THE IMPACT OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISAL

SYSTEM ON THE ROLE OF A PRINICPAL IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education
in Professional Leadership

by

Tricia E. Tsang

May, 2011

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, who I am forever indebted to, for the sacrifices they have made as I ventured on this journey. Without their unconditional love and support, I would not have fulfilled this dream. I want to thank my Duryea family, KB's, and Agape girls for always having faith and confidence in me, especially when I did not believe in myself. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this work to the late Dr. Lee Stewart, who not only planted the seed in me to pursue this degree but who also pushed me to always strive for academic excellence.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the changing role of the school principal from a managerial position to one now focused on instructional leadership. Specifically, the investigation will examine principals evaluating teachers and providing appropriate staff development. A review of recent literature claims that fewer and fewer school administrators are qualified to take on the role of a school leader (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007); thus, many of them do not feel competent enough to evaluate teachers or provide relevant staff development.

The nexus of this research comes from a research project that focused on school principals' thoughts and insights related to their role as a school leader. A convenience sample of 178 principals from the southeast region of Texas responded to a questionnaire in a cognitive interview setting that covered a range of topics, including principals' views and practices within the context of the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), the Texas state-developed and recommended instrument for conducting teacher performance appraisal. The survey also included the principals' attitudes and thoughts with regards to the importance of staff development, and whether they connect PDAS data to offered staff development courses.

Analysis of the responses reveal that principals do not hold strong, central beliefs in the importance of PDAS in assessing the developmental needs of teachers, nor do they agree on the purpose this evaluation tool serves. Principals, however, do share the attitude that their role in professional development is one of the most significant tasks in their principalship.

Recommendations include strengthening the method and protocols of PDAS; restructuring the PDAS framework to include more collaboration and the ability to tailor it to meet the needs of teachers; build a stronger relationship with local universities to increase access to professional development opportunities; for principals to include teachers in the creation and implementation of staff development; and to conduct a similar, large-scale survey in other parts of the state and/or other states where teacher evaluations and professional development are mandated. These recommendations are in alignment with the Texas Education Agency's idea that the purpose of PDAS is to improve student performance through the professional development of teachers. These ideas are not revolutionary, yet there is a disparity that continues between theory and practice, and it is toward the resolution of this inconsistency that the recommendations are proposed to support.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study is part of a complex, multipart inquiry into the roles of a principal in the Gulf Coastal Region by a large university in Southeast Texas. It is intended to provide a greater understanding in how to increase in the effectiveness as principal. The information collected is designed for use in improving current principal practices and helping universities better prepare their future administrators.

Background

School administrators, today, have an extremely multifaceted and challenging role (Varrati, Lavine, Turner, 2009). As a supervisor, a principal has the task of appraising and evaluating teacher performance. With the information acquired, the principal then takes on a second role as an instructional leader, giving feedback and creating opportunities for professional growth for the teacher. The intention of the evaluation is to provide the principal with strengths and weaknesses of a teacher, and then to present professional development opportunities that are specific to that particular teacher to help him/her grow into a stronger educator.

In the past two decades, the government has been wrestling with finding a successful approach to educational reform. The report, *A Nation at Risk*, written in the early 1980's brought up concern with the educational system of the United States compared to the rest of the world. Our country was falling behind (A Nation at Risk 1983). With each presidency, the topic of education became a greater part of the platform. It was during George W. Bush's terms that the nation moved towards an accountability-based model under the law, *No Child Left Behind*. It was through this

reform that education started to examine, in depth, the roles of teachers and principals, and their contributions to student achievement (No Child Left Behind, 2001). There was a realization that standards and expectations were vague and that current models in place were ambiguous.

Statement of the Problem

With the awareness that the current systems are ineffective, states and local districts are reevaluating what they have in place. However, many are having trouble moving away from the traditional methods and roles. Many changes are taking place in the role of the principal. What used to be an extremely managerial position has transformed into one that emphasizes the instructional leader aspect (Schools need good leaders now, 2007). Though this role has become the core of a campus leader, little training is provided in preparation programs, and only a miniscule emphasis is placed on it in principal standards. Studies found that fewer and fewer school leaders are prepared to take on the role of a principal (Augustine, 2009).

One of the required roles of a principal is supervision, which has slowly formed into more of an evaluator role. Few principals feel comfortable or well-trained in completing evaluations on their staff. Teachers question the curriculum competence, the objectivity, and the consistency of the evaluator, contributing to the lack of value in the teacher evaluation. Both principals and teachers view it as a formality they have to complete by law, but few principals and teachers find the information gained from it pertinent to them. In Texas, the teacher evaluation and appraisal system is known as the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). Like a number of other states, PDAS uses a checklist to rate teachers, leaving the ratings up to the mercy of the

evaluator. One of the foci of this study is to gain perspective and answers to the question, "How important is PDAS in determining developmental needs for teachers?" To the principals who use it, is PDAS an effective way to rate teacher performance?

Another focus of this study is to determine the role of the principal in professional development. With principals taking on a number of roles in their position, the focus on staff development is often times not a priority for them. Lack of time and financial constraints have contributed to the minimal focus on professional development. This study will provide an understanding of how current principals view and value their role in professional development by how they answer the question, "How important does a principal rate teacher professional development as a task for principals?"

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discover and understand the effectiveness of Texas' teacher evaluation, PDAS, and its usefulness to principals in assessing their teachers' needs for staff development. This study will explore the perceptions of principals in whether PDAS identifies strengths and weaknesses of teachers, and if the information collected is valuable to use to further grow teachers.

The study will also determine the importance of the principal's role in staff development. A connection will be made to see if the data collected from PDAS influences the principal's position in staff development.

Research Questions

The six research questions of this study were:

1. How important is PDAS in determining the principals' assessment of the developmental needs of their teachers?

2. How important does a principal rate teacher professional development as a task for principals?

3. Do women administrators see the principal role differently than the men?

4. Is there a difference in importance of roles between secondary principals versus primary principals?

5. How do the responses from principals differ between exemplary, recognized, acceptable schools, and low-performing schools?

6. Do rural, suburban, and urban school leaders see their roles differently?

Significance of the Study

This study is contributing to a greater university study in the role of the principal and has the prospect to create a greater understanding in how this role has transformed over time. First, the data collected are from principals of the same region, allowing the researcher to find possible trends in how the role of principal has evolved in this geographic area. The information could help local districts reevaluate their current systems in how to more effectively use their principals. It may also encourage them to reconsider the resources that they need to provide principals, as well as the support they need to give their campus leaders.

Second, it has the potential to close the gap between what educators desire to accomplish in their role and what actually happens. The analyzed data will show the genuine feelings and attitudes of principals in the areas of professional development and PDAS. The information gathered can be used to help define and refine expectations and

standards the principals value in these two areas. It can also help districts to reevaluate the varied roles principals have, and help them to reprioritize which one(s) are most important.

Lastly, this study can help to bridge a large disconnect between the principal preparation programs and the local districts. Standards are always changing due to education reform, but often times, the curriculum in the programs do not change, producing fewer highly-qualified and well-trained principals to enter into administrative positions. Findings from this study can serve to jumpstart further inquiry about the needs of the 21st century leader and how to better meet those needs in university preparation programs. Hopefully, with the data collected, local universities will forge an improved relationship and open communication with surrounding districts, and decide together what steps ought to be taken to better-prepare school leaders for their roles.

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, presenting the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature that are relevant to the field of study, setting the framework for the study, as well as the context in which the data find their value. Chapter 3 outlines the design, variables, participants, instruments and procedures of the study. It also details emerging themes, integrity, and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 focuses on presenting the results, and the analysis of them within the framework of the research questions. Chapter 5 discusses the researcher's interpretation of the results, and the implications and recommendations for future research.

Definitions:

Professional/staff development- defined by Hassel (1999) "is the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students" (Kent 2004, p.427).

21st century learner- is defined as a student, who is active and hands-on in his/her learning, engaged in technology, and challenged to be a critical thinker.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Evolution Education Reform

Education reform started to take shape in the 1980's when the National Commission on Excellence in Education came out with the report, *A Nation at Risk*. It summarized how the education system in the United States was falling behind the rest of the world. This report was designed to create awareness for the American people of where we stood in education, and to empower the country to move towards transforming its education. Teacher reform was also recommended, with the report suggesting increasing contractual time for preparation and professional development, increasing salary, recruiting math and science teachers from outside education who were able to bring in the real world needs, and having communities be accountable for their teachers during this time of change (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). Reed (2003) believed John Dewey's philosophy: "The educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming…" (p.204). The United States needed to change its current systems in order to stay competitive with the rest of the world.

A Nation at Risk pushed America to consistently question the quality of education. Presidents avoided the hefty topic on their platforms in fear of public responses. Eventually, one president forged forward to change the approach and face of U.S. education. In Public Law 107-100, also known as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), President George W. Bush pushed for school reform, by trying to establish better quality in public education, and by asking all stakeholders to be more aware and accountable for our children's education. In an effort to be more competitive with the rest of the world in our test scores, NCLB drew up standards in hopes of closing the

achievement gap in schools. NCLB designated monies for increased teacher training. It stated that there needed to be better prepared, trained, and recruited teachers in order to increase student achievement. Therefore, the quality of teachers needed to be set at higher standards. With the money given to the states and local districts for this very reason, they were to use their discretion in how to seek out scientific, research-based practices that would be valuable in the classroom. States were also asked to establish a more rigorous plan for ensuring that all children were taught by highly effective teachers. There was leniency in how the states could use the federal money, as long as the state could prove that the funds were contributing towards teacher reform, and positively effecting student achievement (*No Child Left Behind*, 2001). *No Child Left Behind* brought attention to low-performing schools and the need for them to improve. Not only should the selection for teachers be rigorous but also leaders assigned to the campuses (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007). Policy-makers have had the revelation that one key to substantial student growth in a school is if there is a highly effective principal in place (Schools need good leaders now, 2007).

The Present State of School Leadership

Principals now need a better understanding of the 21st century learner in order to know how and in what capacities they learn. School leaders must lead a campus that is a learner-centered school. Even with a movement of pushing principals to be effective instructional leaders, national and state standards place little emphasis on these responsibilities (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007). The standards, in which school leaders are required to meet, are extremely vague, and few of them explicitly address student achievement.

The 21st century principal faces complicated issues that require him/her to constantly solve problems; however, real-life issues that principals face on a daily basis are often not embedded into their preparation programs. Most states have a large pool of school leader candidates, who meet all the criteria for becoming an administrator, but only a handful of them are actually qualified (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007). Because many are self-selected into a leadership program, the education field often does not attract the most highly-qualified candidates. Principals often attend professional developments that are irrelevant to their needs and weak in substance. There needs to be a greater emphasis and rigor in standards in the principal's role as an instructional leader; more evaluation standards need to be tied to them.

University preparation programs for school administrators need to be held accountable for providing curriculum that emphasizes these expectations as well, and if need be, adjust and make improvements in the curriculum to meet this need. New leadership standards are being written and implemented, but unless there is a change in the principal preparation programs with these new standards, the influence and impact in schools will only be marginal. The educational leadership curriculum needs to cater more towards 21st century leaders in order to run a more successful school. Unless leadership preparation and training changes, we should not expect student results to change.

Districts need to also relinquish more decision-making to the building leader to allow them to meet the needs of their school better. Decisions about how to spend school money, what scheduling model to use, who and how to staff their school, and even how to evaluate staff should be campus-based decisions (Augustine, 2009). Usually, the larger the district, the less decision-making a campus leader has. Districts do this to maintain

equity and accountability among campuses. However, districts are slowly giving leaders more of an opportunity to provide for individualized staff development specific to their campuses.

The Necessary Transformation in School Leadership

To nurture a greater group of well-prepared leaders, universities and districts need to forge a relationship in developing better-trained school administrators. These programs then can provide more training, rigor, and guidelines before a potential candidate enters into the principalship (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007). There are more and more states that are pushing laws and policies to clarify the responsibilities and roles of a principal, as well as increasing funding to better support principal preparation programs (Shelton, 2009).

Research has suggested reducing the number of principal preparation programs, and making those that exist more rigorous. The focus would be on quality programs. It has also been suggested that programs should limit the amount of people enrolled, giving more focus and support to those who are preparing to become future administrators. A good place to begin is a more rigorous screening and acceptance process. More explicit standards need to be written and the same standards that principals need to meet as school leaders should also be embedded in several areas: the principal preparation programs, their professional development, and their evaluations (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007).

States and districts need to increase communication and have more cohesion in their standards and expectations of school leaders, in order to have higher-quality school leadership (Augustine, 2009). An increasing number of states are also making licensing

more rigorous, which has moved towards a more performance-based model, formed by explicit standards and proof of knowledge and skills on the job. Failure to meet any of the previous expectations leads to license dismissal or a nonrenewal of license. Many states have also moved to a tiered or advanced licensure certification, moving away from the standard requirements of completing a university preparation program and passing a state certification exam. Though it varies from state to state, this tiered model requires principals to fulfill different standards at the various levels, such as proof of best practices in the classroom, continuous graduate courses, and evidence of educational leadership experiences, internships, mentoring, and a professional portfolio (Shelton, 2009).

Research suggests that all campus staff: teachers, administrators, and support staff, need to take part in leadership training, and that all training should be research-based, relevant and applicable to their campus. Principals of low-performing schools need to be well-trained in assessing the pulse of the staff, so they can focus professional development on school needs and areas that require improvement. Afterwards, they must evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development implemented, and its usefulness, to help make future decisions on whether to continue it or reconstruct it. Studies have even suggested that schools may need to look outside of the education field for leaders, who often possess the skills needed to be an effective principal (*Schools need good leaders now*, 2007).

Principal Role in Teacher Evaluations

From researchers to educators, most all of them recognize that one of the most important tasks of a principal is to be an instructional leader, and evaluate the quality of

teaching in the classroom (Jacob, Lefgren, 2006). "The principal can be the catalyst for successful teacher evaluations, leading to a consistent and flourishing system of school improvement" (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton 2003, p.29). Ponticell and Zepeda (2004) discuss symbolic interaction as "human beings [who] are actively engaged in creating their world and their understandings of it" (p.44) and have used symbolic interaction to explain the importance of the relationship between a principal and his/her teachers.

The relationship between a teacher and principal has a great impact on the instructional effectiveness in a classroom. The rapport a principal builds with his/her teachers is crucial in how the teachers view the principal as an evaluator. If there is trust and respect in the relationship, then teachers are more likely to trust the evaluator and his/her feedback (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003). The purpose of a teacher evaluation is to verify the proficiency of a teacher to guarantee that effective teaching is taking place in the classroom (Kyriakides, Demetriou, Charalambous, 2006). The stronger the teacher is instructionally, the greater instructional quality the students receive. Teacher evaluations are for accountability in quality of teaching, helping to quantify the overall effectiveness of the teacher, and to ensure that the students have highly-qualified teachers in place (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

Learning for adults has been formed by their education, experiences, and their desires to problem solve everyday problems. Adults find validity in their performance, seeking feedback and opportunities to grow from their current practices and application of their new training (Ponticell, Zepeda, 2004). Teachers want to be effective in their role as an educator, and they desire positive and constructive feedback in their effectiveness and practices. The key factor in a successful teacher evaluation is the principal's role and

involvement in it. If a principal allows collaboration, shared decision-making, open communication, and a focus on promoting professional development, the more likely the teacher supports the evaluation process (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

The terms supervision and evaluation have morphed into the same meaning over the years and have been used interchangeably (Ponticell, Zepeda, 2004). Teachers have always correlated supervision to their evaluations because for many, that was the only time they saw campus administrators. In the 1980's, research found that principals had low accuracy when it came to identifying the levels of performance of their teachers. However, a study in the 1990's proved that most administrators are capable of identifying the range of teacher quality (Peterson, 2004). Though novice teachers look to their evaluation for affirmation, veteran teachers have a more negative view, not expecting to seek any new insight because of its vagueness (Peterson, 2004).

A majority of teacher evaluations consist of a general checklist, filled out after a few brief observations and walkthroughs; thus, the evaluation seems inconclusive. Though necessary, many school administrators view it as a waste of time, while teachers view it as a formality, instead of a useful tool to improve their skills (McLaughlin, 1984). Teachers consider the evaluation tools used on them as ineffective and irrelevant. They believe the standard checklist does not take into consideration the students, their backgrounds, and variables that may not be within a teacher's control, making the evaluation conditional and contextual. Because teachers feel that the evaluation does not give a fair look at the complete picture, they do not respect its results or the appraiser, which usually tends to be the principal. They believe that the administration fails to see the complexity of their role in the classroom. This view, thus, weakens the principal's

position as an instructional leader (McLaughlin, 1984). Most teacher salaries are based on years of experience and level of education (Jacob, Lefgren, 2006); therefore, there is not pressure to have an impressive evaluation from year to year because pay is not based on evaluation performance.

PDAS

In 1993, a group of 10,000 educators in Texas, ranging from public school teachers to administrators and university professors, were surveyed to determine what they believed were the most important proficiencies every teacher needed to possess as a 21st century educator. Five proficiencies were agreed upon as the most essential for teachers to hold in order to create student success; they, then, were put into a document called *Learner-Centered Schools for Texas, A Vision of Texas Educators* (*Professional development and appraisal system*, 2010).

