Leading in Unfamiliar Territory: A Narrative Research Study Exploring How Newly Transitioned Principals Describe Their Experiences Developing Relationships Amongst Followers in A Large Urban School District in The Southeast United States

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This work is dedicated to:

Those who have inspired me

Those I have inspired

Those I will inspire.

A special dedication to:

Karsyn Leigh Hicks
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Abstract

Recent evidence indicates that nearly 25,000 school principals vacate the role each year. This problem is acutely serious in urban schools and urban school districts. Consequently, many transitioning principals are asked to enter and lead schools laden with uncertainty and unstableness. This narrative study explored how newly transitioned principals in a large urban school district in the southeast United States, experiencing frequent principal transitions, describe their experiences of developing relationships with their followers and how those followers shaped the newly transitioned principals’ leadership. Participants of this study were 12 principals who had been at their school site no more than three years and were outside appointments. Informing the study was leader-member exchange theory and followership theory. Following semi-structured interviews, the data was inductively analyzed manually, and seven themes emerged. Key findings highlight approaches the principals used to build and maintain relationships, the styles of followers they encountered, and how those followers influenced the principals. This study concluded with suggestions for further research and implications for theory and practice.

Keywords: LMX Theory, Followership Theory, relationship building, leader-follower relationship, principal-teacher relationship, follower influence
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Chapter Summary

Findings from Analysis

Building Relationships
- Building relationships requires a leader’s active engagement and participation
- Be visible
- Listen
- Be involved and get others involved

Know your people personally and professionally

Observations/Evaluations hinder the development of relationships

Characteristics of Leader-Follower Relationships
- Fierce conversations are a main ingredient in strong and challenging relationships
- The foundation of leader-follower relationships is trust
- Trust established
- Trust nonexistent

Followers and Their Influence
- Leaders experience different types of followers
- Followers cause leaders to be more and do more

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2006, when Jasmine Cross, a student at a high school in an urban school district in the southeast United States, walked across the stage at graduation, the principal who congratulated her was not the same principal who had welcomed her to the school as a freshman. This occurrence is not an anomaly. In fact, within this same school district, which happens to be the setting for this study, there have been approximately 250 principal transitions over the last 10 years. The turnover of principals in U.S. schools nationwide is constant, causing huge disruption in the management of our K-12 education system, with severe effects on student performance, staff and community relationships, and the development of the principal (Ringel, Gates, Ghosh-Dastidar, Brown, & Chung, 2004; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007; Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Fuller, 2012; Hull, 2012; Spillane & Lee, 2014; School Leaders Network, 2014). The problem is particularly acute in many of the nation’s lowest-achieving, high-poverty schools, often located in urban school districts (Gates et al., 2006; Béteille et al., 2012; Papa, 2007; Partlow & Ridenour, 2008; Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001; Johnson, 2005). Although the turnover of principals is commonly found in urban schools and school districts, Fuller (2012) has noted that principal turnover is a problem that affects many schools, regardless of the school’s demographics or achievement levels. In fact, Béteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2012) asserted that many school districts throughout the country experience principal turnover at rates of 15%-30%. Similarly, a report titled “Churn: The High Cost of Principal Turnover” (School Leaders Network, 2014) indicated that 25,000, or one-quarter, of the nation’s principals vacate the role each year. While a principal may leave his or her job for a multitude of reasons, evidence has consistently indicated that high turnover rates plague the principalship due to factors such as low salaries, stress, poor working conditions, and
a legislated rise in accountability (Ringel et al., 2004; Béteille et al., 2012; School Leaders Network, 2014).

Increasingly, institutional reports and academic literature addressing problems in educational leadership examine the high turnover rate and subsequent shortage of equipped principal candidates for our nation’s schools (Ringel, Gates, Ghosh-Dastidar, Brown, & Chung, 2004; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007; Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Fuller, 2012; Hull, 2012; Spillane & Lee, 2014; School Leaders Network, 2014). However, the effects of principal turnover have not been comprehensively quantified nor have they been studied in depth through qualitative approaches. For example, a 2014 report by the School Leaders Network was self-identified as suggesting that the “churning,” or loss of experienced principals and replacement with inexperienced principals every three years, is costing U.S. school districts $163 million annually in training, mentoring, and continuing education. Additionally, principal turnover can have a drastic ripple effect on the even higher turnover of teachers (Béteille et al., 2012; Fuller, Baker, & Young, 2007), which translates into poor achievement of the school and poor student performance (Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto, 2012; Miller, 2013; Béteille et al., 2012). Hargreaves (2005) maintained that the transition and succession of principals has become a widespread problem, affecting school reform efforts, teacher morale, and campus climates. Dillon (2011) validated that view by postulating that the instability caused by the turnover and transitioning of principals complicates a school’s ability to improve on all levels. Additionally, Weinstein, Jacobowitz, Ely, Landon, and Schwartz (2009) found that the transition process was further convoluted as principals battled a lack of support, negative teacher attitudes, and hostile school cultures. As a result, many newly transitioned principals are being asked to enter and lead schools that have
experienced cultural upheaval and unstable and complex performance conditions (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Saidun, Tahir, & Musah, 2015). Yet, new principals continue to rise to these complex challenges of leadership. And, with each transition, a new principal likely has to start from scratch to build trusting relationships with an entire school faculty and staff (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). Understanding how new principals create, develop and, in the best case scenario, maintain relationships with staff – teachers and administrators alike -- to provide positive school, teacher and student advancement is essential.

This chapter begins with an examination of the problem of the practice guiding this research study. It is followed by an introduction of the purpose statement and the overarching research question and subquestions that are used to focus the study. Next, the discussion centers on leader-member exchange theory and followership theory as components of the study’s conceptual framework. Following is a presentation of the significance of the study that emphasizes ways in which this study may be used in theory and practice. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the current research study, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and a list of key terms.

Statement of the Problem

Research has established that principal turnover is a resounding problem in many of our nation’s school districts. Young and Fuller (2009) discovered, in their study of principal retention in Texas, that only 50% of newly hired principals remain on the job for at least three years. Even more alarming is that, within five years, those retention rates drop to 30%. Similarly, in a study of 519 first-year principals in six urban school districts, Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, and Ikemoto (2012) found that within the first year, 61 principals had left their school. By the second and third year, an additional 56 and 66 principals had left. While many of these
principals are resigning and leaving the profession altogether to pursue other careers, many of them gravitate to schools already well-positioned with lighter demands and higher student achievement (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; School Leaders Network, 2014). Scholars such as Hull (2012) and Béteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2012) asserted that many of these individuals use the initial year of hardship schools to gain experience before advancing to more manageable institutions, creating a vacuum of leadership and a culture of inconsistency at the level of the underperforming schools. Consequently, the effect of churning principals has made it increasingly difficult for the newly transitioned principal (Beam, Claxton, & Smith, 2016; Spillane, Harris, Jones, & Mertz, 2015; Northfield, 2013; Hertting, 2008).

Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman, and White (2003) noted that teachers and staff have become so accustomed to the transition of principals that they have become pessimistic and negative toward the whole process. These authors observed that teachers and staff are resistant and will often “wait their principals out” (p. 8), as they expect that the principal will leave promptly. As a result, the transition in leadership becomes a difficult and complicated process that often leaves new principals feeling frustrated, stressed, and without support (Weinstein, Jacobowitz, Ely, Landon, & Schwartz, 2009; Lee, 2015). Adding to this complicated process is the challenge of a new principal developing and maintaining relationships with his or her teachers. Identifying the factors that assist newly transitioned principals in establishing positive leader-follower relationships, and understanding the barriers to the formation of these, thus becomes a crucial issue for practice and scholarship alike.

A study by Lee (2015) of 16 novice elementary school principals constituted one of the first investigations to explore the varying levels of challenges experienced based on how the principal succeeded to the position. Lee found that when the succession of the new principal
occurred through the promotion of the assistant principal, the newly transitioned principal was less likely to face resistance. However, because the individual previously served at the school, adjusting to others’ expectations presented a challenge. When the succession involved newly transitioned principals being appointed from outside the school and tasked with turning the school around, the principals found it difficult to cultivate trust, promote cooperation, and establish authority. Not surprisingly, however, principals experienced the most difficulty when they entered schools with an unplanned succession. In these instances, not only do principals spend most of their time trying to establish the most basic necessities of leading the school, but they must also discern which staff members are trustworthy. Lee found that principals must navigate the social and political landscape of the school before focusing on the goals of the school. The results from the study by Lee complimented findings in the work of Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, and Ikemoto (2012) and Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015). Burkhauser et al. (2012) found that principals who maintain high levels of staff collaboration and cohesion are more likely to remain at the school, and that those who are successful start working on these relationships immediately. Likewise, Van Maele and Van Houtte discovered in a study of 673 participants across 58 elementary schools that teachers had lower levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout when trust existed in the relationship between the principal and teacher. Examining this phenomenon of leadership is the focus of this study.

It has been shown that principal turnover has created widespread problems in many schools and caused the loss of millions of dollars (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Ringel, Gates, Ghosh-Dastidar, Brown, & Chung, 2004; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007; Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; School Leaders Network, 2014). Additionally, the results of previous studies have indicated that those principals transitioning to a school may have a hard
time transitioning because of the resistance and opposition posed by the teachers and staff (Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman & White, 2003; Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Northfield, 2013; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Lee, 2015). Accordingly, scholars have also emphasized that principals who work on developing relationships built on trust with their new staff are more successful and higher rates of retention (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015; Lee, 2015; Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto, 2012). Essentially, educational leadership scholars have outlined parameters for principals to have leadership success; however, in-depth studies identifying the concrete components of the leader-follower relationship that make successful outcomes possible are lacking. A rapidly growing amount of literature regarding effective school leadership has emphasized the importance of effective leader-follower relationships in a school. Indeed, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) posited that, for a school to function correctly and successfully, strong leadership is vital. Such leadership maintains a compelling influence on the motivations and commitment of teachers and teachers’ job satisfaction (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Marks & Printy, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Yet, for some, obtaining this type of influence in relationships with new staff members presents challenges.

Mortimore (1996) argued early on that, without support, school principals are powerless to implement change. Along similar lines, without establishing positive relationships with followers, leaders cannot be successful. Kelley (1988) suggested in a foundational study that followers play a significant role in the success or failure of a leader. With an abundance of research suggesting the types of traits, skills, and characteristics that a principal should possess to affect student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Seashore, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), school culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Silins, 1994; Tajasom & Ahmad, 2011), and teachers (Silins, 1994; Bogler, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006;
Cerit, 2009; Walker & Slear, 2011), little research exists concerning how transitioning principals develop quality relationships with their followers. Furthermore, newly transitioned principals are likely to encounter different school contexts (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Lee, 2015; Spillane, Harris, Jones, & Mertz, 2015) with varying types of behaviors from their new staff members following a transition. Therefore, identifying how newly transitioned principals develop relationships with their followers, understand the characteristics and behaviors of followers, and how those characteristics and behaviors impact the principal their success as a leader are essential.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research is to explore how newly transitioned principals in a large urban school district in the southeast United States experiencing frequent principal transitions describe their experiences of developing relationships with their followers and to understand their perspectives on how those followers shape their leadership. Specifically, this study seeks, from the perspective of the new principal, to: (a) uncover how newly transitioned principals make sense of their relationships with followers in their new workplaces; (b) understand the dyadic relationship between principals and followers; and (c) discover the roles of followers in shaping principals’ leadership.

**Central Research Question and Subquestions**

The primary research question chosen to guide this study was: “How do principals describe the leader-follower relationship during their experience of transitioning to a new school?” The secondary questions included: “How do newly transitioned principals describe the qualities of their relationships with their followers?” and, “How do newly transitioned principals describe the roles that followers play in shaping their leadership?”
**Conceptual Framework**

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013), theoretical frameworks are “the current version of the researcher’s map of the territory being investigated” (p. 20). Given that this study seeks to explore how newly transitioned principals develop relationships with their followers and how they describe the roles of followers in shaping their leadership, this study is informed by the leader-member exchange theory and followership theory. A brief description of each of these theories and how this study plans to employ them follows. The Literature Review in Chapter 2 discusses these theories in detail.

**Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

In the mid-1970s, organizational leadership theorists Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975) developed the Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) theory. This theory focused on the different relationships developed by leaders with each of their followers. Dansereau et al. proposed that leaders developed relationships with each subordinate and placed them in an *in-group* or *out-group*. Those in the in-group were known to gain special privileges not afforded to those in the out-group (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Recognizing that leaders were developing different relationships with each of their members created a shift in the focus of VDL and a change in its name to leader-member exchange theory (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

LMX theory, as shown in Figure 1.1, is best described as a theory that studies the dyadic relationship, or exchange, between a leader and a follower (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). They believe that there are three domains to leadership: the leader, the follower, and the relationship. By focusing on the leader-follower relationship, this study brings the often overlooked relationship domain to the forefront of the discussion. Specifically, the discussion centers on the
quality, whether high or low, of the relationship between a leader and a follower (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Researchers have emphasized that relationships are embodied by four dimensions: contribution, loyalty, affect, and professional respect (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Additionally, researchers note that within these dyadic exchanges, or relationships, the idea of mutual influence is prescient (Jackson & Johnson, 2012), which essentially posits that leaders and members influence each other significantly. The concepts of developing relationships, mutual influence, and the different relationships, whether high or low quality, between a leader and follower serve as a basis for selecting LMX as the primary theoretical framework for this study.

**Followership Theory**

Although LMX theory includes the premise of exploring mutual influence to determine how leaders understand the roles that followers play in shaping their leadership, this study will also use Followership theory. For far too long, research has been leader-centric and has focused on the impact and influence of leaders (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Researchers such as Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014) have insisted that the scientific community has discounted an essential component of the leader-follower relationship by failing to concentrate on followers. Accordingly, followership has emerged as one of the newest theories in the leadership research, having gained prominence following a 1988 article by Robert Kelley.

Followership, according to Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014) involves “an investigation of the nature and impact of followers and following in the leadership process” (p. 89). Specifically, the authors proposed that followership occurs through either a role-based approach or a constructionist approach. In the role-based approach, the discussion centers on how followers impact leader attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes. The constructionist approach
concentrates on how leadership and followership are co-constructed in social and relational interactions between people. For the current study, however, the role-based approach provides the best opportunity to understand how leaders perceive the characteristics and behaviors of the followers who shape their leadership.

The expansion of followership studies has produced numerous models by various researchers that describe the styles, characteristics, and behaviors of followers. For example, Kelley (1988) introduced a model based on two behavioral dimensions: dependent/independent critical thinking and passive/active. Similarly, Kellerman (2008) introduced a followership continuum based on the level of engagement of the followership. Although some models exist, one of the more notable similarities of the developed models is that many of them measure followership on a passive-to-active scale. These models help to characterize the behaviors and roles of followers. As such, the use of these models and followership theory can assist the researcher in understanding the roles of followers as principals describe how those roles shape their leadership.

**Theoretical Conclusions**

The selection of LMX theory and followership theory as lenses to explore how newly transitioned principals describe their experience of developing relationships with their followers and how those followers shape their leadership is threefold and is depicted in Figure 1.1. First, LMX is the primary theory guiding this study and represents the best theory to help explain the dyadic exchange that occurs between a leader and follower. While many theorists explore the leader side of the leader-follower relationship, the relationship between the leader and follower is not heavily studied in the education literature. Thus, LMX offers the current researcher the best opportunity to understand the dynamics of the relationship between a newly transitioned
principal and his or her followers. Second, LMX assists the researcher in recognizing the quality of the relationships developed between a principal and his or her followers. Finally, embedded within LMX is the concept of mutual influence, meaning that followers influence leaders as much as leaders influence followers. However, how followers impact leaders is relatively unknown. A construct in the followership literature, proposed by Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014) suggests that the behaviors and characteristics of followers are antecedents to the behaviors and characteristics of leaders. Given that this study aims to determine how leaders describe the role that the styles, behaviors, and characteristics of followers play in shaping the leadership of the leader, followership theory provides a valuable second theoretical lens through which to accomplish this. As such, components of these two theories prove most useful to the researcher in addressing the problem of practice and research questions.

**Overview of Research Plan**

Given that the primary purpose of this research study was to explore how newly transitioned principals in a large urban school district described their experiences of developing relationships with their followers and how those followers shaped their leadership. Therefore, a qualitative narrative approach was best suited for this study. This method allowed the researcher to focus on the stories of the participants as they described their experience of being a newly transitioned principal. As noted by Creswell (2012), employing a qualitative narrative approach allows the researcher to focus on the personal stories and life experiences of the participants.
within the study. Furthermore, after a thorough literature review of the primary conceptual framework, leader-member exchange theory, guiding this study, this researcher chose to conduct a qualitative study as these types of studies are largely absent in the literature. Additionally, since this study focused on understanding the experiences of newly transitioned principals, the researcher chose a narrative approach. Using a narrative format allowed the participants to tell their individual stories and permitted the researcher to write about it in a narrative format (Creswell, 2012).

The focus of this research was to explore how newly transitioned principals, following a principal transition, described their experiences of developing relationships with their followers and to understand the leaders’ perspectives on how those followers shaped their leadership. Accordingly, 12 principals were interviewed. The primary requirements for participation were that the principal transitioned from another site and could not have served more than three years at their current site. The selected participants participated in one 60 minute face-to-face semi-structured interview using questions designed to (a) uncover how newly transitioned principals made sense of their relationships with followers in their new workplaces; (b) understand the dyadic relationship between principals and followers; and (c) discover the roles of followers in shaping principals’ leadership. The personal narratives obtained during the interviews with the participants provided the data for this study. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. This approach and the method of analysis is further detailed in Chapter Three.

Significance of the Study

Seashore, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) suggested that principals need an average of five years for their impact to be seen and felt in the culture of a school and
achievement of its students. However, in the study of first-year principals in urban school districts, Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, and Ikemoto (2012) argued for more research on first-year principals to uncover some of the issues that they experience. They reasoned that such research could be valuable to the field of education. Fuller (2012) maintained that much more research is required in exploring the effects of principal turnover. Understanding that it can take a principal, on average, five years to have success at the school, this study explores newly transitioned principals within their first three years of leading a school. It is possible that these principals experienced some of the same issues as first-year principals. Additionally, this study explored which concepts may be intensified by the lingering effects of principal turnover.

This study has made an attempt to advance scholarship on the topic of the Leader-Member Exchange and how dyadic relationships are developed within an educational organization. Additionally, it aimed to enhance the knowledge of followers and their followership behaviors by examining the leader-follower relationship (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten 2014). Uhl-Bien and her colleagues (2014) argued that, by exploring followership, scholars may enhance their ability to characterize effective and ineffective follower behaviors. Thus, this researcher’s goal has been to contribute to practice and also to theory.

Within the literature on LMX theory, studies on the dyadic relationship between principals and their followers are nonexistent. Moreover, scant research exists regarding LMX in an education context. Not only is there a dearth of literature regarding the dyadic relationship between principals and their followers, but also, many of the empirical studies situated in the LMX literature are quantitative and from the perspective of the follower. This study took the opposite approach, seeking to understand the point of view of the leader through a qualitative methodology. The current study intended to bring leaders views on followers to the forefront of
the leadership discussion. By not focusing on the followers, the leadership literature fails to acknowledge a major piece of the leader-follower relationship (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014; Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). Accounts of how followers impact or influence the behaviors, attitudes, and motivations of their leaders are largely missing from the literature; this study begins that conversation.

The significance of the current study is that it explored how principals build high-quality relationships with their teachers following a transition in school leadership. Additionally, this study examined how principals understand the ways in which followers (teachers) shape their role as a leader and impact their (the principals’) attitude, behaviors, and motivations. In doing so, the findings of this study are aimed to assist school principals in building their leadership capacity and in developing high-quality relationships with their followers. With the alarming rates of principal turnover, school leaders need to hit the ground running when they enter their new positions. Given the high turnover rate of newly transitioned principals in their first few years, the results of this study could potentially improve the success and retention rate of principals in those years. Additionally, this research has the potential to provide school districts and universities with information to enhance professional development courses for school leaders on building high-quality relationships and how to lead in organizations with followers with different styles and characteristics.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

While every effort was made to ensure a quality research study, a number of limitations need to be considered. First, this research study was limited by the selection of the participants. Although the participants corresponded to the criteria set forth by the researcher, others factors including race, age, ethnicity, and/or gender may have influenced the experiences of the
participants. Additionally, the total number of years in education and specifically administration might have shaped the views of the participants. Accordingly, another limitation was the absence of discussion during interviews that centered on whether or not participants received administrative training focused on relationship building. Prior to the appointment of all new administrators, the school district trains new assistant principals and principals on relationship building. However, it is unknown if that same training is offered when a principal is transferred to another school site. This researcher chose not to pursue questions on the training of principals as it was believed it went beyond the scope of the study.

During each interview, participants were reminded that they would be given a pseudonym to maintain anonymity and the transcriptions would be stored securely. Although this was listed in an informed consent form and reiterated at the beginning and conclusion of each interview, the comfort level of the participants with the researcher may have impacted their willingness to be open and honest about their experiences in response to the interview questions posed by the researcher. Moreover, though the questions posed by the researcher were piloted three times with two former principals and one current principal of the same school district as the research participants, the nature of a qualitative study allows for interpretation and these questions may have been interpreted differently by the participants.

Finally, there are more than 14,000 school districts in the United States. Of those, the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), an organization that claims to be the nation’s voice for urban education, represents 68 urban school districts and 12,117 schools. Despite the number of school districts in the nation and those represented by the CGCS, this study limited the focus to only one urban school district. This was intentional, however, as it ensured the participants had a common frame of reference.
Delimitations

The researcher identified three research delimitations:

- This study relied solely on the perspective of the leader.
- This study focused on participants who had been at their school site for three years or less.
- The study focused on participants who were transferred or promoted from another school.

Definition of Key Terms

**Dyadic Exchange/Relationship:** The relationship developed between a leader and follower (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

**Follower:** An individual in a subordinate position that works with a leader.

** Followership Behaviors:** “[B]ehaviors enacted from the standpoint of a follower role or in the act of following (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014, p.96).

** Followership Outcomes:** “[O]utcomes of followership characteristics and behaviors that may occur at the individual, relationship and work-unit levels (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014, p.96).

** Follower Role Influence:** The impact of the behaviors, characteristics, or roles enacted by followers on leaders.

** Followership Theory:** “[A]n investigation of the nature and impact of followers and following in the leadership process” (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014, p.89).

** Leader Member Exchange Theory:** A theory that studies the dyadic relationship, or exchange, between a leader and follower (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995)
Newly Transitioned Principal: An individual appointed or transferred to a school principalship within the last three years, including those with previous experience as a principal at other schools.

Principalship: The overarching responsibilities of the campus leader: the principal.

Principal Transition/Succession: Principals “promoted into position to fill existing vacancies opened by personnel leaving due to retirement, advancement, or termination” (Zepeda, Bengtson, & Parylo, 2012, p.136).

Principal Turnover: The result of a principal leaving his or her school due to termination, voluntary exits, or intra-district transfers (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012).

Urban School District: A school district situated within a large city, with a large student population, and a majority of its students are on free or reduced lunch.

Urban School: A low-performing, high poverty school that has a high concentration of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012).

Chapter One Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the background and problem that led to the focus of this study. The central research question, additional sub-questions, and conceptual frameworks that guided this study were also identified. Following was a presentation of the research plan and a discussion on the significance of this study. Finally, the limitations of the study are noted, and a list of key terms was presented. The next chapter reviews the most relevant scholarly literature that surrounds the problem of practice and theoretical constructs.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores five bodies of scholarly literature informing the current study on how newly transitioned principals describe their experience of navigating among different stakeholders while leading a new school initiative. Specifically, this study seeks to uncover how newly transitioned principals develop relationships with their stakeholders and how they understand the various influences of those stakeholders on their role as a leader. The first section presents the history of principalship in the United States and explores how the role of the principal has evolved over the century. Next, the chapter examines the literature on principal turnover, principal succession, and leadership transitions. The researcher pays careful attention to the urban school principalship. The chapter then provides an overview of the pertinent literature on leader-member exchange theory and concludes with a detailed review of the literature on the phenomenon of followership.

To outline the argument of discovery, a specific inquiry guides each section of this chapter:

1. What have researchers documented regarding the principalship, and how has the role evolved?
2. What data exists about the shortage and high turnover rate of principals in urban schools and how has this data been analyzed?
3. What are key insights into the problem of principal successions and leadership transitions?
4. What contributions does LMX theory make to understand the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers?
5. How might studies on the phenomenon of followership help to understand how followers impact the leadership process?

The review of these comprehensive five sets of literature on the principalship, principal shortages, leadership transition, leader-member exchange theory and followership reveals limitations in certain areas. For instance, the literature on the history and historical roots of the principalship is limited to the work of a few historians due to a greater focus on the social and institutional histories of schools (Kafka, 2009). Because followership has only recently emerged as a new analytical construct, that body of literature is very narrow.

In 1998, a report produced by the Educational Research Service for the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (as cited in Whitaker, 2001) indicated that school districts were experiencing difficulties filling principal positions due to a shortage of candidates. In a random survey of 403 suburban, urban, and rural school districts, with student populations of 300 or more, the study revealed that the documented shortage of principal candidates severely affected urban schools with the role of the urban school principal ranking among the most difficult to fill. While all principalship roles are complicated and taxing, as noted by Cistone and Stevenson (2000), the role of the urban principal may present additional complications due to the location of a disproportionately high number of low-performing, high-poverty schools in most urban districts. Specifically, as test scores increasingly define a school’s success, and accountability mandates surge, the difficulty of filling the role of the principal has increased in urban, suburban, and rural settings each year (McGhee, 2005; Whitaker, 2003). Roza and Swartz (2003) noted, however, that school districts with high minority rates and schools with poor working conditions – common dominant characteristics of urban schools usually receive the fewest applicants to fill
school vacancies. Consequently, principals typically vacate their roles from these schools as soon as they gain experience, often transferring to another school in the district with more desirable conditions (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010). These trends create a high number of leadership transitions and principal successions in economically and academically challenged urban schools.

On a national level, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, generated public alarm about the availability of quality principal leaders nationally in their 1998 report. In this report, (as cited in Whitaker, 2001), researchers pointed out the existence of a shortage in quality leaders in all grade levels and every type of geographic location (rural, urban, and suburban). Years later, research continues to indicate that, nationally, principals are leaving in increasing numbers due to various reasons, such as burnout, stress, workload, increased accountability measures, bureaucracy, and disciplinary problems, student test scores, salary, poor working relationships, among others (Johnson 2005; Partlow, 2007; Papa, 2007; Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; DeAngelis & White, 2011; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011; Farley-Ripple, Raffel, & Welch, 2012). In fact, researchers have noted that each year, many school districts throughout the country experience principal turnover rates of 15% to 30%, and this figure swells in low-performing, high poverty schools (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010). Consequently, urban schools face acute and persistent challenges such as the constant turnover and succession of principals. As a result, these challenges have a larger effect on teacher morale, school reform efforts, and the climates of campuses (Hargreaves, 2005; Meyer, Macmillan, & Northfield, 2009). Given the serious challenges in urban schools and their
frequency of principal turnover or transition, this study focuses on this particular subset of schools and their newly transitioned principals as they navigate new dyadic relationships.

