. Likewise, the influence that EDS can have on the self-efficacy of principals does not require extensive professional development, training, or specialized certifications. This research revealed a moderate, statistically significant relationship between enabling district structure and principal perceptions of self-efficacy. Multiple regression analysis found that EDS explains an additional 17% of the variance in PSE beyond the influence of other demographical factors including the school's socio-economic status, grade levels, and principal experience and training.

These results stress the need for South Carolina's public-school districts to strategically engage in the development and nurturing of principal self-efficacy through empowering and enabling district structures. The EDS Enhancement Model identifies high-yield strategies that can assist district leaders in nurturing and sustaining an enabling district structure. "District leaders should consider school leaders' collective sense of efficacy for school improvement to be among the most important resources available to them for increasing student achievement" (Louis, et al. 2010, p. 147).

Recommendations for Future Study

This study found a moderate, statistically significant relationship between enabling district structure (EDS) and the personal self-efficacy (PSE) of South Carolina's public-school principals. EDS was found to explain 16% of the variability in principal self-efficacy and was highly reliable in predicting PSE. District size was found to have a small, negative, statistically significant correlation to EDS. Relationships between EDS and PSE were strongest and most significant in districts with 6 – 15 schools. A small, negative statistically significant correlation was found between principal education level and enabling district structure.

This study is intended to aid South Carolina's district leadership in valuing and understanding the role that enabling district structure can have in nurturing principal self-efficacy to engage in transformational practices as prescribed by the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate and the established student performance goals of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee. It also seeks to contribute to a growing body of research on the construct of enabling district structure.

Below are recommendations for further investigation based on the findings of this study:

1. Replication of this study utilizing the EDS Form and PSES with additional samples of principals to continue to validate the limited research on the relationship between enabling district structure and principal self-efficacy.
2. Conduct quantitative research with a variety of populations focused on identification of potential relationships between school operational and principal demographic factors for the purpose of identifying potential antecedents to enabling district structure.
3. Conduct quantitative research that probes deeper into the individual factors on the EDS Form and PSES to develop an understanding of relationships and influences from individual EDS structural dimensions and PSE factors. For example, the research of Landy (2013) and this study have found that managerial leadership self-efficacy has a stronger relationship to perspectives of EDS than both instructional leadership and moral leadership. These findings can be more deeply explored through adaptation of current surveys or development of new measurement tools.
4. Continued development of qualitative and quantitative research focused on the influence of district size on enabling district structure and perceptions of principal self-efficacy.
5. Conduct a mixed methods study to inquire more deeply into the construct of enabling district structure. Following the approach of Curry (2014), following quantitative research, conduct qualitative interviews with principals with high EDS perceptions regarding specific factors that contribute to the development of enabling district structure including the practices defined in the EDS

Enhancement Model (Nutter, 2021). This approach could both validate current research and help districts understand potential antecedents to enabling district structure.

6. Conduct quantitative and qualitative studies focused on the perspectives of district level leadership on the construct of enabling district culture. Engaging multiple districts in a case study approach could assist in developing deep understanding of the district level perspectives and practices that have been identified to support an enabling culture.
7. Conduct quantitative or qualitative studies with teachers within schools of principals experiencing high levels of enabling district structure to assess the potential influence of EDS on enabling school structures. Utilization of the ESS Form (Hoy, 2003) would allow for correlation of enabling structure at both the school and district level.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH
APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW

This is to certify that the research proposal: **Pro00063092**

Title: *The relationship between district structure and principal self-efficacy in South Carolina*

Submitted by:
Principal Investigator: Justin Nutter
College of Education
Department of Educational Administration
820 South Main Street
Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2), the referenced study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **1/10/2017**. No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research protocol could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions, contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager

APPENDIX B

HOY PERMISSION LETTER

Re: Permission to utilize adapted ESS Form

WH Wayne Hoy <whoy@mac.com>
Sat 12/31/2016, 12:33 PM
NUTTER, JUSTIN

Reply all

Inbox

Dear Justin-

You have my permission to use the ESS in your dissertation research. I have no problem with the adaptation.

Best wishes.
Wayne

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor Emeritus in
Education Administration
The Ohio State University
www.waynekhoy.com

7655 Pebble Creek circle, #301
Naples, FL 34108
Email: whoy@mac.com
Phone: 239 595 5732

On Dec 30, 2016, at 2:20 PM, NUTTER, JUSTIN <nutterj@email.sc.edu> wrote:

Dr. Hoy,

I am requesting your permission to utilize the 12-item Enabling School Structure form (ESS) while conducting a dissertation study on the relationship between "enabling district structure" (EDS) and principal self-efficacy in South Carolina's public schools.