It took two years of debate and deliberation before agreeing upon the proficiencies that would best promote student-centered learning and an optimal learning environment for students. According to the proficiencies, the learner's academic success was based on its support from, not only campus staff, but also his/her family and community; it was set to be a school/community effort. These proficiencies became the foundation of every educator's appraisal system, and the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) was created shortly after this, in 1995, to govern and enforce these proficiencies.

Texas uses an instrument known as the Professional Development and Appraisal System, or PDAS, to evaluate teacher performance. The purpose of PDAS, according to the State, is to assess teachers and to find trends that indicate areas needing additional

professional development. The eight domains containing fifty-one various criteria from the Proficiencies for Learner-Centered Instruction were adopted in 1997 by SBEC. The domains include: 1. Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process, 2. Learner-centered Instruction, 3. Evaluation and feedback on Student Progress, 4. Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time/Materials, 5. Professional Communication, 6. Professional development, 7. Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements, and 8. Improvement of All Students' Academic Performance.

Establishing Learner-Centered Proficiencies

The first proficiency is learner-centered knowledge, which means that a teacher acquires a strong understanding and mastery of his/her content area, technology, and pedagogy in order to make it significant and applicable for students. This proficiency is designed to push teachers to engage their students and help the students to make connections between their learning and their world. The second proficiency is learner-centered instruction, where the teacher assesses the academic levels and needs of the students, and plan lessons accordingly. The teacher is constantly assessing and reassessing where his/her students are in their learning, adjusting lessons, helping them to make their learning relevant, and empowering them to become critical thinkers and independent learners. The next proficiency addresses equity in excellence in all learners, in which teachers are aware and considerate of student diversity in the classroom. In this proficiency, teachers are not only conscious and sensitive to their students' cultures but also tie it into their learning. A teacher's role is to also create an optimal environment where all children are comfortable with their own and others' diversity. The fourth

proficiency is learner-centered communication, where the teacher shows the ability to communicate professionally and effectively to all stakeholders. The teacher is expected to engage in collegial conversations with peers, clearly correspond with parents, and provide opportunities for students to communicate verbally, nonverbally, and through media. The final proficiency is learner-centered professional development, where the teacher models being a life-long learner, as well as maintaining his/her professionalism and integrity. In this proficiency, teachers show their willingness and desire to further develop as an educator by engaging in collaboration, participating in professional learning communities, and seeking opportunities to better their practices.

Framework of PDAS

Under the current PDAS system, districts must appraise teachers no less than once every five years. Teachers, who earn at least a proficiency rating of Meets Expectations in all eight PDAS domains, are able to qualify for appraisal less than annually, but the teacher must consent. Districts are required to maintain an annual appraisal schedule for teachers who desire an annual appraisal. Districts are allowed to develop their own instrument and protocol to appraise teachers, as long as the evaluation is based on the PDAS framework requirements and submitted to the Texas Education Agency for approval.

A teacher's evaluation consists of at least one 45-minute observation accompanied by additional walkthroughs per school year. A summative conference is mandated and scheduled with the appraiser no later than fifteen days prior to the last day of instruction for the year, unless waived by request of the teacher. If a teacher disagrees with the scoring of the evaluation, he/she has the right to request for a second appraisal

from another PDAS-qualified administrator in the district (*Professional development and appraisal system*, 2010).

Drawbacks of PDAS

Kyriakides, Demetriou, and Charalambous, (2006) say that, in order to develop a complete teacher evaluation system, three areas need to be defined: the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria to be met, and the reliable sources and pertinent data supporting the evaluation. Though the strongest indicator for teacher quality has always been student achievement, research has found that only about 1% of items on teacher evaluations focus on learning outcomes (Peterson, 2004). Research says that supervision should enhance classroom performance. However, with the current systems in place, teacher evaluation has become more of a meaningless ritual (Ponticell, Zepeda, 2004). Unfortunately, teachers and principals see evaluations as a formality that have to be fulfilled because it is mandated by state laws (Ponticell, Zepeda, 2004). For a number of teachers, it means putting on a "required show" (p.52) for that one observation, making sure they hit every item on the checklist and moving on from it once the post observation meeting is over (Ponticell, Zepeda, 2004). Teachers learn what their appraisers look for during an observation, and over time, they know exactly what to do to create "perfect" observation results that satisfy the appraisers.

There is cause for concern in teacher evaluations because of "the lack of consistent, measurable standards and the scarcity of research or evaluative data regarding the quality, value, and outcomes" (Reed 2003, p.190). McLaughlin (1984) shares the frustrations of many educators: "Teachers are not hired to cram information into students' heads to be retained just long enough to enable them to pass objective tests" (p.196).

However, this statement has become reality, and it is exactly what teachers have become. Educators avoid the phrase of "teaching to the test" but that is exactly what it has become for teachers. They are taught and trained on what type of questions to expect on the test. The focus for a majority of the year is to teach students strategies in how to master these types of questions on the test. Since the implementation of NCLB, standardized testing results have been the only acknowledged way to gauge the effectiveness or value added by a teacher, though test results hardly reflect the teacher's true performance. PDAS does not factor or show outside variables, such as student growth, what kind of day the child is having, what happened at home the night before the test, or what was taught in the classroom. Teachers also cited that principals are so busy with the managerial aspect of their job that they spend a modest time in the classroom, thus, investing little in building the essential teacher-principal relationship (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003). Teachers receive little feedback on their practices. Many principals have not been in the classroom since standardized testing was implemented and are not familiar with the types of questions on it nor the types of strategies that students need to be taught in order to be successful.

Contrary to popular belief, most principals do not favor teacher evaluations. Principals do not believe they have the ability to be consistent and make it relevant to a teacher. They also believe that the data from the evaluation can cause tension between them as an instructional leader, and their role as an administrator. Like most bosses, they want to be well liked and viewed as competent in what they do. By avoiding an uncomfortable situation, principals avoid the possible image of "the bad guy." Lastly, to avoid potential conflict, principals try to diminish teacher evaluations by having the

attitude that it is just a formality they have to do. Many teachers also believe that the evaluation is ineffective because the evaluator, usually the principal, had little knowledge about the curriculum or methods being evaluated. With doubt in the instructional competence of principals, teachers do not validate their ratings on the evaluation (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

In their study, Ponticell and Zepeda (2004) found that only a small number of principals (roughly 10%) believed that there was more to supervision than evaluations. The principals believed that supervision also included having conversations and communications with teachers about current practices, addressing concerns, and empowering them to improve even further. The communication between a principal and teacher is crucial in better practices in the classroom; however, this piece in supervision is often lacking, overshadowed by the principal's busyness or fear of a hard conversation.

Peer observations are sometimes used as part of a teacher's evaluation but often times are discouraged due to limited time during the school day. One area that McLaughlin brings up is the unsaid agreement of teachers having the mentality of not interfering with other teachers, even though there may be "bad" practices in place. As a result, even if peer feedback is emphasized, it may not be the true picture of what is going on in the classroom. Because of this autonomy, the role of the principal is even more crucial in giving helpful feedback. Therefore, communication between the principal and the teacher has significant impact on the effectiveness of a teacher (McLaughlin, 1984). However, the lack of feedback often prevents teachers from sensing that they are effective in the classroom. Many teachers viewed their evaluations as valueless, citing that the lack of feedback, the inconsistency across the campus and district, and the

subjectivity used by administrators negated the value of the evaluation (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003). Because of this negative view of evaluations, teachers go through the motions and lower the expectation that the evaluation process will help them improve instruction.

Peterson (2004) discusses a study done on why principals avoid giving a negative teacher evaluation. One of the reasons is that the principal wants to avoid confrontation and the hard conversation that comes when a teacher has a poor evaluation. Though tough conversations are part of being a leader, he/she still wants to be accepted by the staff, so conflict is avoided, sometimes altogether to avoid awkward situations; therefore, current teaching practices, both good and bad, continue. Sometimes, the principal does not take the time to know the practices of the teacher in the classroom, which makes for an inaccurate evaluation. It also may be that the principal does not possess the knowledge or skills to identify when there are instructional problems in the classroom. In some districts, it is hard to counsel a teacher out of teaching due to the lack of support from the district level. Lastly, school districts struggle with a shortage of financial resources, and these financial constraints may prevent a principal from appropriately evaluating a teacher or being able to replace him/her when it becomes necessary. One of the biggest complaints by administrators about teacher evaluations is the lack of time. Administrators struggle with the ability and frequency to observe classroom instructional practices because they are bogged down with administrative or discipline issues (Peterson, 2004). "If accountability-based evaluation systems continue to focus principals' and teachers' attention on complying with steps established by law, and if fulfilling the steps continues to be more important than the process of adult learning required to improve teaching and

learning, then there is little hope that supervision and evaluation will be perceived by teachers or principals as anything more than a perfunctory, compliance-centered process where both principal and teachers deliver the required show" (Ponticell, Zepeda, 2004).

Studies have shown that teacher evaluations have several flaws: 1. They have been subjective to the rater; 2. It causes classroom disruptions when the evaluator is present; 3. It shows an inadequate representation of the classroom; and 4. It is inaccurate in validity. Other problems that have been mentioned include rater's style of learning, limited samples, and a change in teaching practice that may not be the norm, meaning teachers will change their usual method of teaching when they know that an evaluation is on the line (Peterson, 2004).

Effective Teacher Appraisal Systems

The best way for teacher evaluations to be effective is to make clear expectations to the teachers of what is expected (Peterson, 2004). Odden's research (2004) found that the teachers who scored high in evaluations had the greatest student growth. The evaluation had extremely detailed and specific standards that were to be met. It also included multiple forms of data on the teacher's instructional practices, and more than one well-trained evaluator scored the teacher, which was based on very specific rubrics. With multiple evaluators scoring a teacher, it moved the evaluators to be more cautious and conscious of how they were scoring that particular teacher, which resulted in more consistent evaluation scores.

Due to the negativity these evaluations seem to generate, some school districts have adopted a teacher evaluation that principals are trained to use. The principals are coached on what to observe and how to assess and analyze the classroom behaviorally

and academically, which focuses on a more individualistic evaluation. When this type of process-based evaluation is used, it affects several aspects of their roles and responsibilities as teachers and principals (McLaughlin, 1984). Researchers believe that using multiple data sources would also increase the reliability of teacher evaluations. Sources, such as student and parent surveys, achievement data, transcript of professional development activities, peer reviews, and proof of support in campus improvement, should also be data that need to be considered. Peterson (2004) even goes so far in suggesting that the teacher can choose to select the data he/she wants to be evaluated. This method also provides some individualization in the evaluation that is specific to the teacher's needs. The method of walk-throughs has been recognized as an effective practice. The structure of a walk-through should only last about 3-6 minutes, informal, and unscheduled. During this time, the principal can engage in conversations with the students and assess student learning. With more frequent walk-through visits, an administrator can gain a more reliable sampling of the classroom (Peterson, 2004). Berube and Dexter (2006) have also found research in which teachers are placed on different tracks, which are determined by teacher effectiveness and years of experience. One caution of this method is making sure that there are not too many complex tracks, which then becomes a burden to the evaluator and thus, loses its effectiveness because sufficient time cannot be dedicated to each track.

To move principals away from having a negative mentality about evaluations, some districts are investing in more training for principals to become better evaluators. This long-term investment will help principals become more successful instructional leaders and school managers. Principals are starting to be given more authority and

resources in teacher evaluations. Districts are providing more workshops, trainings, and other educational activities based on teacher evaluations. Mentor teachers, who are able to respond immediately to a principal's request and needs, are also being provided. Personalizing resources and ideas encourage principals to, not only meet immediately with the teacher but also, give ideas of ways to grow in certain areas (McLaughlin, 1984). Ponticell and Zepeda (2004) suggest that before school districts and states start changing the evaluation system, principals need to first take a deep look at themselves and their own practices and attitudes, especially in their role in supervision. This role is extremely crucial because it lends itself to how they go about in molding and training teachers.

In a survey conducted on a sample in the western United States, principals had a high average of identifying highly effective teachers. The effectiveness of a teacher was based on overall effectiveness, specific characteristics, parent satisfaction, dedication, work ethic, classroom management, relationship with administrators, and ability to improve math and reading scores. Jacob and Lefgren (2006) believe that if a principal's own evaluation was based on his/her ability to rate the effectiveness of teachers, then student achievement would tremendously improve.

In order for teachers to accept ownership in the criteria in an evaluation, they need to be included in the process of creating them (Kyriakides, Demetriou, Charalambous, 2006). The greater involvement there was by teachers to help create the structure of the evaluation, the more willing they were to change, and to seek knowledge to better their practice. The process also increased communication amongst teachers, and shared decision-making campus wide (Reed, 2003). It motivated teachers to regain the intrinsic

desire to seek and grow. One teacher even said, "Personally, it provided development opportunities and knowledge that I was cared for/valued as an educator" (p.202).

Communication in schools is often used for administrative matters, but there also needs to be a strong emphasis on instructional communication between the teacher and principal. Trainings have been provided for principals to develop a common language with their staff to communicate clearly, specifically, and precisely. This way the feedback given to teachers is appropriate, understood, and useful. The communication between the teacher and the principal must be relevant to what goes on the classroom, so it encourages further conversations. The more communication that takes place, the more consistent and aligned goals are to the greater mission and vision of the school, naturally producing a more effective school as a whole (McLaughlin, 1984). Teachers found that evaluations were effective when they received constructive feedback in a timely manner, as well as encouragement in what was going well. They stated that follow-up interactions kept them accountable for striving for improvement (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

Different Evaluation Frameworks

In a Cyprus study, researchers took existing models to generate criteria for a more effective teacher evaluation. The first model is called the goal and tasks model, where principals measure teachers according to their performance in meeting specific education outcomes, like benchmarks, test scores, etc. The caution with this model is to make sure there are clearly defined standards and goals. The resource utilization model is when there is evidence of teachers using given resources or applying staff development strategies in their classroom. In this model, an administrator needs to know what resources are available and provided and if all teachers have the ability and opportunity to

access them. In the working process model, the teacher is rated for her teaching methods, the student results of it, and whether it led them to have understanding of the concept being taught. This model is only effective if expectations of mastery are set and student comprehension is evident. The school constituencies satisfaction model focuses on the perspectives of the students and their parents of the teacher. In order for this model to be effective, a teacher's role and duties need to be predefined and agreed between teachers and their constituencies before being rated. The accountability model is closely linked to the school constituency model in that it requires the teacher to show evidence of communication and decisions made on behalf of the stakeholders. And similar to the previous model, the expectations and responsibilities of a teacher need to be preset and established before this model can be implemented. The absence of problems model is the teacher's ability to solve problems between him/herself with a fellow staff member or parent. This model gauges the teacher's ability to confront adversity. Evaluators need to be aware that, though obvious problems may not be evident, it does not mean that expectations are fulfilled; therefore, a principal needs to be aware of identifying a problem at all times. And lastly, the adaptability and flexibility a teacher shows through change, the ability to cope with diversity and challenges, as well as portraying a life-long learner are characteristics that represent the continuous learning model. Before this model is used, the principal needs to consider how important adapting to change is for a teacher and if it is working towards the predetermined goals. Whether the criterion is based on a few of these models or all of them, there need to be clear ways of defining them and measuring teacher effectiveness. Their teacher evaluations are based on four specific areas: teaching skills and classroom organization, teacher's professional knowledge,

teacher's professional behavior and ethics, and his/her involvement with the community. This evaluation is completed by a head teacher each year, and then, every two years, an inspector completes an evaluation on the teacher (Kyriakides, Demetriou, Charalambous, 2006).

Berube and Dexter (2006) discuss a framework that has four similar domains that would improve student learning: 1. Planning and preparation, 2. Classroom environment, 3. Instruction, 4. Professional responsibilities. Reed et al (2003) built an evaluation with the assumptions that 1. What standards were being assessed were selected based on context of the individual, 2. The evaluation needed qualitative and quantitative data, 3. It should be ongoing, 4. A selected person is assigned the task of collecting and organizing data for the evaluation, 5. Determining the goals, process, and data used for the evaluation should be a collaborative effort with teachers, 6.Encourage greater understanding of the expectations of the evaluation, 7. Facilitate increased conversations and feedback, 8. Growing the teacher in his/her practice, philosophies, and relationships.

Principal Role in Professional Development

Progression of Staff Development

The role of principal has transformed over the years from a managerial position to the current role of instructional leader (Haar, 2004). Research says that the United States will be facing a shortage of experienced and qualified principals because of the demands and stress of the job. Not only are they responsible for creating professional learning communities, leading instruction, scheduling, and budgeting, but principals are also expected to mentor and mold teachers into effective educators. There is a direct

correlation between a principal's support of teacher growth, and a teacher thriving in the classroom (Drago-Severson, 2007). Therefore, principals need to be involved with their teacher's professional growth if they want optimal learning and student success.