**The Principalship in Historical Perspective**

This section traces the evolution of the principalship to provide historical context for understanding both the leadership challenges it involves and the problem of principal turnover. Over the last few decades, as accountability and school reform efforts have grown, researchers and historians have expressed greater interest in the evolution of the role that principals play in educational institutions (Pierce, 1935; Hallinger, 1992; Beck & Murphy, 1993; Brown, 2011; Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005; Kavanaugh, 2005; Rousmaniere, 2007; Kafka, 2009). While the principal and his or her role is and has been an important component in schools, historian Kate Rousmaniere (2007; 2013) maintained that the principal has remained largely absent from the historical and academic discussions of school administrators. Rousmaniere stated, “It’s as if the principal did not exist at all” (p.4). She proposed three reasons for this situation: First, the historical accounts of principals are written by scholars who are not historians. Consequently, their depiction of principals is deficient as they lack the “historical training” (Rousmaniere, 2007, p.5). Second, in the historical literature, researchers have condensed school administrations and grouped all of the positions (superintendent, principal, and assistant principal) into one. Finally, Rousmaniere argues that, as a result of unpleasant memories held by principals concerning disciplinary actions, historians have bypassed principals in educational history. Along similar lines, historian Judith Kafka (2009) offered a fourth reason that historians have ignored principalship in history. She suggested that principals have fallen through the educational literature cracks as more research has focused on the social and
institutional histories of schooling. Although the literature on the principalship is sparse, the available scholarship describes significant changes in the role over time.

In the early 1800s, teachers operated and managed schools. The teacher, also referred to as the schoolmaster, operated under the guidance of an elected board and was held responsible by the local community for what occurred inside the classroom (Rousmaniere, 2007; Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2013). The teacher, primarily working alone, held the responsibility for teaching students in a building with one room. However, as the student populations of schools increased, schools began to categorize students by age and achievement level, creating grade levels. Consequently, students were separated into different classrooms with different teachers. As a result of the growing number of students and additional teachers in the building, a need existed for an individual to manage the school building, leading to the creation of the principal-teacher relationship.

Tasked by the superintendent, the principal-teacher or head teacher, was a role typically occupied by a white male. The position was created to provide oversight of the school at the local level (Pierce, 1935; Brown, 2011; Kavanaugh, 2005; Rousmaniere, 2007; Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2013). Aside from teaching, additional authority and responsibilities came with the position of the principal-teacher. Researchers note that the role was assigned clerical and administrative duties, such as completing records, managing discipline, verifying attendance, maintaining the building, and ensuring that the school day started and ended on time (Brown, 2011; Rousmaniere, 2007; Kafka, 2009). Over time, and with a consistent influx of immigrants, the population of schools steadily increased. Kafka (2009) pointed out that between 1870 and 1898, the enrollment numbers of schools rose from 7,000,000 to 15,000,000 (p.324). As a result, the teaching responsibilities for the principal-teacher were eliminated, and his role evolved into
one that resembled that of a manager, politician, and supervisory principal (Kavanaugh, 2005; Rousmaniere, 2007; Kafka, 2009). Essentially, this transformative process birthed the role of the modern day principal.

With such a significant increase in the number of students attending school in the earlier 20\textsuperscript{th} century, managing the district and local buildings became increasingly difficult for the superintendent. To lighten the load, Benben (1960) insisted that the role of the modern day principal was created. With this creation came greater prominence and prestige. Kafka (2009) explained that principals began congregating to discuss school issues and problems and aimed to professionalize the profession. Eventually, these meetings led to the establishment of the National Association of Secondary Principals (NASSP) in 1916 and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in 1921 (Brown, 2011, p.89). Establishing these organizations helped the principals increase their authority and prominence. Within the community, they were viewed not only as school leaders, but also as local leaders. In fact, Kafka stated that, “For many, the principal \textit{was} the school” (p.324).

Following the professionalization of principalship, the principal became responsible for all phases of management and instruction (Pierce, 1935). As the expectations of schooling increased, the roles of school principals also increased. These changes in expectations led Beck and Murphy (1993) to arrange the evolution of the principal position from the 1920s-1990s by metaphorical themes. As displayed in Table 2.1, in the 1920s and 1930s, principals were deemed spiritual and scientific leaders. In the 1920s, principals were likened to ministers and thought to have been called for the position. In the 1930s, they were compared to business executives, as many thought schools should be managed in a similar manner to businesses (Beck
& Murphy, 1993). These observations reflected the importance the church and scientific management played in American life.

Table 2.1

*Evolution of the Principal by Metaphorical Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>The Principal as…</th>
<th>Dominant Values</th>
<th>Metaphorical Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Twenties</td>
<td>Spiritual Leader Social Leader</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Venues Broker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thirties</td>
<td>Executive Manager Democratic</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Scientific Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forties</td>
<td>Leadership Leader on Homefront</td>
<td>American Social</td>
<td>Democratic Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fifties</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Objectivity Academic Detailed</td>
<td>Theory-Guided Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sixties</td>
<td>Bureaucrat</td>
<td>Technical Standardization</td>
<td>Bureaucratic Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seventies</td>
<td>Community Leader</td>
<td>Socially Relevant Humanist</td>
<td>Humanistic Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eighties</td>
<td>Instructional Leader</td>
<td>Effectiveness Accountability</td>
<td>Instructional Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nineties</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Higher Expectation for the Purpose of Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where individuals were situated within a time period tended to shape how they viewed the principalship. In the 1940s, Beck and Murphy (1993) suggested that principals were referred to as the “Democratic Leader.” This notion of a principal as a democratic leader was reflective of the sentiments generated by World War II. As many Americans began to focus heavily on the idea of patriotism, principals were encouraged to be leaders on the home front (Beck & Murphy,
1993). They were encouraged to maintain a more democratic leadership style, rather than an autocratic one, with the goal of creating more democratic citizens (Brown, 2011). Principals were urged to work together with teachers to create curriculum and implement instruction. Additionally, they were required to include parents, students, and teachers in the decision-making process to help govern the school (Kafka, 2009).

Although the 1940s required principals to participate in shared decision making, the 1950s saw less of the principal distributing decisions and more of the principal acting as an administrator (Beck & Murphy, 1993). During this time, the public viewed principals as authority figures: objective, academic, and detailed (Beck & Murphy, 1993). During this period, principals utilized empirical data to assist teachers with effective teaching strategies. They also became more detailed about their clerical and custodial activities. Kavanaugh (2005) indicated that the principals during the 1950s focused more on running the school than on leading it.

Principals running the school were also noticeable in the 1960s. Brown (2011) noted that the launch of Sputnik in the late 1950s, as well as social chaos and political upheaval during the 1960s, produced a new emphasis for education. The emphasis was on maintaining normalcy and stability within schools. Beck and Murphy (1993) referred to principals during this time period as bureaucrats. The principals were tasked with handling those who challenged the system (Brown, 2011). Additionally, as noted in Hallinger (1992), during the 1960s, principals started their role as a manager of programs. During this time, principals began to manage federally sponsored and funded programs. Furthermore, as a result of the social and political mayhem, this time period saw many black school leaders replaced by white males (Kafka, 2009).

The disorder caused by the social and political turmoil spilled over into the 1970s. During this time, the nation battled issues such as affirmative action and other civil rights issues
(Rousmaniere, 2013). Rousmaniere (2013) pointed out that during the 1970s, school boards refused to hire black principals, fearing they would surrender to political pressure from the community. Though pressure arose from the community, the 1970s also saw the principal influencing those in the community to become more involved in schools. Beck and Murphy (1993) referred to principals during this time as community leaders. Just as they had started in the 1960s, the principals were tasked with managing federal programs. During this time, the theme of accountability began to surface (Hallinger, 1992).

The 1980s, too, witnessed the expansion of accountability in the work of principals (Brown, 2011; Beck & Murphy, 1993; Rousmaniere, 2013). During the 1980s, the community viewed principals as problem solvers, resource providers, instructional leaders, visionaries, and change agents who managed people and implemented policies (Brown, 2011). Beck and Murphy (1993) referred to principals as instructional leaders, as the intention of principals was on school effectiveness. As an instructional leader, principals became more involved in the teaching and education within the school and providing professional development and resources for teachers and the classroom (Kavanaugh, 2005). Principals during this decade became known as agents of school reform (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005) and were charged with creating and enacting visions to move schools forward (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

Just as principals began to provide visions for their schools, the 1990s saw principals move into a transformational role (Hallinger, 1992). Beck and Murphy (1993) observed them metaphorically as a leader. Similarly, Brown (2011) details the responsibility principals held with guiding schools from a bureaucratic to a postindustrial model of schooling. With the increase in minority student populations and students living in poverty (Kavanaugh, 2005), the principal became integral in creating caring and integrated communities (Beck & Murphy, 1993).
Accordingly, the role of the principal expanded beyond that of an instructional or transformational leader. To many, principals were designated multiple hats with multiple tasks and responsibilities (Kafka, 2009).

Since the 2000s, the complexity of the principalship has changed and evolved (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005; Kafka, 2009). These authors attributed societal changes as causes to the impact of the role and responsibilities of the principal. Principals, today, are asked to do more with less (Kafka, 2009). However, as Kafka observed, this is not a new situation. She argued that history has shown that principals have always possessed minimal resources, but have been forced to perform many responsibilities. Brown (2011) postulated that the 21st century has presented new challenges for principals. The evolution of the principalship and its requirements necessitate an individual working long hours with lower salaries (Brown, 2011). Consequently, Brown insists that the changes to the principalship and the emphasis placed on accountability and testing discourage potential candidates from pursuing principal positions. Research has indicated that the complexity of the roles of the principals has shifted from that of building managers to that of “highly skilled building managers, outstanding human resource directors, and competent negotiators. They are expected to be change agents and problem solvers who provide visionary leadership, moral leadership, and cultural leadership while practicing transformational leadership, collaborative leadership, servant leadership, and distributive leadership” (Brown, 2011, p.48). As a result, these changes have led to shortages and frequent turnovers in the principalship in many schools today creating positions filled by newly transitioned principals who are likely to experience these same challenges and complexities.
The Shortage and High Turnover of Principals in Urban Schools

The Shortage of Principals

Over the last two decades, researchers in education have debated the existence of a shortage of school principals. As Roza and Swartz (2003) conclude from the review of a quantitative analysis conducted by the Center on Reinventing Public Education, the existence of a shortage depends on how a shortage is defined. The Center on Reinventing Public Education analyzed 83 public school districts in 10 regions that were identified as experiencing principal shortages. Through this review, Roza and Swartz found that “high challenge, high poverty, (p.1),” usually urban schools, attract the fewest candidates for their principalships. Additionally, the researchers noted that experiencing a shortage of leaders is abnormal for school districts and that the idea of a shortage is largely based on perception (Roza & Swartz, 2003). For example, the superintendents of some school districts may perceive a scarcity of quality leadership (Whitaker, 2001), causing them to believe a shortage of applicants exists when the data suggests a high number of available applicants.

In line with the findings of Roza and Swartz’s (2003) analysis, Whitaker (2001) found, after surveying the perceptions of 108 superintendents on the quantity and quality of principal candidates, that 90% perceived an average to excessive case of principal shortage. Furthermore, the survey respondents indicated a dwindling quality of available applicants. This finding, however, may be somewhat biased. In other words, according to Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady (2009), because the success of a principal determines the success of a superintendent, superintendents may perceive a dwindling quality of principals, creating a shortage where no shortage exists.
Along similar lines, Pounder, Gavin, and Shepherd (2003) insist that the picture of administrator availability is often lacking. Additionally, Pounder et al. suggest the misinterpretation of some school district leaders on the existence of quality candidates results from ambiguity. In essence, school district leaders fail to realize what they need or want in principal candidates (Pounder, Gavin, & Shepherd, 2003), adding to the evidence of an administrator shortage that they describe as “incomplete, contradictory, and inconclusive” (Pounder et al., p.142). Certainly, while the idea of a principal shortage divides researchers, the turnover of principals in schools, particularly urban schools, is a major cause for concern.

**Principal Turnover**

While Pounder, Gavin, and Shepherd (2003) state that the evidence of a principal shortage is contradictory, the research clearly identifies high turnover in principalship, a situation that is exacerbated in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010; Papa, 2007; Partlow & Ridenour, 2008). Each year, one out of five schools, nationally, experiences the departure of its principal (Béteille et al., 2012). In data from a nationally representative survey, Battle (2010) found that 21% of principals leave their job each year. Principals leave for various reasons including low pay, high pressure, lack of authority, unpleasant work hours, and the expansion of the principal role (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001). Moreover, as DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) document, the role of the principal has evolved immensely over the years (Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2007). Resource scarcity increasingly forces principals to play the role of building manager, problem solver, surrogate parent, public relations director, chief fundraiser, nurse, and safety officer. Consequently, the expansion of the role of a principal is cited as a primary reason
dissuading many potential and qualified applicants from applying and discouraging quality leaders from staying on as principals, not just in urban schools, but in schools in general.

In a study of newly hired principals in Texas, Young and Fuller (2009) revealed that a little over 50% of the principals stay on the job less than three years. The researchers further concluded that most of the leaders (90%) leave the principalship altogether. Likewise, in a study of 1,543 administrators in Virginia, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) observed that principals are gradually pulled away from the tasks they find the most satisfying to complete less satisfying tasks. Indeed, many of the respondents said they lacked the influence and authority to perform their job. However, most strikingly, the researchers found that of the participants, 91% cited stress and 86% cited long work hours as creating barriers to their interest in administration. The findings of DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran may help explain the findings of Young and Fuller and further point to the many of the schools being hit the hardest as the lowest performing schools. Roza and Swartz’s (2003) review of the quantitative analysis produced by the Center of Reinventing Public Education confirms this thought by showing that many of these schools maintain the most undesirable working conditions and are likely the low-performing and urban schools.

In a similar study in North Carolina and Illinois, Gates et al. (2006) analyzed the principal turnover and attrition rates between the 1987-1988 and 1999-2000 school years. During those years, the state of North Carolina employed 2,167 principals while the state of Illinois employed 3,613 principals. The researchers concluded from their study of these two states that a 14% turnover existed amongst Illinois principals and an 18% turnover existed in North Carolina. Interestingly, however, a majority of the turnover resulted from the principal leaving the principalship and not the school district. Gates et al. found that 20% (North
Carolina) and 13% (Illinois) of the principals left the school district altogether. Specifically, Gates et al. found that principals of schools with a large minority population often changed or left the schools, but remained in the system. Thus, the characteristics of a school are essential in predicting principal turnover. In North Carolina, principals leading in schools that could be seen as urban schools with high minority populations were leaving the school for better schools or different jobs at a rate of 24%, compared to 14% if the school had a minority student population of 0%. These results, found by Gates et al., coincide with results found by Partlow and Ridenour (2008). In their study of the frequency of elementary principal turnover in 109 Southwest Ohio schools, Partlow and Ridenour conclude that within a seven-year period, 42.7% of the schools that had three to five different principals were urban. Likewise, Roza and Swartz’s (2003) review of the quantitative analysis produced by the Center of Reinventing Public Education corroborates this statistic, showing that many urban and low-performing schools maintain the most undesirable working conditions. In summary, the most explicit finding to emerge from the literature on principal turnover is that the turnover rates in urban schools are abysmal. These studies show that generally the frequent turnover of principals in urban schools creates lasting effects on the schools and those within them. For this study, such lingering effects may explain the challenges a newly transitioned principal may have in developing relationships with his or her stakeholders.

The Effect of Principal Turnover

According to Strickland-Cohen, McIntosh, and Homer (2014), the constant turnover rate within low-achieving schools, as demonstrated above, may hurt the students and cripple the school’s progress. In their article, Strickland-Cohen et al. discuss methods that new administrators can use to sustain the effective practices of former principals. They indicate that
principal turnover can impede sustainability and create a loss of momentum within a school. This is evident in the study conducted by Miller (2013). Using 12 years of administrative data from North Carolina, Miller linked principal turnover to a decrease in students’ levels of achievement. She determined that test scores during the first two years under a new principal were lower than under the previous principal, after the newer principal had settled into his or her new position.

Similar to the ideas advanced by Strickland-Cohen and colleagues (2014), Dillon (2011) posits that the instability caused by the turnover and transitioning of principals complicates a school’s ability to improve. Referring to data from eight states who received federal grant money to turnaround their low-performing schools, Dillon notes that 44% of the 317 schools retained leadership while others received new leaders. Statistics such as this show that schools plagued by frequent turnover and transitioning of principals are unlikely to establish strong cultures and are likely to maintain higher teacher turnover. Miller (2013) notes that 1.3% more teachers than usual leave as new principals transition to schools, with an additional 1.6% more than usual leaving after the new principals’ first year (p.70). Together, this body of work signifies that turnover and principal transitions can result in more detriments than benefits.

**Principal Successions and Leadership Transitions**

**The Transition and Succession of Principals**

On the surface, the terms “successions” and “leadership transitions” may appear different. However, as the literature reveals, they are the same, as both acts involve the replacement of a leader. Therefore, for the purpose of this section, the terms are interchangeable.

Within the K-12 education literature, research studies specific to leadership succession and transition are scarce. This study will address that scarcity. Accordingly, Fink and Brayman
(2006) argue that leadership transitions are extensively discussed in business and organizational change literature, but not in education. Despite this absence, Gandel (2005) maintains that leadership transition is common in most organizations. As demonstrated above, one such organization is public schools, particularly urban schools. Although succession and leadership transition research is uncommon in education literature, one could argue that Carlson’s 1962 book is education’s seminal work of succession. Although Carlson’s work explored executive succession and its relation to school superintendents, his findings provide important insights into the role of organizational successions. Based on his examination, he indicated that organizational consequences result from the decisions of executive succession (Carlson, 1962).

For instance, Carlson noted that succession causes disruption in communication, decision-making, and the normal activities of an organization. Carlson also discovered that when succession is implemented correctly, it can benefit the organization.

Normore (2007) validated Carlson’s (1962) view through his review of the literature, finding that planning and implementing successful succession plans for principals further develops schools and brings continuity in leadership. However, not all of the literature agrees that leadership succession benefits schools. With some principals leaving their schools due to promotion, retirement, or termination (Zepeda, Bengtson, & Parylo, 2012), Fink and Brayman (2006) argued that succession allows inexperienced leaders to take the helm of schools, creating a resistance by teachers to change. Additionally, in the cross-case analysis of the 30-year period research conducted in the Change Over Time? study, Fink and Brayman found that the three schools studied had successions that were unplanned. Consequently, they argue that unplanned successions “serve only as an enemy to improvement” (Fink & Brayman, 2006, p.85). Research conducted by Zepeda, Bengtson, and Parylo (2012) and Hargreaves (2005), however, provided a
different perspective. In their research, they show that, with proper management, succession can yield success. Zepeda et al., for example, found that leadership succession plans allow school districts the opportunity to train formally and grow their own leaders. Therefore, succession planning, as Normore (2007) maintained, is essential to any organization. However, to attain success, Hargreaves (2005) recommended that the process be slow and methodical.

Transitions in leadership require a methodical process, or they could incur significant costs for the leader and organization (Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2008). In the work of Manderscheid and Ardichvili (2008), the authors reviewed an extensive amount of literature on leadership transitions. They specifically examined leaders who transitioned from one organization to another, excluding the transition of first-time leaders. Based on their review of the literature, Manderscheid and Ardichvili developed a model, Figure 2.1, to help new leaders discover elements that could increase the probability of a successful leadership transition.

![Figure 2.1: Manderscheid and Ardichvili’s Transition Model](image-url)
The model shows that managing impressions, seeking feedback, and aligning expectations early in the transition phase will assist the leader in building relationships with team members and decreasing stress. Ultimately, taking these measures increases the leader’s chance of a successful transition and lessens turnover and lost productivity. In summary, the conceptual model developed by Manderscheid and Ardichvili points to a simple, yet effective measure that aids in a successful transition. Furthermore, the model also shows that the transition of a new leader can be unsuccessful creating a negative effect on the organization. Therefore, given the aim of this study, Manderscheid and Ardichvili’s work provides insight on what may assist newly transitioned principals in building high-quality relationships with their new staff.

**The Effect of Principal Successions and Leadership Transitions**

Bengtson, Zepeda, and Parylo (2013) maintained that leadership succession is inescapable. Organizations of all kinds experience leadership turnover, but what are the effects of leadership transition? Contributing to the limited leadership transition literature in education is the work of Meyer and his colleagues (2009), who extensively studied the effects of a principal turnover. In one study, exploring the influence of principal turnover on teacher morale, Meyer et al. sampled two secondary schools out of their larger three-year study of 12 schools and 105 administrators. Between the 1996 and 2005 school years, both of these schools experienced principal turnover. One of the schools, Charring Cross, employed three different principals during that period, while the other, Mussel Brook, employed seven during the same period. Meyer et al. note that, at Charring Cross, the agendas of the new principal and those of the teachers differed, which affected their working relationship. The new principal described a “wall of resistance” (p.177) and detailed how some teachers, with informal leadership roles, silenced other teachers and encouraged them to resist the new principal. Throughout the duration of this
resistance, Meyer et al. found that teacher morale remained relatively high because the teachers were aware that the new principal would likely leave or retire after her two-year appointment was completed.

Unlike the culture and morale at Charring Cross, the culture and morale of Mussel Brook constantly changed with the appointment of each of the seven principals over the eight school-year period. Meyer, Macmillan, and Northfield (2009) found that culture was hampered by the fear of new changes with each newly appointed leader. In an attempt to improve the culture of the school, the newest appointed leader at Mussel Brook reversed some decisions made by his predecessor. One such reversed change was the elimination of weekly staff meetings. However, the morale of the teachers did not improve along with the culture. In fact, Meyer et al. found that the morale was non-existent. Unlike the teachers at Charring Cross, Meyer et al. discovered the teachers at Murrel Brook lacked the energy to resist due to the constant changes in the administration. Thus, they were more open to the changes initiated by the new principal. Although Murrel Brook differed from Charring Cross, principal turnover clearly affects the morale and culture of a school.

The work of Daresh (1993) helps to explain the impact of principal turnover on teachers. In his study, he explored the effects of the arrival of a new principal on teachers. Through qualitative interviews with new principals, Daresh identified that the principals consistently described that their teachers experienced stages of grief after principal succession. He described the following stages occurring during the period surrounding the transition of a new leader into a school: 1) denial and isolation, 2) anger, 3) bargaining, 4) depression, and 5) acceptance (Daresh, 1993, p.4-9). In the denial stage, teachers considered the previous principal still a part of the organization. During the short-lived anger stage, the principal said the teachers described the
new principal as invading their space. The bargaining stage occurred when teachers decreased their anger and hostility toward the new leader. In the depression phase, usually around the return from winter break, teachers began to comprehend that their feelings would not bring back the former leader. Finally, in the acceptance phase, typically around spring break, the teachers realized that the new principal was there to stay and that they must learn to work together. Given that principals are likely to experience staff members who may cycle through these phases, Daresh advises new principals not to take their reactions personally. If a new principal assumes the effect of these stages, it could likely affect them as leaders, which also suggests that followers may impact their leaders.

**Principal Turnover and Leadership Succession Conclusion**

Principal turnover is crippling many of our nation’s schools. The literature uncovers that, each year, many school districts struggle with filling the role of principals who have vacated their position. Unfortunately, many of these vacated roles exist at some of the nation’s lowest performing schools, particularly urban schools. The review of literature on principal turnover revealed that the demands of the job drive many principals out of their schools. Researchers point out that many of the schools and districts who face high frequency in turnover do so because of the schools’ undesirable working conditions. Some of these conditions include demanding accountability measures, unpleasant work hours, and a lack of authority, all in the absence of an increase in salary. Consequently, the literature exposes that the effects of principal turnover is paralyzing schools. Researchers note that constant turnover has led to a decline in student achievement, an increase in teacher turnover, and an inability to maintain a strong school culture. Given this, this subset of schools experiencing effects of principal turnover represents an ideal context in which to conduct this study. Specifically, this study seeks to explore the
dyadic relationships formed by new principals and the established stakeholders of these schools following a school turnover in order to understand how those relationships are developed and how the relationships and stakeholders impact the new principal.

**Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

The following section of this literature review explores the literature on leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. Over the past few decades, the number of LMX studies has dramatically increased. Unlike most leadership theories that focus on leadership styles, leadership behaviors, skills, or traits, LMX theory aims to explain how leaders develop relationships with their subordinates (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000, Othman, Fang Ee, & Lay Shi, 2010). Specifically, LMX assumes that leaders establish and maintain different relationships with each of their followers (Liden & Graen, 1980; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Thus, this theory may help to understand how newly transitioned principals develop relationships with their new staff members and how those relationships may impact them as a leaders. A pivotal 1982 study argued that these developed relationships fall on a continuum ranging from high-quality relationships to low-quality relationships (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982). Driving this argument is the idea that the theoretical roots of LMX are comprised of vertical dyad linkage theory (VDL), role theory, and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986, Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

In the mid-1970s, Dansereau and his colleagues, George Graen and William Haga (1975), introduced vertical dyad linkage theory (VDL), which serves as one of the theoretical foundations for LMX theory. The basic premise of VDL is that leaders create relationships of differing quality with each of their subordinates. Under the VDL construct, leaders group
subordinates into two relationship groups: the *in-group* and the *out-group*. The in-group includes members who are a part of the leader’s inner circle. Members of the in-group often receive privileges not available to those in the out-group (Dansereau et al., 1975). For example, members of the in-group could experience greater trust, interaction, support, or rewards from leaders (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Gerstner & Day, 1997). Conversely, individuals belonging to the out-group experience a relatively weaker relationship with their leader (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Gerstner and Day (1997) furthermore note that the link between a leader and a member of the out-group is typically dictated by a contractual obligation. Moreover, Erdogan and Bauer (2015) maintain that those who belong to the out-group often feel discriminated against by their leader and typically experience less job satisfaction than do those in the in-group.

As researchers began to note the varying differences in relationships between leaders and their many followers, the focus of the vertical dyad linkage theory shifted to the particular relationship between the leader and follower (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Specifically, VDL’s focus changed to the dyadic relationship and exchanges between a leader and each of his or her followers (Jackson & Johnson, 2012; Sin, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2009; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). A change in the name of the theory accompanied this shift in focus, establishing leader-member exchange theory (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). Jackson and Johnson (2012) point out that this alteration of the name was striking because it directed attention to the dyadic exchange and the mutual influence between a leader and a member. Consequently, numerous other studies have focused on the exchange, the quality of relationships developed from this mutual influence, and its outcomes. As a result, this theory represents the theoretical lens of this dissertation because it may aid in understanding how newly transitioned principals establish high-quality relationships with their new staff. Specifically, this
theory may assist the researcher in discovering, in the case of newly transitioned principals, how the dyadic exchange between a leader and follower influences the leader and how the leader understands those influences.