My research seeks to further explore the relationship between EDS and PSES that Landy (2013) found in order to potentially validate her findings and add to the understanding of the influence of an enabling district structure on principal self-efficacy. Landy utilized an adaptation of the ESS focusing on the construct of enabling district structure in which the term "district" was substituted for "school" and the word "principal" was substituted for "teacher." I would like to utilize the same adapted form within my study.

Sincerely,

Justin Nutter

University of South Carolina
Educational Leadership and Policies
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C

TSCHANNEN-MORAN PERMISSION LETTER

William & Mary
School of Education

MEGAN TSCHANNEN-MORAN, PHD
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

January 18, 2017

Justin,

You have my permission to use the Principals' Sense of Efficacy Scale, which I developed with Chris Gareis, in your research. The best citation to use is:

> Tschannen-Moran, M. & Gareis, C. (2004). Principals' sense of efficacy: Assessing a promising construct. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42, 573-585.

You can find a copy of these measures and scoring directions on my web site at http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch . I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for these measures as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

I would love to receive a brief summary of your results when you finish.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran
The College of William and Mary
School of Education

P.O. Box 8795 • Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795 • (757) 221-2187 • mxtsch@wm.edu

APPENDIX D

SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION EMAIL

Request for Principal Participation

JN Justin Nutter <jnutter@lexington4.net>
Fri 1/13/2017, 3:49 PM

Reply all

Dear South Carolina Superintendent,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership & Policies Department at the University of South Carolina, and as part of the requirements of my degree in educational administration I will be conducting a research study over the next month involving principals of South Carolina's public school districts.

This study explores the potential relationship between principal self-efficacy and school district structure in South Carolina. It seeks to advance understanding about what South Carolina school districts can do to help principals develop personal efficacy in order to successfully engage the challenge of school leadership.

This study involves a one-time completion of an on-line survey by principals of public schools in South Carolina. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and consists of three sections. The first section asks the principal to provide perceptions of one's self-efficacy with various roles of the principalship. The second section asks the principal to provide perceptions of one's school district structure. The final section asks the principal to provide general demographic information about one's district, school, and professional experience. Questions in all three sections are multiple choice in nature and do not require written responses.

Participation is anonymous, which means that no one (not even the researcher) will be able to identify a specific principal or the principal's district or school. Likewise, analysis and communication of findings will be grouped around demographic ranges and correlations between indicators, and, thus, will also not allow the identification of any principal, school, or district.

Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, your principals will receive an initial participation request on Sunday, January 22, 2017 and a follow-up email reminder each week of the four-week data collection period (January 23, 2017 – February 17, 2017). Participation is voluntary by each principal receiving the request and the principal only needs to complete the survey once.

Your encouragement to your principals to participate in this study would be greatly appreciated! However, if you would like for your principals to be excluded from participation, please inform me by replying to this email before Friday, January 20, 2017 and I will not send them a research request.

If you have additional questions about the study, please feel free to contact me via email (nutterj@email.sc.edu) or phone

Sincerely,

Justin Nutter
Associate Superintendent
Lexington School District Four

APPENDIX E

EXEMPT CONSENT LETTER

January 23, 2017

Dear South Carolina Principal,

My name is Justin Nutter. I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership & Policies Department at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in educational administration, and I would like to invite you to participate.

This study explores the potential relationship between school district structure and principal self-efficacy. It seeks to advance understanding about what school districts can do to help principals successfully engage the challenge of school leadership.

This study involves a one-time completion of a survey by you as a principal of a public school in South Carolina. The survey contains three sections of questions and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. The first section asks your perception of efficacy – your confidence in your ability to perform specific practices – of your role as principal. The second section asks you to provide feedback on your perception of the way your school district is structured. The final section asks you to provide demographic information about your school district and your professional experience.

Participation is anonymous, which means that no one (not even the researcher) will know what your specific answers are. The survey will be completed through surveymonkey.com and responses will not be linked in any way to any of the participants.

Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, you will receive a follow-up email reminder each week of the four-week data collection period (January 23, 2017 – February 17, 2017). Please excuse this repetitive contact.

Taking part in the study is your decision and is voluntary. You will not receive any compensation for participation. You may also quit the survey at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at , nutterj@email.sc.edu, or my faculty advisor, Dr. Peter Moyi, pmoyi@email.sc.edu, if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 803-777-7095.

If you would like to participate, please complete the survey by clicking on this link: Principal Questionnaire
I greatly appreciate your consideration and participation.