Slowly, research is finding that the core of the educational reform movement needs to be teacher quality (Kent, 2004). There is an explicit relationship between administrators grooming adult learners and creating an optimal learning environment for children in the classroom, making it necessary to focus on developing teachers into life-long learners (Drago-Severson, 2007). Studies have found that there is a strong relationship between the professional development a teacher attends and implements, and the academic growth and success of students in his/her class (Kent, 2004). Researchers have pushed collaboration as the key element of teacher learning. Collaboration allows teachers to gain multiple perspectives, encourages self reflection, and good practices, as well as allowing teachers to gain information that is relevant to them. During this process, the principal's role becomes one of a facilitator (Drago-Severson, 2007).

A wide range of staff development options have always existed, but many are dated and no longer meet the challenges that teachers face daily (Kent, 2004). Staff development has historically been developed and implemented from the top-down, not meeting current teacher needs, or providing continuous support and follow-up (Kent, 2004). Districts usually generate broad professional development courses for the year and hope that it would meet some teachers' needs. These district staff developments often are a one-time course, usually not in a series, and there is no follow-up after a teacher attends. Therefore, there is no accountability of whether the teacher puts into practice what they have learned. Zimmerman and May (2003) also agree that training needs to be

centered on student achievement, collaboration, and site-based needs, but at the same time, professional development also needs to be a long-term commitment that is differentiated from teacher to teacher connecting it to the district's overall objectives. There is a shift in the center of professional development. Research believes that its focus needs to change "from the teachers to the students, from districts to schools, from single, fragmented efforts to long-range, comprehensive plans. The focus must move from outside of school training by experts, to school-based, embedded learning in classrooms, and from ad-hoc skill development to the cultivation of content-specific skills and knowledge" (Kent, 2004).

Scholars agree on the "how" to get teachers to want to learn: 1. To bring in their own experiences and diverse backgrounds to mold their teaching style, 2. To help them to understand the reason to learn something in particular and how it applies to their classroom, 3. To make sure their needs are met, 4. To understand their school and classroom culture, and 5. To learn through experiences. There are several components researchers promote that create effective professional development for teachers. The professional development needs to be 1. Ongoing, 2. Centered on student achievement, 3. Originated from and established in practice, 4. Connected to teacher needs, 5. Linked to the ongoing change in school, 6. Provided on campus and relevant to that specific campus, and 7. Concentrated on collaboration between teachers. It has been discovered that regardless of social economic status or ethnic diversity, collaboration contributes to professional development in schools. However, the level and depth of collaboration depends on the culture of the school (Drago-Severson, 2007).

Problems of Current Staff Development

Because principals are pulled in so many directions, they often do not focus on becoming more knowledgeable about current practices that would help their teachers to flourish. There is a greater need to help principals support and cultivate teacher learning and growth (Drago-Severson, 2007). In a study done by Zimmerman and May (2003), principals agreed that the top inhibitors of providing effective professional development were lack of money and limited time with other reoccurring reasons, such as the process of providing effective professional development, the lack of human resources, a shortage of qualified yet cost-effective presenters, and lastly, teacher resistance and attitude. A few principals responded with that they were so busy with all the high-stakes testing, they found it hard to give more time and energy to professional development.

Due to financial, time, and funding restraints, the development of teacher leaders is often hindered (Drago-Severson (2007). Districts nation-wide are spending less than half of one percent of their budget and resources on staff development, though a study done over 1,000 districts found that for every additional dollar spent on training teachers, the training contributed to greater student achievement, which is more than any other resource (Kent, 2004). Drago-Severson (2007) discusses how research on staff development needs to go beyond just providing information. Scholars have argued that many models really do not support effective teacher development because they make assumptions on how a teacher learns and what they need, ignoring its relevance to the teacher. There needs to be a better connection between theory and real-life situations teachers face each day. Drago-Severson (2007) believes that professional development needs to involve transformative learning, a process of changing the way educators see

and do things, pushing them to be more reflective and willing to change. The attitudes of teachers contribute to the changes that professional development may bring into their everyday practices (Kent, 2004). Teachers are often unaware of their deficiencies in their own teaching and if they do recognize it, they lack the ability or knowledge to change it (Kent, 2004).

There are countless professional development programs created, but researchers believe that they are not implemented or used because their demands are beyond what teachers have ability to do (Drago-Severson (2007). Principals need to know how to scaffold the staff developments for their staff like cases previous stately. They also need to have a deep knowledge for adult learners. Kegan's theory involves five stages in which adults progress through as learners. Stages 0-2 are when the adult learner is very egocentric, only looking at his/her own needs, interests, and acts on impulse. Stages 3-5 are when the adult learner moves to more of a societal perspective, considering other perspectives and becomes more interdependent on others. If principals can better understand what stage their teachers are, they can individualize support for the teachers

Possible Solutions to Staff Development

Before even focusing on staff development, the principal needs to set the direction in which he/she wants to take his/her campus. Teachers want to know what goal(s) they are working towards accomplishing before they set out doing it. When creating effective professional development for teachers, Haar (2004) says that the principal needs to plan with the end in mind. Research recommends that the framework for professional development should relate to the purpose, vision, values, and goals of the school, which

need to be established ahead of time. If there is no direction, then everything teachers do, including professional development, loses meaning and value.

Drago-Severson (2007) says that teachers should be given more ownership in the creation and implementation of professional development trainings, as well as time for self reflection. Staff development needs to push teachers to challenge their own thinking and practices, to be stimulated, and to encourage inquisitiveness (Kent, 2004). If teachers feel that the staff developments they attend are useful to their classroom, then they are more likely to put it into practice. It starts with principals talking to teachers about what it is they need, so they know what the teachers would find pertinent to them. Teachers can share what areas they would like to focus on that year, so the principal can help to either find relevant staff developments for them or help create them for teachers with similar interests.

Zimmerman and May (2003) suggest that teachers and principals should collaborate in how to best find time for teachers to engage in professional development. These days, there is never enough time in the day for teachers or administrators to do what they need to do. Districts recognize that and are making more of an effort in providing an array of ways of completing staff development. Some districts offer online courses while others provide video conferencing, all slowly deviating from the standard face-to-face professional development classes. Regardless of how it is offered, the core of staff development is all the same, to learn better practices in order to increase student success.

Haar (2004) believes that professional development not only needs to be driven by student data and involve the teachers for input, but to also have intensive follow-up

and support for continual professional development. Campus decisions are becoming more data driven, but the follow-up is what is lacking. In the end, the only way teachers can make use of their training is if they see the connection between theory and practice, as it applies to their classroom. If they do not see its relevance, teachers will most likely not use it in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential for the principal to not only provide staff development based on gathered data but to ensure that teachers are utilizing the training into their classroom. This approach can only be successful if principals and teachers engage in consist conversations.

Increased student success will only occur if there is an open line of communication between administrators and teachers (Kent, 2004). Principals need to be constantly talking to their teachers, asking what is working, getting a better understanding of what is going well and what help they need in order to be better practitioners. Feedback from both administrators and teachers are imperative in what step(s) to take next.

Partnering with universities in developing teacher evaluations increases opportunities for professional development because they know what the needs are for teachers (Reed, 2003). In order for professional development to be effective, it has to be "an ongoing process, which includes appropriate, well-thought-out training and individual follow-up" (Kent 2004, p.428). It is important that if does not just stop at providing but the follow-through is just as crucial. Universities have the ability to do accomplish this part because they have more resources and personnel. They are also more aware of the most current research in best practices, which is beneficial for teachers to better meet the needs of their students.

Professional development needs to be embedded in research, practical, and relevant to teacher needs. Otherwise, teachers will be reluctant to change because it is irrelevant or too overwhelming (Kent, 2004). Because new research is always surfacing, it may be overwhelming for teachers, and they are reluctant to change their practices, especially if they have been in the profession for a long period of time and already set in their way of doing things.

For those who resist change, the principal needs to understand the source of their resistance, to include them in the process, and help them to understand the value of participating in collaboration and professional development (Zimmerman, May, 2003). Teachers need to see themselves as the change agent that will make the difference in the success of their students. It is through this intrinsic attitude and reward that they will see positive results in their classroom with the change (Kent, 2004). Teachers need to realize that they are life-long learners and need to be accountable for not only themselves but also their colleagues (Kent, 2004).

Working Staff Development Frameworks

Drago-Severson (2007) interviewed twenty-five different principals, from assorted cultural backgrounds, varying positions (elementary, middle, high school) with different geographical locations (urban, suburban, rural), diverse educational credentials, and a mixture of sectors (public, private, Catholic). In the study, Drago-Severson found that all the principals supported their adult learners through four ideas, which she calls pillar practices. These four pillars form Drago-Severson's Learning-Oriented Model of School Leadership.

The first pillar is called teaming, where collaboration and communication is encouraged. This idea may look different from campus to campus, but the purpose of it is to increase interdependency between colleagues and decrease isolation. Teaming creates opportunities for teachers to engage in more conversations to reflect on current practices and make appropriate adjustments to them. Some examples of teaming, besides just planning together, include visiting other teachers' classrooms, visiting other schools, pairing teachers up to teach together, teaming teachers with outside organizations, such as local universities or research centers, and evaluating each other's student work. Principals need to make sure there are clear expectations, set objectives, and give support to teachers as necessary to attain their goals.

The next pillar that Drago-Severson (2007) discusses is the provision of leadership roles teachers can assume. When a teacher assumes a leadership role, it encourages continual learning, further develops teaming, and increases ownership in the school. Most people think that the only way a teacher can hold a leadership role is by becoming an administrator of some sort. However, there are plenty of opportunities at the campus level; such roles include curriculum development and implementation, budget advising, leading workshops/trainings, grant writing, mentoring graduate interns or student teachers, and even hiring of staff. Principals need to focus more on supporting teachers in developing their leadership skills, like shared decision-making, problem solving, collecting and analyzing data, and building on their expertise. Studies have shown that when these skills are fostered, it builds a stronger campus culture. The principal needs to provide opportunities for teachers to step into these types of roles,

forming relationships with local universities or education service centers, as well as inviting teachers to take on these roles on campus.

The third pillar, collegial inquiry, is centered on the idea of reflection on one's practices with a group of people, in order to better improve the ones already in place and increase the success in the classroom. It is during these times of inquiry that teachers can learn and listen to different perspectives, which can lend itself to self analysis and reflection. It is the constant probing of practices and assumptions that challenges a teacher's perspective and pushes him/her to grow as an educator. Collegial inquiry can take on several forms; besides dialogue, it can be done through writing, such as journaling, proposal writing, or in open forums for teachers to voice their perspective in a non threatening environment. It is a principal's role to ensure that teachers have opportunities to engage in collegial inquiry, whether voiced or written, and not be judged for what is shared.

The fourth and last pillar is mentoring. This idea provides an avenue for those teachers who like to be more discrete with their leadership roles. Mentoring prevents new teachers from isolation and increases accountability. Researchers view mentoring as a way to help increase teacher retention. Like the other pillars, mentoring at various campuses may look different. While some focus more on the emotional support, others use it as a way of reinforcing that the new member has content support. Whether the mentor or the mentee, both parties are challenged to think of their beliefs and current practices. A principal needs to provide guidelines and set goals for both the mentor and mentee to ensure this program is effective.

Holmes Group initiated a collaborative model between teacher education programs and local schools known as Professional Development Schools (PDS) to better prepare incoming teachers into the workforce. The purpose of the PDS model is "(a) to develop, refine, and disseminate practices and structures that improve, advance, and support student learning and well-being; (b) to prepare new teachers and other school-based educators; (c) to support the professional development of practicing teachers and other school based-educators, and; (d) to conduct applied inquiry that supports and advances student and educator learning" (Watson 2006, p. 78). These preservice teachers engage in at least one semester of day to day responsibilities of a classroom teacher. They experience lesson planning, instruction, assessing student growth, managing and disciplining a classroom, attending professional development, etc. Studies show that the teachers in the PDS are more aware and understanding of students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, reflect more on teaching and student learning, and work collaboratively and cooperatively with their colleagues. Though there is no significance in retention between a PDS teacher and non-PDS teacher, research did find that PDS teachers are more effective in the classroom, and are more capable and competent using technology, managing and disciplining, and being reflective in practice. Districts and principals even believed that PDS teachers would be better hires because they feel that they are well-prepared for the classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Texas' teacher evaluation, PDAS, and its usefulness to principals in assessing their teachers. This chapter describes the methods that were used to investigate these questions and is organized into the following sections: Research Design, Variables Participants, Sampling Procedures, Instruments, Procedures, Identifying Predominant Themes, Data Analysis; Internal and External Validity, and Limitations.

Design

This study was conducted as an exploratory inquiry using data gathered from principals from the Gulf Coastal region executed by Master's students of the Educational Leadership department of a large, doctoral-granting university in the metropolitan area of Southeast Texas. It was a quantitative survey research with Likert-scale questions with participants having an opportunity to explain their answers. A mixed methods approach was used to analyze this study. The responses of the principals were analyzed using correlational techniques, statistical, and causal-comparative approach. All participants were sitting Texas K-12 public school principals. The survey questionnaire was administered face-to-face by the Master's program students. The gathered data from the principals were amassed and documented in a database that will be used for future research on specific roles of a principal. The original principal survey will be included in its entirety as Appendix B to this study.

Using the archival data from the survey project, this study explored whether the data collected from the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) impacted the staff development a principal provided on his/her campus. The portion of the survey that focused on the importance of PDAS and on the importance of staff development was Sections E. Responses were further analyzed for significant relationships with the selected principals within the gender, level, location, and their campus Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) rating in Section A and Section B.

Variables

The independent variables in this study are the principal, level of school, campus location, and school TAKS rating. The dependent variables in this study are the data gathered in the two Likert scale questions and the responses collected in the open-ended questions regarding PDAS and staff development.

Participants

The participants in this study were limited to K-12 principals who currently hold a school principal position. No other school or district personnel, such as teachers, assistant principals, retired principals, or other staff, were sought out for this survey project. A total of 178 usable responses were acquired. Of the 178 participants, 112 were female principals and 65 were male principals with the ethnic breakdown as follows: 51% white/non-Hispanic, 28% black/non-Hispanic, 19% Hispanic, 1.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.4% non-resident/international. The average experience level of the participants in education was 21 years with the range of 5 years to 46 years. The average

experience level as a principal was 6 years with the range of 0 year to 38 years. The

locations of schools where the participants served as principals are 13 rural, 103 urban,

60 suburban, and 2 blanks. According to Texas State accountability system, each school

was given a rating of Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, or Low Performing. Each

principal self-reported his/her school's TAKS rating. There were 52 Exemplary, 53

Recognized, 66 Acceptable, and 7 Low Performing.

Sampling Procedures

Participating principals were selected by students in the university's Master's

degree program. Convenience sampling method was used in the selection process.

Graduate students had the freedom to choose the principals for interviewing purposes.

Therefore, most participants were either in supervisory positions or acquaintances of the

students.

Instrument

University professors from a major, doctoral granting institution in a large, urban

area in southeast Texas developed the principal survey questionnaire. The survey was

organized into 5 sections with 36 items to answer. Section A contained demographic

information about the principal and school. Section B focused on how a principal uses

his/her time and whether the time off campus is useful. Section C inquired about the

principal's own evaluation. Section D addressed the issue of principal succession and if

districts already had a program in place for it. Section E, which is the focus of the study,

determined the views of principals in their roles in PDAS and staff development. Selected

sections in the survey were chosen to evaluate tendencies in the principals' responses in

the importance of PDAS and staff development. The complete survey instrument, included in Appendix A, was approved by the institutional human subjects board of the university at which it was developed.

All survey questions were open-ended format, except the two Likert-scale questions, which were used to rate the principals' perception on the degree of importance of PDAS and staff development. Open-ended responses allowed for greater flexibility in how they expressed their opinions without the restrictions placed by prescribed answer choices. This instrument was originally intended for students in the Master's of Education program to gain exposure and practice in the research methods. Questions regarding how building administrators view the importance of PDAS and their role in staff development were brought up through discussions. A group of principals were initially interviewed in attempt to formulate specific questions. The questions were revised based on additional feedback obtained from more principals over time.

The six research questions of this study are:

1. How important is the PDAS in determining the principals' assessment of the developmental needs of their teachers?

2. How important does a principal rate teacher professional development as a task for principals?

3. Do female administrators see the role differently than male administrators?

4. Is there a difference in importance between secondary schools versus primary schools?

5. How do the responses differ between exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and low performing schools?

6. Do rural versus suburban versus urban school leaders see their roles differently?

Procedures

There were several factors that were considered by the survey developers in how to administer the questionnaire. The designers believe that sending it by mail would not be practical due to its extensiveness and size. Also, surveys sent tend to suffer a low rate of completion and return rate, so mailing it would also not be efficient. In addition, principals are pulled in all directions, often times swamped by paper work, where the survey could be easily lost in the mix. It was also decided that e-mailing the survey would not be beneficial due to the amount of information that is e-mailed to a principal on the daily basis. The creators of the survey believed that principals would quickly glance over the e-mail, expecting to complete it at a later time but never get back to it.

The data was obtained by Master's students through cognitive interviews of each participant. The responses were later recorded through the use of an on-line tool for analysis. Thus, the information regarding the data collection procedure was acquired through an interview from a university professor who designed the instrument and monitored the process. Because of the length and complexity of the open-ended questions, it was determined that this method would capture the most insightful answers from the participating principals.