The Evolution of LMX

Since its inception, LMX has swiftly evolved into one of the foremost theories on leadership. In their seminal work, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) described the evolution of LMX in four stages: VDL, LMX, leadership-making, and the team-making competence network. In the first phase, VDL, researchers found that leaders differentiated their relationships within their work units. Additionally, researchers found that followers, too, differed in their opinions of their leaders, allowing the leader-member relationship to become the unit of analysis (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In the second stage, LMX, the theory focused on the relationship and its outcomes. During this phase, researchers aimed to study the antecedents and results of the quality of LMX relationships. Additionally, Graen and Uhl-Bien note this stage focused on the substantiation of differentiation in LMX relationships and the connection between LMX relationships and organizational outcomes. The third stage, leadership-making, concentrated more heavily on how high-quality dyadic relationships are formed and influenced by the role-making process. Essentially, the dyadic exchange is comprised of two people—one leader and follower—that go through multiple stages to form a relationship. The fourth and final stage is the team-making competence network stage. In this stage, the focus of LMX centers on how combined dyadic relationships create larger network assemblies (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). With these four phases, the evolution of LMX has undergone a vast transformation. However, many studies on LMX are situated within the second and third stage, focusing on the antecedents, outcomes, and development of LMX relationships.
In the third stage of the evolution of LMX, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) maintained that dyads advance through the Leadership-Making model, comprised of three stages: stranger, acquaintance, and partnership. Similarly, Graen and Scandura (1987) described LMX development in three stages: role-taking, role-making, and role-routinization. In the first stage, leaders and members begin as strangers. The relationship between the two individuals is contractual, and the interactions are formal. During this stage, one of the members must offer a proposal after sampling the other’s behavior to advance the relationship to the second stage. In the next stage, acquaintance/role-making, the social exchange in the relationship evolves, and the leader and member begin to share information and resources. During this stage, the leader and member begin to test each other and influence each other’s attitudes and behaviors. This phase is also the most critical phase, as some dyads fail to progress to the third stage, instead relapsing to the first stage. However, if the individuals pass each other’s tests and advance to the third stage, a partnership is formed. During the partnership/role-routinization phase, high-quality relationships, described as mature, are formed and influenced heavily by mutual trust, respect, and obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

**Antecedents and Outcomes of LMX**

The bulk of the extensive research on LMX theory remains focused on the antecedents and consequences of LMX (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Jha & Jha, 2013). However, what some researchers find as an antecedent to develop LMX relationships, other researchers may find as an outcome (Dulebohn et al., 2012). The reviewed literature for this study contained articles that associated LMX with followers taking charge and their organizational tenure (Kim, Liu, & Diefendorff, 2014), work performance and work attitudes (Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009), job satisfaction (Harris, Wheeler,
Kacmar, 2009; Loi, Chan, & Lam, 2014), organizational citizenship behaviors (Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2014), self-identity (Jackson & Johnson, 2012), and turnover and turnover intentions (Harris et al., 2009; Ballinger, Lehman, & Schoorman, 2010). The intention in selecting these articles was to understand the impact of the exchange between a leader and a follower. Furthermore, by selecting these articles, the researcher hoped it would help answer this study’s research question and explain how LMX specifically influenced the leader. What was found, however, is that in each of these studies, the exchange or relationships between a leader and his or her followers and the quality of those relationships positively or negatively affected the studied variable. This exchange as a unit of analysis – and the impact of it on leaders’ behavior and effectiveness (in this case, newly transitioned principals) – is fundamental to this study.

The meta-analysis work of Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, and Ferris (2012) further documented antecedents and outcomes as they are understood in LMX theory. Antecedents, as they describe, are characteristics that some researchers suggest are needed to develop a LMX relationship. In an examination of 247 studies, Dulebohn et al. observed 21 antecedents and 16 consequences of LMX quality. The antecedents are grouped by follower characteristics, leader characteristics, interpersonal relationship characteristics, and contextual variables. Dulebohn and colleagues note that following these antecedents and contextual variables, LMX is formed leading to consequences of LMX such as role conflict, turnover, or job satisfaction. Through their meta-analysis, the researchers found that the behaviors and perceptions of leaders maintained the greatest variance in LMX. As a result, this finding enhances the idea that LMX and the quality of the relationship is affected more by the leader than by the follower. Notably absent in the work of Dulebohn et al., though, was if and how followers affect the LMX relationship. Given that this study aims to understand the role followers may play in influencing
leaders, this observation was shocking. Along similar lines to Dulebohn et al., in a critique of the LMX literature, Jha and Jha (2013) highlighted 12 outcomes of LMX discovered from 30 years of LMX research. They insisted that these outcomes strengthen the support for LMX and the importance of quality dyadic relationships. However, they also described the 12 outcomes of LMX as affecting the follower. Consequently, it appears that the impact of LMX on the leader and the outcomes of LMX for the leader is an understudied phenomenon.

**The Quality of LMX Relationships**

Given that this study centers on newly transitioned principals entering established cultures as the new leader, the principals in question may be best served by forming high-quality relationships with members of their new schools. This brings us to the linkage of this study to literature focusing on the quality of LMX relationships. These studies indicate that the quality of the exchange between a leader and a follower – in this case, between a principal and teacher – is characterized by four dimensions: contribution, loyalty, affect, and professional respect (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Originally, the idea of professional respect was not included in the initial dimensions (Graen, 2003; Jha & Jha, 2013), and it currently remains the least agreed upon dimension (Sin, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2009). Through a meta-analysis of 63 studies consisting of 10,884 dyads on LMX agreement (p.1050), Sin, Nahrgang, and Morgeson (2009) found that affect, loyalty, and contribution align more closely with the concept of LMX. With professional respect representing the newest dimension, Sin et al. found it yielded the lowest agreement. Although these four dimensions describe what high-quality relationships should be like, these findings highlight that leaders and members may not always agree on the quality of the relationship (Sherman, Kennedy, Woodard, & McComb, 2012), a
factor further affecting the development and outcome of the relationships. Specifically, Sin et al. found a moderate correlation ($p = 0.37$) between leader-member agreement (p.1051).

The above findings in the meta-analysis conducted by Sin, Nahrgang, and Morgeson (2009) are consistent with findings in studies by Sherman, Kennedy, Woodard, and McComb (2012) and Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, and Gardner (2009). Both of these studies explored leader-member agreement/disagreement and examined employee outcomes. In the study conducted by Cogliser et al., the researchers created an LMX balance framework that served as guidance to understanding follower job performance and work attitudes. Within this framework, if leaders and members agreed on the quality of their relationship, then the perspectives were considered balanced. However, an unbalanced perspective led to follower underestimation (high leader perspective of LMX and low member perspective of LMX) or follower overestimation (low leader perspective of LMX and high member perspective of LMX). With a sample of 285 employee and supervisor dyadic relationships, Cogliser et al. found that if the relationships were balanced low or high, then follower job performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction were congruent and also low or high. Additionally, they found that when the follower overestimated the quality of the relationship, their dedication to the organization and job satisfaction was also high.

Likewise, Sherman, Kennedy, Woodard, and McComb (2012), developed a four-quadrant model that captured when members maintained similar or divergent views of their relationship. These authors used their model to explore the employee outcomes of turnover intention and actual turnover. In their model, both the leader and the member could believe they had a high-quality relationship (congruent M-in/L-in); both the leader and the member could perceive a low-quality relationship (congruent M-out/L-out); the leader could perceive a high-quality
relationship while the member did not (disparate M-out/L-in); or the opposite could occur, with the member perceiving a high-quality relationship while the leader did not (disparate M-in/L-out). With 375 dyadic relationships used for the study (95 M-in/L-in, 95 M-in/L-out, 94 M-out/L-in, 91 M-out/L-out), the results indicate that, when a member believes he or she is involved in a high-quality relationship and that perception matches the perception of the leader, then the intent to turnover is lowest. However, when the leader and member disagree (M-out/L-in), then the intent to turnover is the highest. Again, these results reinforce the idea that leaders and members vary in how they perceive the relationship and how that perception determines the quality of the relationship. The results also provide a rationale for the need of qualitative studies as perceptions are harder to capture through quantitative work. For the purposes of this study, if leaders or followers misinterpret the relationship quality, it may have more damaging effects to the leader, teachers, and/or school.

Relating to the above three studies, Sin, Nahrgang, and Morgeson (2009) found that LMX agreement increased as the length of the relationship increased, and the intensity of the dyadic relationship also increased. In each of the above three studies, the authors cited communication as a reason for developing or not developing high- or low-quality relationships. In the present study of newly transitioned principals, communication may present a hindrance to forming high-quality relationships, an aspect this study will explore through in-depth interviews with principals using a qualitative methodology and narrative analysis. Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, and Gardner (2009) contend that a lack of communication can lead to miscues and misperceptions, resulting in troubled and unbalanced relationships. Thus, for principals entering a new school, such relationships may create a lasting effect on the principal and the school community. Consequently, leaders must aim to develop high-quality relationships with their
members (Kim, Liu, & Diefendorff, 2014). Moreover, trust represents a vital component in the formation of high-quality relationships.

**Trust in LMX Relationships**

High-quality relationships require numerous components. One of those components is trust (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Werbel & Henriques, 2009; Sue-Chan, Au, & Hackett, 2012; Korsgaard, Brower, & Lester, 2014). Sue-Chan, Au, and Hackett (2012) submitted that trust is significant to the supervisor-subordinate relationship because of the supervisor’s reliance on the subordinate’s help to achieve organizational goals. Sue-Chan et al. confirmed these results, finding that the performance of a subordinate positively predicted both whether or not a supervisor trusted them and how the leader evaluated the quality of the LMX relationship. However, Werbel and Henriques (2009) found in their study of 304 supervisor-subordinate dyads that a leader’s trust in a member was based more on the perception that the subordinate would comply with the leader’s request than on the subordinates actual ability to perform the work. The findings of Werbel and Henriques add to the previous argument that leaders and members perceive the quality of exchange differently. In their study, the researchers found that supervisors viewed receptivity, availability, and discreteness as the most important conditions to building quality relationships. On the other hand, members viewed availability, competence, discreteness, integrity, and openness as the most important conditions. Nonetheless, although a slight contradiction exists in the findings of Werbel and Henriques and Sue-Chan et al., dyadic trust is clearly not always mutual, but must be bidirectional in order to form a high-quality relationship.

In a review of the current literature on dyadic trust, Korsgaard, Brower, and Lester (2014) examined three different types of dyadic trust: reciprocal trust, mutual trust, and asymmetric
trust. Reciprocal trust describes when the trust of one party affects the other party’s trust. In reciprocal trust, trust levels often vary, and sometimes may not be reciprocated by one partner. However, as Korsgaard et al. found in their literature review, these levels may merge over time and those within dyads share their levels of trust. Mutual trust, on the other hand, refers to when the shared trust levels of both parties are congruent. As each member of the dyad begins to determine that the other is trustworthy, mutual trust is established. Additionally, similar to the finding by Sin, Nahrgang, and Morgeson (2009) that, with an increase in relationship tenure, LMX agreement increases, so too does mutual trust. As Korsgaard et al. uncovered, mutual trust signifies high-quality relationships. Finally, Korsgaard et al. describe asymmetric trust, which refers to when members of the dyad share different trust levels. Korsgaard et al. discovered that, while few studies exist regarding the consequences of asymmetric trust, this trust level has been found disruptive to a dyad and enhanced by how individuals interpret their experiences in dyadic exchanges.

Similarly, the work of Kelley and Bisel (2014) expands the discussion of trust in the LMX literature. In their article, the authors explain how leaders decide who to trust and when to trust them. Such assertions could prove useful for new leaders, such as those that are the focus of this study. In a rare qualitative LMX study, Kelley and Bisel interviewed 40 participants to determine that, through communication and doubt, the interviewees educed seven narrative elements. These elements include selection, probation, escalation, confederation, jeopardy, redemption, and termination. Table 2.2 details more regarding these seven elements.
Table 2.2:

*Leader to Member Narrative Sense-Making of Trust*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Element</th>
<th>Defining Feature</th>
<th>Indicative Leader Communication Practice</th>
<th>Doubt Communicated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Beginnings marked by vetting.</td>
<td>Critical listening, Explicit questioning, Verification of task-related abilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>Early testing.</td>
<td>Frequent and close evaluation, Instructions of procedures, Micro-Managing.</td>
<td>Leader communicates trust, but also doubt implicitly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalation</td>
<td>Intensifying experimentation.</td>
<td>Complex and frequent delegation, Periodic evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederation</td>
<td>Mature testing.</td>
<td>Diminished task-related messaging, Self-management encouraged</td>
<td>Leader communicates trust, often implicitly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeopardy</td>
<td>Post mature trusting testing.</td>
<td>Micro-managing, Reduced delegation, Critical evaluations</td>
<td>Leader communicates doubt, at times explicitly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemption</td>
<td>Post mature trusting restoring to trustworthiness.</td>
<td>Similar to Confederation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>Post-trustworthiness</td>
<td>Discursive Closure</td>
<td>Leader stops communication because of overriding doubt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates the results of a narrative study conducted by Kelley and Bisel (2014). These seven elements help to explain how leaders decide whether and when to trust members, and if they are worthy of resource exchanges. Unlike the results of Werbel and Henriques (2009), the results of Kelley and Bisel’s study not only focuses on whether trust is built through the compliance of members, but also on how leaders may trust others going forward. In summary, the aforementioned studies on trust, and the study by Kelley and Bisel, help unpack and unveil a significant component that can influence the relationship between a
principal and his or her new staff members. More importantly, the work of Kelley and Bisel informs this current study because the study exhibits the type of results a qualitative study can yield.

**Not All LMX Relationships Are the Same**

Since the creation of LMX, the scientific community has acknowledged and accepted that leaders develop different relationships with each of their subordinates (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It has also been recognized that the quality of relationships falls on a continuum ranging from high-quality to low-quality (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982). Schyns and Day (2010), in a critique and review of LMX, suggested that all leaders should strive to establish high-quality relationships with all of their subordinates. However, Othman, Fang Ee, and Lay Shi (2010) may disagree. In their article, Othman et al. proposed a number of circumstances where high-quality LMX relationships can be dysfunctional. They contend that dysfunctional LMX can surface because of a flawed assessment of a member by a leader or when members attempt to create favorable impressions of themselves via upward influence tactics. Additionally, Othman et al. pointed out that in dysfunctional relationships, leaders often align themselves with members who share the same views, and place those who do not subscribe to those views in an out-group or low-quality relationship.

The influence of a leader in LMX relationships is an understudied phenomenon that this study, in part, aims to address. Othman, Fang Ee, and Lay Shi (2010) postulated that leaders play an integral role in determining whether relationships are of high-quality or low-quality and whether they are dysfunctional. Expanding the idea that the actions of a leader are monumental in LMX relationships is the work of Lian, Ferris, and Brown (2012) and Xu, Loi, and Lam
Specifically, their works examined how abusive supervision by leaders impacted high-quality relationships. Lian et al. found from a study of 260 employees that, despite of high levels of LMX, the harmful behavior of a leader retains a damaging effect on the basic needs of his or her members. Additionally, they note that the damage may be severe enough to cause a subordinate who shares a high-quality relationship with the leader to act in an unorthodox manner within the organization.

The impact of abusive supervision and dysfunctional LMX relationships is further confirmed in a study conducted by Xu, Loi, and Lam (2015). Using 152 employees to collect data, Xu et al. found that the abusive supervision of a leader causes members to feel emotionally exhausted, resulting in their silence within the organization. Furthermore, Xu et al. concluded that when members are involved in high-quality relationships, the abuse and mistreatment of a leader is more harmful to the emotional welfare of a subordinate. Thus, while some researchers encourage leaders to maintain high-quality exchanges and relationships with each of their members, these dyads are not immune to dysfunction.

Complications with LMX

As with any theory, LMX experiences problems. One of the most fundamental problems, as noted by Sheer (2015), is a deficiency in the conceptual definition of LMX. Sheer argued that in four decades of LMX literature, seminal researchers and the numerous authors of LMX studies have failed to produce an exact definition for LMX. Instead, she reasoned, “the inferred conceptual definitions appear as a hodgepodge (p.214).” Similar to how researchers may view LMX as an antecedent in one study and an outcome in another (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012), Sheer contended that researchers may reference LMX differently from one study to another.
Moreover, Sheer (2015) argued that researchers have failed to uphold the most prominent part of the leader-member exchange—namely, the exchange. She insists that LMX is treated as characteristics of the leader or the relationship rather than interaction-based exchange behavior. To further illustrate her point, Sheer used the work of Schriesheim, Castro, and Cogliser (1999). In Schriesheim et al.’s work, they exhibited nine distinct labels of LMX definitions from 137 studies: exchange (11), quality of exchange (73), exchange relationship (8), quality of exchange relationship (7), other leader-follower relationships (5), quality of relationships (11), negotiating latitude (7), role-making (4), and others (11). Sheer pointed out that, of the 11 definitions labeled “exchange,” most of them fail to fit the label of exchange. Thus, as a result of the lack of a consistent definition and boundaries of the exchange, how LMX is measured is also noted as a problem with LMX theory.

Sheer (2015) explained that, when employing the measurement tools of LMX, the most cited LMX scale, LMX-7, developed by Scandura and Graen (1984) fails to contain items that pertain directly to the exchange itself. She insisted that these items offer an assortment of items to rate, but attempting to rate them creates confusion. The ideas proposed by Sheer also appear in the other articles. In one such article, Zhou and Schriesheim (2009) described that low supervisor-subordinate convergence may result from deficiencies in the measurement tools. The low convergence is further impaired, as Zhou and Schriesheim proposed, by differences in perception of the leader or member. The authors considered it possible that leaders and members focus on different aspects of the exchange relationship, leading to low convergence. Similarly, the empirical work of Schriesheim, Wu, and Cooper (2011) focused on the wording and content of the LMX measurement tools. With a sample of 50 MBA students, Schriesheim et al. found that the wording and content of these tools initiate attributional and social desirability biases into
the rating process. Consequently, the different perceptions of LMX by leaders and followers (Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009) are likely to lead to extensive distortions in LMX ratings (Schriesheim, Wu, & Cooper, 2011).

**LMX Theory Conclusion**

According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), leadership is comprised of three facets: follower, leader, and relationship. In reviewing the literature on the leader-member exchange, one can conclude that the main theoretical premise behind LMX is the dyadic relationship between a leader and subordinate. LMX rests on the assertion that leaders will develop high- or low-quality relationships with each of their individual followers. The review of literature highlighted the importance of trust in high-quality relationships. Additionally, the literature unveiled that, while leaders should aim to establish high-quality relationships with all of their followers, not all relationships are equal. Specifically, the literature revealed how influential a leader can be in the development of LMX relationships. Finally, while the literature shows no consensus on whether LMX is an antecedent or an outcome, it represents an ideal theoretical lens to employ for this study because it submits that leaders develop different dyadic relationships with their subordinates. Specifically, in this study, it allows for the exploration of the dyadic relationships and outcome of those relationships established between newly transitioned principals and their stakeholders.

**Followership Theory**

Followership and follower-centered approaches are emerging perspectives in research on leadership, and interest in these perspectives is increasing (Bligh, 2011). According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), leadership has three domains: leader, follower, and the relationship. However, the follower domain has been largely understudied. Consequently, Ekundayo,
Damhoeri, and Ekundayo (2010) identified the importance of studying followers in the leader-follower relationship. Along similar lines, Rosenau (2004) and Collinson (2006) maintained that without followers, leaders cannot exist. If this is the case, why has followership and the focus on followers only recently become popular? Why have followers not garnered the same attention as leaders? Solovy (2005) contended that the success of an organization depends more upon the followers than upon the leaders, thus arguing that followership deserves more attention in research. The concept of followership is central to this study because it may help further explain the leader-follower relationship, and reveal how followers impact leaders. Specifically, within this theory is the idea that followers have behaviors and characteristics that may impact the behaviors and characteristics of leaders. Becoming aware of these styles and characteristics will help this researcher understand the roles that followers play in the leader-follower relationship. Additionally, it will provide insight into how newly transitioned principals may characterize their stakeholders. Therefore, this section of the review explores the literature on followership and followers by describing its evolution over time and discussing its expansion in theory, research, and practice.

**The Evolution of Followership**

Although followership only recently gained more prominence in literature on leadership and organizational change, Baker (2007) noted that the research of followership started in 1955 (p. 55). Additionally, Baker observed that the discussion of followers existed before the 20th century in the works of scholars outside the management world, for example Mary Parker Follett, Sigmund Freud, Erich Fromm, and Erik Erickson (p. 52). While discussion of followers in other leadership literature existed and many studies explored the leader-follower relationship, the leadership research focused heavily on leaders. Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014)
described most of the leadership research as leader-centric with a focus on leaders. By lacking acknowledgement of followers, the leadership literature failed to recognize an important piece of the leader-follower relationship (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014; Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010).

The focus on followers gained considerable momentum as a result of the work of Robert Kelley. In his 1988 foundational article “In Praise of Followers,” Kelley insisted that followers play an integral role in the success of an organization. Additionally, Kelley attempted to reverse the negative perception of followers by defending the positive contributions followers make in an organization. In 1995, Ira Chaleff expanded Kelley’s work in his book “The Courageous Follower,” which provided a model for followership. The model hinges on two categories: the follower’s courage to challenge the leader and the follower’s support of the leader. Using these two categories, Chaleff created a model forming four quadrants: resource, individualist, implementer, and partner. Though research on followership began around 1955 (Baker, 2007), it is the often cited work of Kelley and Chaleff that opened the doors for the followership literature to explore how followers viewed themselves in the leadership process; how followers impact leaders’ behaviors, motivations, or attitudes; and how followers view their behaviors when interacting with leaders.

To provide an accurate depiction of how followership has evolved, the following table details scholars and their view of followership. As shown, some scholars created models to explain followership and the roles of followers. Additionally, the table shows how those who have studied the construct define followership differently. Although relatively new, followership theory is expanding in theory and practice, as the table reveals.
Table 2.3: 
*Followership Theory Chart*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Definition of Followership</th>
<th>Model or Related Theoretical Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adair (2008)</td>
<td>A follower [who] shares in an influence relationship among leaders and other followers with the intent to support leaders who reflect their mutual purpose. This would mean that collaborative employees (followership) would be the very support system leaders need to lead effectively (p.139).”</td>
<td>Work grounded in perception of followers by themselves or by others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Blackshear’s Five Stages of Followership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Stage Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Employee provides work for compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Committed Follower</td>
<td>Employee buys into organizational mission and makes “internal pledge” to task or person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Engaged Follower</td>
<td>Employee becomes a follower and actively supports task or person; willing to go the extra mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Effective Follower</td>
<td>Follower is “dependable, capable, and reliable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exemplary Follower</td>
<td>Follower could be leader but puts ego aside and works to support the leader. Followers “lead themselves.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris (2006)  
The ability to effectively follow the directives and support the efforts of a leader to maximize a structured organization (p. 304).

Boccialetti (1995)  
The willingness to go along with leadership.

Felt that followers exhibited one of nine styles based on three dimensions: deference, distance, and divergence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Deference</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Divergence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helper</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomat</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisan</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>Gamesman</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebel</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistleblower</td>
<td>Medium High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Carsten et al. (2010)  
A role in relation to a leader that is conceived of differently by different followers and is dependent on contextual variables, such as leadership style and organizational climate.

“Followership adopts the follower as the primary focus and explores how followership behaviors are related to organizational outcomes of interest (e.g., leadership, performance)” (p. 543).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Diagram</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carsten, Harms, &amp; Uhl-Bien (2014)</td>
<td>“The behaviors one engages in while interacting with leaders in an effort to meet organizational objectives (p. 14)”</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Carsten, Herms, &amp; Uhl-Bien’s Follower Role Orientations" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaleff (1995)</td>
<td>A form of stewardship. It is a relationship centered on common purpose and sharing core values that balances and supports leadership.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Focused on ideal behaviors followers should demonstrate: courage to serve, courage to challenge, courage to participate in transformation, courage to take moral action, and courage to speak to the hierarchy." /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howell &amp; Mendez (2008)</td>
<td>An active role that complements the leader’s role in achieving results.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Howell and Mendez’s Antecedents and Outcome of Follower Role Orientation" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Quote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellerman</td>
<td>“Followers are subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors, and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall in to line (p.213).” “the response of those in subordinate positions (followers) to those in superior ones (leaders). Followership implies a relationship (rank), between subordinates and superiors, and a response (behavior), of the former to the latter” p. xx</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>“A role in which followers have the vision to see both the forest and the trees, the social capacity to work well with others, the strength of character to flourish without heroic status, the moral and psychological balance to pursue personal and corporate goals at no cost to either, and above all, the desire to participate in a team effort for the accomplishment of some greater common purpose” (p. 147). First to genuinely introduce followers in the literature. Based on two behavioral dimensions: independent, critical thinking and passive, active scale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malakyan</td>
<td>“Leadership–followership processes occur in relationships and leading–following functions are exchangeable behaviors in human relationships. Thus, leaders and followers trade their functions from leader to follower and from follower to leader in order to develop their intrapersonal perspectives, foster interpersonal relationships, and maximize mutual effectiveness” (p. 11).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Steger, Manners, and Zimmerer (1982)  No definition on followership, but propose nine followership styles based on followers’ desire for self-enhancement and self-protection.

The foundation of research is grounded in the belief of knowing a subordinate’s followership style could improve the effectiveness of the leader.

Thody (2003)  No definition of followership.  Research focuses on the lexicon of followership. Hypothesizes that followership has a life of its own too and that followers are as much independent as leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thody's Typology of Followers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holistic Personality Types</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active-Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplary/Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
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</table>
“The study of followership involves an investigation of the nature and impact of followers and following in the leadership process” (p. 89).

Followership studied through two lenses: role based approach (how followers influence leader attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes) or constructionist approach (leadership and followership are co-constructed in social and relational interactions between people).

### Role-Based Approach

![Role-Based Approach Diagram]

### Constructionist Approach

![Constructionist Approach Diagram]

No official definition of followership.

Model based on two dimensions: behavioral (compliance/defiance) and attitudinal (loyalty/hostility).