With kind regards,

Justin Nutter

nutterj@email.sc.edu

APPENDIX F

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRRE

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Part 1 of 3

Directions for Part One: **Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions by marking one of the five responses.**

The scale of responses ranges from "None at all" (1) to "A Great Deal" (5), with "Some Degree" (3) representing the mid-point between these low and high extremes. You may choose any of the five possible responses, since each represents a degree on the continuum.

Your answers are anonymous.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Part 1 of 3

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

1. "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."

	None at All	2	Some Degree	4	A Great Deal
facilitate student learning in your school?	○	○	○	○	○
generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school?	○	○	○	○	○
handle the time demands of the job?	○	○	○	○	○
manage change in your school?	○	○	○	○	○
promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population?	○	○	○	○	○
create a positive learning environment in your school?	○	○	○	○	○

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Part 1 of 3

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

2. "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."

	None at All	2	Some Degree	4	A Great Deal
raise student achievement on standardized tests?	○	○	○	○	○
promote a positive image of your school with the media?	○	○	○	○	○
motivate teachers?	○	○	○	○	○
promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?	○	○	○	○	○
maintain control of your own daily schedule?	○	○	○	○	○
shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?	○	○	○	○	○

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Part 1 of 3

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

3. "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."

	None at All	2	Some Degree	4	A Great Deal
handle effectively the discipline of students in your school?	○	○	○	○	○
promote acceptable behavior among students?	○	○	○	○	○
handle the paperwork required of the job?	○	○	○	○	○
promote ethical behavior among school personnel?	○	○	○	○	○
cope with the stress of the job?	○	○	○	○	○
prioritize among competing demands of the job?	○	○	○	○	○

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Part 2 of 3

Directions for Part Two: The following statements are descriptions of the way your school district is structured.

Your answers are anonymous.

4. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes behavior in your district from **never** to **always**.

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Always
Administrative rules in this district enable authentic communication between principals and district administrators.	○	○	○	○	○
In this district, red tape is a problem.	○	○	○	○	○
The administrative hierarchy of this district enables principals to do their job.	○	○	○	○	○
The administrative hierarchy obstructs student achievement.	○	○	○	○	○
Administrative rules help rather than hinder.	○	○	○	○	○
The administrative hierarchy of this district facilitates the mission of this district.	○	○	○	○	○

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Copy of page: Part 2 of 3

5. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes behavior in your district from **never** to **always**.

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Always
Administrative rules in this district are used to punish principals.	○	○	○	○	○
The administrative hierarchy of this district obstructs innovation.	○	○	○	○	○
Administrative rules in this district are substitutes for professional judgment.	○	○	○	○	○
Administrative rules in this district are guides to solutions rather than rigid procedures.	○	○	○	○	○
In this district the authority of the district administration is used to undermine the principals.	○	○	○	○	○
The administrators in this district use their authority to enable principals to do their job.	○	○	○	○	○

Principal Questionnaire: Personal Self-Efficacy & District Structure

Part 3 of 3

Directions for Part Three: Please provide information on the following descriptors.

6. Please indicate the **number of schools** in your district:

- ◯ 1-5 schools
- ◯ 6-10 schools
- ◯ 11-15 schools
- ◯ 16-20 schools
- ◯ 21 or more schools

7. Your total years of experience in public education.

- ◯ 1 - 3 years
- ◯ 4 - 6 years
- ◯ 7 - 9 years
- ◯ 10 - 14 years
- ◯ 15 - 19 years
- ◯ 20 or more years

8. Highest level of education achieved.

- ◯ Bachelors
- ◯ Masters
- ◯ Specialist
- ◯ Doctorate

9. Your total years of experience as a school principal.

- ○ 1 - 3 years
- ○ 4 - 6 years
- ○ 7 - 9 years
- ○ 10 - 14 years
- ○ 15 - 19 years
- ○ 20 or more years

10. Your total years of experience as a principal **in your current district.**

- ○ 1 - 3 years
- ○ 4 - 6 years
- ○ 7 - 9 years
- ○ 10 - 14 years
- ○ 15 - 19 years
- ○ 20 or more years

11. What grade levels are in your school? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Prekindergarten
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ 1st
- ☐ 2nd
- ☐ 3rd
- ☐ 4th
- ☐ 5th
- ☐ 6th
- ☐ 7th
- ☐ 8th
- ☐ 9th
- ☐ 10th
- ☐ 11th
- ☐ 12th

12. 2016-17 Free & Reduced Lunch percentage for your school.

- 0% - 10%
- 11% - 20%
- 21% - 30%
- 31% - 40%
- 41% - 50%
- 51% - 60%
- 61% - 70%
- 71% - 80%
- 81% - 90%
- 91% - 100%