Identifying Predominant Themes

This study's intent was to address the six questions related to the principal's role in staff development using PDAS data, and whether the principal's view of PDAS was

beneficial in determining appropriate professional development courses offered. The open-ended nature of the survey questions were intended to give principals the flexibility and freedom to respond accordingly. As a result, one of the first steps was classifying the data, categorizing the open-ended responses in similar groups. By sorting responses, the commonalities became evident, which was helpful in providing insight about the principals' views.

Once general themes had been identified from the open-ended responses, the themes were given an operational definition, and each response was assigned to a particular category. Responses that overlap in categories were placed in the one with the strongest element. Therefore, each response had only one code and was placed in the category that best captured its meaning. The predominant themes in the six research questions were identified and discussed in the next chapter. Quotes were embedded into the themes to capture the attitudes, beliefs, and tone of the responses from various principals. It also gave a better perspective of the rationale and context of the responses from the principals.

Analysis

This study used a descriptive model to understand predominant lines of thought that emerged from the responses of the open-ended questions that supplement the Likert-scale questions. An analysis was made to find trends in responses between female versus male principals; variations in exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and low-performing school responses; predisposition between elementary school principals and secondary principals; and a look at urban, suburban, and rural schools.

Internal and External Validity

The survey questions were developed to gain more discerning information by asking open-ended questions. There was a potential risk associated with coding the responses due to the researcher's own opinions and biases. However, the reliability of the data was maintained by reassessing the coding by multiple individuals. Another potential concern was that a sample population was selected through convenience sampling. The interviewers had the freedom to choose from their personal and professional connections who to survey. There was a possibility that this type of method may prevent the sample population from accurately representing the overall population. The participants, however, were sufficiently diverse with a large portion of area schools represented.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. Though the results were produced from a sample of 178 principals, it could not be presumed that the data collected accurately represented all school principals in the southeast region of Texas. Also, because the study's data was archived secondary data, the integrity of the data could decrease with either misinterpreted data, or error in transcription of the data. The method of which the data was collected by the interviewer could have varied from the principal's intent. Errors may have been incurred from the actual interview to transcribing it onto paper. Also the interpretation of the researcher's data into categories or coding may have varied from another researcher's method, which could have caused results that were not identical to one another. Nevertheless, as a preliminary study that seeks deeper knowledge of general trends and discernment with respect to the topic, the researcher

remained convinced that the significance of this study's contribution to the field remained

preserved.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Principal and Campus Demographic Analysis

A total of 178 guided interviews were conducted from the principal survey project underlying this study. The survey interview collected demographic data concerning both the principals themselves, as well as the campus they were leading. Individual demographic data selected for use in this study included:

- Gender

Campus demographic data used in this study included:

- Community type (i.e. urban, suburban, urban);

- Grade levels served by the campus;

- State accountability rating of the campus.

The following tables present a detailed description of each of the above-listed demographics, both for principals individually and the campuses they lead.

Gender of Principals Surveyed

The gender distribution of the principals surveyed for this study was a percentage split of approximately 63% female and 37% male and is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Gender of Principals

Gender	*f*	Valid %
Female	112	62.92
Male	66	37.08
Total	178*	100.00

* Missing cases = 0 (None)

Location (Community Type)

Included on the survey interview was the question that asked principals to report their school's classification as either "Urban," "Suburban," or "Rural," on the questionnaire termed "Location." This type of designation is labeled as "Community Type" by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in their annual public report on statewide public school district and campus demographics. Table 2 below shows the designations as reported by the principals.

Table 2

Community Type of Campuses

Community Type	f	Valid %
Rural	13	7.39
Urban	103	58.52
Suburban	60	34.09
Total	176*	100.00

*Missing cases = 2 (1.14%)

Grade Levels of Campuses

In the state of Texas, districts have the freedom to choose how to structure their schools and feeder patterns. The most typical breakdown is the levels of K-5 for elementary, 6-8 for middle school, and 9-12 for high school. However, there were several variations in the school structure, and because the questionnaire did not provide for specific nominal designations or ranges, the raw data was recorded as is. To accurately and efficiently organize the data in a manner that would be consistent and meaningful, the different variations in structure were categorized into two groups: "Primary" and "Secondary." Primary schools consisted of campuses that were early childhood centers, EC-4, and EC-8 campuses. Secondary consisted of 6-12 campuses, EC-12 campuses, middle/intermediate schools, and high schools. Table 3, below, shows that about half of the principals interviewed were from primary-leveled schools. However, ten campuses were unidentifiable, meaning there was no information that could correctly categorize them into one of the two groups.

Table 3

Grade Levels of Campuses

Grade levels	f	Valid %
Primary	89	52.98
Secondary	79	47.02
Total	168*	100.00

*Unidentifiable campuses = 10 (5.95%)

State Accountability Rating

After Texas' standardized test, known as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), each school is awarded an accountability rating based on student achievement and growth from year to year. Principals were asked to report the most recent accountability rating given to their campus. Students take this standardized test annually in third grade through eleventh grade with tested subjects varying by the grade level. Passing standards are set each year and have to be met for a school to receive a certain rating. The growth in scores is also considered when given an accountability rating. There are four possible accountability ratings that the state can give a campus: "Exemplary," "Recognized," "Acceptable," and "Low Performing," which is the order from the highest rating to the lowest. A "Low Performing" rating given by TEA would involve district and state interventions, especially if the school received the rating for more than a year.

Table 4

State Accountability Rating of Campuses

Campus Accountability Rating	*f*	Valid %
Exemplary	52	29.21
Recognized	53	29.78
Acceptable	66	37.08
Low-Performing	7	3.93
Total	178*	100.00

* Missing cases = 0 (None)

Research Question One

How important is PDAS in determining the principals' assessment of the developmental needs of their teachers?

The first question asked principals how they would rank the importance of using the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) to help grow teachers. It can be assumed that all principals in this study know the purpose of PDAS because it is a requirement to be trained in using the instrument in a formal, state-approved training before being employed by the public schools in Texas as a school principal. Responses for this question were categorized as *Very Important, Important, Moderately Important, Of Little Importance, and Unimportant*. Principals were given an opportunity to elaborate on their answers, explaining and supporting their responses. Answers in the *Very Important* category and *Important* category were those responses that viewed PDAS as the most significant method of assessing the needs of teachers. Answers categorized in

Moderately Important and *Of Little Importance* indicated a view that PDAS was or could be vital in assessing teacher growth. Answers categorized in or *Unimportant* indicated that PDAS was not imperative in growing teachers.

Out of the 178 total principals that participated in the survey, 176 principals responded to this question. The two principals who did not respond were taken out of the analyses. About 59% (104 responses) principals rated PDAS as a crucial tool in determining the needs of teachers. Principals, who thought PDAS was somewhat valuable in assessing teacher needs, made up about 32% (57 responses), and principals who thought PDAS was not relevant at all in determining teacher developmental needs, made up 9% (15 responses). Figure 1, below, offers a graphic breakdown of the results.
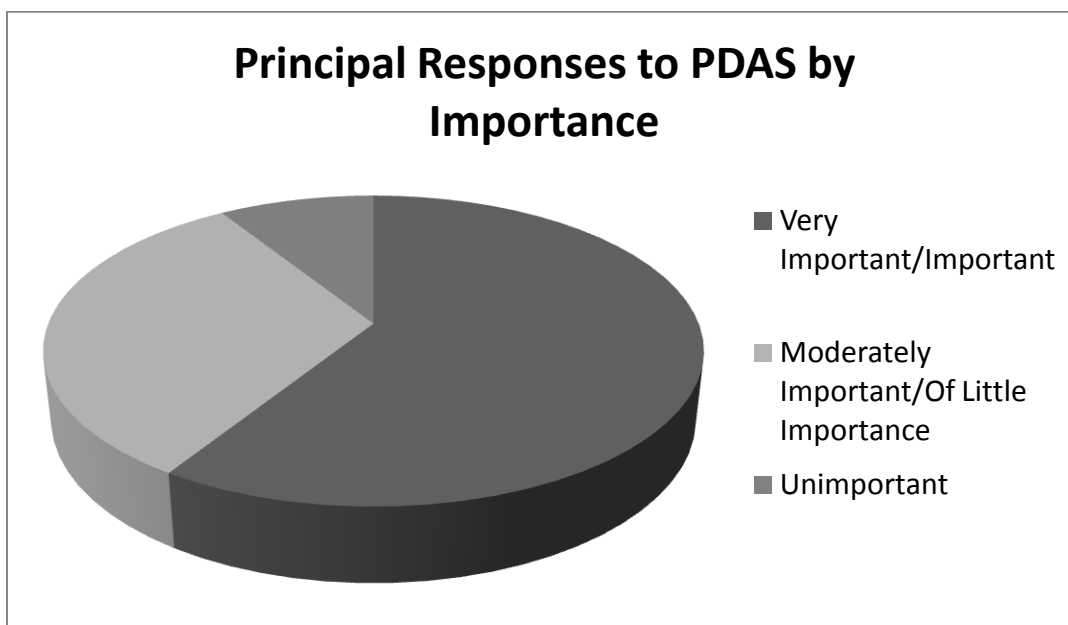

Figure 1. Principal responses to PDAS by importance.

What stood out was not that over half of the principals responded that PDAS was significant in determining teacher needs, but that close to half (41%) of the principals responded that PDAS was not critical in assessing the developmental needs of the

teachers. This result was surprising because PDAS is the state-mandated evaluation tool

that principals must use to appraise their teachers. In the questions to follow, a deeper

analysis will look at the breakdown of these results and make sense of the principals'

responses.

Research Question Two

How important does a principal rate teacher professional development as a task for

principals?

    This second question asked principals their thoughts of whether professional

development was a priority of a principal. Principals' responses fell into one of the

following categories: *Very Important, Important, Moderately Important, Of Little*

Importance, and *Unimportant*. Those principals that responded with *Very Important* and

Important believed that one of the most imperative tasks of a principal was providing

teachers with staff development. Responses of *Moderately Important* specified that it was

and could be a significant task of the principal. Principals, who responded *Unimportant*,

believed that providing professional development was of little meaning to their role as a

principal.

    From the 176 total responses, 170 principals (97%) replied that it was *Very*

Important/Important that one of their main tasks was providing professional development

for teachers. Only 2% said that it was *Moderately Important*, and 1% of principals stated

that it was not of any importance to them. The following questions will delve into

patterns and reasoning behind these responses. Figure 2, below, depicts the stated results.
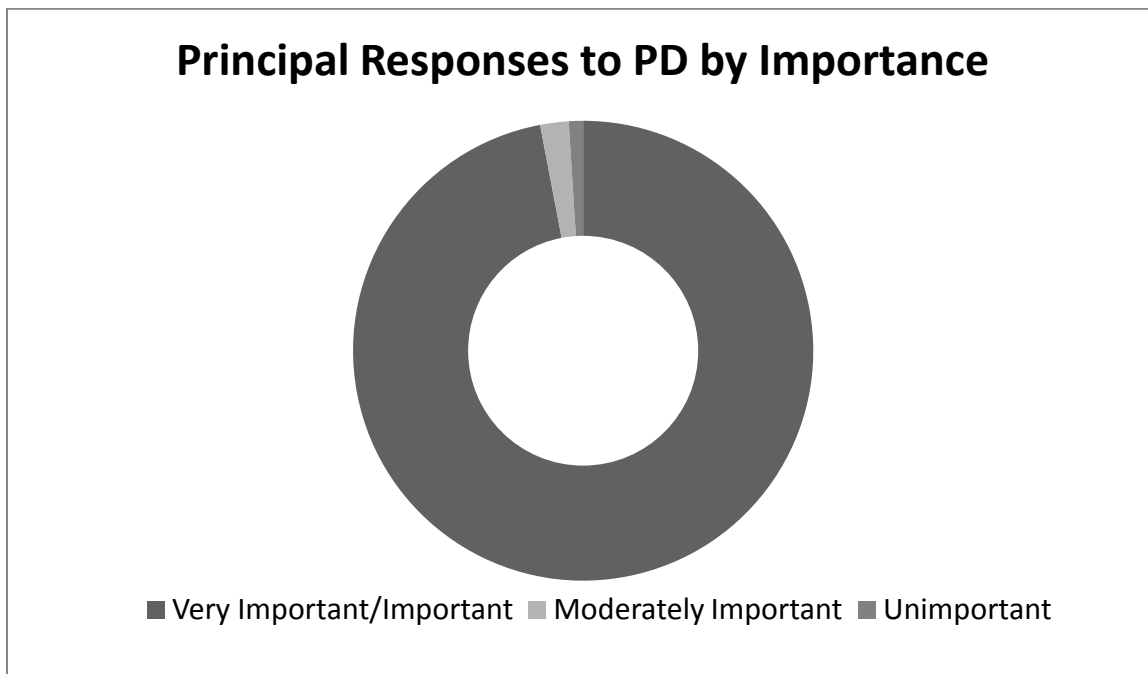
Principal Responses to PD by Importance

■ Very Important/Important ■ Moderately Important ■ Unimportant

Figure 2. Principal responses to staff development by importance.

Research Question Three

Do women administrators see the principal role differently than men?

This third question compared how female principal responses compared to their male counterparts to see if there were any trends or patterns in their responses. The data used was from the open-ended question that principals could choose to respond to after categorizing their responses. A majority of principals chose to give a brief explanation to support their categorized answer.

Female and male administrators were asked their thoughts on the importance of the Professional Development and Appraisal System. Of the 178 participants, 176 participants responded. The two participants who did not respond were removed from the analysis. Out of the 112 female principals, 68 responded that PDAS was *Very Important* or *Important,* as an assessment in teacher growth. This was well over half (61%). Female

participants, who responded *Moderately* or *Of Little Importance*, represented 33%, or 37

out of the 112 female principals. *Unimportant* responses made up of 6%, or 7 out of the

112 total female participants.

A total of 64 male principals responded to this portion of the survey. Out of 64

responses, 36 male principals replied that PDAS was *Very Important/Important* in the

assessment of teacher needs. This number constituted a little over half (56%) of the male

responses. About 31% (20 out of 64) males responded that PDAS was *Moderately*

Important/Of Little Importance in assessing developmental needs of teachers.

The remaining 8 replies stated that PDAS was *Unimportant*, which consisted of 13% of

the total male principal responses. Figure 3, below, shows the comparison between the

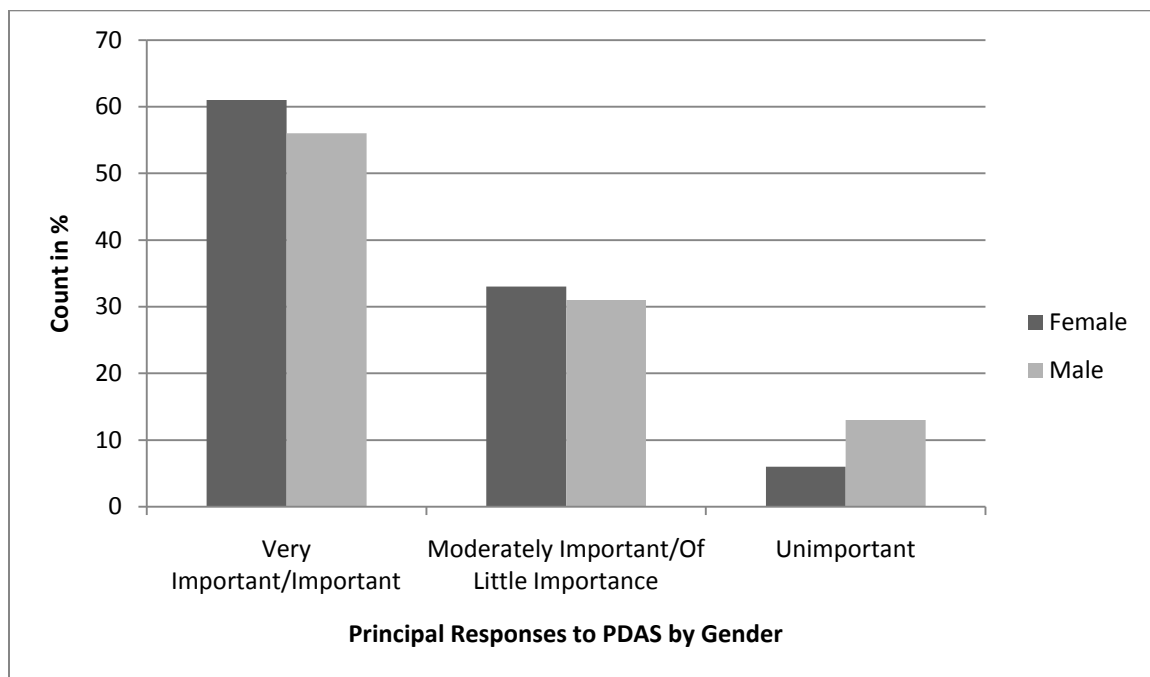female and male responses in each category.

Figure 3. Principal responses to PDAS by gender.

Both female and male principals had the opportunity to follow-up the above responses with explanations. Regardless of gender, the responses focused on being able to identify teacher strengths and areas of need, on how it drives their professional development, that it is an objective assessment of the teacher, and that it is simply required by the state to complete. Some examples of these beliefs:

- "It helps give you a more specific area of need for each individual teacher. You understand the strengths and weaknesses of teachers better through the PDAS process."