#### Vecchio's Four Followership Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Description Offered By Vecchio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant I: Loyal, compliant</td>
<td>Supportive and conforming subordinate. Extreme case is a blindly obedient subordinate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant II: Hostile, compliant</td>
<td>Maliciously obedient subordinate. Extreme case is very hostile, but obedient subordinate, which is logically inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant III: Hostile, defiant</td>
<td>Hostile and defiant. Extreme case is extremely hostile subordinate who experiences distress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant IV: Defiant, loyal</td>
<td>Conscientious objector; may exhibit loyalty to supervisor but defy him, which could induce mental illness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Perception of Followers and Followership

The majority of the followership literature explores how individuals perceive their role as followers. Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, and McGregor (2010) posed this question, asking respondents to socially construct their roles as followers. The variation of their results yielded that participants see themselves as three types of followers: passive, active, or proactive. Passive followers place value in obedience and deference to their leader’s techniques. Active followers recognize the knowledge of leaders, but consider it important to contribute to the leadership process when the opportunity presents itself. On the other hand, proactive followers are not ones to sit back idly. Instead, proactive followers view obedience as ineffective and aim to challenge and influence leaders. However, proactive followers ensure they challenge constructively.

Not all followers express a willingness to challenge their leaders. In a study examining nurses in the United Kingdom, Kean, Haycock-Stuart, Baggaley, and Carson (2011) found that how followers co-construct leadership determines their actions. Through focus groups and interviews, Kean et al. discovered that some followers choose to step back and observe leaders before following them. Additionally, they found that not all followers are active, and some
choose to stand by while others resist following altogether. Kean et al. suggested that followers make a choice either to stand aside or to sabotage the leadership process by resisting.

Along similar lines, Sangani (2012) described how Bob Jones, a director of a leadership consulting firm, defined followers and their choice of followership. In his business practice, Sangani described, Jones placed followers into five categories: the sheep, the yes people, the survivors, the alienated followers, and the effective followers. The sheep followers most closely resemble the passive followers described by Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor (2010). These individuals wait for someone to tell them what to do and when to do it. Conversely, yes people tell leaders what they think the leaders want to hear. The survivors, on the other hand, do just enough to get by. The alienated followers, on the other hand, spend most of their time complaining and feeling dissatisfied. Since each of these four types of followers are unhealthy for an organization, Jones advocated for followers to become active followers, leading them to become effective. Resembling the findings of Carsten et al., Sangani pointed out that Jones placed an emphasis on the part that the environment and context play in determining follower roles.

Context and environment are covered substantially in the followership literature. In contrast to most followership studies, which are situated in the United States and in business organizations, Billot et al. (2013) researched the leader-follower relationship internationally and in a higher-education setting. In addition to finding that followership affects teaching and learning, their study found that the leader-follower relationship is reciprocal and fluid -- sometimes followers assume leadership roles, while at other times, leaders act as followers. The authors furthermore observe that the leader-follower relationship impacts followers’ perceptions
of themselves and their roles, with followers commonly viewing themselves or the role of a follower negatively. 

Interestingly, in their attempt to interview participants for their study, Billot et al. (2013) contacted 620 potential prospects, but only 38 participated. Upon examination, the researchers learned that some of the individuals who declined to participate did not define themselves as followers and resisted the title because of its negative connotation. Some others considered themselves neither followers nor leaders. These thoughts reflect findings in the work of Hoption, Christie, and Barling (2012). In their research, Hoption et al. found through two quantitative studies a link between being a follower and a reduction in positive affect and extra-role behaviors. In the first study, of the 154 participants, 51 were assigned the role of a follower. Hoption and her colleagues found that those 51 participants reacted negatively to the follower label and were less likely to perform extra-role behaviors at work. In other words, the follower label caused individuals to limit their participation in the organization. The perceived negative undertone of being a follower was also noted in Hoption et al.'s second study. In their second study, even when the participants self-labeled as followers, the negative connotation of followers limited the job-related positive affect. The empirical findings in Hoption et al.'s has helped to enhance the understanding that followers submit to the negative side of the follower label by reinforcing negative stereotypes attached to being a follower.

The idea that the term “follower” is negative is a perception that some researchers of followership aim to change (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). In fact, Baker, Anthony, and Stites-Doe (2015) affirmed that, throughout the 20th century, society and researchers held a negative view of followers. Numerous researchers failed to believe that followers could represent proactive, contributing members within an organization. However,
this perception was not only embraced by researchers, but also maintained by individuals in follower roles. In a qualitative study with 31 participants, Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, and McGregor (2010) explored how individuals socially constructed and enacted their role as followers. Over one-third of the participants (12) reported a passive construction of followership. These 12 individuals felt that followers should be obedient and not question or actively disagree with their leader. This finding also corroborates the results of Hoption, Christie, and Barling (2012) and suggests that some individuals believe the follower has a limited role in the leader-follower relationship.

Follower Role Orientations

Although some individuals may construct and enact the follower role negatively, others do so positively (Howell & Mendez, 2008; Hoption, Christie, & Barling, 2012; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Carsten, Harms, & Uhl-Bien, 2014). The manner in which one chooses to view or enact their role is known as follower role orientation. According to Carsten, Harms, and Uhl-Bien (2014), follower role orientation is defined as “one’s beliefs regarding the responsibilities, activities, and behaviors that are important to the role of followers, how broadly one perceives the role, and one’s beliefs about what it takes to be effective while working with leaders” (p.15). Thus, revisiting the study conducted by Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, and McGregor (2010) to understand how followers constructed and enacted their role is important because their findings classify potential roles that followers portray. In this study, the researchers found the 31 participants socially constructed and enacted their roles as followers in three role orientations: passive, active, or proactive. These results resemble the expanded follower role orientations discussed in Carsten, Harms, and Uhl-Bien (2014).
Given the definition of follower role orientations by Carsten, Harms, and Uhl-Bien (2014) and their review of the history of followership, the researchers note that the most frequent follower role orientations are passive, anti-authoritarian, and proactive. Similar to the role orientations found in the research of Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, and McGregor (2010) is the concept of passive and proactive followers. Passive followers enact their role by remaining silent and obedient to the leader. Proactive followers, on the other hand, take their role more seriously and believe they have something to contribute. Thus, proactive followers are known to be more vocal and take initiative (Carsten, Harms, & Uhl-Bien, 2014). Carsten et al. (2014), however, noted that the other follower role orientation is anti-authoritarian. Those followers who enact this role are less likely to take directives from their leader and often feel that they should combat what the leader says or does. Accordingly, researchers note that how followers view themselves and the role orientation they enact can influence the leader-follower relationship (Howell & Mendez, 2008; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Carsten, Harms, & Uhl-Bien, 2014). This is important to the current study because it may explain how followers shape the leadership of newly transitioned principals and how they may affect the dyadic exchange.

Howell and Mendez (2008) also discussed follower role orientations. In their theoretical article, they propose a typology of follower role orientations that include roles that are interactive, independent, and shifting. An interactive role compliments the leader and is likely to correspond with the actions of the leader. This role appears similar to the passive role described by Carsten and her colleagues (2010; 2014). Howell and Mendez’s second role orientation is the independent role. This role is characterized by independence, and those who enact this role typically possess strong capabilities that match those of the leader. The final role described by
Howell and Mendez is the shifting role. As the name suggests, individuals who enact a shifting role, alternate between the role of a leader and follower. At times, the individual may feel the need to act as a leader while, at other times, he or she may feel the need to step back into the role of the follower. The proposed follower role orientations by Howell and Mendez and those found by Carsten and her colleagues are significant in at least two respects. First, when enacted, these follower role orientations may maintain a meaningful impact on the leader. Subsequently, these follower role orientations may provide an enhanced explanation of the leader-follower relationship and knowledge on how established followers may influence newly transitioned principals. The second significance of the established follower role orientations is that it shows that the role of a follower is fluid and interchangeable with that of a leader. Conversely, this also indicates that the role of a leader and follower is not static. These roles are mutually dependent and influence each other, which is significant to this study because, in part, this study is exploring that mutual influence and the exchange that occurs between a leader and follower.

**The Fluidity of the Leader and Follower Role**

Agho’s (2009) quantitative study on the perceptions of effective followership and leadership explored similarities and differences in characteristics of leaders and followers. Resonating with Malakyan (2014) and Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014), Agho discovered, through the use of a questionnaire answered by 302 senior-level executives, an overwhelming belief that leaders and followers retain interrelated roles. Specifically, they found that 89.7% of their participants believed that, although leaders and followers held different roles, the roles were interdependent (p.162). However, perhaps the most compelling finding is that 99% of Agho’s 302 respondents felt that effective followers can enhance the organization through their work performance and the quality of their work output (p.162). Of particular
interest to the aim of this study is that both the leader and follower respondents in Agho’s study considered honesty and integrity the most important characteristics of the leader-follower relationship. If newly transitioned principals are to establish high-quality leader-follower relationships, then it may be important that they possess honesty and integrity.

The results in Agho’s (2009) are comparable to the propositions offered by Baker, Stites-Doe, Mathis, and Rosenbach (2014). Baker et al. maintained that, because the role of a follower is simply a role, others can enact it differently in different contexts. They point out that, within organizations, roles are often shifted and shared between individuals. Accordingly, they proposed that leaders and followers may enact either role regardless of their position. They argue that the roles are not permanent, and the ability of a leader and follower to fluctuate between roles makes the leader-follower relationship complex. In addition to this proposition and similar to Agho’s finding regarding the importance of honesty and integrity in the leader-follower relationship, Baker et al. proposed that trust constitutes a critical component of establishing the leader-follower relationship. Therefore, this study will explore the aspect of trust to understand the role it plays in helping new principals navigate amongst different stakeholders.

While some empirical studies explore how followers see themselves (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Hoption, Christie, & Barling, 2012; Billot et al., 2013), theoretical articles such as Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten’s (2014) and Malakyan’s (2014) introduced theoretical frameworks that illustrate the importance of followers in the leader-follower relationship. Uhl-Bien et al. asserted that research should “reverse the lens” and explore how followers influence the attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes of leaders. They proposed an approach that explores the leadership process and how leaders and followers interact
to co-create leadership. Their approach focuses on the value of followers and followership. In a similar manner, Malakyan proposed a leader-follower trade approach, arguing that leaders and followers trade roles and exchange functions. Essentially, Malakyan argued that leader and follower roles are not static and are interchangeable, an argument that resonates with the empirical work conducted by Billot et al. (2013) and Agho (2009) and propositions of Baker, Stites-Doe, Mathis, and Rosenbach (2014).

The Qualities of a Follower

As found in the research of Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, and McGregor (2010), followers see themselves playing different roles. Accordingly, each of these roles includes qualities that allow a follower to be placed in different categories. Collinson (2006) makes notes of these qualities as he challenged readers to rethink followership and follower identities. Calling for a post-structuralist approach to how one views followers and their identity, Collinson suggested a link between the identities of followers and leaders and asserts that followers and leaders influence each other. Through this post-structuralist, interactive approach, Collinson identified that successful organizations retain courageous followers. Such followers, classified by Kelley (1988) and Chaleff (1995) as the active or engaged follower, are not afraid to constructively critique, doubt, or question their leader. Collinson asserted that in the process of developing courageous abilities, followers learn to construct their reality as they grow.

Therefore, like leaders, followers grow and mature into more capable people as they determine and act upon the qualities that they perceive will benefit them and their organization. Goffee and Jones (2006) identified specific qualities that make a “good” follower. For example, they believe good followers should complement their leaders and take part in the leader’s vision. Additionally, Goffee and Jones believed that good followers should know when and when not to
be more active. Frisina (2005) adds to the definition of what constitutes a good follower by suggesting that good followers align their personal values with their organization. Frisina considered a good follower one who would arrive to work excited and ready to take on the day’s tasks. She also found that good followers must be actively engaged critical thinkers.

Consistent with Frisina’s (2005) finding that followers must be actively engaged critical thinkers is the findings of Blanchard, Welbourne, Gilmore and Bullock (2009). Blanchard et al. (2009) examined the link between active engagement and independent critical thinking and followership. They sought to expand Kelley’s (1992) behavioral dimensions of followership to understand how these constructs are linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. After surveying 331 respondents, the authors found that more active and engaged followers are linked to greater job satisfaction and organizational outcomes (p.126). Additionally, they found that independent critical thinking can have two effects. One effect is that it can increase intrinsic job satisfaction of those followers are actively engaged with the organization. However, Blanchard et al. also found a negative link exists between independent critical thinking and organizational commitment and extrinsic job satisfaction. Missing from this scope of literature is the integral role leaders play in how actively engaged followers are by impacting their attitudes and behaviors, an aspect this study will, in part, address.

The Impact of Leaders on Followers

Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004) provided a foundation for how authentic leaders impact the attitudes, behaviors, and performance of followers. In their proposed model, Avolio et al. suggested that authentic leaders impact follower behavior and attitude through five psychological processes. These processes include optimism, trust, positive emotions, hope, and identification. Avolio et al. proposed that leaders can enhance followers’
hopefulness and self-efficacy by identifying with their followers and sharing goals and information with them. Additionally, by sharing information with followers and openly communicating, the authors claim that leaders can establish followers’ trust. Avolio et al. claimed that leaders can increase followers’ personal and social identification. Essentially, the authors put forth the idea that leaders affect the identity and development of their followers.

The idea that leaders influence the attitudes and behaviors of followers was expounded upon in the work of Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005). In their work, Gardner et al. proposed that leaders can raise a follower’s self-awareness by exhibiting authentic values and behaviors. Similarly, in the work of Lord and Brown (2001), the authors maintained that leaders impact followers, or subordinates as they call them, by influencing their self-concept. Furthermore, Gardner et al. contended that the behaviors of authentic leaders affect the trust, engagement, and well-being of followers. The behaviors of leaders are further explored in the work of Huettermann, Doering, and Boerner (2014). In their study, Huettermann et al. investigated followers’ perspectives on what leader behaviors encourage the development of team identification. Their qualitative study resulted in four leadership dimensions that each yielded its own set of specific leadership behaviors. The leadership dimensions include providing guidance, encouraging involvement, role modeling, and administering teamwork. A few examples of the nine leadership behaviors noted by the followers in the study that would enhance team identification were: listening to the team, leading by example, directing members, and facilitating information flow. However, while the aforementioned research explains the influence of leaders on followers, how do followers impact leaders? This study will attempt to provide answers to that question by examining how the behaviors and characteristics of followers shape the leadership and behaviors of leaders. Additionally, it will attempt to
understand how the characteristics and behaviors of followers affects the leader-follower exchange.

**The Impact of Followers on Leaders**

The work of Oc and Bashshur (2013) focused on followers’ influence on leaders. Oc and Bashshur argued that followers socially influence leaders who are dependent on followers for information, affiliation, and maintaining their self-regard. In their theoretical article, they propose that followers are likely to socially influence leaders and produce positive or negative responses. A positive response would include compliance, identification, or internalization while a negative response would include resistance. Each of these responses from the social influence of a follower would result in the change of a leader’s behavior or attitude.

Lapierre, Bremner, and McMullan (2012) also discussed the impact of followership on leaders. The authors’ stated aim was to close the gap in the literature by identifying the specific behaviors followers use when working with leaders. Lapierre et al. reinforced the discussion of passive vs. proactive followers by proposing that each of these behaviors affects a leader’s positive affect and psychological empowerment. Additionally, Lapierre et al. posited how followership would influence charismatic leadership. Specifically, they proposed the idea that followership could influence a leader’s personalized charismatic leadership or socialized charismatic leadership. Socialized charismatic leadership style focuses on the collective and on developing others. Conversely, a personalized charismatic leadership style is more commanding, more authoritative, and serves one’s own personal interest. A personalized leadership style, the authors contend, damages both the followers and the leaders. The propositions made by Lapierre et al. and Oc and Bashshur are noteworthy of study. However, a major problem in attempting to understand the impact of followers on leaders is that empirical studies, whether qualitative or
quantitative, on this matter are largely absent from the followership literature. Therefore, this study will attempt to contribute to that section of the followership theory and literature by employing a qualitative study that is focused on understanding the perceived impact of followers on leaders.

**Follower Styles**

Since its evolution, followership has comprehensively evolved. As shown in Table 2.3, researchers interpret followership and what it means to be a follower differently. Consequently, multiple models have been proposed to describe the styles of followers. Of those follower style models, the most often cited and expanded upon is Robert Kelley (1988, 1992) and Ira Chaleff (1995). In recent years, Barbara Kellerman’s (2008) followership model, too, has expanded in the followership literature. Presented below is a discussion of the similarities and differences of some of the more prominent followership style typologies.

As Lapierre, Bremner, and McMullan (2012) contended, the behaviors, characteristics, and styles of a follower can affect a leader. Thus, what are some of the styles and features that followers possess? Zaleznik (1965), who focused on subordinate dynamics, developed one of the first typologies of follower styles. In this typology, followers fell within a dominance-submission and active-passive range. Based on their position within the axis, followers could be known as an impulsive subordinate, compulsive subordinate, masochistic subordinate, or withdrawn subordinate. If a subordinate wanted to be controlled (submission) and did nothing (passive), then they were labeled a withdrawn subordinate. Likewise, if they maintained a more active behavior style and wanted to control their leader, then they were known as an impulsive subordinate.
Zaleznik’s (1965) typology paved the way for Kelley’s (1988, 1992) developed typology. In Kelley’s typology, followership styles are attributed to individuals based on two behavioral dimensions: dependent-independent and passive-active. These dimensions create a quadrant resulting in alienated followers, exemplary followers, conformist followers, passive followers, and pragmatist followers. Similar to Zaleznik’s withdrawn follower, Kelley labeled those followers who were passive and dependent as “sheep.” He believed that these types of followers failed to possess any level of critical thinking and referred to the leader to think for them. He also believed that individuals who were active, but dependent on the leader, as “yes people” or conformists. Notable, Kelley’s typology and work revealed his belief that all followers could become exemplary followers. He maintained that followers are more than passive individuals blindly following their leader.

Expanding the idea of Kelley (1988, 1992) that followers could be more than passive and blind was Ira Chaleff. Chaleff (1995) argued that if a leader is to be effective, then he or she must retain effective, or “courageous” followers who are willing to “stand up to and for leaders.” Chaleff’s typology hinges on whether followers offer their support to their leader and whether they are willing to stand up to the leader. Based on these axes, followers can fit into one of the four followership styles: implementer, partner, resource, or individualist. If an individual is supportive of the leader and willing to challenge the leader, then he or she is known as a partner. However, if they do not offer their support to the leader and are less likely to challenge the leader, then they are classified as a resource. While Chaleff fails to utilize the range of passive-active, his characterization of followers also portray followers as active or passive.

Additionally, the belief that followers are active or passive can be seen in the typology developed by Kellerman (2008). The premise of Kellerman’s followership typology is the level
of engagement of a follower. Followers can range from “feeling and doing nothing” to “being passionately committed and deeply involved.” Where followers fall in that range determines their follower style. Kellerman noted that this range produces five followership styles: isolate, bystander, participant, activist, or diehard. Followers who are diehard are willing to die for their causes while those labeled as isolates remain completely detached. Kellerman believed that if followers are engaged, then they can become change agents.

Although the typologies developed by Kelley (1988, 1992), Chaleff (1995), and Kellerman (2008) are the most cited follower style models, other researchers have contributed to the followership literature with their interpretation of follower styles. For instance, Blackshear (2003) developed a followership continuum based on followership performance. On this continuum, followers move in and out of five stages: employee, committed, engaged, effective, and exemplary. An engaged follower, for example, is an “active supporter and willing to go above and beyond” (p. 26). Another example of a follower style model is that of Steger, Manners, and Zimmerer (1982).

Although they failed to define followership, Steger, Manners, and Zimmerer (1982), proposed nine followership styles based on a follower’s desire for self-enhancement and self-protection. A follower’s desire to enhance himself or herself suggests that he or she would like to be more involved in the organization (Steger, Manners, & Zimmerer, 1982). Moreover, Steger et al. indicated that some followers aim to protect themselves out of a fear of failure or consequences. The desire for self-enhancement (SE) and self-protection (SP) are further characterized by low, medium, and high levels that are used to categorize the nine followership styles. These styles include: game player (high SE, high SP), achiever (high SE, medium SP), kamikaze (high SE, low SP), bureaucrat (medium SE, high SP), super follower (medium SE,
medium SP), artist (medium SE, low SP), apathetic (low SE, high SP), donkey (low SE, medium SP), and deviant (low SE, low SP) (Steger et al., p. 24). These followership styles and the others mentioned above in this section and Table 2.3 show that followers can behave differently toward their leaders. Many of the typologies show that followers range from passive to active followers. However, the extent to which followers and their styles influence leaders remains unclear. Thus, the author of this study hopes to contribute to this limited portion of the followership literature.

Followership Theory Conclusion

Followers are an essential component of the leader-follower relationship. However, a review of followership suggests that the leadership literature has largely ignored followers. Hence, the development of followership theory, which focuses on how followers contribute to the leader-follower relationship and how followers construct their roles. As the literature reveals, numerous researchers insist that the role of a follower is fluid and interchangeable with the role of a leader. Understanding this fluid role dynamic is important for scholars studying leadership from both the perspective of the follower, and from that of the leader. Additionally, the literature indicates that followers enact their roles differently. As a result, researchers have developed various models to describe the styles and roles of followers. Although the researchers differ in how they describe followers, they retain one similarity, in that most researchers gauge followers on how passive or active they are. Furthermore, an interesting revelation from the review of the literature is the negative perception that individuals hold of the word follower and its role. The literature also shows that this negative perception affects the manner in which individuals enact their role as a follower. However, while the followership literature is growing, gaps remain. Missing from the literature are studies documenting how followers impact leaders. Uhl-Bien and colleagues (2014) maintained that followers and follower behaviors should be
explored as an antecedent to leadership outcomes. Accordingly, they call for an expansion of the followership literature by exploring ways by which followers impact the behaviors, attitudes, and actions of leaders. This study will contribute to this expansion by seeking to examine the role that teachers (followers) play in influencing the dyadic relationship and behaviors of newly transitioned principals (leaders). This will be done by focusing on semi-structured interviews with newly transitioned principals to comprehend how they understand the influence of followers on their leadership and their developed relationships.

**Comprehensive Summary and Conclusion**

Although the report by the Educational Research Service (1998) sent educational organizations into a frenzy by indicating a principal shortage; it further identified that not only does this shortage exist in urban schools, but it affects the urban school principalship the most (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009). Consequently, the urban school principalship is a role under stress for a number of reasons, and one that warrants further study. Research shows that the demands of the role, the inability to attract highly qualified teachers, a strong population of at-risk students, deteriorated facilities, and the unequal amount of pay all contribute to rendering the urban school principalship undesirable. These reasons represent a few examples of why applicants first never apply for the job (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003) or why they use the job as a stepping stone to a more desirable position (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012). Thus, this review of the literature on principalship exposed growing and problematic levels of turnover within many urban schools.

These findings of high turnover rates highlighted the importance of examining literature that addressed principal successions and leadership transitions. Often, with new leadership come changes that not only impact the culture and climate of a school, but that also play an integral
role in the contribution to student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). This points to the significance of the principal in the functioning of a school. Consequently, it is imperative that leaders who take over after a principal turnover have the best possible chance to make a reasonably seamless transition into their new role. Studying the obstacles to and the conditions favoring quality transitions of newly appointed principals is the focus of this study.

As leaders transition into their new roles, many of them are entering organizations that maintain established cultures characterized by both positive and negative, rooted behaviors and/or attitudes. Thus, the question becomes, how do newly transitioned leaders establish high-quality relationships with followers, and how does the follower influence the leader and the relationship? The review of literature on leader-member exchange theory and followership indicates that followers may impact leaders, and that the exchange component of the leader-follower relationship is key, but the exchange as a unit of analysis and the impact of followers on leaders remains understudied.

Leader-member exchange is prominent within the leadership literature. However, followership is not. Although followership is gaining popularity in research and its literature is expanding, it remains relatively new and in need of additional research. A review of the literature reveals various gaps in the literature that are worthy of study. For instance, additional research is needed to determine the impact of followers on the leader or on the leader-follower relationship. These studies are rare. However, numerous studies examine how leaders impact followers or the LMX relationship. Furthermore, many of these studies are quantitative and investigate specific behaviors of followers or outcomes of LMX as it pertains to the follower. Contrasting, however, is that in the LMX literature many studies are from the perspective of the follower while in followership literature, many studies are from the perspective of the leader.
Yet, it is unknown whether many of these quantitative results are organization specific or if the outcomes of LMX are transferable to the leader. In essence, would followers or leaders in an educational organization employ the same behaviors to mutually influence the other as followers or leaders in a healthcare organization would employ? Is it possible for principals to create high-quality dyadic relationships with teachers, as other leaders do with their subordinates? Thus, LMX and followership studies would benefit from expanding across various organizational settings to explore how newly transitioned leaders navigate amongst established stakeholders of their organization. LMX theory and studies on followership could also benefit from additional studies approached through qualitative methods to obtain a greater representation of the perception of those involved in the leader-follower relationship. Numerous studies encountered for this review were quantitative, and the researcher of the current study believes that qualitative results could yield additional helpful information to reduce some of the literatures’ existing gaps by exploring the understudied perspectives of leaders and the influential role that followers play in the leader-follower relationship.

Missing from the LMX and followership literature are studies conducted in educational organizations. Likewise, the education literature could also benefit from additional research on leadership transitions. Given the documented frequency of leadership transitions in educational organizations, studies on this phenomena, particularly studies informed by LMX, could both provide information on the reasons behind the frequency of the transitions and practical analyses that new leaders could refer to transition successfully. Furthermore, studies that understand and document the effects of leadership transitions could have a positive effect on the educational system as a whole by identifying ways to decrease the number of turnovers within educational organizations, especially urban schools. Finally, dedicating studies that focus comprehensively
on the exchange or dyadic relationship between a leader and follower could also provide valuable insight. As the literature revealed, although the word “exchange” occurs in the name of the theory, generally, the exchange or relationship is largely absent from studies. Moreover, most of the conducted studies are quantitative. By conducting the study through a qualitative approach, a study may obtain greater detailed data for its intended research question.

While leader-member exchange is the lens through which this study will be explored, it is important not to overlook urban schools. A growing amount of research acknowledges the increasing amount of turnover in urban schools. The research also clearly demonstrates the integral role that school districts play when placing leaders in urban school principalships. Thus, the literature reveals that not only is the principal position for urban schools hard to fill, but also, many school districts place inexperienced candidates in the role and require them to produce results without significant support. Essentially, school districts may be contributing to the alarming statistics that show an increase in principal turnover.