- "The instrument gives me the vehicle in which to diagnose a teacher's needs. That way I can guide them through determining the best path for professional development."

- "The needs of my teachers definitely guide where I go with my professional development. If there is a weakness in a certain area this is certainly where I start with professional development."

- "The PDAS evaluation instrument gives me an objective instrument to record the actions of a teacher. This record is then used to provide the teacher with feedback regarding his/her performance and ways to improve instructional practices. Ultimately, the purpose of the datum is to assist the teacher. In the event the feedback and instructional recommendations do not improve the teacher's performance, the PDAS would be used as documentation to recommend termination."

- "It gives feedback and data on the teacher's current level of competence, and allows further growth to be established by setting short-term and long-term goals."

- "It is what is required of us."

- "It is what our district wants and needs so it has to be done."

Principals who responded that PDAS was *Moderately Importance/Of Little Importance* had similar explanations, again, regardless of gender. Both feel that PDAS does not accurately capture what goes on the classroom. A few responded that it was just a formality required by law. Some principals believed that the results of PDAS were subjective to the evaluator. Many principals believed that PDAS should be used with other evaluative tools to fully assess teachers. One of the principals even admitted that he/she does not take PDAS seriously because he/she usually does it last minute and rushes through the process. Examples of their attitudes are:

- "It is so subjective that it is very difficult to gauge what the needs can be. In some instances, it can be reliable, but it just depends if the assessors of the teachers, used the instrument with fidelity."

- "PDAS is a window but not the whole picture. It helps us gauge the overall climate and needs but it is not the only thing."

- "PDAS is also mostly just a bureaucratic paper work exercise"

- "Anyone can put on a good show. For it to be effective, we have to have multiple observations, and talks with the students."

- "Observing can show areas of weakness but most of the time, the areas a teacher needs improvement in aren't noticed during a PDAS observation."

- "It is a subjective tool that can be easily manipulated to reflect what the principal wants to expose."

The remaining principals (7 female, 8 male), who responded that PDAS was *Unimportant* in assessing teacher development, had the same response: PDAS was not used on their campus. Only one principal actually used PDAS on his campus and replied, "Most teachers expect the Exceeds expectations and don't really think about evaluation."

Female and Male Views in Professional Development Disaggregation

These female and male principals were also asked whether they felt that staff development was an important role of a principal. Both female (98%) and male (94%) respondents strongly believed that it was a major task of a campus leader. Only 2 out of the 112 (2%) of the female and 2 out of the 64 (3%) of the male principals responded that it was *Moderately Important*. There were no female participants that believed staff development was *Unimportant,* and 2 out of the 64 (3%) of the male administrators believed it was not crucial in their role as principal. Figure 4, below, shows the contrast between female and male responses in each category in pertaining to staff development.
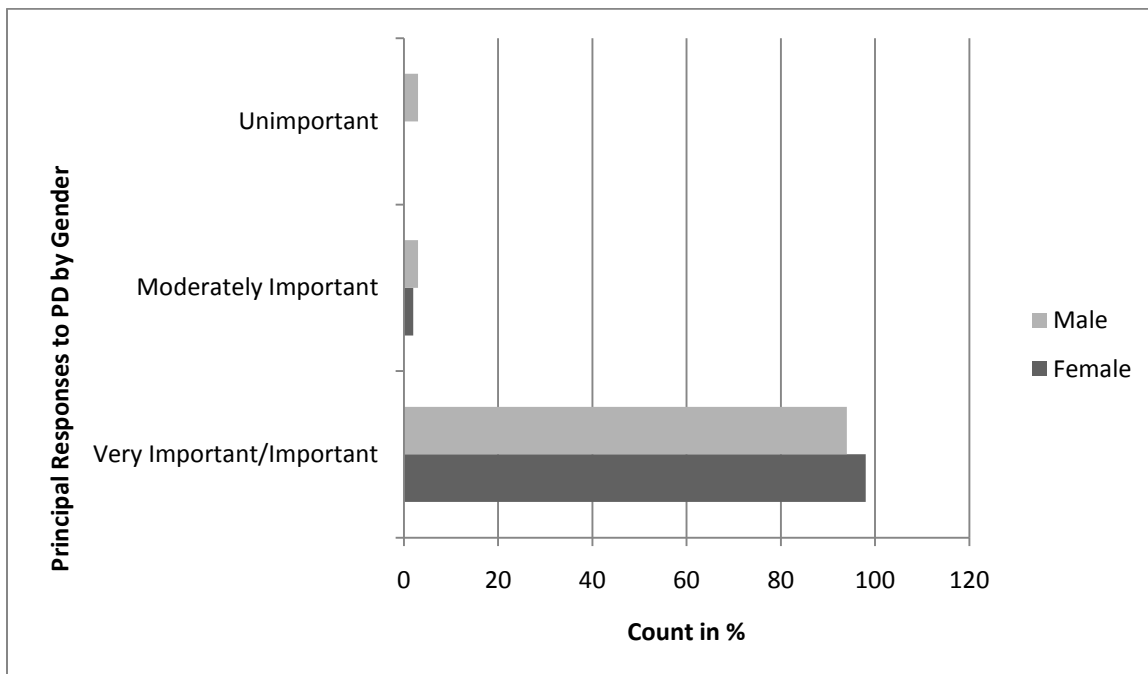
Figure 4. Principal responses to PD by gender.

Both the female and male principals, who answered that staff development was a *Very Important/Important* role of a principal, believed that their main role as a campus leader was to be an instructional leader. They recognized that teachers were the greatest factors that contributed to student success. A number of principals stated that teachers, as well as themselves, needed to be life-long learners and that it was their role as the principal to guide them through that process. Example statements below show the positions of the principals:

- "Teachers are what makes your school run. The better prepared they are to teach, the better the students will perform and the less stress you have put on the teachers."

- "Your teachers are what make it happen. They need to grow professionally in order for their performance to improve."

- "Principals are the instructional leaders and must support and/or provide quality professional development opportunities for all of the professional staff."

- "I think this sets the tone for everything we do. What teachers do in the classroom IS the difference maker for student success and I believe professional development is the key to better teaching and learning."

- "If you create, nurture and develop good teachers that will prevent you from having to deal with a myriad of other problems that result from having an ineffective teaching staff."

- "It is important that principals are a part of staff development because it shows the teachers that they are learning with them. It is also important for buy in. For the staff development to be implemented the principal needs to be aware of what happened at the presentation."

- "The principal is the instructional leader of leaders and it is very important for the principal to demonstrate learning as a continuous experience."

There was a trend in how the female principals responded compared to the male principals. Female principal responses focused on development, support, needs, and ongoing opportunities to grow. They also mentioned staying abreast of current research. Some examples of their responses are:

- "The principal needs to know what the staff needs are but doesn't have to deliver the staff development."

- "Teachers have a lot to think about so I should be able to work toward helping teachers with professional development."

- "Principals do not have to lead it, but they need to make sure it is meaningful and that teachers have an opportunity to follow through."

- "The expectation and role has changed from management to curricular leader. We must continue to have "PD" to know the best practices and research that is current and expected by teachers."

- "I believe that serving as a principal, I become not only someone's supervisor but a colleague, mentor and a professional resource. There is no magic recipe for success but one of the truest ingredients will be cultivation. I serve as an exemplar of what teachers should incorporate in their classrooms and how they grow professionally. I am obligated to give them knowledge and allow them to practice, implement, and reflect from their professional development experiences."

- "Teachers have a lot to deal with; the least I can do is help them with professional development."

Male principal responses focused more on resources, promoting learning communities, guiding teachers to set goals and develop skills, and strengthening instruction. Examples of these views are below:

- "Teachers get to know what we all need to be doing. Everyone needs to be responsible in the learning process, finding out the best practices and knowing what will help the kids the most."

- "It is the principal's job to look at campus needs and send them to training in-line with personal and campus goals and needs."

- "Professional development is crucial for a professional learning community, and I require the teachers to document their professional development each six weeks based on their needs and weaknesses. At the school, we offer professional development at different levels based on the teachers' needs. We do not have a "blanket" professional development plan for all the teachers; rather, an individualized plan for each teacher to recognize their needs. This is especially crucial for new teachers; however, it also recognizes the different needs of effective and master teachers."

- "Teachers can always grow. It is my job as a principal to facilitate this growth."

- "It strengthens instructions and improves teacher satisfaction."

Within the four principals (2 female, 2 male) that responded *Moderately Important*, only two (2 female) explained their answers. One of the female principals stated that it was the teacher's responsibility to know current teaching practices, as well as newly legislative mandated policies and practices. The other principal explained that staff development needed to universal, like grade book training where it applied to the entire staff.

Two male principals rated professional development as an *Unimportant* task of the principal. One did not respond with a rationale for his response, and the other stated that he did not understand the question.

Research Question Four

Is there a difference in importance of roles between secondary principals versus primary principals?

This fourth question addressed the issue of how secondary principals may respond differently to their roles than primary principals. Out of the 178 total participants, 167 responses were used in this portion of the analysis. There were 11 campuses levels that could not be determined even after searching on the Internet; therefore, the 11 campuses were not considered in the analyses. There were a total of 86 primary schools that responded, and 81 secondary schools that replied.

Out of the primary schools, 52 (60%) principals responded that it was *Very Important/Important* that PDAS was an effective tool in assessing teacher needs. Secondary school principal responses were close in percentage (59%) in viewing the purpose of PDAS in the same way. The same percentage of primary and secondary principals (33%) answered that PDAS was *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance* in determining teacher needs. There was little variance in primary and secondary principal percentages in their response to PDAS being an unimportant evaluation tool in assessing the developmental needs of teachers, with 7% of primary school principals and 8% of secondary school principals, respectively. Figure 5, below, shows the data and the similarity in responses.
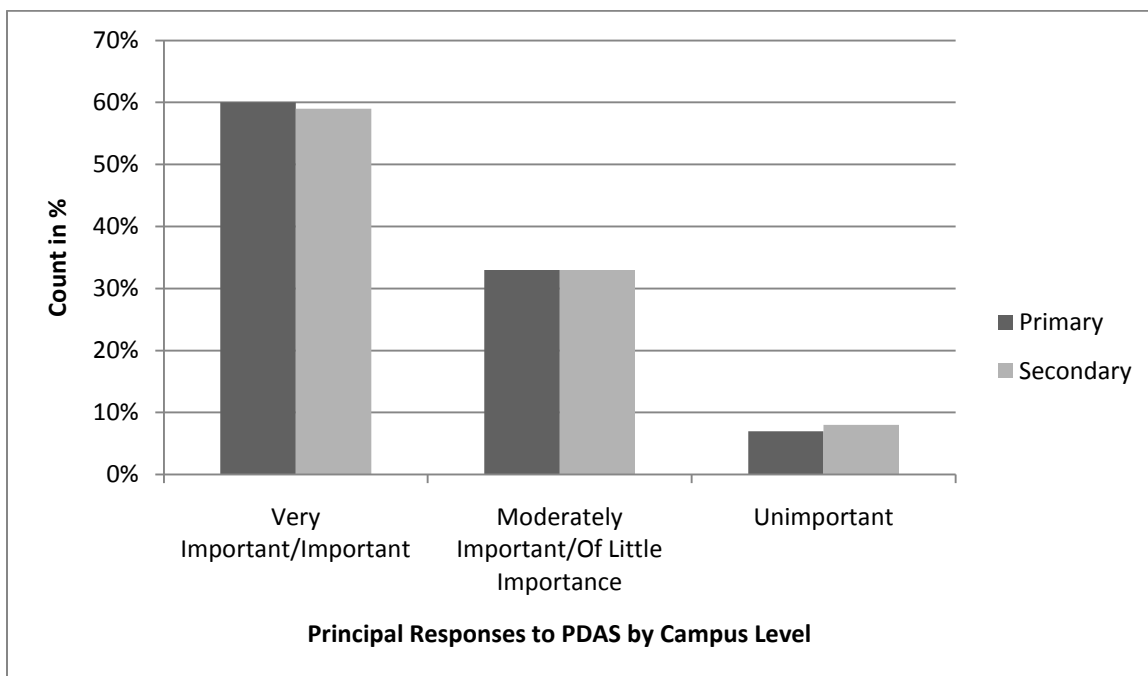
Figure 5. Principal responses to PDAS by campus level.

Both the primary and secondary principals, who recognized that PDAS was an important evaluative tool for teacher assessment, agreed that its use was to determine strengths and areas of need for teachers. It allowed them to see current teaching trends and practices and what aspects of teaching were going well and what needs more work. Some examples are:

- "It allows me to observe teaching practices and to see where individual professional development needs to occur. It also allows me to assess future campus instructional goals."

- "The PDAS allows me to visit, observe and provide support rather than intimidation. The PDAS gives me an opportunity to capture areas of excellence and those that need improvement (in a confidential manner.) Your approach means so much because it truly sets the tone of your communication

with your staff members. Supporting my teachers includes providing a sense

of comfort and safety. Principals can assist and have meaningful meetings and

one-to-one discussion where the teacher can truly benefit from receiving

valuable information versus a large amount of negativity simmering."

- "It helps the principal look at various aspects teachers may need and

    recommend them to take some courses."

- "This allows you to know where your teachers stand and show teachers

    different teaching strategies."

Overall, the primary principals responded in a more positive manner, recognizing

that PDAS was useful in identifying different components of strengths and needs. They

shared that the data they gathered from PDAS helped them to better grow their teachers.

In the end, they believed that PDAS was an effective tool in assessing teacher needs.

Examples of responses follow:

- "It is a tool that covers essential teaching areas. Gives principals some kind of

    measurement system for teachers."

- "It is a tool to recognize teacher's strengths and weaknesses and gives them an

    avenue to plan their continued learning."

- "This is a critical way to help evaluate teachers and find where they need to

    work most. It is documented for the teacher to see, which makes it harder for

    them to deny what they are doing wrong."

However, secondary principals, though they responded that it was important in

determining teacher development, were more disapproving in their responses. Several

openly stated that they used PDAS only because that was what was expected from them

as a principal. They were also were aware that PDAS should not be the only evaluative

tool in assessing teachers and recognized that other tools needed to be used to supplement

PDAS. Below are some examples of secondary principal responses:

- "It is what our district wants and needs so it has to be done."

- "It is what is required of us."

- "There is only so much that one can learn about how a teacher runs her
  classroom and provides instruction to her students from a couple of
  observations. PDAS doesn't evaluate the late hours a teacher stays after school
  to tutor her few struggling students. It is an excellent indicator, but by no
  means ALL that one should use in assessing the needs of a teacher."

- "The PDAS is important, but it is not the only source of data that I use to
  determine the effectiveness of the teacher. It is a legal appraisal system and
  allows principals to evaluate teachers on the same criteria. However, on a
  daily basis, other forms of evaluation are used."

- "But it can sometimes have limited applicability here as there are additional
  pieces that go beyond PDAS as teachers wear many hats. Additional
  information or more specific feedback needs to be provided from teachers."

In the 57 *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance* responses, both primary and

secondary principals generally stated the same beliefs. They believed that PDAS was

subjective to the evaluator and that it did not capture the entire picture of the teacher.

Regardless of the level of principal, the responses involved skepticism in its

effectiveness. Examples of the responses are reflected below:

- "Anyone can put on a good show. For it to be effective, we have to have multiple observations, and talk with the students."

- "It is a one-time glance at a teacher's practices."

- "It is so subjective that it is very difficult to gauge what the needs can be. In some instances, it can be reliable, but it just depends if the assessors of the teachers used the instrument with fidelity."

- "PDAS is a tool, but I rely more on frequent Classroom Walk Through visits which last only 3 to 5 minutes but are unannounced and hopefully occur every 6 weeks."

- "It is a snapshot observation of how the teacher is teaching."

- "PDAS can be somewhat important, but it doesn't paint the whole picture."

- "It is a subjective tool that can be easily manipulated to reflect what the principal wants to expose."

- "You have to know them as teachers. PDAS is a snapshot of 1 lesson and 1 day. It can be helpful, but not the only tool administrators use to determine the needs of their teachers."

- "As I said this is a very small piece of the pie when we are trying to help our struggling teachers. Walk-throughs, grades, student and staff questionnaires, and benchmark data tell a better story."

The 6 principals, who said PDAS was insignificant to determining teacher needs, all said that the actual PDAS tool was not used on their campuses. They were using a different version or evaluative tool in measuring the developmental needs of teachers. A

few primary principals mentioned that their campuses will move to the PDAS tool the following school year.

Primary and Secondary Principal Attitudes in Staff Development Disaggregation

Out of the same 167 principals who responded to the PDAS question, the same number responded to the question concerning their role in staff development. The percentages in the *Very Important/Important* category were extremely close. Of the 86 primary school principals, 83 responded (97%) that they very felt strongly that staff development was a task of the principal, and 96% of the secondary school principals responded the same way. Only 1% of primary principals (1 principal) and 4% of secondary principals (3 principals) felt that staff development was somewhat of an important role for principals. And the only level of principals that said that the role was trivial was 2 primary principals, which made up of 2% of the total responses. Figure 6, below, illustrates the comparison between primary and secondary principals in their attitudes about the importance of staff development.
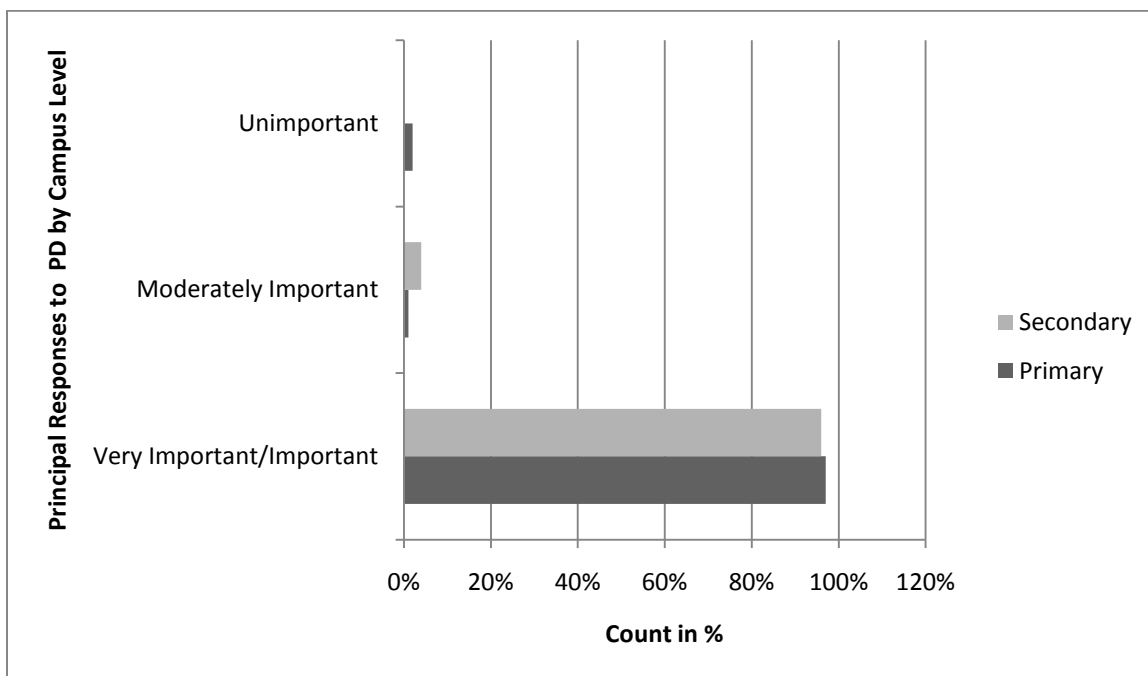
Figure 6. Principal responses to PD by campus level.

The 97% of primary principals and 96% of secondary principals believed that one of the most essential roles of the principal was to be an instructional leader. They recognized that teachers were the key to student success, so in order for there to be continual success in the classroom, teachers needed to be well-trained and knowledgeable about current practices; this responsibility, in the eyes of these principals, was theirs. As both levels of principals indicated, they did not only provide the opportunities but also model life-long learning themselves. In primary and secondary principal responses, they stated that one of the first things they need to know is the needs of the school and the teachers. Then from that point, they could appropriately implement what was necessary to increase student success. Examples of the beliefs of the principals are as follows:

- "Your teachers are what make it happen. They need to grow professionally in order for their performance to improve."

- "Principals are the instructional leaders and must support and/or provide quality professional development opportunities for all of the professional staff."

- "It is important for teachers to hear expectations and research from their supervisor."

- "If you do not provide your teachers with the professional development they need, you will never see them improve and grow as teachers."

- "As the instructional leader on campus you need to know where your teacher needs support to improve their teaching."

- "Your teachers are the key to the students' success. They are in the classroom daily instructing the students. You want your teachers to have the best professional development available to help the students improve their academic growth."

- "Principals should use the evaluations from teachers to develop growth plans and professional development opportunities in and outside of the school. The principal should be an instructional leader and promote professional development among the teachers."

- "Teachers have the most significant impact on student learning. They improve by having specific/research-based professional development."

- "As we build life-long learners, it is important to be life-long learners ourselves. Without professional development, we run the risk of teachers becoming complacent."

- "Teachers have a lot to think about, so I should be able to work toward helping teacher with pro development."

One trend that was noted between the primary and secondary principals in their staff development responses was that primary principals were more hands-on and felt more responsible in personally empowering and growing a teacher, whereas the secondary principals delegated the role and took a hands-off approach in guiding teachers. Below are responses from both levels of principals.

Examples of primary principal responses:

- "If a principal is not part of the teacher development, there is no accountability and the principal doesn't know what the teachers are supposed to know."

- "Principal should serve as the campus's instructional leader and model a behavior that embraces professional development. He/She is responsible for developing the talents of all faculty and staff members. He should also know the strengths/weaknesses of employees to better address the needs of the students."

- "This is a very important piece of being a principal because you need to be able to know the needs of the staff so that you can provide purposeful staff development and make sure the staff is being given opportunities to grow."

Examples of secondary principal responses:

- "Everyone needs to be responsible in their own learning process, finding out the best practices and knowing what will help the kids the most."

- "We delegate a lot of it to other admin and helping teachers."

- "I offer empowerment, resources, and support when needed."

- "Principals delegate a lot to the director of instruction because of the role. They must support and be the hammer that gets people to take action and work hard."

- "..ISD's curriculum department handles majority of this."

Out of the four principals who responded that professional development was slightly important for the principal, only two (secondary) principals wrote comments. One stated that it was the teacher's job to keep abreast new research and teaching practices, while the other one stated that if staff development was provided to the staff, it should be universal and apply to everyone; otherwise, it was not beneficial. The two primary principals that replied that staff development was a trivial role of the principal either did not give an explanation or stated that they did not understand the question.

Research Question Five

How do the responses from principals differ between exemplary, recognized, acceptable schools, and low-performing schools?

The Texas Education Agency assigns each public school a rating of exemplary, recognized, acceptable, or low-performing at the end of each school year based on the state's standardized test, Texas Assessment Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Each year

TEA raises the requirements for a school to attain a certain rating. In the *2010*

Accountability Manual (p.45), the following table shows the standards for each rating:

Table 5

2010 TEA TAKS Rating Standards

Requirements for Each Rating Category	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
Base Indicators			
TAKS (2009-10)* All Students *and each student group meeting minimum size:* African American Hispanic White Econ. Disadvantaged ** TAKS (Accommodated) included for all grades and subjects.*	Meets each standard: Reading/ELA ... 70% Writing .... 70% Social Studies .. 70% Mathematics .... 60% Science .... 55% **OR** Meets Required Improvement **OR** Meets standard with TPM**	Meets **80%** standard for each subject **OR** Meets **75%** floor and Required Improvement **OR** Meets standard with TPM	Meets **90%** standard for each subject **OR** Meets standard with TPM

Completion Rate I (Class of 2009) *(if meets minimum size)* All Students African American Hispanic White Econ. Disadvantaged	Meets **75.0%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement	Meets **85.0%** standard **OR** Meets floor of **75.0%** and Required Improvement	Meets **95.0%** standard
Annual Dropout Rate *(2008-09)* *(if meets minimum size)* All Students African American Hispanic White Econ. Disadvantaged	Meets **1.8%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement	Meets **1.8%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement	Meets **1.8%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement

Additional Provisions			
Exceptions *(See Chapter 3 for more details.)*	May be applied if district/campus would be *Academically Unacceptable* due to not meeting *Academically Acceptable* criteria.	May be applied if district/campus would be *Academically Acceptable* due to not meeting *Recognized* criteria.	May be applied if district/campus would be *Recognized* due to not meeting *Exemplary* criteria.
Check for Academically Unacceptable Campuses *(District only)*	Does not apply to *Academically Acceptable* districts.	A district with a campus rated *Academically Unacceptable* cannot be rated *Recognized*.	A district with a campus rated *Academically Unacceptable* cannot be rated *Exemplary*.
Check for Underreported Students *(District only)*	Does not apply to *Academically Acceptable* districts.	A district that underreports more than **150** students or more than **4.0%** of its prior year students cannot be rated *Recognized*.	A district that underreports more than **150** students or more than **4.0%** of its prior year students cannot be rated *Exemplary*.

** TPM stands for the Texas Project Measure, in which it estimates whether a student is likely to pass the TAKS at a future grade (grade 5, 7 [writing only], 8, or 11). The measure of TMP is based on three components of data: (1) the student's current performance on TAKS, (2) the student's previous-year performance in the subject of interest, and (3) the TAKS scores of all students on the campus that the student attends.

A low-performing rating is one that does not meet the acceptable standards. With this rating, the school comes under state and district scrutiny until it raises its rating.

All 176 principals responded to this category of the survey. There were a total of 52 Exemplary campuses, 53 Recognized campuses, 64 Acceptable campuses, and 7 Unacceptable campuses. Of the 52 Exemplary campuses, 25 responded (48%) that PDAS was vital in assessing the developmental growth of teachers. Over half of the Recognized campuses (53%) responded that PDAS was a critical assessment. Acceptable campus principals replied with 70% believing that PDAS was central in assessing teacher, where 86% Low-Performing schools agreed that it was a main source of assessment. Approximately 31% of Exemplary, 41% of Recognized, 28% of Acceptable, and 14% of Low-Performing campuses responded that PDAS was *Moderately/Of Little Importance* in gauging teacher needs. Surprisingly, 21% of Exemplary campuses responded that PDAS was not crucial in assessing the development needs of teachers. Recognized campuses had 6% response and Acceptable campuses had 2% response that PDAS was marginal in determining teacher needs. Figure 7, below, depicts the variation in responses from the different TAKS rated campuses.
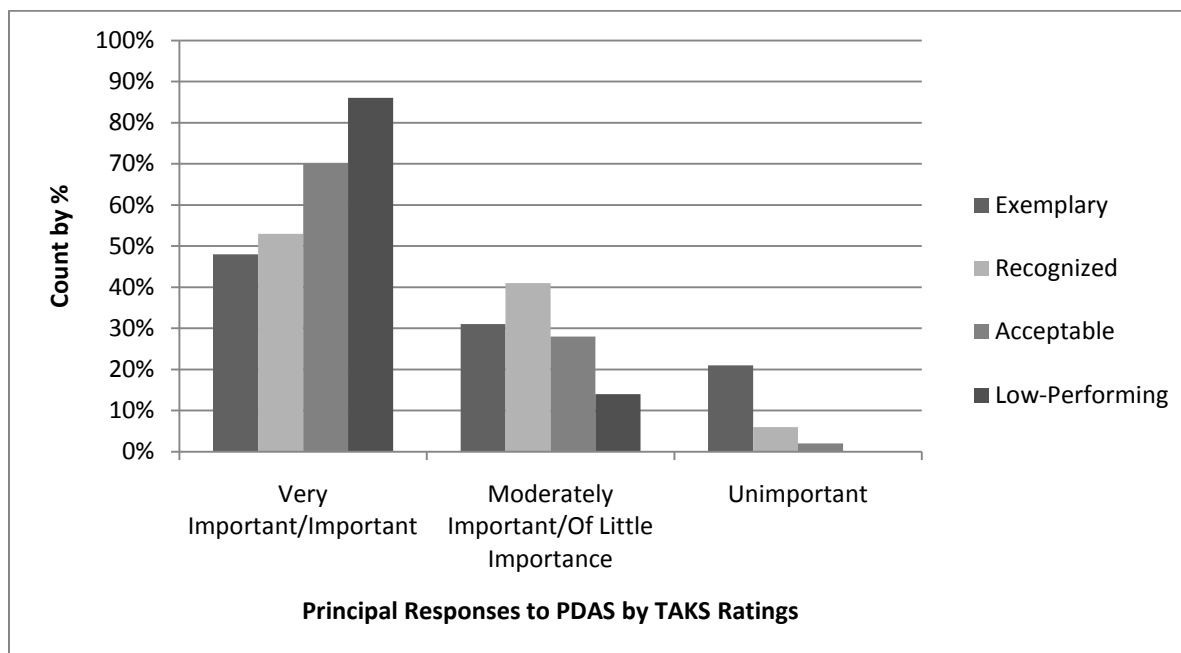
Figure 7. Principal responses to PDAS by TAKS ratings.

All responses in the *Very Important/Important* category, regardless of TAKS rating, focused on the same themes. They believed PDAS was imperative because it showed the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, it allowed opportunity to give feedback, and it guided them in providing professional development. These various TAKS-rated campuses also believe that PDAS only gave a snapshot of what went on in a classroom and relied on other sources, as well, to evaluate teachers. One theme that was different from the rest of the rating was in the Acceptable category. There were multiple responses that said that they thought PDAS was essential because it was "required of them" to use it. There is a statement that represents each TAKS-rating; they are listed from the highest rating, Exemplary to the lowest rating, Low-Performing. Some examples of their attitudes are as follows:

- "Giving a teacher a proper evaluation is extremely important to their success. When you can accurately evaluate them it is beneficial to all stakeholders."

- "It gives feedback and data on the teacher's current level of competence, and allows further growth to be established by setting short-term and long-term goals."

- "It helps give you a more specific area of need for each individual teacher. You understand the strengths and weaknesses of teachers better through the PDAS process."

- "The needs of my teachers definitely guide where I go with my professional development. If there is a weakness in a certain area this is certainly where I start with professional development."

In the *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance* category, themes between TAKS ratings were more evident. On the Exemplary campuses, almost all the principals responded that they used a range of evaluative tools to supplement PDAS and that they believed the most effective tool was unscheduled walkthroughs. On the Recognized campuses, many principals mentioned that PDAS only gave a glimpse of a teacher's practices, was subjective to the evaluator, and only pieces of PDAS were used for evaluating teachers. On the Acceptable campuses, the overall attitude of PDAS was that it was "fairly effective" and not taken too seriously. Like the Recognized campuses, the principals on the Acceptable campuses believed that it was subjective to the appraiser and only showed a quick look of what went on in the classroom. The one Low-Performing campus responded that PDAS was somewhat important if it was used correctly and not as a "got you" mentality. Examples of each TAKS rating are categorized below:

Exemplary

- "I feel the informal assessments give me much more information."

- "Classroom Walkthrough, TAKS scores, data team, common formative assessment and other measures are also used for assessment of teacher development needs. So PDAS is not the only one used."

- "PDAS is a tool, but I rely more on frequent Classroom Walk Through visits which last only 3 to 5 minutes but are unannounced and hopefully occur every 6 weeks."

Recognized

- "Our version of PDAS is just one tool in assessing the needs of the teachers. It gives certain items to check in the classroom. However, it is not the end all because it is a snapshot look at the teacher's practices. Walk-throughs must also be conducted to ensure that I get a true picture of what is happening in the room. Only with the walk-throughs in conjunction with the formal appraisal can I truly understand the teacher and be able to asses his/her needs."

- "PDAS is a window but not the whole picture. It helps us gauge the overall climate and needs but it is not the only thing."

- "It is one piece of information. The most important piece is the results of incremental and final testing for the year. If children are not achieving, the principal needs to know why and make sure that teachers are trained in areas of challenge."

- "It is a subjective tool that can be easily manipulated to reflect what the principal wants to expose."

- "We use some of the PDAS instruments for pieces of specific indicators, but it doesn't guide their assessment of teachers."

Acceptable

- "PDAS is a fairly effective instrument that should be used along with other tools."

- "Doesn't take it very seriously, as she recognizes that administrators conduct evaluations at the last minute and often rush through."

- "It is so subjective that it is very difficult to gauge what the needs can be. In some instances, it can be reliable, but it just depends if the assessors of the teachers, used the instrument with fidelity."

- "PDAS is another one-shot deal where it doesn't show the whole picture, but can be useful for intervention plans."

Low-performing

- "It can be useful tool when it is not used as a document to have a teacher out. Systemic professional development piece is not there."

All the campuses, regardless of TAKS rating that replied that PDAS was *Unimportant,* all stated that PDAS was not used on their campuses.

Staff Development Disaggregation Based on TAKS Ratings

Of the 176 principals that responded, a majority of principals, despite TAKS ratings, ranked their role in staff development as one of the most focal points of their job. 98% of Exemplary principals, 94% of Recognized principals, 97% of Acceptable Principals, and 100% of Low-Performing principals all replied that it was a fundamental task of the principal to be involved in professional development. Principals who believed that the role of a principal in staff development was *Moderately Important* only made up 7% of the total: 4% from Recognized campuses and 3% from Acceptable campuses.