In conclusion, the considerable amount of principal turnovers in school districts each year is potentially hurting the organizations in which they occur. While some principals leave schools and are succeeded by leaders who are familiar with the culture and characteristics of that school, many leaders are placed in schools with whose culture they are unfamiliar. As a result, many of these leaders cannot immediately produce an impact and experience low morale, teacher resistance, and passive followers. Enacting these styles of followership can cause a decrease in the quality of the leader-member exchange or relationship. Thus, with the literature revealing that urban schools are affected the most by principal turnovers for various reasons, it would prove beneficial to understand how newly transitioned principals form relationships with their new followers and the perceived impact of those relationships and followers on the leader’s
attitude, behaviors, and motivations following a transition in leadership. Since the perspective of leaders has been understudied in the leader-member exchange theory literature and the impact of followers in the followership and leadership literature, this study will seek to acquire this knowledge by interviewing individuals who have recently transitioned into the role of a principal.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how newly transitioned principals described their experience of developing relationships with their followers and how those followers shaped their leadership practice. Specifically, this study sought to uncover how newly transitioned principals develop relationships with their followers, to understand the dyadic relationship between principals and followers, and to discover the roles of followers in shaping principals’ leadership. This chapter describes the methods employed to examine the study’s research questions and outlines the research procedures used in the study. Additionally, this chapter justifies the selection of a qualitative methodology and a narrative analysis approach.

Driving this research study is the alarming rate of principal turnover in today’s schools. Béteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2012) suggested that 15%-30% of school districts in the United States experience a principal turnover each year, and many of these principal turnovers lead to positions that are filled with principals with none or scant prior experience. Additionally, many new principals enter unstable school cultures and campus climates with low teacher morale, negative teacher attitudes, a lack of support, and passive followers (Hargreaves, 2005; Weinstein, Jacobowitz, Ely, Landon, & Schwartz, 2009). Consequently, the roles and characteristics of the teachers (followers) have a profound effect on the leadership capacity of the newly appointed principal.

As a newly transitioned principal attempts to establish authority at a new school and develop relationships with new staff, the role that followers play in this process is critical. Researchers, however, have rarely explored the dyadic relationship between a principal and his or her followers. Moreover, the examination of the dyadic relationship has been understudied from the perspective of the leader. Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory literature has
suggested a mutual influence between a leader and follower. Theorists within the followership literature have concurrently proposed that followers’ behaviors and characteristics are antecedents to leadership outcomes (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Yet, the examination of how followers influence leaders has been largely ignored. Accordingly, this research study aimed to address some of those gaps and to expand upon the literature examining LMX theory and followership theory using a qualitative methodology and narrative design.

**Research Question and Subquestions**

The primary research question guiding this study was: “How do principals describe the leader-follower relationship during their experience of transitioning to a new school?” The secondary questions included: “How do newly transitioned principals describe the qualities of their relationships with their followers?” and, “How do newly transitioned principals describe the roles that followers play in shaping their leadership?”

**Research Paradigm**

In describing a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, Ponterotto (2005) explained that “reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than it being an externally singular entity” (p.129). Along similar lines, Creswell (2012) noted:

In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences… These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views… Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate individuals’ lives. (pp. 20-21)
Creswell (2012) referred to this paradigm as social constructivism. Despite the various names -- an interpretive paradigm by Merriam (1991), interpretivism by Burrell and Morgan (1979), constructivist-interpretivist by Ponterotto (2005), and social constructivism by Creswell (2012) -- these paradigms concur in asserting that multiple realities are constructed from the lived experiences of a study’s participants. Merriam (1991) pointed out that researchers using this approach are interested in how participants interpret their lives and experiences. Similarly, Creswell (2012) noted that a researcher who adopts a social constructivism paradigm should endeavor to rely on participants’ views. Ponterotto (2005), who has posited that the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm serves as the foundation for a qualitative research approach, concurred by suggesting that realities exist in the minds of participants. Accordingly, he argued that conversations between researchers and participants will help uncover those realities. These aspects of the paradigm led this researcher to choose it for this study which aimed to understand the dynamics and lived experiences of leader-follower relationships from the leader’s perspective.

**Research Design**

Given that this study aimed to uncover how newly transitioned principals described their experiences and understood the influence of followers on their roles, the researcher selected a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is best suited when the research intends to uncover how others create meaning from their experiences (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 2009; Chase, 2011; Creswell, 2012; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Creswell (2012) has asserted that a qualitative research approach honors the experiences of its participants and that it calls for participants to share their reality in their words. The use of a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to investigate a phenomenon from the lived
experiences of the study’s participants, and to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and the meaning the participants attributed to the experiences (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Creswell, 2012; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Additionally, since LMX theory and followership theory have characteristically been explored through quantitative studies, employing a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to acquire new knowledge and contribute to those bodies of literature by providing greater details through rich, thick description. Specifically, the researcher conducted this study using a narrative research approach.

**Research Tradition**

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), “Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience…Simply stated, narrative inquiry *is* stories lived and told” (p. 20). Philosophical assumptions derived from the work of John Dewey (1938) provided the foundation for Clandinin and Connelly’s construct of narrative research, particularly Dewey’s assertion that how an individual’s experience influences his or her understanding of a phenomenon (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002; Clandinin & Caine, 2008) drives narrative research. Thus, the experiences of participants become the stories told by researchers. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) defined three dimensions that contribute to narrative research: temporality, sociality, and place. Temporality refers to the changes that occur over time (past, present, and future). In the case of the current study, the focus on the evolution of the dyadic relationship between a newly transitioned principal and a follower met this criterion. As it relates to sociality, Clandinin and Huber (2010) insisted that narrative research “attend to both personal conditions and, simultaneously, to social conditions” (p. 436). Essentially, through narrative, researchers explore the interaction between the internal reactions and the outside context of an individual. Given that
this study sought to understand how newly transitioned principals developed relationships with their followers and how they understood how those relationships and the followers shaped their leadership, the dimension of sociality contributes valuable data. The final element, according to Clandinin and Connelly, is place. Place refers to the specific and/or physical places where experiences occur. For this study, place allowed the researcher to focus on the schools where these newly transitioned principals lead and which are embedded in the school district and broader socio-cultural urban realities as well. As the newly transitioned principals navigated new relationships with their followers, the specific location or place varied, but the common denominator of place was that of a comprehensive urban school district.

The dimensions that form narrative research, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), are not separate entities. In fact, they are interrelated, and this unity led the researcher undertaking this study to affirm that the narrative approach developed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) represented the most appropriate methodology to examine the phenomenon. By recognizing that the lives of individuals are shaped by their stories, the use of a narrative approach allowed the researcher to understand the participants’ personal experience as a story. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) asserted that there is value in the experiences of others and that the use of narrative research extends the opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding of that experience. Similarly, Riessman (2008) explained that “many investigators are now turning to narrative because the stories reveal truths about human experiences” (p. 10). The widespread use of narrative research in education studies (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) to answer similar questions in similar contexts also underpinned this selection. For example, Baird (2010) used a narrative approach to study the ways in which three faculty constructed meaning of the leadership behaviors that built or destroyed trust. Dawson and Hjorth (2012) contended that
narrative research “can bring lived experience into our study in a form that still carries the temporality and vividness of the real” (p. 342). For this study, a narrative research methodology allowed the researcher to uncover and communicate the experiences of the study’s participants in a way that clearly, directly, and authentically demonstrated the real process of building relationships for a newly transitioned principal.

Through the use of a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm (Ponterotto, 2005) and narrative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), the role of the researcher was to work collaboratively with the participants to mutually construct findings from dialogue and interpretation. The interaction between researchers and participants provided a rich opportunity for collecting data. Consequently, the researcher became the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative narrative research study (Merriam, 2009; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thus, the role of the researcher was to take part in the experience of the participant to the greatest extent possible and to translate that experience using qualitative research methods, such as conducting, coding, and interpreting transcripts of semi-structured interviews. (Merriam, 1991; Creswell, 2012).

**Site and Participants**

The participants of this study were situated in and recruited from a large urban public comprehensive school district within the southeastern United States. The school district serves 266 K-12 schools (142 elementary schools, 44 middle schools, two K-8 schools, 25 high schools, four career centers, four technical centers, and 43 charter schools). The goal of the researcher was to identify a school district that has experienced frequent turnover. As such, after reviewing the school district’s public records of administrative appointments and transfers, it was determined that between 2005 and 2016 the school district had over 250 principal changes.
Additionally, it was noted that many of these administrative changes occurred in schools that were low-performing and Title I. While the goal was to secure participants for this study from schools that have experienced frequent turnover, such as low-performing urban schools, the researcher did not limit this study to only those principals serving in those schools. Since the experiences of newly transitioned principals were likely to differ, this researcher aimed to include participants from all school types in hopes of gathering different perspectives.

Seidman (2006) recommended that researchers use purposeful sampling when identifying participants for a qualitative narrative study. Creswell (2012), too, advocated for a purposeful sampling method and suggested a sampling pool of five to 25 individuals for narrative studies. For this study, initially the researcher intentionally recruited the potential participants via a homogenous sampling method. Homogenous sampling concentrates on finding individuals who share similar demographics or characteristics (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013; Creswell, 2012). The participants in this study shared the same characteristics of being newly transitioned principals who had served at their respective schools for no more than three years. Additionally, this research established the criterion that the participants were serving at sites at which they did not previously work. It was important that the research participants had not served at their site immediately prior to their transfer or appointment because the goal was to understand how they formed relationships with individuals with whom they had not immediately shared previous working experience. In addition, the maximum of three years as a criterion seemed like an appropriate midpoint where leaders would be settling into their role as the school’s leader. Finally, the researcher sought both male and female participants with various backgrounds, educational experience, and administrative expertise, aiming to gather different and multiple perspectives.
Recruitment and Access

To conduct this study and to obtain access to the participants, the researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northeastern University. Once the IRB approved the details of the study, a research proposal request was submitted to the school district office to gain access to sites and participants. The school district approved the request and gave the researcher three months to conduct the study before requiring approval again. Upon approval from the school district, the researcher reviewed the archives of school district board meetings and the education section in the local newspaper to identify the appointments and transfers of school principals within the previous three years. There were a total of 97 appointments or transfers of principals in the three years prior. Of those 97, 72 of the principals met the criterion of being outside appointments or transfers.

After using the school district and local newspaper archives to identify the 72 potential principals to be included in the study, each participant was contacted via a mailed letter (Appendix A) inviting them to partake in the study. The researcher stamped each envelope with a stamp that read “Requesting Your Participation in Research Study.” This was completed to decrease the chance of the letter being mistaken for junk mail. Inside was a letter that explained the purpose and details of the study, the time commitment needed for participation, risks involved, the incentive that would be offered for participation, and the researcher’s contact information. After two weeks passed, the researcher had only received two responses, so a follow-up email (Appendix B) was sent to the potential participants. The follow-up email resulted in two more principals confirming their willingness to participate in the research study. It was feared that non-existing relationships between the researcher and potential participants and district email security measures may have contributed to the lack of response. Thus, since the
goal of the researcher to obtain 6 to 12 research participants had not been met, an alternative recruitment method was employed.

After two attempts to secure the minimum number of research participants, the researcher chose to use personal contacts within the school district and the four confirmed participants to assist in sharing the recruitment letter with the individuals listed on a potential participant list generated by the researcher. The recruitment email forwarded to the participants was the same email sent by the researcher two weeks prior. After two additional weeks, 11 additional individuals confirmed their willingness to participate in the research study.

With the addition of the 11 new principals bringing the total to 15 potential participants, the researcher established a pool to determine the number of participants that would be selected for the study. With Creswell (2012) having suggested recruiting five to 25 research participants for a narrative study, this researcher decided that 12 constituted a well-rounded group of newly transitioned principals to ensure the study had the best opportunity to achieve saturation. This decision was based on how the participants obtained the position (transition or retirement), type of school (based on student achievement level and student demographics), education levels taught at the school, and the gender of the principal.

**Overview of Participants**

The participants included in this study are situated in a large urban public comprehensive school district within the southeastern United States. The school district serves over 200 K-12 schools and, within the last 10 years, has experienced more than 250 administrative transitions. Consequently, the researcher sought out variation and representation in the participants. Of the 72 individuals contacted, 44 were female and 28 were male. Additionally, these individuals were the principals of 45 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, and 8 high schools. Thus, as
shown in Table 3.1, 12 principals (nine women and three men) participated in the study. Eight of the participants are Caucasian and four are African American. They ranged in age from the mid-30s to the late-60s. Similarly, their years working in education ranged between 12 and 45 years. Lastly, they represented eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. Chapter Four includes more detailed profiles of each participant.

Table 3.1

*Overview of Study’s Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>9 Female, 3 Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>8 Caucasian, 4 African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mid 30s – Late 60s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Years in Education</td>
<td>12 – 45 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Types</td>
<td>8 Elementary, 2 Middle, 2 High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 provides a brief overview of the 12 participants in this research study; they are a representative sample of the potential participants contacted.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Following approval by the Northeastern University IRB, the acquisition of consent from the school district, and the recruitment and selection of the 12 research candidates, data collection occurred in three separate phases. This section begins with a summarized overview of the phases as shown in Table 3.2. The first phase consisted of the researcher performing a document review, recruiting participants, and conducting pilot interviews. The second phase involved the researcher organizing and completing interviews with the participants and starting the preliminary analysis of the data. In the third phase, the data was analyzed and the trustworthiness of the study was developed. A thorough description of each phase follows in the table below.
Table 3.2

*Overview of Data Collection Phases*

| Phase I: Document Review, Participant Recruitment and Selection, and Pilot Interviews | • Reviewed school board local newspaper to identify potential participants  
• Sent recruitment letter (Appendix A) to potential participants  
• Sent follow up recruitment email (Appendix B)  
• Selected individuals \(n=12\) for participation in study  
• Reviewed respondents to ensure variation and representation  
• Sent informed consent form (Appendix C) and set interview time and dates  
• Conducted pilot study with three individuals (one current principal and two former principals of school district)  
• Finalized study’s interview protocol (Appendix E) |
| --- | --- |
| Phase II: Interviews | • Performed document review to obtain participants’ biographical and work related data  
• Confirmed information gathered about participants through document review (Appendix D)  
• Conducted semi-structured interviews  
• Transcribed interviews  
• Determined validity and accuracy through member checking (Appendix F) |
| Phase III: Data Analysis | • Stored data  
• Conducted preliminary inductive analysis with initial codes  
• Crafted participant profiles  
• Developed matrix of data  
• Performed cross case analysis of data (Appendix H)  
• Implemented inter-rater reliability of data  
• Executed thematic development  
• Determined conceptual congruence |
Phase One: Document Review, Participant Recruitment and Selection, and Pilot Interviews

The first few steps of phase one of the data collection process revolved around reviewing school board and local newspaper archives to determine the list of potential participants for this study. As detailed in the recruitment and access section of this chapter, 72 principals were identified as having met the criteria for participation in this study. Recruitment letters were mailed to the identified potential participants and two weeks later followed up with recruitment emails. Due to the lack of response, the researcher solicited the help of personal contacts within the school district to forward the research recruitment materials to those individuals identified as potential participants. Of the 72 individuals identified for participation in this study, 15 initiated contact expressing their willingness to participate in the research study. Three individuals were excluded from the study on the basis of being the principal at their new site less than six months. Ultimately, the researcher felt that the remaining 12 respondents were representative of the potential sample pool and that their experience varied, which led to their inclusion in the study.

After choosing to move forward with the 12 candidates, each individual was sent an informed consent form (Appendix C) and a request to set up a formal interview. Throughout the process of obtaining confirmation of interview dates and times, the researcher initiated a pilot study. The pilot process prepared the researcher for the interviews administered during the second phase of the data collection process. During the pilot, three volunteers were selected to test the study’s interview protocol. The volunteers included a current principal in the school district and two former principals of the school district. Administratively, the principal who currently leads one of the district’s schools has been in administration for 14 years and in education for 21 years. The two former school principals both had more than 30 years of education and administrative experience. One of the former principals retired as an elementary
school principal and the other retired as a district administrator after serving as a middle school principal. Each of the pilot interviews with the former principals occurred by phone. The interview with the individual who currently serves as a principal occurred face-to-face in her office.

During each conversation, the researcher tested the interview questions on the volunteers as if they were real participants in the study. By performing the pilot studies with the three volunteers, the researcher was able to obtain valuable information such as the time required to carry out the interviews. The process also helped with the identification of ambiguous questions or phrases, the reactions of the volunteers to the questions, and volunteers’ thoughts on the essence of the questions. Furthermore, the pilot process allowed the researcher to assess the testing recording devices to ensure peak performance during the actual interviews. After conducting the pilot process, the researcher determined that face-to-face interviews would be most successful and would aid the researcher in picking up subtle cues from the participants. In addition, piloting the interview protocol allowed the researcher to refine the interview questions, validate the questions’ link to the study’s conceptual frameworks, and finalize the interview protocol (Appendix E) prior to administering it to the research participants. In Table 3.3, presented below, the finalized questions and their link to the conceptual frameworks are outlined.
### Table 3.3
**Study’s Interview Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Linked Conceptual Framework</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Tell me about your experience transitioning here to SCHOOL NAME.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What did you experience? What were some of your emotions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As a newly transitioned principal, can you share with me some specific experiences that will help me understand your particular process in developing relationships with your new staff?</strong></td>
<td>LMX Theory</td>
<td>Dyadic Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What actions did you take?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please describe things that worked well, and things that did not work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a strong working leader-follower relationship?</strong></td>
<td>LMX Theory</td>
<td>High/Low Quality Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you describe any relationships that you have developed here that come close to that?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are the characteristics of more challenging interactions?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How would you describe one or some of your more challenging interactions after you became principal?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important, how important do you believe trust is in a relationship between a leader and follower? Why?</strong></td>
<td>LMX Theory</td>
<td>High/Low Quality Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you describe for me what a leader-follower relationship with you looks like once trust has been established?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you describe for me what a leader-follower relationship with you looks like when trust has not been established?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When you arrived at SCHOOL NAME, share with me some specific examples of the different characteristics, behaviors, or work/collaboration styles that you identified in teachers following your transition as the new school principal?</strong></td>
<td>Followership Theory</td>
<td>Follower Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have those behaviors and characteristics changed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What type of roles and behaviors are you experiencing now?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tell me about a time when a follower or followers were most helpful to you as a leader.</strong></td>
<td>Followership Theory</td>
<td>Follower Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were their styles, behaviors, or actions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Least helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify 2-3 followers that have had a positive influence on you since you have arrived here.</strong></td>
<td>Followwership Theory</td>
<td>Follower Role Influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3 presents the final questions refined after the pilot study. These questions were informed by the literature and provided the participants an opportunity to tell their stories; they had a chance to share their experiences in building and maintaining relationships with new staff members. By encouraging the participants to answer the questions in the table, the participants obtained a more thorough understanding of the purpose of the study; and, as will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the selected questions yielded significant data.

**Phase Two: Interviews**

The second phase of the data collection process started with a document review to obtain biographical and work experience data on the participants. This review was conducted using public documents available from the school district website and the local newspaper.
Additionally, these resources were also used to obtain data regarding each principal’s school demographics. Once the biographical and work-related data was found on each participant, the information was confirmed with the participants through email, and a convenient interview time and date was finalized. Completing the document review to gather biographical and work related data eliminated spending unnecessary time during the interview and allowed the researcher and participant to concentrate on the study’s interview questions.

The interviews between the researcher and each participant lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. Each interview began by providing the participant with a copy of the research approval letter from the school district and an informed consent form (Appendix C). The researcher reiterated details of the participant’s participation and provided the participant an opportunity to ask any questions prior to starting the interview. The interviews were recorded with a Sony ICD PX333 digital recorder as the primary recording device and an iPhone as the secondary recording device. The researcher also took notes on a notepad that served as a means to capture and record observations.

For this study, the researcher employed an in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix E), as recommended by researchers such as Merriam (2009) and Seidman (2006). Seidman encouraged researchers to utilize open-ended questions to avoid leading the interviewee to an answer. Likewise, Merriam (2009) noted that semi-structured interviews are “guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time” (p. 90). Employing a semi-structured interview provided the researcher the flexibility to address thoughts brought up by participants that furthered enhanced the interview data. Seidman (2006) asserted that the foundation of in-depth interviews is the experience of others and the meaning created by those
experiences. Similarly, Merriam identified that interviews allow researchers to determine the experiences held by their participants regarding events in their lives. Employing a semi-structured interview format allowed exploration of these experiences. During the 45-60 minute interviews, participants had the opportunity to share their experiences in developing relationships with their followers; they simultaneously identified the perceived impact of those followers on their leadership.

At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher provided a $20 gift card to Starbucks or Chick-Fil-A as a token of appreciation for the participant’s participation in the research study. Also, the researcher promptly sent the digitally recorded interview to Rev.com, a professional transcriptionist service. Transcribing the interviews readied the data for analysis and provided the researcher with the opportunity to employ a member-checking method. The transcript of each interview was then sent to the corresponding interviewee for member-checking; each participant reviewed for error, validity, and accuracy (Saldaña, 2013) and was encouraged to add any additional follow-up information or reflections. This helped to ensure the credibility of the study. Only one participant submitted a revision to their transcript. The change was made, and the researcher proceeded with the analysis of the data, following the guidance of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) who have strongly recommended that researchers analyze data alongside additional data collection.

**Phase Three: Data Analysis**

Following the advice of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013), the analysis of data ran concurrently with conducting the interviews. Appropriately, the work of Miles and Huberman (1994), which was later expanded by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013), was primarily used to guide the data analysis. The analysis occurred in three major phases: data condensation, data
display, and drawing and verifying conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013, pp.12-14). However, before any analysis of the data could begin, it was critical that the researcher stored the data properly.

Creswell (2012) has recommended that researchers take multiple precautions to ensure the safe storage of data. Therefore, the data, including all transcripts, audio recorders, audio recordings, and consent forms, were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home office. The audio recordings were uploaded to the researcher’s personal computer as MP3 files and coded to be recognized only by the researcher. These MP3 files and the Microsoft Word files containing each participant’s transcript were securely stored on the researcher’s password protected computer. The files were subsequently uploaded to an external hard drive to minimize the threat of losing the data; the drive was subsequently stored in the locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home office. Additionally, each participant and the site at which he or she is employed were tagged with pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. Finally, the researcher has been the only individual to view the data in its entirety. Portions of two transcripts were submitted to two peer reviewers to ensure credibility of the study. At the completion of the doctoral thesis project, all data will be shredded and deleted.

**Data condensation.** Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) have indicated that the first phase, data condensation, is a form of analysis that “sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes” (p.12). Therefore, to begin the data condensation process, each transcript was reviewed twice before a formal analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the participant, his or her voice, and what he or she stated. As the transcripts were read and reread, the researcher also examined corresponding field notes for further insight into the participants. The researcher also started a preliminary inductive analysis of each transcript to help craft the profile of each
participant. This preliminary analysis involved condensing each transcript and extracting data that focused on the details of each participant’s transition to their school. Seidman (2006) asserted that profiles are crafted narrative summaries using the words of the participants. These profiles helped the researcher tell the story of the participants, forming a narrative. The crafted profiles of each participant are presented in the next chapter.

Next, in the data condensation process, the researcher employed an in vivo coding process during the first cycle and began to identify words and phrases from each participant’s transcript that stood out (Saldaña, 2013). Each transcript was coded by hand and the codes were subsequently entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet in preparation for a cross case analysis. Additionally, the researcher inscribed notes in the margins of the transcripts to assist in developing themes. The researcher also used memoing to reflect on the data and the connection made with the words of the participants. Although Saldaña (2013) suggested that no fixed number of codes developed from a transcript exists, he also encouraged researchers to trust their instincts when it comes to in vivo coding. In this case, with 12 transcripts, the in vivo coding process yielded 1,730 initial codes. Saldaña (2013) recommended that researchers employ a second coding process to further analyze the data. Therefore, the researcher used pattern coding for the second cycle. During this round, the researcher examined all the sets of codes inputted in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, from the in vivo coding process, and began to group the codes by categories by filling each cell with similar colors. This also helped to eliminate redundancy amongst the data. By grouping similar in vivo codes, placing the codes into categories, and using the remove duplicates function in Microsoft Excel, the researcher was able to perform a cross-case analysis and trim the code list to 171 codes and 14 categories (Appendix G).
**Data display.** The second phase in the data analysis approach developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) is data display. During this phase, the researcher utilized the observed code similarities and differences noticed during the cross-case analysis to develop categories. To ensure the study’s reliability, the researcher sent portions of two transcripts to two independent peer debriefers. The peer debriefers independently analyzed the data and provided recommendations for adding to or adjusting the codes. Each peer debriefer was knowledgeable about qualitative research and held a Ph.D. from a research intensive university.

To gain greater clarity on the themes that emerged from the data, the researcher created a matrix to compare and contrast codes, categories, and concepts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Miles et al. (2013) outlined that conceptually clustered matrixes “bring together key data from key participants into one matrix” (p. 178). Accordingly, the researcher created a matrix that grouped key excerpts from the participants to each specific interview question. The cross-case analysis and the developed matrix helped to execute thematic development. These seven findings are further discussed in Chapter Four.

**Drawing and verifying conclusions.** The final step of the data analysis process required drawing and verifying conclusions. After noting the similarities and differences and labeling them by codes, the researcher was able to determine the major themes for the study. The research generated seven major themes grouped into three categories. These three categories and seven themes were then synthesized to assess conceptual coherence. The researcher then used the synthesis to organize the data in response to the research questions to draw conclusions, identify implications, and outline ideas for future research. Six conclusions were inferred.
Trustworthiness

Qualitative research requires strong credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Creswell and Miller (2000) guided qualitative researchers to employ a variety of nine validity procedures to ensure the credibility of their studies. The nine validity procedures are: triangulation, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, collaboration, the audit trail, thick, rich description, and peer debriefing. For the purposes of this study, the researcher employed the following measures: member-checking; thick, rich description; audit trail; and peer debriefing.

Member Checking

To ensure that this study was credible, member-checking constituted the primary measure used to verify the study’s trustworthiness. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checks are “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). Member-checking required the researcher to confirm the collected data’s accuracy by allowing the research participants to check, verify, and/or further elaborate on their interview responses. At the completion of the interviews, each participant received their interview transcripts (Appendix F) and was given ten days to submit changes. The researcher asked participants to check for clarifications and elaborations that needed to be made. Only one participant submitted changes the transcript. Another method to ensure the credibility and dependability of the research findings occurred via double-checking the interview transcripts with the audio recordings. Cross checking the audio recordings with the interview transcripts guaranteed that the entire conversation between the researcher and participant was captured.
Thick, Rich Description

Thick, rich description was also utilized to ensure the research was trustworthy (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of thick, rich description based on the voices of the participants also promoted the transferability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by providing other researchers the opportunity to apply the findings of in similar settings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Therefore, assuring at least relative transferability required the researcher to use purposive sampling to obtain multiple perspectives from a variety of contexts. The use of thick, rich descriptions should enable readers of this study to take the findings and relate them in their own contexts.

Audit Trail and Peer Debriefing

The researcher also used an audit trail and peer debriefing to promote trustworthiness in the study. An audit trail ensured the credibility and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the study, meaning that it is able to be replicated. Creswell and Miller (2000) have maintained that an audit trail requires the use of a research log to accurately document the entire inquiry process. Correctly recording the research process allows one to follow the procedures clearly and understand the rationale behind decisions made. Additionally, the researcher used peer debriefing as another method to certify the credibility of the study. Creswell and Miller (2000) stated: “A peer review or debriefing is the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored” (p. 129). In the case of this study, the researcher used two peer debriefers who hold doctorate degrees from Research I institutions and who were not connected to the study. Through the use of peer debriefing and an audit trail, the researcher was able to add an additional layer of credibility to the study.
Although Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated that “narrative inquiry relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability” (p. 7), this researcher found it important for this study to be considered credible and trustworthy. While the researcher aimed to strongly allow the voice of the participant to shine through the data, procedures were adhered to in order to enhance the study’s findings. For instance, a second round of member-checking was employed with select participants to verify that all interpretations, findings, and data collected were accurate. Additionally, the use of rich, thick descriptions ensured that the complete story was told with the goal that other researchers might apply them in their specific contexts.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Before completing this study, the researcher informed each participant of the study’s purpose and the expectations of his or her participation. Participating in this study required that each principal felt comfortable with and understood the purpose of his or her involvement. If participants were comfortable and agreed to the study, they were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix C) before the interview. While this study posed minimal risks to the participants, the researcher reminded each individual that they could refuse to continue at any time and could avoid answering interview questions they deemed too sensitive. The researcher also ensured participants that their identities would not be revealed or linked to their comments (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Additionally, to further protect each participant and site, the researcher provided each participant and site pseudonyms, and the participants were informed that the recordings and data gathered from the interviews would be stored safely and would only be accessed by the researcher.
Positionality Statement

As someone who has never taught or had an administrative role in K-12, this researcher maintains some biases regarding leadership needs in school settings. One of those biases is that the leader of a school represents the glue that holds the school together. In this researcher’s role as a professional speaker, strong leadership is not only desired, but it is also necessary for moving schools, particularly urban schools, forward. Another bias this researcher maintains is that every organization must contain leaders and followers willing to collaborate to achieve success. Given that many urban schools are heavily scrutinized by their school districts and state education departments, these groups should cooperate to advance the organization. This researcher feels that some teachers, specifically veteran teachers, fail to allow new leaders a fair opportunity to lead them and their school. Many of these teachers operate with a deficit mindset by holding on to the past and comparing their new leader to his or her predecessor. Consequently, this researcher believes some teachers fail to live in the moment, and their stubbornness creates unnecessary complications for the new principal. Additionally, this researcher also believes that some school leaders retain the mindset that they can immediately effect change without building relationships with those around them, as was evidenced in the experiences the researcher has had with some of his previous clients.

Briscoe (2005) contended that one’s identity can influence how he or she understands the world. Although not an every-day member of an educational setting, this researcher believes, given his identity and experiences, that he can tell the story of the leader-follower relationship. Much of the leadership literature fails to recognize the significance of followers to leaders; therefore, the dyadic relationship between principals and followers has been primarily disregarded. Briscoe has argued that the voices of others, individuals unlike oneself should be
shared in scholarly work. Sharing the voices of newly transitioned principals through this narrative qualitative study could help other educational leaders develop the leadership skills to improve their relationship-building capacity.

While it is important to enter the scholarly space with an open mind (Machi & McEvoy, 2012) and to tell the story of others, this researcher realizes that research on newly transitioned principals poses a challenge. Briscoe (2005) pointed out that studying individuals in a context where the researcher is not a member of the group can be complicated. For this researcher, this could have posed a challenge as some principals may have been reticent to share their experiences given the lack of “insider” status. Additionally, some leaders may not have considered themselves impacted by followers or they might not have previously identified the dynamics involved in maintaining high-quality or low-quality relationships. This researcher recognizes his biased belief that every leader is influenced by his or her followers, some leaders may not share that perspective. Having occupied many leadership roles, this researcher knows the impact that followers can have on leaders. However, some may have viewed this researcher as a privileged individual offering advice to a profession of which he has never been a part and in a setting he has never experienced. Overcoming these challenges depended on this researcher’s ability to communicate the goals for the study in a way that was transparent and comprehensible to the individuals interviewed. Maintaining mutual respect for respondents and avoiding behaviors that might have seemed to objectify the people interviewed, or that could have caused anyone to feel inferior, was essential (Briscoe, 2005).

While this research has the potential to help school leaders, it also afforded the researcher the opportunity to learn more about: the relationships leaders developed with those around them; the characteristics of followers as described by leaders; how followers impacted their leaders;
and how leaders understood that impact. Serving in multiple leadership roles, which have shaped the identity of this researcher, helped ensure objectivity. Furthermore, this researcher believes that his lack of experience in a K-12 setting was beneficial to the study because he entered the process with curiosity and open-mindedness. When it comes to leadership, this researcher firmly believes that organizations need both strong leaders and strong followers to succeed. Finally, this researcher consciously attempted to suspend his beliefs and biases to allow the findings delivered through the participants’ voices to tell the story.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology employed for this qualitative study. It reported the research questions that guided the study and described the design, approach, and tradition informing the research. Additionally, the chapter defined the participants and the study’s recruitment process. Next, the chapter detailed the data collection and data analysis phases and closed with a discussion of the study’s trustworthiness and the researcher’s positionality. The following chapter discusses the findings of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The current study explored how newly transitioned principals in a large urban school district in the southeast United States, which experiences frequent principal transitions, described their experiences in developing relationships with their followers. This study also attempted to explain their perspectives on how those followers shape their leadership. To answer the research questions designed for the study, interviews were conducted with 12 principals who had served at their respective schools no more than three years. The participants were invited to answer questions that aimed to: (a) uncover how newly transitioned principals make sense of their relationships with followers in their new workplaces; (b) understand the dyadic relationship between principals and followers; and (c) discover the roles of followers in shaping principals’ leadership. After completing the interviews, the data was analyzed and resulted in three categories with eight emerging themes.

This chapter presents the findings of this narrative study. It begins with an overview of the data collection and analysis process, followed by a description of the participants. The next section presents the emerging concepts and themes from the data analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings.

Overview of Participants

The participants of this study are situated in a large urban public comprehensive school district within the southeastern United States. The school district serves over 200 K-12 schools and, within the last 10 years, has experienced more than 250 administrative transitions. As shown in Table 3.1, 12 principals (nine women and three men) participated in the study. They represented eight elementary schools (ES), two middle schools (MS), and two high schools (HS). Eight of the 12 principals were promoted to their position, including the two high school
principals who were promoted from a middle school principalship. Notably, however, six of the principals fulfilled the role because the previous principal was transferred by the school district to lead another school. While no principal served at their current school more than three years, their experience in education and administration varied. All of the participants have worked in the field of education for over 10 years, with six of the participants serving as a principal at two or more schools.

The participants of this study led schools with student populations ranging from 350 – 2,600. However, demographically, the schools were similar. Eight of the 12 schools were labeled as Title I, meaning that 65% or more of their student population received free or reduced lunches. Additionally, 10 of the 12 schools had student minority rates of over 50%. The school grades for the 2015-2016 school year also revealed that the schools are academically similar. Six of the schools received a D for their school grade, five schools received a C, and one school received a B. Moreover, six of the eight elementary schools are labeled as one of the lowest 300 performing elementary schools in the state. Table 4.1 below provides more details about the participants. Following the table are the profiles of each of the participants in this study.
Table 4.1

*Detailed Look at Research Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in Edu/Admin</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Years at School</th>
<th>Transfer/Appointment</th>
<th>Previous Principal</th>
<th>Title I</th>
<th>Minority Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRED</td>
<td>Late 60s</td>
<td>43 / 30</td>
<td>Hammond HS</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITNEY</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
<td>23 / 13</td>
<td>Houston HS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMONE</td>
<td>Early 40s</td>
<td>22 / 13</td>
<td>Biles ES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARTER</td>
<td>Early 40s</td>
<td>18 / 10</td>
<td>Woodson ES</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOROTHY</td>
<td>Late 50s</td>
<td>32 / 9 ½</td>
<td>Height ES</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSA</td>
<td>Mid 30s</td>
<td>12 / 8</td>
<td>Parks ES</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIKKI</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
<td>21 / 11</td>
<td>Giovanni ES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Resigned</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARBARA</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>28 / 19</td>
<td>Jordan ES</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYNNE</td>
<td>Late 40s</td>
<td>22 / 8</td>
<td>Swann MS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIONEL</td>
<td>Late 30s</td>
<td>15 / 7</td>
<td>Ritchie MS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GABRIELLE</td>
<td>Mid 30s</td>
<td>13 / 6</td>
<td>Douglas ES</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEVERLY</td>
<td>Late 30s</td>
<td>15 / 7</td>
<td>Johnson ES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FRED

FRED, in his late 60s, leads one of the district’s largest high schools, Hammond HS. Even with over 40 years of educational experience, the appointment to the principalship at Hammond HS still created anxiety. Initially, FRED felt separation anxiety because he was leaving “what he knew worked.” He had the anxiety of running a $100 million school with over 160 teachers and 50 staff members. Additionally, he was apprehensive about how he would introduce himself to the teachers, students, and staff. FRED wanted to make sure people knew him. With his appointment in the middle of the school year, FRED was tasked with completing 60 fall observations and 153 spring evaluations for a staff he had no relationships with. At the time of his transition, he knew no one in the building. However, after a year and a half at the helm of Hammond HS, he says hello to everyone whether they say it back or not because, as he says, “I want them to feel comfortable with me as a person.”

During the interview, it was apparent that FRED was about business. He shared that he was different from his predecessor and that he “did not want to be feared, but respected.” In describing his methods to build relationships with his staff, he offered:

I say hello to everybody. You can’t go by me and-- I don’t care whether you say hello back, I’m saying hello. I’m going to ask them… I’m going to find out about things. Whether I’m interested or not in who you are, you won’t know that. You know? I’m going to ask you about your family, and kids, and whatever. I pick up on things and I listen, and so on.

When it came to his leadership, FRED was adamant that he remained “consistent” and “on point” as a leader.

WHITNEY

The transition for WHITNEY, in her mid-40s, to Houston HS was quite seamless since she had previously served for four years at the school as the assistant principal. With this
experience and the experience of leading another school in the area, WHITNEY was well-connected to the campus community and the community at large. She has been involved in education for 23 years, with 13 of those years as an administrator. Her smooth tenure at Houston HS over the last three years was made easy because the majority of the staff knew her. However, while many of the members of the staff knew her, her immediate circle of administrators was different from her initial time at Houston. WHITNEY mentioned that in her three years of being at the school, she has been able to hire three new administrators who share her vision, passion, and philosophy on educational leadership. With an intense focus on doing what is best for the youth, WHITNEY asserts that she’s the “bitch that’s hard to hate.”

It is evident that WHITNEY is passionate about her school, students, and staff. She shared:

I always say people want to work hard for someone who works hard, and I think that is probably the key to what I do. I am passionate about this being a phenomenal school, and a school that is all about kids, but I think that I'm willing to do whatever needs to be done. I don't ask any of my followers to do anything I'm not willing to do, whether that's taking out trash, or serving lunches, or covering classes, or tutoring kids. I'm 100% in it for the experience these kids walk away with, and so I think it's hard to not do anything I ask you, because, number one, you know my heart's in the right place; and, number two, you know I'm willing to do it also.

WHITNEY’s down-to-earth leadership style has earned her credibility, allowed her to garner her follower’s trust, and made her school’s advancement smooth.

SIMONE

SIMONE, in her early 40s, has 22 years of education experience. She has served in an administrative capacity for 13 years and at Biles ES for one year. She was encouraged by district leadership to apply for the principalship following the promotion of the previous principal. With her appointment came a firm directive from district leadership that her number one priority was to improve the school’s culture. Knowing this, SIMONE entered Biles ES with a great deal of
anxiety, fear, and unknown questions. She mentioned that she only knew two people at the school. However, she felt that an advantage for her was the timing of her appointment. SIMONE was appointed with nearly seven weeks of school left, which allowed her to observe the school and work on building the foundation for the school’s culture.

The appointment to Biles ES for SIMONE was, and still is, a challenge worthy of being embraced. When it comes to leading her followers, SIMONE believed:

I think definitely holding everyone accountable, from yourself to everyone else and definitely being a very hands on principal, meaning you’re in classroom, you know what’s going on instructionally, you know what the teachers need, and letting them see that, and all elements. And then it helps them be able to follow those same expectations. I think it’s important to be transparent and let them know it’s okay. And I tell them all the time I made mistakes. It’s new, we’re all doing this together so I think that helps them a lot as well. I think being able to laugh and just have fun.

CARTER

CARTER, in his early 40s, was going home to Woodson ES, a place he knew well after serving at the school as an assistant principal for four years. CARTER has been in education for 18 years, 10 of them in administration. However, his transition to Woodson ES was not as seamless. Until CARTER’s transfer, the school was being run by only an assistant principal, as the previous principal had been transferred to another school within the district in the early months of the school year. Even though many at the school welcomed CARTER warmly, he only knew approximately five teachers on the staff from his previous tenure. Furthermore, the timing of his transfer in January created additional difficulties, as 65% of observations and evaluations had to be completed by February and only 20% had been completed.

While the evaluations created difficulty in building relationships for CARTER, he did not allow those circumstances to prevent his relationship building. He offered:

I would say as far as building relationship with staff, letting them get to know you. Everyone has a comfort level as to how much they let people know about their personal lives, but
I think you need to let them get to know you on a personal level and whatever way you're comfortable. Like, for me it was, like I said, sharing my childhood. Even sharing my history of coming from a single parent home and the struggles that I've gone through as a child coming from that background, and those types of things. I was comfortable to do that, but I think whatever your comfort level is you get to know them on a personal level, let them know you on a personal level but get to know them on a personal level. Take time to sit down and just ask them questions that are not school related. That personal type relationship, building that. But then also in a professional setting just leading by actions. I think that's one of the most important things that you can do, is to lead by actions when it comes to your interactions with kids, your interactions with parents. Then how you are interacting with the adults. Whether it be a difficult situation or something that's just fun-filled and exciting. Even through the challenges showing them that you're going to treat them with dignity and respect, and not by saying it but just by showing those actions. And letting them know that you will get in the trenches with them, you will get your hands dirty with them, and you'll do what it takes to support them and make sure they have what they need to be successful.

**DOROTHY**

After 32 years in education, DOROTHY, in her late 50s, thought she would retire at her previous school site. However, district leadership felt that, with her expertise from 9 ½ years of administration and her relationship with the community, that she would be an excellent fit at Height ES. Her mid-year transfer to the school also had a “coming home” effect, as she had previously served at the school as a teacher. While she was upset to leave her previous school and cried about it because she felt she was leaving family, the transition to Height ES was easy. Many in the community from her previous school helped establish her reputation by calling members of the Heights ES community. In the 1 ½ years that she has been at Height ES, her high expectations of her staff have created critical changes that have advanced the school.

DOROTHY also held high expectations for herself as a leader. In describing her leadership approach, she explained:

I think to really try to get to know everybody. And to let them to get to know you too. But you yourself first have to know about yourself. You do. I mean, yeah. I have very high expectations and I tell everybody that. And I do it for myself too. I do it for my family. And I will do whatever it takes. I told you that in the beginning, I will do whatever it takes to get the job done and I tell everybody that. But I think you have to really get to know everybody. Because everybody, if they know what your reason is for
being here and you work with that person, they will come around. They will come around to it. And I believe there's probably maybe just a couple of people on this staff who don't believe that we can get where we need to be.

Although DOROTHY has experienced a small number of followers who do not believe in her vision, she is surrounded by followers who have bought in and created a smooth transition.

ROSA

ROSA, in her mid-30s, has been in education for 12 years with eight of those in an administrative position. ROSA transferred to Parks ES 2½ years ago, following the transfer of the previous school principal. She stated that walking into Parks reminded her of the school she had left because the environments were similar. Upon arriving at Parks, trust amongst the staff and administration was previously nonexistent. Consequently, ROSA felt that many of the staff members initially resisted her and put up a wall. In fact, she recalled one teacher saying to her, “I’m going to be here longer than you.” Not only did ROSA battle with resistance from the teachers, but she also dealt with being transferred in the middle of the school year to a staff that was fairly new. At Parks ES, ROSA inherited a staff where 22 teachers had two years or less of teaching experience. She states, “They were sinking and they needed a life boat.”

Taking over Parks ES was different for ROSA. Inheriting a staff that was fairly new to education caused her approach to leadership to shift. Illustrating how her approach to leadership has changed, she said:

Whereas here, oh no, we need that constant pat on the back. And I had to step outside of myself because that's not who I am. I may be sunshining but I don't have time to be walking around patting you on the back and all that kind of stuff. So I had to have a come to Jesus with myself about how I could be that person and still be genuine and not be phony, because that's what I felt I was going to be if I did that. So I had to find my type of way to celebrate them and give them that pat on the back that they need. And some do need that. I had a lot of new teachers who really did need that. I had not worked with such an inexperienced staff before, so that was a piece that was like, "Wow."
NIKKI

Unlike the other participants in this study, NIKKI, in her mid-40s, walked into a unique situation when she took over at Giovanni ES. As she put it, “the school was on auto pilot.” The previous principal of Giovanni ES went on a leave of absence and never came back, causing many in the school to create pseudo administrative roles for themselves. She stated that many on the staff “did what they wanted to do” because they did not have anyone to answer to. However, with 21 years of educational experience, 11 administratively, this atmosphere was one NIKKI could handle. Once she was appointed to the school in March, NIKKI came to the school prior to her reporting day to observe. After her official reporting date, she took the opportunity to meet staff members individually to begin building relationships.

NIKKI was unsure of what she was walking into when arriving at Giovanni ES. Thus, for her, the key to building relationships was to be transparent. She expanded that thought by sharing:

Just being transparent. Knowing that just building that trust-- Because I can tell you one thing, if somebody doesn't trust you you're not going to get any working relationship with anybody because they're always skeptical about what is the next move. I don't really trust her, I don't know. So you got to have that trust. When you have that trust then you build on that rapport and that relationship. The loyalty to me comes in as a next step, because if you don't have a following of following your vision and you're trying to move a vessel forward but you don't have those key ingredients, it falls apart.

For NIKKI, these key ingredients allowed her to guide Giovanni ES forward despite the challenges presented to her when she arrived.

BARBARA

BARBARA, in her early 50s, was transferred to Jordan ES and has been at the school for six months. Notably, the transition to Jordan ES represented BARBARA’s third transition to a new school as the principal. She mentioned that she transitioned to schools in April, October,
and January. BARBARA believed the most recent transfer that occurred in January created turmoil and additional stress for her and the staff. She felt that she had walked into a school where people questioned her existence because they knew the achievement level of the school from which she had previously transferred. Contributing to BARBARA’s stress was that she had to deal with a new staff populated by extremely veteran teachers. She explained some of the initial resistance she faced:

I offered the opportunity when I got here, “Come meet with me one on one. Here's what we're going to discuss. Here are the questions." I would say out of a faculty of close to 60 maybe 10. Why would you not want to do that? You love this school, you care about this school, this school is great. Why would you not want to take five minutes to meet with the new principal to talk about what are our greatest assets and what maybe can we look at to better serve our stakeholders. So that was a little telling to me right away about the followers.

Although the initial resistance by teachers created uncertainty for BARBARA, it did not stop her attempt to establish and build new relationships. She said:

I think you have to be proactive about developing the relationships, and strategic. It can't just be, "Oh, you think that's going to naturally happen." It's hard enough being a new principal, but if you don't-- Because I can sit here all day and just get overwhelmed by all of this stuff. All these emails, just everything that the want us to do is very overwhelming. But that's a high leverage for you. To build the relationships with the people who are going to help you move forward and take some time to do that. Figure out how you're going to do that and do it because otherwise it's going to happen and it might not happen the way that you want it to happen.

LYNNE

The appointment of LYNNE, in her late 40s, to the principalship at Swann MS came with mixed feelings. Not only was she coming back to a familiar place where she had spent the bulk of her 22 years as an educator, but she was also a product of the community. Many of the feelings that LYNNE experienced came from the transition from a high school administrator back to the middle school level. However, her transition was easy because there were many recognizable faces of staff members still at Swann MS. LYNNE took over a principalship at a
school where many of the staff members did not feel supported, which naturally made her a good fit because she feels her strength is that she is a “relationship person.” Her approach to win teachers over has been simple. She indicated:

You're going to see the smile on my face, it's the greeting, it's valuing those staff members, the teachers here. It's taken the time to just listen to them. Even listening to their personal lives too. So knowing that they know that I care. The open door policy. You come to me, you talk to me. I will make the time for you. And just doing the little things to where they felt valued… whether it's putting notes in their boxes and leaving notes in their classrooms. Giving them candy bars. Mondays have milk and cookies every now and then to reward them. Bringing in breakfast and feeding them as a staff.

Although this is her first year at Swann MS, she has connected with many of the staff members and has created a shift in attitude.

**LIONEL**

In his late 30s, LIONEL is the principal at Ritchie MS. He was appointed to the position and has been at Ritchie for three years. He has been in education for 15 years, with seven of those years as an administrator. His appointment occurred toward the end of the school year, in April, which afforded him the opportunity to focus on getting the pulse of the school. To do this, in LIONEL’s first month, he met every employee for 10-minute conversations to gather their expectations of him, the strengths of the school, and the school’s areas of improvement. With his appointment in April, the first few months of LIONEL’s appointment to the principalship presented challenges because he had to complete evaluations of teachers without knowing the “full picture.”

However, even without knowing the full picture, LIONEL made it a priority to get to know his staff. He detailed:

My process was just being personable and I wouldn't change that. Just trying to be friendly and visible and listen. Ask people questions and be interested in them, try to learn a little bit about them personally. So I think you're trying to meet everybody where they're at. And one thing I do too is like in terms of professional, I always want to know
what people's three to five year plan is. Always have like, what are you working towards? And trying to line up everything with that. To me that helps build-- That's a relationship piece that's built in. You're trying to align growth opportunities for people that want that.

GABRIELLE

GABRIELLE, in her mid-30s, has been at Douglas ES for 1 1/2 years. She was appointed to the principalship after serving as an assistant principal in a school with a similar clientele as Douglas ES for 4 1/2 years. In total, she has been in education for 13 years. Since she served as the assistant principal at a neighboring school, GABRIELLE’s initial challenges were not the students, but the staff. One of her toughest tasks was establishing a leader-follower relationship with the assistant principal. The relationship was confounded by a personal friendship between the two and by the fact that the assistant principal had also applied for the principalship. As a result, the poor relationship between GABRIELLE and the assistant principal caused her to streamline many initiatives. The relationship also led her to take a top-down leadership approach that she is working on changing now that she has a new assistant principal. Additionally, as the new principal, GABRIELLE walked into an environment where she felt many went around her as the leader, harbored a clique-style culture, and included a culture of teachers that were the “haves” and “have nots.” It was clear that GABRIELLE felt behind in terms of building relationships with her staff. She suggested:

I feel like, because I had no other experiences seeing somebody else do something in a more positive culture, because I didn't really come from a total positive culture. Maybe I should’ve just spent more time under another principal to know what that needed to look like. To know how to build a culture that was going to be what I actually wanted it to be because it wasn't necessarily like that where I came from.

BEVERLY

BEVERLY, in her late 30s, is the ultimate product of Johnson ES. She grew up in the community, attended the school, started her teaching career there, and now proudly serves as its
principal. With 15 years of educational experience, seven of them as an administrator, the appointment of BEVERLY to the principalship was somewhat overwhelming given the size of the school. Her appointment to Johnson ES came at the end of the school year, allowing her the opportunity to come in and observe before making any real changes. Upon her transition, she immediately noticed the low morale and tension between teachers and staff members. She confessed that things were not flowing and that the feeling was that the staff members love for their students became “our poor kids.” BEVERLY realized that she needed to become more hands on and proactive about building more relationships with teachers and staff. She affirmed:

I just became very transparent with my communication and so people knew, like if they wanted to know something they just needed to ask. I tried to beat them to the punch and not even having to ask and just putting it out there to say, here's what we've got going on. So I think just being honest and open with them helped to build that relationship as well.

She went on to share:

I made sure that I have a lot more cards. So I'm constantly buying thank you cards and appreciation cards and little note cards, so that I can do a little hand-written message and get that out to people when they've got things that are going on.

With seven years of administrative experience, three of them at Johnson ES, BEVERLY became so focused on moving the school forward that the last year she has lacked in relationship building. She maintains that she will use this upcoming year to return to the basics of developing and building relationships with her staff members.

**Overview of Research Findings**

The primary research question guiding this study was, “How do principals describe the leader-follower relationship during their experience of transitioning to a new school?” The secondary questions were, “How do newly transitioned principals describe the qualities of their relationships with their followers?” and, “How do newly transitioned principals describe the roles that followers play in shaping their leadership?” The analysis of the 12 interviews occurred
in three phases. The preliminary inductive analysis was done in vivo and resulted in 1,730 codes. The second phase of coding was pattern coding and yielded 171 individual codes that were grouped into 14 groups. A sample of the codes and categories are located in Appendix G. Following the second phase of coding, a cross case analysis was performed and seven themes under three categories emerged. These categories and their associated themes are listed in Figure 4.1. Following is a detailed exploration of the emerging categories and themes found during the analysis. These categories and themes are supported by examples from the personal narratives of the participants.

Figure 4.1: Themes by Category

Findings from Analysis

Building Relationships

Following the transition of each participant to their new school, they needed to build and establish relationships with the staff of the school. In each of the interviews, the participants discussed ways in which they went about this. The idea of building relationships was recurring,
which led to it becoming a category to accommodate the following three themes: 1) building relationships requires a leader’s active engagement and participation; 2) knowing your people personally and professionally; and 3) observations/evaluations hinder the development of relationships. The narratives of participants supporting these themes ensue.

**Building relationships requires a leader’s active engagement and participation.**

Building relationships with followers required that leaders actively participated in establishing the relationship. In fact, half of the participants felt that being visible was critical in building relationships. Similarly, seven of the participants believed that listening to their staff members contributed to building relationships. Finally, half of the participants encouraged the participation of others and involved themselves in order to build relationships.

**Be visible.** With her appointment to the principalship at Biles ES coming at the end of the school year, SIMONE was able to use the last few weeks of the school year to begin working on establishing relationships with her new staff. She mentioned that she was “purposeful” in her actions. For example, she attributes “kind of being visible… just being out there, car circle, bus ride, and I come early to school…” as early successes in building relationships. She also mentioned that she was intentional in:

> just going in, seeing their class and just walking through. I just really-- Part of my training, was to just focus on for the first 30 days… just positive. So, I just did that. I was going and just leaving a note. Some of them were really shocked by it. They said they didn't have a lot of walkthroughs previously. So they were appreciating it. So I think that helped.