Principals that believed staff development was not a key task for principals consisted of 2% from Exemplary schools and 2% from Recognized schools. Figure 8, below, represents the similarities in responses amongst the different TAKS ratings.
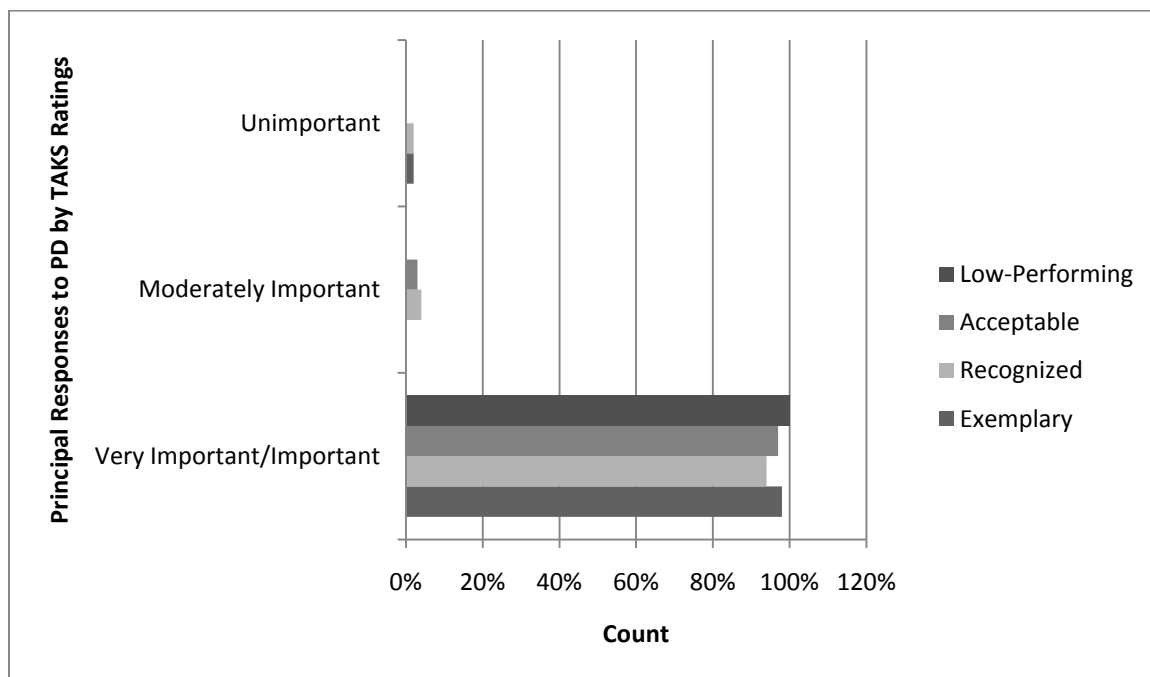
Figure 8. Principal responses to PD by TAKS ratings.

It was evident from Figure 8 that principals, regardless of their campuses' TAKS rating, strongly felt that a significant task of the principal was professional development. Principals of all four TAKS ratings answered the same way. They viewed themselves as instructional leaders that needed to stay abreast current practices and research. Though the principals believed that they did not have to be the ones delivering the staff development, it was their job to at least offer or suggest relevant staff development. They recognized that the teacher was key to student success, so the principals needed to have a deep knowledge of the needs of their teachers. Some examples of principal beliefs are:

Exemplary

- "The principal needs to know what the staff needs are but doesn't have to deliver the staff development."

- "Everyone needs to grow. If we work together with the teachers to plan a growth chart, everyone gains."

- "Principals do not have to lead it, but they need to make sure it is meaningful and that teachers have an opportunity to follow through."

- "With today's changing society, it is important for principals to be abreast of the current practices and reforms."

- "I think this sets the tone for everything we do. What teachers do in the classroom IS the difference maker for student success and I believe professional development is the key to better teaching and learning."

Recognized

- "Principals can direct teacher in need of extra training or support in the correct area. I try to provide a lot of staff development choices for my faculty. All of which help accomplish our school's mission."

- "It should be based on needs assessment. It should be dependent on teacher's skills and feedback."

- "The teachers and I need continuing professional development. No matter how good we think we are, we can always increase our knowledge of pedagogy. The world continuously changes, and we have to change to meet the needs of every child."

- "Growing teachers to be better is what a principal's job should be, not just rating them and getting rid of them."

Acceptable

- "Teachers get to know what we all need to be doing. Everyone needs to be responsible in the learning process, finding out the best practices and knowing what will help the kids the most."

- "The ability to use best practices and what is best for students is crucial to successful teaching. Giving teachers ongoing opportunities to learn the best and most current practices is essential to student learning."

Low-Performing:

- "You must be ahead of everyone in understanding the application of the big picture."

- "There are many things that a principal has to share with her staff. Professional development is a great way to improve on knowledge."

Out of the 4 principals (2 Recognized, 2 Acceptable), only two responded with rationale for their answers. One principal said that it was the responsibility of the teacher to keep up with current practices and research, while the other principal said that the only type of professional development that would be relevant were ones that were universal and applied to the entire staff. Of the 2 principals (1 Exemplary, 1 Recognized) who rated staff development *Unimportant*, one did not give a reason and the other stated that he did not understand the question.

Research Question Six

Do rural, suburban, and urban school leaders see their roles differently?

A total of 174 participants responded with their community type. Out of this total, 13 campuses were rural, 102 were urban, and 31 were suburban. The percentages of campus locations that rated PDAS as *Very Important/Important* in determining teacher needs consisted of 69% rural, 61% urban, and 53% suburban. For the principals that rated PDAS as *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance*, 23% were rural, 28% were urban, and 42% were suburban. Lastly, those who answered that PDAS was *Unimportant* were 8% rural, 11% urban, and 5% suburban. Figure 9, below, presents the data.
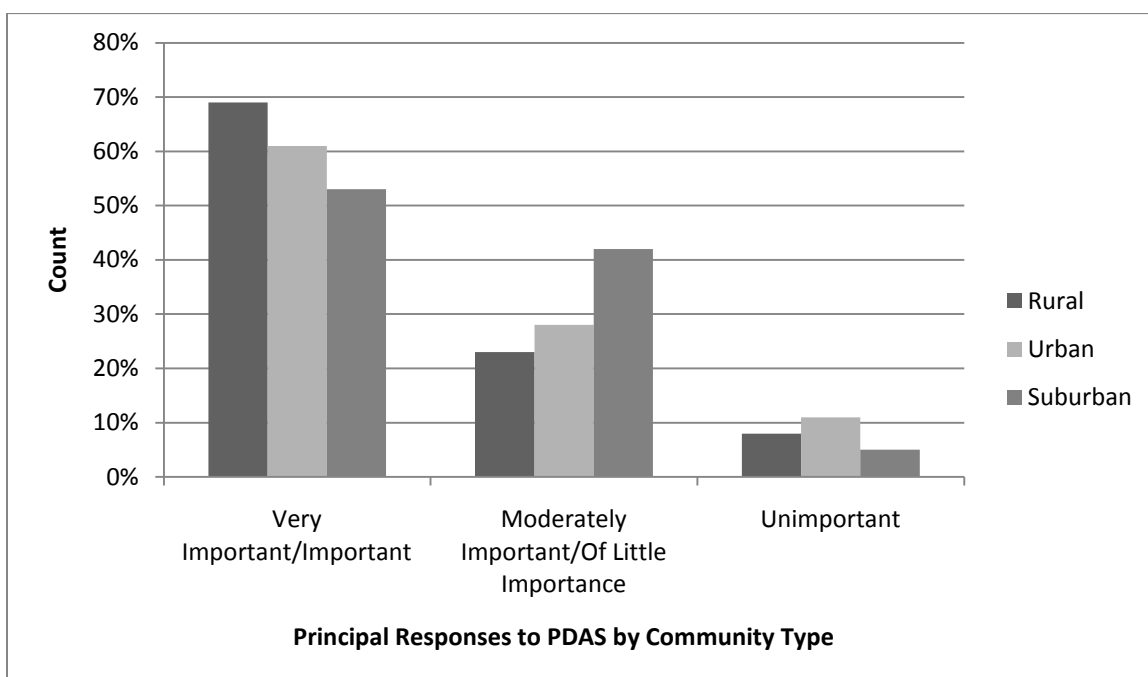

Figure 9. Principal responses to PDAS by community type.

There were little difference between principals who responded *Very Important/Important* and those who replied *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance*, which showed that location did not have a great significance in how principals responded.

Within each community type in each category, there was a wide range of thoughts and attitudes. Examples of the array of responses from principals, in spite of location, are:

- "Giving a teacher a proper evaluation is extremely important to their success. When you can accurately evaluate them it is beneficial to all stakeholders."

- "I already have a feel for most of my teachers. It does give me more information about each teacher and helps get me more data for explaining to the teachers what I feel they need to become more proficient at."

- "Important because it gives the teacher an idea of where they are at and where they need to go."

- "Most useful when you follow up and find the cause of issues."

- "The PDAS allows me to visit, observe and provide support rather than intimidation. The PDAS gives me an opportunity to capture areas of excellence and those that need improvement (in a confidential manner). Your approach means so much because it truly sets the tone of your communication with your staff members. Supporting my teachers includes providing a sense of comfort and safety. Principals can assist and have meaningful meetings and one-to-one discussion where the teacher can truly benefit from receiving valuable information versus a large amount of negativity simmering."

- "This allows you to know where your teachers stand and show teachers different teaching strategies."

- "Principals should track the progress and development of teachers on a regular basis and not just once a year. Principals should make an effort to visit classrooms often."

- "When I am doing classroom walk-throughs I am taking note of where we are struggling as a school. Is it hands-on activities, classroom management, motivating the students, etc.? look at the results of the school as a whole and that helps decide what staff development we should have."

The principals in rural, urban, and suburban locations, who responded *Unimportant*, all gave the same reply: PDAS was not used on their campuses.

Staff Development Disaggregation Based on Community Type

Of the 174 responses, a majority of the principals responded that professional development was a crucial role of a principal. In the *Very Important/Important* category, 100% of rural, 95% of urban, and 98% of suburban agreed that it was a key task. The *Moderately Important* consisted of 3% urban and 2% suburban. And the only community type that made up the *Unimportant* category was urban, with a 2% response. Figure 10, below, depicts how the three community types compare in responses.
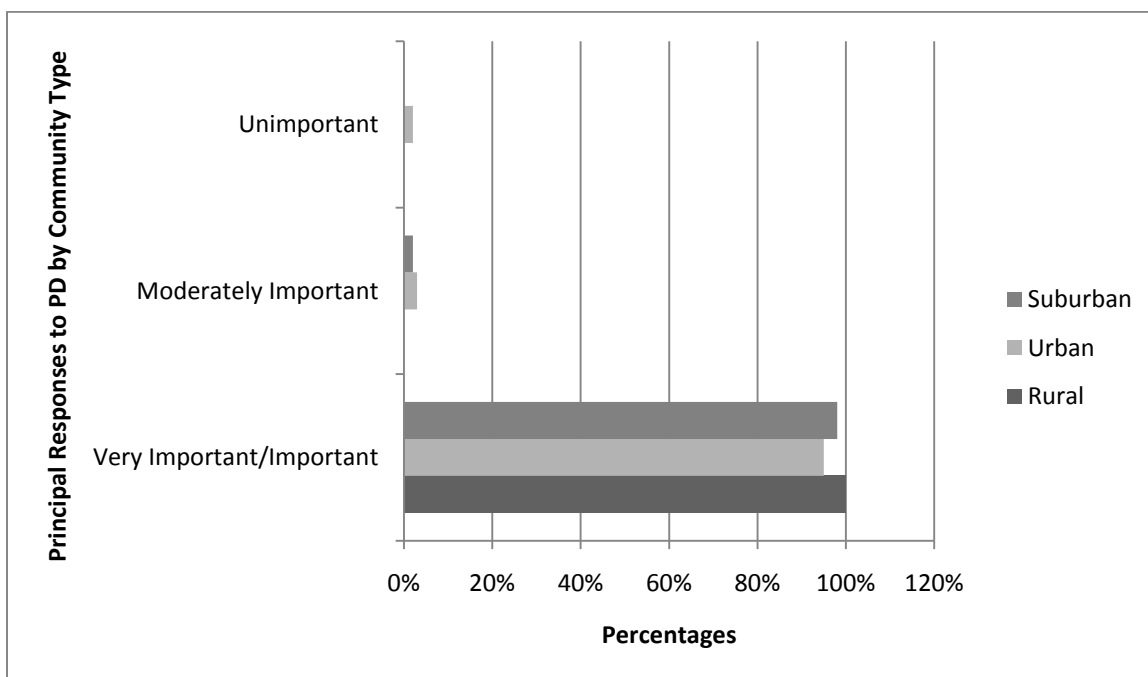

Figure 10. Principal responses to PD by community type.

Overall, no matter what the community type, all principals view their role as an instructional leader as central in their principalship. In general, the principals, regardless of community type, believed that they needed to guide and grow teachers, and know what their needs were, in order to provide relevant professional development. They believed that it was a hefty responsibility to not only recognize and assess needs but also then nurture the teachers to better their practice. A few examples are:

- "As an instructional leader, principals must direct teachers towards development in areas needed to become more effective."

- "Everyone needs to grow. If we work together with the teachers to plan a growth chart, everyone gains."

- "If you did not teach it to them, then you cannot assume they know. With so many different teaching certification programs, the instructional leader must take a concrete and specific approach to helping teachers in the area of instruction, curriculum, assessment, and delivery."

There were two trends in responses within two community types. In the suburban community type, several principals responded that they delegated the instructional piece to other staff members on campus or relied on what the district already had in place. Responses from rural principals showed that they recognized their teachers had a lot on their plate and thought that the least they could do was help suggest and/or provide professional development for them.

- "We delegate a lot of it to other admin and helping teachers."

- "Principals delegate a lot to the director of instruction because of the role. They must support the hammer that gets people to take action and work hard."

- "Teachers have a lot to think about so I should be able to work toward helping teacher with pro development."

- "Teachers have a lot to deal with- the least I can do is help them with professional development."

Out of the four principals who responded *Moderately Important*, one urban principal stated that the staff development she supplies was only effective if it applies to everyone on campus. The other suburban principal stated that she believed the teacher was accountable for his/her own staff development. Of the two urban principals who replied *Unimportant*, one did not give a reason for his answer, and one did not understand the survey question being asked.

Summary

This chapter presented the resulting data for each of the six questions by: disaggregating categorical responses frequencies; providing examples of principals' responses; and by an in-depth investigation of the trends and patterns within responses to the questions. There quite a few major themes that emerged from the six research questions. Female and male principals did see their roles differently in professional development. The various campus level principals had trends in their responses both in PDAS and professional development. There were some minor themes within principals' perceptions when disaggregated by the schools' TAKS ratings and the community types.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how principals in Texas schools perceived the importance of the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) as a tool for staff development. It also explored principals' views on their role in professional development for teachers. Their beliefs and attitudes were captured through two Likert-scaled questions with two follow-up questions that gave principals an opportunity to explain their ratings to the questions. The questions regarding PDAS and staff development were conducted in a cognitive interview setting and recorded by trained survey administrators. The principals' responses to the questions were studied both as separate lines of inquiry, as well as their connections to collected personal demographic data of the principals and their campus demographic data.

The six research questions explored in this study were:

1. How important is PDAS in determining the principals' assessment of the developmental needs of their teachers?

2. How important does a principal rate teacher professional development as a task for Principals?

3. Do women administrators see the principal role differently than the men?

4. Is there a difference in importance of roles between secondary principals versus primary principals?

5. How do the responses from principals differ between exemplary, recognized, acceptable schools, and low-performing schools?

6. Do rural, suburban, and urban school leaders see their roles differently?

Research Question One

The first research question sought to examine principals' views regarding how they felt about using PDAS data to determine teacher needs. About 59% principals rated PDAS as a crucial tool in determining the needs of teachers. Another 32% thought PDAS was somewhat valuable in assessing teacher need. Approximately 9% of the principals thought PDAS was not relevant at all in determining teacher developmental needs.

One prominent result was that almost close to half (41%) believed that PDAS was less than *Very Important/Important* in being used to assess teacher needs, even though it is the state mandated evaluation tool used.

Research Question Two

The second research question was to explore principals' attitudes on the importance of their involvement with staff development on their campus. This question sought to understand if principals felt that providing staff development was a priority for them. Almost 97% replied that it was *Very Important/Important* that one of their main tasks was providing professional development for teachers. Only 2% said that it was *Moderately Important*, and 1% of principals stated that it was not of any importance to them. It was evident by the responses that principals viewed this role as one of the most significant undertakings they have as a campus leader.

Research Question Three

      The third research question was to determine if female principals approached their roles differently than male principals. Trends and patterns were examined, and a few themes were evident. Figure 3 showed the comparison between the female and male principals. The data showed that regardless of gender, the principal responses in the *Very Important/Important* category focused on being able to identify teacher strengths and areas of need and on how it drove their professional development. In the *Moderately Importance/Of Little Importance* category, gender again was not a factor. Both sides believed PDAS was a formality and only completed because it was required of them by law. They also believed that it did not accurately capture the entire picture of the classroom and teacher practices. What was a surprising answer was the admittance by principals that the results of PDAS were subjective to the evaluator. The principals, who answered that PDAS was *Unimportant,* all had the same response: that PDAS was not used on their campuses. The only exception was one principal that stated that it was insignificant because teachers just expect the best ratings but do not really care about the actual purpose of the evaluation.