Being visible was also important to other participants. NIKKI emphasized that upon her transition, she also made herself visible through walkthroughs. She stated, “just stopping and chatting with staff members… just wanted to get a feel for the school, the environment.” Similarly, LIONEL referred to being visible and listening as methods to building relationships. He indicated that he “made a point to get into every classroom once a week.”
BARBARA echoed this view, revealing that she has:

spent a lot of time out on the school site smiling, greeting people, just letting people know that I'm here and I'm happy to be here. Even though some days maybe not so much. Once you're out there and you're visible, that helps a lot to start building relationships, rather than totally being in the office all the time, looking through all the paperwork, trying to figure out everything that needs to be done.

Just as BARBARA made it a point to be out on the school site greeting people, so did BEVERLY and FRED. BEVERLY insisted that when she arrived to Johnson ES that she spent a lot of time “just mostly like putting my face out there…being visual, kind of creating a positive atmosphere just with general conversation.” Additionally, FRED described how he went about being visible to build relationships. He acknowledged that:

It was a purposeful—Visits to the classrooms. Purposeful walkthroughs. Really, non-threatening, non-evaluative. Just, "Hi, how are you doing?" Some of them very funny, really funny… And then that first year that I was there all the departments had lunch during the same period. I visited them all. I wanted to get in. I wanted them to see. I participated in different things, after-school activities, get-togethers…

Listen. Being visible was not the only way that the newly transitioned principals engaged their staff to build relationships. Participants also suggested that actively listening to their staff members aided in the relationship building process. GABRIELLE described her relationship with her instructional leadership team. She stated, “I built a very strong relationship with those guys and they were a big, strong core for me. I think a lot of it was just listening and responding to some things.” Likewise, LYNNE offered that it was important that her staff knew that she cared. She showed this by listening to them, “even listening to their personal lives too.” On the professional level, ROSA mentioned that “you have to observe, you have to listen, you have to sit down and talk to people to kind of hear about what they would like to see changed and things like that.” Many of the participants considered listening important. However, gaining some early successes once arriving to their new school required both listening and taking action. This was best illustrated by BEVERLY who shared:
Our school was dirty. It was filthy. It looked like a total garage all the time. There were all these tables that were lying in the halls with all these clothes that families could just come and pick up at any time... It looked like a 24 hour rummage sale. So we took the tables away. We got the clothes out to people. We put the table in a different location so it wasn't as soon as you walk on campus. So that was like an early win. People knew that I was listening and kind of taking some action.

When it came to listening, the two high school principals, FRED and WHITNEY, who both were appointed from middle school principalships, presented unique perspectives. In offering advice to newly transitioned principals about being new to a school community and building relationships, both FRED and WHITNEY mentioned the importance of listening. WHITNEY recommended:

It's just remembering to stop and listen to the person, because you can get real caught up in saying, "No, I don't have time," or, "I'll get with you later," and not follow up, regardless of who that is, but I think that if you remember ... You've got to put the people before you put the job.

FRED extended this recommendation and highlighted the importance of listening. He said:

You can't just hear, you have to listen. You really need to listen. And even if it involves some level of pretending, you have to value what the people say and make them feel that what they say is really important. In some cases, it is. To them it's always important. To me, on the scale of one to ten it might be a three. But to them it's a nine. Well, I need to recognize that and I need to listen and pay attention to that. Listening is the key.

Be involved and get others involved. To build relationships, principals discussed having an “all hands on deck” mentality. At least half of the principals mentioned that it was important for them, when establishing relationships, to let their staff see them involved and encourage the participation of others. FRED immediately went to work upon arriving at Hammond HS to show his commitment to the school by establishing 13 school committees that focused on a wide range of areas. Creating these committees allowed him to obtain an objective view of the school, but he also used this opportunity to encourage members of the staff to feel comfortable with him as the school leader. Similar to FRED’s actions of getting others involved was the work of DOROTHY. She states:
Anything I ever did I told them what I was going to do, the reason why I was going to do it, and asked them what their thoughts were. So I always tried to keep everybody-- And I know we're talking about teachers but I would bring in, like, my PTA president and some of the community people…

DOROTHY wanted everyone to take ownership of Heights ES. She showed her commitment by being a hard worker and inviting others to take part in the conversations regarding the school.

WHITNEY further elaborated concerning her approach of utilizing her involvement as a method to build relationships. She explained:

I always say people want to work hard for someone who works hard, and I think that is probably the key to what I do. I am passionate about this being a phenomenal school, and a school that is all about kids, but I think that I'm willing to do whatever needs to be done. I don't ask any of my followers to do anything I'm not willing to do, whether that's taking out trash, or serving lunches, or covering classes, or tutoring kids. I'm 100% in it for the experience these kids walk away with.

CARTER expounded upon this notion, agreeing that:

I'll do whatever it takes for the kids to be successful. That includes getting pied in the face, getting slimed, just building that type of culture that we're all in it together. All hands on deck, and we'll do what it takes.

He went on to share that eliminating ego and his disinterest in throwing his weight around of being an administrator has further aided in getting others involved and building relationships. He shared:

One thing that I let them know is I take my job seriously, but I don't take the title itself, as an administrator, I don't wear that title on my chest. It's more about my job responsibilities. So, I wanted to let them know that we're in this together, titles are checked at the door.

Being in this together is a constant theme that the participants reminded their staff of. Many of the participants spoke of this idea, but LYNNE drove the point home, as it had been previously discussed at a meeting on the morning of her interview. She passionately declared:

And I just had to correct them this morning in lead team. "Well you're the boss, this is your decision." No. This is your school. This is not my school. And I have to remind the staff of that a lot because they see the principal as, "You make all the final decisions, or these are your decisions to make." No. I take that big piece of building these
relationships where that we are a group making decisions together. And I value what you have to say because this is our school. This is not just my school and I want you all to be a part of the decision making process.

Unlike many of the aforementioned participants who willingly sought to involve others, GABRIELLE’s hand was forced, due to the unpleasant relationship between her and her assistant principal. GABRIELLE specified:

I did a lot of planning on my own and tried to mainstream some of the things that I made her a part of. And quite frankly, I tried to mainstream some of the things that I told her I actually wanted to accomplish and it seemed to work a whole lot better. I asked her for her input when I wanted her input, but truly I just made the decisions for the school.

As a result of the relationship, or lack thereof, between GABRIELLE and her assistant principal, she was able to focus on building relationships with other teachers who wanted to be involved. She remarked that their relationship made it easier to “quite frankly, ask some of my other teacher leaders who I knew wanted to be a part of making our school better.” Consequently, GABRIELLE remained able to build relationships, despite the failed relationship with her assistant principal.

**Know your people personally and professionally.** Another common theme amongst participants was the importance of knowing your people personally and professionally. More than half of the principals discussed the value of knowing who their staff members were beyond being a worker on their campus. DOROTHY shared, “First I try to have a real cordial conversation with them just about their life. ‘How are you? Tell me about your child?’ And when they know that you care then it goes on from there.” Knowing that one cares was also important to CARTER. Equally important, however, was that his staff members at Woodson ES also got to know him on a personal level. He stated:

I think whatever your comfort level is you get to know them on a personal level, let them know you on a personal level but get to know them on a personal level. Take time to sit down and just ask them questions that are not school related. That personal type of relationship building.
Participants appeared to be intentional about getting to know their staff members. However, no one appeared more intentional than FRED. He disclosed:

I'm going to find out about things. Whether I'm interested or not in who you are, you won't know that. You know? I'm going to ask you about your family, and kids, and whatever. I pick up on things and I listen, and so on… So it was very purposeful in establishing a personal and professional relationship with the faculty.

Being purposeful about knowing the staff personally and professionally seemed to escape BEVERLY after her first year. The interview provided her an opportunity to reflect on what she could do differently, and getting to know her staff on a more personal level was a recurring theme. She felt that she “hit that really hard and heavy” in her first year as principal at Johnson ES. However, she “got caught up with the regular flow and demands and everything,” and failed to further her knowledge of her staff during her second and third year. She suggested that she would show more consistency in the upcoming school year, indicating that:

As I'm moving into next year I know I'll be doing… It will be kind of like a rebirth of that sort of thing—just getting out there and talking to people. Just standing in the hall and not be so focused and driven on getting to the next thing. Really just kind of standing there and talking with them. After my first year-- Although I had made connections professionally and people felt comfortable with me, I didn't know a lot about them personally. Who are their kids? How many do they have? What's going on in their life? So trying to take more time. And there's some who just don't want to share and I'm cool with that too. But really just trying to show that I'm taking the time, that if you want to share that stuff with me, I'm here.

As noted in BEVERLY’s experience, the daily grind of being a principal can cause one to neglect the actions one takes when first hired. Similar to the experience of BEVERLY is the experience of WHITNEY, who faced a gut check moment during the interview. WHITNEY talked about a teacher that she had hired from Chicago. She explained that, prior to the teacher moving to the area, they had talked on the phone regularly, and she had helped her find a place to live. However, once the school year started, WHITNEY was so “knee-deep in drama in establishing the new team, that I forgot about her.” She went on to say:
The teacher ended up being pregnant, and got into a situation in the classroom, where that's when she revealed she was pregnant, and I was like, "Why did you not tell me?" She's like, "I haven't seen you." That was a good check moment... you can get lost in the system and forget about the people.

Having an understanding of who one’s staff members are personally and professionally can help the principal move the school forward. It also assists in establishing relationships. When discussing the ability to build relationships and knowing your people, WHITNEY revealed, “I have some teachers that are strong in one area and weak in another. I'd never go to the weak ones if I needed something strong from another.” Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of one’s teachers was just as important to LIONEL, who acknowledged that knowing the staff personally and professionally creates a better environment for all. He shared:

I think you try and get to know them personally and professionally and you try to line their strengths with the opportunities you put them in front of. To me that's the job, that's the job. You're going to have happier people, you're going to have better relationships, I think, when you can do that. So it's getting to know-- Knowing them and all of them. That includes personal and professional. From things like assigning duties. You got one that has daycare in the morning to drop their child off. That's like, "Alright, let's work with that." But it comes down to knowing your staff. Really knowing those things about them. This person is travelling from all across town so they're asking for an afternoon duty for a reason. It's not because they're lazy, it's because they have legitimate situation. You know what I mean? So I think you're trying to meet everybody where they're at.

LIONEL also had a unique approach on getting to know his staff members professionally at Ritchie MS. He disclosed:

One thing I do too is like, in terms of professional, I always want to know what people's three to five-year plan is. Always have like, what are you working towards? And trying to line up everything with that. To me that helps build-- That's a relationship piece that's built in. You're trying to align growth opportunities for people that want that, but it really comes down to knowing. One of my teachers had a passion for being a Success Coach so you want to probably put him in situations where he's going to help students that are challenging. He does that naturally, but the more you can help, kind of, steer that you know where-- You see something in him.

Observations/Evaluations hinder the development of relationships. For many of the participants, transitioning to their new schools caused mixed emotions. These emotions were
exacerbated for five of the participants who entered their new school having to complete
observations or evaluations of members of their new teaching staff. The obligation to evaluate
and observe teachers after mere months or weeks of being on the job proved to disrupt their
ability to build relationships. For instance, SIMONE discussed that many of her teachers had
been previously rated exemplary, but when she observed them, she did not see exemplary
actions. Consequently, friction developed between her and teachers because many of the
teachers felt that she was evaluating them without knowing them or their teaching styles.
GABRIELLE profoundly laid out the strain of completing evaluations and observations once
arriving after the previous principal had been out for nearly six weeks. She expressed:

I had to do 23 observations, and 23 fall evaluations on teachers. I walked in this door and
I had three and a half weeks to do that. I had no time to build relationships with people.
And that was the tone that I set when I walked in the door. I wish that I would have
fought that a little bit harder. I wish I would have. Or wish I could have gone back and
changed when I came or changed what that really looked like because I feel like I was put
in such an unfair position. And I was evaluating people who were effective under the
previous principal’s eyes but not necessarily under mine. And I just feel like I started off
on a foot of nothing but an evaluator. And it's just I didn't have a lot of time to build the
relationships that I feel like truly an incoming principal needs to have. And there's
nothing I can do about it now. I just got to move on from that. But I promise you I'd
think twice before I'm taking on a school that's sitting in that position.

GABRIELLE was not the only principal put into this compromising position.
BARBARA, too, had to start off observing teachers who were not comfortable with how she
observed. In fact, the observation process was a huge issue for her upon her transition because
“the minute you start going into classrooms and you don't really have that relationship yet, and
you start evaluating and perhaps it's not the same way they felt like they were evaluated before.”
She understood that this was the way the school district operated. CARTER also tried to
understand that this was how the school district functioned. He explained that he walked into his
school situation where he wanted to sit back and get to know his school staff, but unfortunately,
he had observations to complete. He shared that he had to be at a 65% completion rate for
observations by February. When he arrived in January, they were only at 20%, putting him in an uncomfortable position. He went on to say, “I relayed that to the teachers that I am going to unfortunately have to start off getting to know you by doing observations.”

FRED felt similar sentiments to the aforementioned principals. He felt that a drawback of being a principal in a school the size of Hammond HS was the “required number of classroom observations and evaluations that took me out of the mainstream.” He went on to say that once he received the appointment to the principalship, he had a short window of time in which to complete his observations. He commented that he “had 60 or more classroom observations to finish. And then I had 153 spring evaluations yearlong summary. I didn't even see some of these people teach. I felt very hog-tied, if you wish.” FRED’s obligation to fulfill his duties as the new principal took him away from being out and about in the building. While he was able to complete all the observations in a timely matter, he realized that he could have allocated more time to be out and about in the building rather than in classroom observations. He disclosed that it caused him to make a change to future observation schedules. Thus, FRED is no longer tied up in observations more than four periods a day. He admitted, “I needed some breathing time. I needed some time to be out there.”

Unlike the other principals, BARBARA did not have to complete observations or evaluations following her transition. Due to her arrival at the end of the school year in April, the previous principal had the observations and evaluations complete. BARBARA remarked, “I was just able to come and observe without having to evaluate or give anything. I was just able to come and watch and see what was going on.” Not having to complete the observations and evaluations gave BARBARA the opportunity to better understand the school, get its pulse, and focus on developing relationships with her staff.
The findings in this section confirm the importance of building and establishing relationships as the new principal of a school. The findings suggest that leaders must also be active participants in the process. Along with being active participants, many of the leaders discussed the significance of knowing their staff members and their stories. Getting to know their staff members helped ease the transition of some principals and allowed them to build meaningful relationships. One unanticipated finding, however, was the extent to which transitioning principals in the middle of the school year affected the relationship building process. As the findings show, many of the newly transitioned principals were forced to start the relationship building process by observing or evaluating staff members with whom they had no prior connection. Consequently, for some, this led to unintended outcomes and some challenging relationships.

**Characteristics of Leader-Follower Relationships**

During the interviews, the participants listed many qualities they believe lead to strong or challenging relationships. However, the most consistent quality was trust. As a result, the discussion on trust focused on what trust looked like when it was established and not established in a relationship. Additionally, the analysis revealed a significant focus on communication, or as most participants labeled it, “fierce conversations.” Following are the narratives that support the themes in this category.

**Fierce conversations are a main ingredient in strong and challenging relationships.** The analysis revealed that communication can help or impede building a relationship. Findings in this study support this finding, as nine of the participants discussed “fierce conversations” as being a key component to strong or challenging relationships. Additionally, given the frequency of the term’s usage, it is believed that “fierce conversations” is likely district jargon. In
relationships that principals described as strong between them and followers, fierce conversations often provided an opportunity for the leader and follower to be open, honest, and transparent with each other without feelings being hurt. For instance, LYNNE described this when discussing her relationship with two of her assistant principals. She explained, “I’m not afraid for them to tell me if I done something wrong or they think-- And their receptive that if I had that same conversation with them.” The openness and confidence in sharing their opinion with each other has led LYNNE to have a “great positive working relationship” with her administrative team. Likewise, for GABRIELLE, the strong conversations were about being able to share and receive valuable advice without taking offense at each other’s comments. She indicated that the deep conversations occurred “in the best interest of each other.” She portrayed those conversations as:

that first somebody to feel confident enough to tell me that I'm wrong. Even though I'm the boss. Because they all don't want to tell you that but when you trust that I'm going to respect you no matter what you do or that I'm going to treat you any different just because you're choosing to do something different.

Similar to LYNNE and GABRIELLE, BEVERLY also experienced conversations that were deep and profound, but had a positive intent. She mentioned that these discussions typically occurred with people with whom she had a more trusting relationship. They provided BEVERLY an opportunity to gather feedback on her leadership style and areas where she could improve. She stated, “we can have more of those conversations and they do feel comfortable enough being able to say to me, ‘You used to do this a lot and you're not doing that so much anymore.’” The fierce exchanges between her and those she trusts are often gut checks and reinforce what she needs to do to maintain quality relationships with her staff members.

BEVERLY went on to explain how a conversation helped a new teacher. She described the teacher as starting to lose her energy because she “came out the gate really strong.”
BEVERLY said that she was able to have an engaging conversation with the teacher that seemed like a breath of fresh air for the teacher. In the conversation, she was able to share with the teacher the similarities they shared in their first years of teaching. She explained:

It was like a breath of fresh air for her because here was her principal having this conversation with her and like it was okay. It's not about her getting in trouble or anything like that. It's okay. So what do you need? We put some things in place for her and helped her kind of re-evaluate her day and where she was spending all her energy. She felt more energized to get through the day, felt better planned, and was being more consistent.

Reflecting on that conversation, BEVERLY shared that it felt good to share her story and then come back to visit how she was spending her time and energy. CARTER also described a story in which he had a year’s worth of tough conversations with a teacher about her student’s test scores. He described the teacher as being “rated on the high end year, after year, after year but her scores were the lowest in fifth grade.” After multiple tough conversations, he mentioned that things clicked for the teacher. He described a handwritten note the teacher gave him, “just expressing her satisfaction for working with her and helping her realize some areas that she had to grow in.”

For some of the participants, having tough conversations were not always positive. Many of the participants illustrated how tough the conversations actually are because they involve challenging a staff member. During BARBARA’s interview, she detailed her interactions with a second grade teacher who made some disparaging remarks to a student. BARBARA questioned whether the teacher knew how grave and negative her remarks were. She stated, “You know the kid's feeling it if I'm feeling it just in the conversation I'm having with her, and other faculty members have mentioned it to me.” She mentioned that the remarks made by the teacher made her “blood boil” and reached a point where she had to remind the teacher that the student is a child.
ROSA, too, faced tough conversations in challenging relationships. As mentioned, one of her roughest relationships upon arriving at Parks ES was with the representative for the Classroom Teachers Association (CTA). In describing the start of their relationship, ROSA divulged that the teacher appeared to be the principal at the school because everybody went to her. ROSA felt that they had to “squash that.” Thus, she felt it was important to have a conversation with her about boundaries and expectations. She disclosed that she told the teacher:

You don't have to be that go-to person. I'm here now. If you have concerns let me know so I can handle it. I said I don't operate with feeling like you're cutting my legs off from under me when I can handle situations for you.

ROSA felt it important to establish an understanding between her and the teacher. She also believed it important to institute role boundaries. ROSA shared that, after the fierce conversation, the teacher “felt like at the end of the day she could breathe and actually just teach and not just function as a union rep here at this school, because that's pretty much what she was doing.” Based on the interview with ROSA, it was evident that she was not afraid of having tough conversations. She described conversations as “heart to heart” with teachers who appeared unmotivated to teach at the school. She highlighted these conversations by revealing:

I try to relate it to them in the way of, if you see yourself right now and how your face looks I can only imagine how you're walking into your classroom because you're not going to tell me that you're able to turn it off and turn it on like that. Absolutely not. And I said, at the end of the day your kids, they represent you. They pick on your vibes. And you may not think so but they do. So while you're telling me you have unmotivated kids I can tell you that you look like an unmotivated teacher.

ROSA sensed that these type conversations are lacking in many principals’ leadership styles. She felt that, as a principal, you must be willing to have the “hard conversations,” and if one did not, it would be impossible to move the school forward. Therefore, she did not hesitate to say something to her teachers, regardless of how they responded.
Not all new principals were initially focused on having tough conversations after transitioning to their new schools. SIMONE discussed her lack of attention to having difficult conversations. She expressed that she allowed things to fester “a little too long before having to talk to some teachers.” Consequently, she had other staff members questioning when and how issues would be addressed. For SIMONE, similar to CARTER, many of her tough conversations centered on evaluations and rating teachers. With the mounting concerns of her inattention to the tough conversations, she began to address those that needed it most. She mentioned that since then, “there’s been lots of conversations.”

**The foundation of leader-follower relationships is trust.** When describing the characteristics of a leader-follower relationship, a consistent theme amongst the participants was trust. With nearly every participant speaking about trust or the lack thereof, it was evident that, for newly transitioned principals, trust was the foundation of the leader-follower relationship. In fact, participants were asked on a scale of 1-5, with one being not important at all and five being very important, to rate the importance of trust in the leader-follower relationship. Eleven of the 12 participants answered five, signaling that trust was paramount. Some participants further explained that belief. LIONEL replied, “It’s high, very high… that’s like a six.” Similarly, FRED said that it was a “five to the fifth power” and further stated that “trust between an administrator and faculty member is critical.” CARTER shared the same outlook as FRED, believing that “if the trust isn't there then you're not going to get a person who may work 100% for that particular leader.”

Establishing and building trust is imperative for newly transitioned principals. For the participants of this study, it was imperative that they built trust early on to move the school forward. DOROTHY conveyed this importance by revealing that there needs to be mutual trust
between her and her staff. She specifically spoke of her leadership team and maintained, “If I
could not trust them I could not share information with them and move the school where I
needed to go.” DOROTHY stressed the significance of trust in the relationship between a leader
and follower, insisting that “if teachers don’t trust you, they’re not going to work hard for you.”
LYNNE, too, discussed a follower’s unwillingness to work for a leader that he or she did not
trust. Thus, for her, being transparent was important. She shared:

I don't sugarcoat anything; I don't hide anything. Again, I'm a very transparent leader and
what you see is what you get. And when I say that I'm doing and this is what we're going
to do, I follow through. And I'm just honest. Sometimes they may not want to hear the
honesty, but that's just me as a person.

However, of all the participants, the response of WHITNEY exhibited the magnitude of a leader
and follower having mutual trust. She admitted:

I'm pretty sure if I asked the staff to eat poop because it was right for kids, 97% of them
would put the spoon to their mouths. They might look at me and say, "Are you for real?"
If I had the spoon with me and I'm like, "No, you guys, this is what we got to do." They
would do it.

Certainly, while a newly transitioned principal may not immediately get to the level of trust that
WHITNEY has built with her staff, it is not impossible. But then again, how does one establish
such trust, and how does that relationship look? The participants in this study were asked to
share what their relationships with followers looked like when trust was established and not
established. The following subsections discuss those answers.

Trust established. The characteristics of a leader-follower relationship where trust was
established varied for the participants of this study. Most of the participants described the
relationship as being open and honest. They believed that it was easier to push the follower to do
what needed to be done. WHITNEY described the relationship as a “ballet.” She believed that
the relationship was a “dance that happens,” where she is “doing her thing” and the follower is
doing theirs. Additionally, she felt that when trust was established between a leader and
follower, the follower would be comfortable enough to share ideas regardless of what they thought she might think. She offered that the follower is “asking those hard questions, coming to me with those crazy, out of the box ideas, because that trust is there.”

LYNNE and DOROTHY extended the positions held by WHITNEY. LYNNE affirmed that “the sky’s the limit as far as getting them to do what you want them to do.” She contended that when a follower knows that he or she can trust the leader, they are more likely to do what is asked of them because “they know that I'm not setting them up for failure or something. I have the confidence in them.” Likewise, DOROTHY considered the relationship to be one where “they do an awful lot for you and I can ask them things and they will just run with it.”

Relationships with established trust seemed to promote openness for most of the participants. At least eight of the participants discussed that they felt more candid and honest with followers in relationships with established trust. LIONEL acknowledged that his relationships were “more open,” which made it “easier to have the difficult conversations.” Similarly, CARTER expressed that conversations were more open but shocked him. He explained that his surprise came in his followers’ willingness to share personal information with him, including personal health issues. NIKKI and GABRIELLE also depicted relationships that were open. NIKKI felt that when trust was present, followers “come in, we can laugh, joke about certain things. They feel comfortable bringing issues to me whether I agree or disagree.” She went on to say the relationships allowed them to have healthy conversations where, when the follower walked away, he or she would know that she would “not treat them any differently,” and they would feel confident that whatever was discussed would remain between them.

GABRIELLE further drove home the idea of openness. She said:

I think whenever you develop trust with people it's about being able to have those strong conversations between each other that you know on a professional level you're okay with.
It's not-- I don't take offense of what you say, you don't take offense of what I say, because we trust that we're about the best interest of each other in that group. I think that trust is about really being able also to say...like that first somebody to feel confident enough to tell me that I'm wrong even though I'm the boss because they all don't want to tell you that. But, when you trust that I'm going to respect you no matter what you do or that I'm not going have something-- I'm not going to turn this negative clock off, for lack of a better word. I don't even know what you call it, but I'm not going to treat you any different just because you're choosing to do something different.

While most of the participants described relationships that featured established trust as being open, SIMONE expanded on how those relationships looked. She imparted that her expectations are sometimes higher for followers she trusts. She also noted that she is likely to depend more on them. She said:

More of the staff that I really trust are the ones I'll probably go to. "Can you do this? Can you do this?" Kind of thing. I think also I guess it goes with expectations because I just know they're going to do it so I don’t have to devote as much energy to them as they usually do. I think I feel more comfortable with them in a sense.

Although relationships were open and leaders appeared more comfortable with their followers when there was trust, it was the complete opposite for the leaders and their relationships when trust was not established.

*Trust nonexistent.* Just as leaders discussed their relationships when trust was established, they also provided insight on what their relationships looked like when trust was not established. For some of the participants, the relationships were often strained by the actions or inactions of the follower. WHITNEY concluded that the inactions or actions of a follower would cause a “fracture problem.” She admitted that she and the follower would “bump heads.” She said:

If I don't believe you have the best interest of kids at heart, or I've come to you with a situation only to find out that you lied about it, or you didn't give me the truth, I'll give you one opportunity to make a mistake, but a second time that happens, that's a choice, and...You just can't be here.
WHITNEY shared further that the lack of trust in her relationship with followers has caused her to encourage two previous administrators to seek employment at another school. She also mentioned that she had been recently involved in a relationship with a department head that lacked trust. She maintained that she refused to micromanage an individual’s job, especially if they were in a leadership role. She declared, “If you can't lead the way I lead, no disrespect, but that's not how a team works, and I'm not mad at you for it, but you've got to go. You've got to go somewhere else.” Although she was the only participant that spoke of assisting a teacher in finding a school where he or she would be comfortable, many of the leaders communicated the difficulty in working with a follower they did not trust.