      Data was then compared between how females and males responded to the question on their role in staff development. The female and male principals, who answered that staff development was a *Very Important/Important* role of a principal, believed that their main role as a campus leader was to be an instructional leader. They believed that they needed to model life-long learning. And most importantly, they recognized that teachers were the greatest factors that contributed to student success. A theme emerged in their answers. Female principal responses focused on development,

support, needs, and ongoing opportunities to grow. The female principals took on a more nurturing role that focused on the overall teacher as a whole. Male principal responses focused more on resources, promoting learning communities, goal setting, developing skills, and strengthening instruction; their foci were more oriented to action and doing something to change the current situation.

Research Question Four

The fourth research question was to discern if secondary principals perceived their roles differently than primary principals. Because of the variations in grade level structures throughout schools in Texas, schools were categorized into one of the two groups based on the assignment by the researcher. Figure 5 compared the responses between secondary principals and primary principals. Both the levels of principals, who recognized that PDAS was a critical evaluative tool for teacher assessment, agreed that its use was to determine strengths and areas of need for teachers. It allowed them to see current teaching trends and practices and what aspects of teaching were going well and what needs more work.

Two themes surfaced from their responses. Overall, the primary principals responded in a more optimistic manner, recognizing that PDAS was useful in identifying different components of strengths and needs. They shared that the data they gathered from PDAS helped them to better grow their teachers. In the end, they believed that PDAS was an effective tool in assessing teacher needs. Secondary principals, though they responded that it was central in determining teacher development, were more critical in their responses. Several openly stated that they use PDAS because it was expected from them as a principal. They were also aware that PDAS should not be the only evaluative

tool in assessing teachers and recognized that other tools needed to be used to supplement PDAS.

Figure 6 displayed how primary and secondary principals responded to their role in staff development. The 97% of primary principals and 96% of secondary principals considered their role in professional development as one of the most essential roles they took on as instructional leader. One trend that was noted between the primary and secondary principal responses was that primary principals were more hands-on and felt more responsible in personally empowering and growing a teacher, whereas the secondary principals delegated the role and took a hands-off approach in guiding teachers.

Research Question Five

Research question five was to determine whether there were trends in responses according to a principal's campus TAKS rating. Because of *No Child Left Behind*, school accountability has become a focal point in rating the success of a school. The Texas Education Agency awards each campus a rating each year based on the results of its TAKS scores. The highest given is Exemplary, followed by Recognized, Acceptable, and ending with Low-Performing. Schools, who receive a rating of Low-performing, are under scrutiny, subjected to district and state interventions, and have a large amount of pressure to improve. Every year schools fight to maintain or increase their ratings. This question sought to explore whether principals of campuses with similar ratings had a pattern in their responses as opposed to campuses of other ratings.

Of the 52 Exemplary campuses, 48% responded that PDAS was vital in assessing the developmental growth of teachers. Over half of the Recognized campuses (53%)

responded that PDAS was a critical assessment. Acceptable campus principals replied with 70% believing that PDAS was central in assessing teachers, where 86% Low-Performing schools agreed that it was a main source of assessment. Approximately 31% of Exemplary, 41% of Recognized, 28% of Acceptable, and 14% of Low-Performing campuses responded that PDAS was *Moderately/Of Little Importance* in gauging teacher needs. Surprisingly, 21% of Exemplary campuses responded that PDAS was not crucial in assessing the development needs of teachers. Recognized campuses had 6% response and Acceptable campuses had 2% response that PDAS was marginal in determining teacher needs.

Upon delving deeper into their answers, several themes materialized. All responses in the *Very Important/Important* category, regardless of TAKS rating, focused on the same themes. Principals believed PDAS was imperative because it showed the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, it allowed opportunity to give feedback, and it guided them in providing professional development. These various TAKS-rated campuses also believed that PDAS only gave a snapshot of what went on in a classroom and relied on other sources to evaluate teachers. One theme that was different from the rest in this category was in the Acceptable ratings. There were multiple responses that said that the reason they thought PDAS was essential was because it was "required of them" to use it.

In the *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance* category, themes between TAKS ratings were more evident. On the Exemplary campuses, almost all the principals responded that they used a range of evaluative tools to supplement PDAS. Also, they considered the most effective tool was unscheduled walkthroughs. On the Recognized

campuses, many principals revealed that PDAS only gave a glimpse of a teacher's practices; it was subjective to the evaluator; and only pieces of PDAS were used for evaluating teachers. On the Acceptable campuses, the overall attitude of PDAS was that it was "fairly effective" and not taken too seriously. Like the Recognized campuses, the principals on the Acceptable campuses believed that it was subjective to the appraiser and only showed a quick look of what goes on in the classroom. The one Low-Performing campus responded that PDAS was somewhat important if it was used correctly and not as a "got you" mentality.

Despite TAKS ratings, principals ranked their role in staff development as one of the most focal points of their job. 98% of Exemplary principals, 94% of Recognized principals, 97% of Acceptable Principals, and 100% of Low-Performing principals all replied that it was a vital duty of the principal to be engaged in professional development. Figure 8 showed the similarities in how principals responded. Principals of all four TAKS ratings answered that they viewed themselves as instructional leaders and needed to stay abreast current practices and research. No themes emerged from this portion of the survey in this question.

Research Question Six

The sixth research question sought to examine if responses of principals differed based on their campus location, whether it was rural, urban, or suburban. The resources a school has plays an integral part in the success of schools; usually, the more resources a campus has, the greater the achievement. Suburban schools often have more resources due to funding and taxes compared to rural schools. Therefore, with this assumption, the

researcher wanted to investigate further to find whether there were trends in how principals approached their roles.

There was more variance in the data of this question. The percentages of campus locations that rated PDAS as *Very Important/Important* in determining teacher needs consisted of 69% rural, 61% urban, and 53% suburban. For the principals that rated PDAS as *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance*, 23% were rural, 28% were urban, and 42% were suburban. Lastly, those who answered that PDAS was *Unimportant* were 8% rural, 11% urban, and 5% suburban. Figure 9 presents the data. Surprisingly, even with such a wide range of replies, there was little difference between principals who responded *Very Important/Important* and those who replied *Moderately Important/Of Little Importance*, which showed that location did not have a great significance in how principals responded in their explanations.

In Figure 9 it showed that, no matter what the community type, all principals view their role as an instructional leader as central in their principalship. In general, the principals, regardless of community type, believed that they needed to know teacher needs in order to provide relevant professional development. Principals understood the immense responsibility of not only recognizing and assessing the needs of teachers but also then nurturing them.

There were two trends in responses within two community types. In the suburban community type, several principals responded that they delegated the instructional piece to other staff members on campus or relied on what the district already had in place. Responses from rural principals showed that they recognized their teachers had a lot on

their plate and thought that the least they could do was help suggest and/or provide professional development for them.

Summary

Consistent with Kyriakides, Demetriou, Charalambous (2006), the principals recognize that the purpose of a teacher evaluation is to verify the proficiency of a teacher to guarantee that effective teaching is taking place in the classroom. They acknowledge that the stronger the teacher is instructionally, the greater instructional quality the students receive. Teacher evaluations are for accountability in quality of teaching, helping to quantify the overall effectiveness of the teacher, and to ensure that the students have highly-qualified teachers in place (Zimmerman, Deckert-Pelton, 2003). There is a wide range of beliefs and attitude towards Texas' teacher evaluation tool, the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). It ranges from strongly believing it is an effective evaluation instrument, with some believing that it is somewhat important, to those who believe that it is trivial. Though the purpose of PDAS, according to the State, is to assess teachers and to find trends that indicate areas needing additional professional development, the principals have difference of opinion in what they think its purpose is (*Professional development and appraisal system*, 2010). Thus, the varying beliefs contributed to the array of responses.

Principals recognize that there is an explicit relationship between administrators grooming adult learners and creating an optimal learning environment for children in the classroom, making it necessary to focus on developing teachers into life-long learners (Drago-Severson, 2007). In their responses, principals acknowledge that teachers are the central factor in producing student success. Studies have found that there is a strong

relationship between the professional development a teacher attends and implements and the academic growth and success of students in his/her class (Kent, 2004). In the survey, principals acknowledge that they need to seek out teacher strengths and weaknesses and guide teachers accordingly. None of principals mentioned any constraints in their role in staff development, though literature reports that they are several factors that cause principals not to place their task in professional development as a priority (Zimmerman and May, 2003).

Implications for Practice and Recommendations

The responses of the principals in this study show that there is an inconsistent use of the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) explicitly states that the purpose of PDAS is to increase student achievement by growing teachers through staff development. From this study, the data reflects the disconnect principals have between their role as evaluators and providing professional development using data from PDAS. In order to bridge this gap and be able to genuinely put it into practice, educational leaders need to find a method in which the PDAS instrument is more effectively used. It may require PDAS to include more protocols on principal-teacher collaboration, review, and discussions to improve the developmental needs of the teacher.

Like McLaughlin (1984) mentioned, evaluations, such as PDAS, have inconclusive data due to a one-size-fits-all structure and need to be tailored to the specific needs of the teacher. Teachers, like the students they teach, are in various places in their career, with differing goals, needs, and desires. Increasing principal-teacher collaboration protocol may be worth investigating in creating a more individualized evaluation. With

both teachers and administrators struggling to find more time in the day, it would seem to be in their best interest if educators would invest some time in creating a professional development framework that could also serve as an appraisal system.

Research has suggested of ways to better improve and personalize teacher evaluations, such as using multiple data sources (Peterson, 2004) or putting teachers on different tracks based on their needs (Berube and Dexter, 2006). Also, increasing the collaboration between the teacher and evaluator on the actual evaluation tool to make it more specific for teachers is another approach that should be highly considered (Kyriakides, Demetriou, Charalambous, 2006). This way the teacher is more likely to take ownership in the data of the evaluation and respect the evaluator because it is a collaborative effort. It would also increase instructional communication between the teacher and principal, which is also another concern of teachers (Reed, 2003).

The responses gathered from the survey show that principals believe that staff development should be a priority but have a hard time putting that idea into practice because of all the other roles they take on as campus leaders. The top inhibitors of putting more focus on nurturing teacher growth are lack of time and lack of funding (Zimmerman and May, 2003). As school finances continue to dwindle, providing more resources has become an even harder task for school administrators. Research states that it would be beneficial for districts and schools to work closely with local universities in providing professional development because these very universities are also the ones that produce teachers (Reed, 2003). To better meet teacher needs, Drago-Severson (2007) believes that teachers need to be given more responsibility in the creation and implementation of professional development that best meets their needs. The more ownership they have, the

more involved they will be in their staff development. The key for principals to

remember is that their role in staff development does not just stop at providing

professional growth opportunities, but it also involves follow-up, reflection, and on-going

evaluation. Principals also need to be intentional with the staff development they do

provide, ensuring that it is not only tied to student data and research but that it is fulfilling

the vision, mission, and goals of the school and district (Haar, 2004).

Implications for Further Research

Right now, principals view their role as an evaluator completely separate from

their role in providing professional development for the teachers, even though evaluation

tools like PDAS, were strategically designed to connect the two areas. Either the current

evaluation tool needs to be restructured or a new evaluation framework needs to be

developed, so professional development can be more easily developed and integrated.

The following recommendations for research in the area of PDAS and

professional development are offered:

1. This study was conducted on principals in the Texas Gulf coast, and it cannot

    be presumed that the opinions and beliefs of this convenience sample

    summarize all principals throughout the state of Texas or in other states in the

    United States. To gain a deeper understanding of principals and their attitudes

    and approaches to their role in teacher evaluations and professional

    development, it is suggested that this study be conducted in other parts of the

    state, as well as other states. This way, there can be broader perspectives on

    the role of the principal.

2. A further study with the principals who are successful in using PDAS data to develop professional development may be beneficial in finding trends and greater understanding in their methods. More details can be gained through delving into more conversations and data. A follow-up investigation may yield worthwhile insights into why these principals are successful in their roles.

3. A survey of professional appraisal practices in other sectors can also be conducted. Such a survey could give a wider range of ideas in how other successful organizations approach evaluations. It could lead to helping restructure or rebuild PDAS to be more effective in its use.

4. A follow-up study in how current principals use PDAS data can help gain a greater grasp in the missing link between the actual data and the use of the data to create professional development opportunities for teacher. Principals are falling short of putting the two together and must find a better approach in putting the data to effective use.

5. The process and training assistant principals receive when stepping into the principalship can help to gain a deeper knowledge in how they are prepared to take on the role as a campus leader. There is a need to explore how novice principals are prepared for their new roles; this look may assist in recognizing why principals struggle with using evaluation to produce professional development. It may be as simple as just showing them the process in analyzing the data and how to develop staff development from it.

6. Principal preparation programs must prepare their future school leaders for the evolving principalship. Universities need to talk to local districts about what they see in current leaders and what districts would like to see in future administrators. Often times these programs are based in theory, so when these leaders graduate and eventually obtain their first leadership position, they often struggle with putting the theory into practice because they have no frame of reference in what it should look like. There needs to be an emphasis in how to make campus administrators stronger instructional leaders, especially in developing their teachers. A guide or approach that can help principals to accomplish this role well is a long-term investment that will benefit our children's education. If administrators desire to be more effective and lead a successful campus, then they must take the time to strengthen themselves in their roles as an appraiser and as a provider of professional development.

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APPENDIX A: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY *of* HOUSTON

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

March 23, 2011

Ms. Tricia Tsang
c/o Dr. Angus MacNeil
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Ms. Tsang:

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "The Impact of the Professional Development and Appraisal System on the Role of the Principal in Staff Development" was conducted on March 21, 2011.

In accordance with institutional guidelines, your project is exempt under **category 4.**

As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review.*   Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and approval by the Committee.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Enrique Valdez, Jr.
Director, Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **March 1, 2016**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 11295-EX

Learning. Leading.™   316 E Cullen Building   ·   Houston, TX 77204-2015   ·   713/743-9204   ·   Fax: 713/743-9227

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

1. Default Section

Graduate Student's Name

Code

2. Section A: Demographic Information

The Principal's Name

Age

Age (In Years)

Sex

○ Male　　　　　　　　　　　　　　○ Female

Years as a Principal

Years in Education

Degrees Held

☐ Bachelors

☐ Masters

☐ Doctorate

Management or Principal Certification Year

Institution

Ethnicity

Ethnicity

Major Teaching Field

Extra-curricular activities directed while a teacher

The School's Name

Location

○ Rural

○ Suburban

○ Urban

Number of Teachers

[____]

Number of Students

[____]

Percentage of Students

White/Non-Hispanic [____]

Black/Non-Hispanic [____]

Hispanic [____]

Asian/Pacific Islander [____]

American Indian/Alaskan Native [____]

Non-Resident/International [____]

Other Certified Personnel [____]

Non-certified Personnel [____]

TAKS Rating

○ Exemplary

○ Recognized

○ Acceptable

○ Low Performing

Percentage of Students on free and reduced lunch

[____]

Name of School District

[_____]

3. Section B

In this section, we are trying to understand how principals use their time and if they think that they are making good use of their time . Specifically, we want to know the following:

On average, how many hours per week do you work as a principal?

On average, what % of those hours are spent off campus?

Do you think the time that you spend off campus is necessary?

○ Always   ○ Occasionally   ○ Very Rarely

○ Very Frequently   ○ Rarely   ○ Never

Explain.

Describe the effective use of your time off campus. Give examples.

Describe the ineffective use of your time off campus. Give examples.

Who arranges the off campus meetings that you must attend? Give specific examples.

4. Section C

In this section, we are interested in how principals are evaluated in their job performance.

Does your district utilize the state's recommended appraisal form for principal evaluation?

○ Yes

○ No

Does your district use a district generated evaluation form?

○ Yes

○ No

Do you feel that the evaluations are fair ?

| ○ Always | ○ Occasionally | ○ Very Rarely |
| ○ Very Frequently | ○ Rarely | ○ Never |

Explain.

Do you feel that evaluations are useful?

| ○ Always | ○ Occasionally | ○ Very Rarely |
| ○ Very Frequently | ○ Rarely | ○ Never |

Explain.

Do the evaluations impact or change your behaviors or practices in your school?

| ○ Always | ○ Occasionally | ○ Very Rarely |
| ○ Very Frequently | ○ Rarely | ○ Never |

Explain.

Do you feel that you have improved as a result of the evaluation appraisal process?

| ○ Always | ○ Occasionally | ○ Very Rarely |
| ○ Very Frequently | ○ Rarely | ○ Never |

Explain.

5. Section D

In this section, we are trying to determine if your district uses a "succession plan" to replace Principal's. Specifically:

How many years ahead does your school district office planning, project Principal arrangements or Vacancies?

- ○ 1 year
- ○ 3 years
- ○ 5 years
- ○ 2 years
- ○ 4 years

When you were hired as a principal, did anyone in central office assist you in setting goals or priorities in order to successfully lead this school?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes, explain.

[text box]

In the succession planning, do you think the best time to place a principal in a school is at the beginning of the school year?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Explain.

[text box]

6. Section E

In this section, we are trying to determine the role of the Principal in Teacher's Professional Development. Specifically:

How important would you rate teacher professional development as a task for Principals?

○ Very Important   ○ Moderately Important   ○ Unimportant

○ Important   ○ Of Little Importance

Explain.

How important is the PDAS in determining your assessment of the developmental needs of your teachers?

○ Very Important   ○ Moderately Important   ○ Unimportant

○ Important   ○ Of Little Importance

Explain.