Unlike the relationships that were “more open” and allowed for easier conversations, LIONEL conceded that relationships where trust was not established were “more distant” and “palpable.” He mentioned that these relationships involved less communication between the leader and follower. Along with the decreased communication, SIMONE found herself more critical of those she did not trust. She said, “I'm just questioning. I just got to go deeper. With the ones I trust, it's quick. ‘Okay, yeah. I know. I got it. Good.’ But the others it's always that, ‘Hmm. Is that sincere? What's the message behind that?’” FRED, on the other hand, painted a picture of how a staff member may be critical of the leader. He proposed that the follower will question every decision made by the leader, whether it is the lunch schedule or their room assignment. He declared, “It's all going to be questioned and that principal is fighting an uphill battle. Once that trust is broken-- If a teacher doesn't feel he or she can trust me, I got a real problem.”

The problem also lies in the follower being uncooperative because he or she does not trust the leader. NIKKI claimed that when trust has not been established, followers are more
likely to invent excuses for “everything that you ask.” Furthermore, ROSA described the followers as feeling reluctant to “come to you for anything.” To illustrate this point, CARTER described a situation in which a speech pathologist he had hired did not feel she had adequate technology in her room. He explained that the relationship was already strained, and the trust was broken after he did not approve a trip she wanted to take within the first month of the school year. Consequently, she sent emails behind his back in an attempt to go above him. He was certain that this result occurred because of a relationship that lacked trust.

The lack of trust in a relationship between a leader and follower can shape the leader’s actions. BARBARA and SIMONE discussed that, when they did not trust a follower, it led them to be more visible. BARBARA revealed that she had a teacher who she did not trust around kids and, as a result, found herself frequently visiting the teacher’s classroom. SIMONE, however, reflected on how relationships where trust is not established could be further strained. She indicated, “I’m more visible in there and they know that. And sometimes I think that can hurt the trust because they see that. There she is again, and you know? So I tried to balance it… But there's still some who it has been harming.” While SIMONE put forward the notion that the lack of trust between a leader and follower can cause harm to the follower, GABRIELLE presented how the leader is affected. She unveiled:

For me? I'm super guarded. I'm very quiet, very reserved, which is not me. I won't involve people in things who I don't trust. And that's hard because there are people on my campus I still don't-- It's not that I don't trust, I don't think that they're really effective so that might be a different word. I can have a good, "Hey, how are you? How's the family?" type relationship. I don't want to tell you that I'm harsher with those teachers but I'm less warm. I will tell you that. And I know that I'm less warm because there is something in your gut that tells you that, like I don't feel like I can have as much as a vulnerable conversation. I don't feel that connection with that person. I don't feel like if I did say something that I'm going to be-- I don't feel confident that if I said something or did something, that I wouldn't be judged and treated like--I don't trust things they say. I don't trust like when they come to me with a situation with a kid, I very rarely believe what they say before I talk to the child. I have a really, really hard time with that. Or, I
will tell you that there have been times where-- God, I don't ever use these words, but like I would say that there are times where I've been-- I'm going to use a different word than harsh, but very direct, very direct. And direct to the point that they probably have walked out of the room and said, "You're a--" You know what I'm saying? They probably have and I'm alright with it. I am. Because I can't trust you to do what you've been asked to do.

The above accounts present the importance of trust in the leader-follower relationship. They show that, for newly transitioned principals, it is critical to establish trusting relationships to advance the school. If trusting relationships are not established, problems can arise, and it can force principals, as in GABRIELLE’s case, to be guarded and unwilling to involve others. Uniquely, during her interview, ROSA brought up that she did not share anything personal with her staff. She maintained that personal information was “for her friends outside of school.” The discussion with ROSA introduced the idea that for some leaders, their actions are guided by a professional trust and personal trust with their followers. Presenting the idea that there was a professional trust and personal trust caused the researcher to ask participants their thoughts on the two. ROSA emerged as an anomaly, as the remaining participants believed that the professional trust and personal trust go hand in hand. Many of the newly transitioned principals felt that if a leader wanted to be respected and wanted to move the school forward, then they needed to exhibit both a professional trust and personal trust in their followers.

As noted above, fierce conversations and trust are two major attributes of the relationship between the participants of this study and their followers. The findings indicate how valuable it is for a leader to establish relationships where they can trust their follower(s) and feel comfortable enough to speak his or her mind. The analysis of findings is consistent with research in the leader-member exchange literature that conveys the importance of mutual trust, loyalty, and communication. The next section will present evidence on followers and their influence on the leader.
Followers and Their Influence

Followership literature discusses that the engagement styles of followers range on a continuum from passive to active. During the interviews, participants were invited to discuss characteristics of their followers and how their followers have influenced them throughout their transition as the principal. Each of the participants mentioned that they had followers that exhibited passive, active, or neutral engagement styles. Essentially, each principal experienced different groups of people once they arrived to their new school. Some of the principals discussed in greater detail the effect these followers and their styles had on building relationships and their personal approach to leadership. These accounts are detailed below.

Leaders experience different types of followers. It was not uncommon for many of the participants in this study to arrive at their new school site knowing no more than three individuals. In this study, only one participant, WHITNEY, knew more than a handful of her staff members once she took over as the new principal. With each participant’s arrival, as a newly transitioned principal, one of the major unknowns was the type of followers and personalities he or she would inherit. Consequently, each principal experienced a wide variety of followers. For the most part, in the beginning of their transition, all of the participants in the study had some followers who initially resisted their leadership and were passive. For instance, NIKKI recalled a follower sharing with her, “I've seen principals come and go. You're no different from anybody else. You will not tell me what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.” The followers at NIKKI’s school had grown accustomed to principals coming and going. Additionally, they had learned to function without a leader, as the previous principal had taken a leave of absence and never came back. NIKKI basically had followers who told her how the school operated and challenged her to make changes.
NIKKI was not the only newly transitioned principal to experience followers who cared little for the leader or did not respond to them. BARBARA and BEVERLY had similar followers. BARBARA shared that many of her followers questioned her appointment, knowing the school from which she came. She believed that many of her followers were not resistors, but rather, feared those individuals who were “strongholds.” She said, “But we've got a few who are strongholds and the rest of them are scared. They're scared. So even though they want to get on the bus they're scared to get on the bus.” She expressed further the frustration a new principal faces with this type of followership:

I need them to be on board with me in some form or fashion. I need some participation. I need them to come to the table. At least, let's just come to the table instead of just going through the motions and doing more of that apathy or that passiveness…

In BEVERLY’s situation, she tried to persuade her staff to respond to her call to be vocal about calling out unacceptable actions by each other. She revealed that one of the first things she noticed when she arrived at Johnson ES was that staff members refused to call each other out. She mentioned that her staff was so comfortable with letting things happen because “we’re just supposed to be friends.” Her biggest pocket of people was those who were “kind of coasting, thought everything was fine, and some other lady can come in here, that's good, but I'm going to do it the way it's always been done.”

At Woodson ES, CARTER also experienced a follower similar to the group at BEVERLY’s school. While he only faced one true resistor, he was not afraid to “clean house a little bit” because some of the teachers were not “effective with this type of population.” One of those teachers was the teacher who chose to resist his leadership. He mentioned that she was not only performing poorly, but she was also “not very receptive to feedback from the coaches or from admin.”
Resisting the leader was not the only type of followers the newly transitioned principals experienced. According to GABRIELLE, she experienced a culture of followers who had classified themselves as the “haves and have nots.” She discovered upon her arrival that there were some “very strong teachers” at Douglas ES. However, “the clicky part of this building” made the school horrible. She explained the haves and have nots in greater detail:

These people were the haves, every single one of them will do nothing but talk negative about all the other teachers in this building and it was very overwhelming to work with. Because those who were haves got to basically run and do whatever the heck they wanted. If you were seen as effective you were the have, and if they saw you as ineffective you were the have not or you just did stuff different, or you didn't conform, or if certain people said you were not good, then you were not good, despite maybe what you saw with your own eyes.

She went on to describe her haves as individuals who were highly effective and “go-getters.” However, the most noteworthy depiction of them was describing them as “a bunch of bitches, for lack of a better word.” GABRIELLE explained, “truth be told, they thought that their shit didn’t stank and that they were better than everybody and that was ugly of them.”

Remarkably, the attitude displayed by the “haves” at GABRIELLE’s school was not recurring in the other schools. DOROTHY discussed the differences of teachers at her school. She conveyed, “Most of the teachers here want to do well. Most everybody is helpful.” The idea of being helpful was also established in the followers at WHITNEY’s school. She expounded on this notion by sharing that these were teachers she called her “road warriors” and who were willing to “get in the trenches.” She felt that these followers helped to keep the pulse of the building. She expressed:

That's crucial, because I can't be everywhere, I can't know what's happening with 2300 kids, but I think when they realize things need to come to me, and they're not huge things, necessarily, they may be little things, that's when they're the biggest asset to me. Don't come with a problem that's already exploded, come to it when you know something's not right, and give me an opportunity to fix it.
Given WHITNEY’s previous stint as the assistant principal at Houston HS, she faced the most positive group of followers. However, to concisely show several groups that newly transitioned principals encounter are the words of FRED, who stated:

There’s that segment of the population that because I'm the principal of this school, and because I was selected to be the principal of this school I had their trust from the get go. That's just who they were. And they communicated that to me and so forth. There were others who played the game. "He's the principal, he's important. I got to trust him. I don't really trust him but I'm going to show him or make him think that I trust him." They exist. Then there's the others that were compliant. Some segment of the population that did as they were told or did as we suggested and so forth, and didn't say anything. Then there's another group that did as they were told and bitched about it in the faculty lounge or wherever they were. And then there were a couple who said, "I'm not doing that."

The current data highlight the wide spectrum of followers one is likely to encounter when becoming the principal at a new school. The data reflect that, following a principal transition, some followers are actively involved while others are passive. The data further reveals that some principals experience followers who isolate themselves and choose to resist the new leader. Additionally, the data also indicate that some leaders have followers who are immediately on the team of the newly transitioned principal. Strikingly, however, with time, many of the followers who were initial headaches either leave or come around to be a more positive follower. Yet, in the process, whether positive or negative, followers have influenced the leader.

**Followers cause leaders to be more and do more.** As previously noted, when newly transitioned principals take over a school, they are likely to experience different types of followers. Essentially, they encounter individuals who are positive or negative and passive or active. Whether followers were positive or negative, or passive or active, the participants in the current study recognized that the followers influenced their actions and attitudes. For one reason or another, each participant experienced a follower who made his or her “blood boil.” In fact, both LYNNE and DOROTHY were often infuriated by their custodians. LYNNE spoke of the laziness of her head and day custodian stating, “Between the two of them at times, they just
agitate me. I just have to whoosh…” Similarly, DOROTHY was confronted by the apathy of her head custodian. When asked why the custodian caused her headaches, she expressed:

> Because I'm doing his job. Why do I have him when I'm doing your job? I have to do everything. Everything. I have to go around the building and then what would bother me about it is when I brought it up he always had an excuse, and it's like, own it. Own it. Just say, "Okay, I got it. I'll take it over."

As a result of the custodian’s carelessness and lack of improvement, DOROTHY recommended that he be demoted to a regular custodian.

While those are two examples of followers causing frustration for their leaders, many of the participants shared examples of how their followers influenced them to be a better leader and positively shaped their leadership capacity. DOROTHY felt that the excitement of her followers has caused her to “want to do that much more.” Not only did her followers generate excitement for her, but they also “pushed me that much higher,” and they were “helping me lead in the right way.” She went on to say:

> I have learned that I got to. I can't just-- Just because they're bad I can't just sweep them under the rug and ignore them. I have got to deal with it head on. I do want to help them but at the same time my expectation is that they get better. So I’ve learned to really follow through on what I tell them that they have to do…

LYNNE was also impacted by some of her followers. In her case, she learned how to relinquish control. She mentioned that she was the type of person who, once assigned a job, she handled it herself. In her role as principal at Swann MS, she has relied more on her staff, as they have reminded her that they are there to help her and make her job easier. She learned that, as she gave her assistant principals more responsibility, she was not only empowering them, but also creating more time for herself. Giving up control allowed her to be more involved with her family because she was working fewer hours on the weekend.

Followers shaped leaders in several ways. LIONEL and BEVERLY both felt their followers caused them to be more thoughtful before implementing new ideas. LIONEL detailed
how his followers caused him to visit with his most pessimistic follower before putting a new plan in effect. He said:

Whenever I'm getting ready to drop something new I'll call her in and share with her first because I want to know what the push back's going to be. She's going to push back and I want her to push back to me, not to me after the meeting.

BEVERLY, too, became more determined at gathering the input of others before executing different ideas. She believed her followers made her more “bold with some of my leadership styles.” She revealed:

It really makes me— When I'm going to make a decision about putting something out there, it really makes me think about all the different aspects of how it might be perceived—what I'm going to say or do. So, I kind of will slow down and take all of that into consideration before moving forward with it.

Though the followers of BEVERLY and LIONEL drove them to focus on gathering the opinions of others before implementing ideas, the influence of followers on GABRIELLE and WHITNEY differed. The followers of GABRIELLE and WHITNEY caused them both to focus on being more sensitive to others when speaking their mind. WHITNEY succinctly put it as “intent versus impact.” She offered that her “intent may have been one way, but the impact may have been another” and further suggested that her followers taught her not to be “so slick in the mouth.” GABRIELLE, who shared that her followers triggered a softer side to her, advanced this view. She disclosed:

I think I've learned how to be a little bit less harsh. I will say that because I'm really not mean, I promise. I think I just learned that like people take on my personality more than I think I realize that they did. When I’m sad people are. When I’m happy, people are. I think I've learned how to be a lot more transparent. I really learned that I just need to love on my teachers a little bit more. Even the ones I can't stand. You have to.

The impact of GABRIELLE’s followers was noticeable, as she stated that she felt “happier” and “less stressed out this year.”
While the principals were all influenced by their followers and their leadership capacity was shaped, the shaping of ROSA stood out the most. Largely, ROSA’s followers expanded her leadership identity. When she arrived to Parks ES, her biggest headache was the representative for the CTA. She mentioned that the representative attempted to undermine her authority on multiple occasions and tried to use the teacher’s contract against her. Therefore, ROSA felt that her transfer to Parks ES exposed her to “making sure I know my contract.” She touched on how, in previous years, she had glanced at the contract, but this transfer caused her to “know my contract.” The most noteworthy impact appeared to be an attitude shift. ROSA mentioned that at her previous school, it was easier to manage and work with the different styles and personalities of the staff because “everybody had that same mentality, that same work ethic, that we don't need that pat on the back from you.” At Park ES, the staff was different. Not only was she working with an inexperienced staff, but she also felt she was working with a group of individuals who constantly needed that “pat on the back.” ROSA went on to say:

I had to step outside of myself because that's not who I am. I may be sunshining but I don't have time to be walking around patting you on the back and all that kind of stuff. I had to have a come to Jesus with myself about how I could be that person and still be genuine and not be phony because that's what I felt I was going to be if I did that. So, I had to find my type of way to celebrate them and give them that pat on the back that they need.

Although it went against who ROSA was as a leader, her new staff caused her to be more in tune with their needs.

An analysis of the findings in this section reveals that leaders encounter followers they consider positive, negative, or neutral. The evidence shows that, following their transition, a new leader walks into an environment where they know no one and experience different types of people. In the case of the participants of this study, each leader faced followers that generated
positive and challenging relationships. Accordingly, over their time as the leader of their respective schools, each participant’s leadership was shaped by those around him or her.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the profiles of the 12 newly transitioned principals who participated in this narrative research study. Yielding seven themes and three categories, this study sought to (a) uncover how newly transitioned principals make sense of their relationships with followers in their new workplaces; (b) understand the dyadic relationship between principals and followers; and (c) discover the roles of followers in shaping principals’ leadership. Detailed accounts of the data were provided to support the emerging seven themes that fell into the three categories. In the category on building relationships, the themes were: building relationships requires a leader’s active engagement and participation, know your people personally and professionally, and observations/evaluations hinder the development of relationships. The category on the characteristics of the leader-follower relationship produced two themes: fierce conversations are a main ingredient in strong and challenging relationships, and the foundation of the leader-follower relationship is trust. Finally, the third category was on followers and their influence. This category was formed by two themes: leaders experience different types of followers and followers cause leaders to be more and do more. Having reported these findings, the next chapter will interpret the results of this study, draw conclusions, and present recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this research was to explore how newly transitioned principals in a large urban school district in the southeast United States, experiencing frequent transitions, describe their experiences of developing relationships with their followers and to understand their perspectives on how those followers shape their leadership. Specifically, this study sought, from the perspective of the new principal, to: (a) uncover how newly transitioned principals make sense of their relationships with followers in their new workplaces; (b) understand the dyadic relationship between principals and followers; and (c) discover the roles of followers in shaping principals’ leadership. Guiding this study was the primary research question: “How do principals describe the leader-follower relationship during their experience of transitioning to a new school?” The secondary questions included: “How do newly transitioned principals describe the qualities of their relationships with their followers?” and, “How do newly transitioned principals describe the roles that followers play in shaping their leadership?”

To meet the purpose of this study, 12 participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. Each of the participants were newly transitioned principals meaning they have been at their respective school three years or less. Eight of the principals were principals at elementary schools, two at middle schools, and two at high schools. After each interview, the researcher had each interview transcribed, and the data was manually analyzed using an inductive approach designed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013). Following two rounds of coding and a cross-case analysis, three categories and seven themes emerged.

This chapter offers a discussion on the interpretation of those findings. It also relates the findings to the study’s research questions and the conceptual framework. Additionally, this
chapter will highlight implications for practice, implications for theory, and make suggestions for future research. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a reflection on the lessons learned while conducting this study and with a chapter summary.

Interpretation of Themes

As discussed above, the data from this study was manually analyzed using an inductive approach outlined in the work of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013). Three categories and seven themes emerged from the data analysis. The first category, building relationships, had three themes: (a) building relationships requires a leader’s active engagement and participation; (b) know your people personally and professionally; and (c) observations/evaluations hinder the development of relationships. The second category, characteristics of the leader-follower relationship, produced two themes: (a) fierce conversations are an element of strong and challenging relationships; and (b) the foundation of the leader-follower relationship is trust. The final category, followers and their influence, involved two themes: (a) leaders experience different types of followers; (b) followers cause leaders to be more and do more. What follows is an interpretation of these findings based on the study’s categories.

Building Relationships

The primary focus of this research study was to understand how leaders develop relationships with their followers. After a review of the data, three themes emerged regarding building relationships: building relationships require a leader’s active engagement and participation, know your people personally and professionally, and observations/evaluations hinder the development of relationships. Researchers within the educational literature have emphasized the significance of the relationship between principals and teachers (Edgerson & Kritsonis, 2006; Rieg & Marcoline, 2008; Walsh, 2005). In fact, Edgerson and Kritsonis (2006)
have argued that the most successful teachers are those who have a relationship with their principal, “motivating them to do their very best (p. 4).” Within LMX theory, such relationships would be classified as high-quality relationships. Also, within this theory is the idea that leaders should aim to cultivate high-quality relationships with each of their followers. For many of the participants interviewed for this study, developing high-quality relationships did not come easy.

Each of the 12 participants in this study were newly transitioned principals. At the time of the study, all of the principals were hired from another school within the district and had been at their respective school site no more than 3 years. Eight of the 12 principals led schools that were categorized as urban and Title I schools, meaning that 65% or more of their student population received free or reduced lunches. Additionally, six of the eight elementary school principals led schools that are labeled as one of the lowest 300 performing elementary schools in the state. Essentially, for most of these school principals, if they wanted their school to have progress, then relationship building would need to be a priority. However, for most of the participants, these extra variables added another layer of challenges to that process.

As will be discussed in the next section, many of the principals took over schools where many of the followers initially resisted the leadership of the leader. When NIKKI took over her elementary school, for example, the school had no leader and the teachers and staff created their own internal pecking order. Similarly, SIMONE walked into a school where people were hesitant to respect her because they did not know her. In discussing his frustration with some of the initial resistance he faced, LIONEL revealed that building relationships was not his first priority. However, researchers such as Brewster and Railsback (2003) would caution against such an approach; they advocated that principals need to make relationship building their first priority in order to produce substantial change in the school.
This study provided evidence that successful relationship building for principals requires their active participation and engagement. Also, the interviews and analysis confirmed that knowing one’s staff personally and professionally was vital to the relationship-building process. The participants in this study each discussed the particular process they employed to build relationships. For many, because they were the newcomer at the school, it was important that they established a presence by being visible in the halls. SIMONE shared that she was purposeful in visiting classrooms and the bus and car ramps after school. Likewise, BARBARA noted that she spent an enormous amount of time being visible on the school campus “smiling, greeting people, just letting people know I’m here and I’m happy to be here.”

As a new principal, being visible was one way to start the relationship-building process with new staff members. Other methods that the leaders in this study employed to build relationships were listening to their staff and getting involved. It was important to the leaders of this study that their followers knew they were listening to their concerns and were willing to act. WHITNEY explained that, as a principal, it can be easy to brush people off because of concerns about all the tasks one must complete. She went on to share that leaders must “stop and listen to the person.” By being willing to listen to their staff members, the leaders were able to show their support and establish that they cared. In short, in building and maintaining relationships, it is like the old adage says, “people do not care how much you know, they want to know how much you care.”

The leaders also built relationships and showed how much they cared by getting involved and encouraging the participation of their followers. It was not enough that followers saw their principals, but half of the principals felt it was equally important that the followers saw them as WHITNEY and CARTER described “in the trenches.” CARTER maintained that at his school it
was an “all hands on deck” mentality. He made sure his teachers understood that if he asked them to do it, he would do it as well. Kellison (2007) suggested that principals can build relationships with their staff members when they are willing to lend a hand. Participants in this study understood that suggestion and found it helped to develop relationships.

Intriguingly, results of this study highlighted the value of a leader being transparent. The participants in this study found that when they were transparent, their followers responded more to their leadership. LYNNE shared:

> When it comes to building relationships with others is you have to be transparent. You can't hide and try to do things behind the scenes. It doesn't work that way. They can see through that. So you better be transparent.

Along similar lines, BEVERLY acknowledged:

> I just became very transparent with my communication and so people knew, like if they wanted to know something they just needed to ask. I tried to beat them to the punch and not even having to ask and just putting it out there to say, here's what we've got going on. So I think just being honest and open with them helped to build that relationship as well.

Results in this study would suggest that by being transparent, participants were able to foster trust and progress towards high-quality relationships. These results would fall in line with the results of a study conducted by Norman, Avolio, and Luthans (2010). In their study of 304 participants, the researchers aimed to determine how the positivity and transparency of a leader impacted the participants. Although the participants were not followers of the leader, the researchers found that when leaders exhibited positivity and transparency, it positively impacted the participant’s rated trust and perceived effectiveness of the leader. In this case of this researcher’s study, participants expressed that when they actively engaged in being open, supportive, and more transparent, it aided in forming relationships. CARTER saw the power of transparency when in his graduate program he was tasked with creating a family history tree. He realized that he needed to share this with his staff. He stated:
You know what? I need to open up and share this with the teachers. So it was something that I went back and went through some of the things in my childhood, some of the things that may have happened in my life that really shaped my belief in education and the way that I interact and deal with people. So I think them really seeing that helped them see that personal side of me. So it opens up conversations, and then having the pictures of family. They come in and ask questions, those types of things. I think that's something that's really helped open up that personal relationship side of it and obviously it's helped with the professional side.

Rieg and Marcoline (2008) contended that relationship building by a principal will increase test scores and decrease disciplinary issues of a school. They provided 10 ways a principal could produce meaningful results. They maintained that “in order for principals to build relationships that create teams, principals must gain an in-depth knowledge of each and every staff member” (p. 10). In this study, more than half of the participants realized the value in knowing their staff members more than as an employee of the school. Through being transparent, it allowed the principals to connect with their teachers at deeper levels and get to know them personally which in turn helped them professionally. LIONEL mentioned that by getting to know his staff, it helped him establish duties. He shared that if he knew one of his teachers had to drop off their kids in the morning, that he would never assign them morning detail. It was this attention to detail that facilitated relationship building for him.

WHITNEY, too, thought it was important that principals knew their staff personally and professionally. She insisted that she would never assign a teacher to do a task knowing it was not their strength. However, to know their strengths and weaknesses, she felt it was important to know their likes and dislikes. During the interview, WHITNEY had a gut check moment on the importance of knowing your staff personally. She identified a teacher on her campus that she hired from another state, helped find an apartment, and texted and talked to on the phone frequently as the school year approached. However, once the school year started and the “hustle and bustle” began, she did not maintain the same level of communication. She said:
The teacher ended up being pregnant, and got into a situation in the classroom, where that's when she revealed she was pregnant, and I was like, "Why did you not tell me?" She's like, "I haven't seen you." That was a good check moment... you can get lost in the system and forget about the people.

The results of this study suggest that strong principals are able to better build relationships with their followers when they openly communicate, are transparent, offer support, and get to know their teachers beyond an employee ID. Therefore, this researcher offers the following three conclusions:

- Conclusion 1: Following a transition, one of a principal’s main priorities should be relationship building.
- Conclusion 2: Leaders should employ different methods to build and maintain high-quality relationships.
- Conclusion 3: Leaders build the relationship. Followers contribute to its quality.

It is important to discuss that some principals may face mediating variables that may hinder the relationship-building process. For some in this study, that variable was observations and evaluations. Nearly half of the participants transitioned to a school that was behind on its observation and evaluation submissions. Consequently, when principals could have used the time to get to know their new staff, they had to spend it observing and evaluating teachers. Transitioning in the middle of the school year forced these principals to begin their tenure in an awkward position as many of the teachers they evaluated felt like they should not have been evaluating them. Throughout the interviews with the principals affected by this challenge, one could sense how the principals believed they were at a disadvantage when it came to building relationships and getting to know their staff, a factor that shaped some of the study’s implications for practice outlined below.
Characteristics of the Leader-Follower Relationship

Research on LMX theory has indicated that various attributes can influence the quality of a relationship. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggested that high-quality relationships are formed through mutual trust, respect, and obligation. Similarly, Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Liden and Maslyn (1998) characterized the quality of relationships by four dimensions: contribution, loyalty, affect, and professional respect. While each of these characteristics describes high-quality relationships, Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, and Gardner (2009) presented a different view, arguing that communication, or lack thereof, can result in troubled relationships. While the participants of this study shared several examples of characteristics that influenced the qualities of their relationships, the results of this study indicate that communication and trust largely determine the quality of the leader-follower relationship.

In the process of reviewing pertinent literature for this study, this researcher, examining LMX theory, pondered the effect that communication, or lack thereof, would have on a newly transitioned principal and members of the school community. Findings of this study show that communication or “fierce conversations” comprised a component of both relationships that were perceived as strong and those that were perceived as weak. For many of the participants, when tough conversations happened in relationships perceived by the principal as strong or “high quality,” it was viewed positively. However, when fierce conversations took place with staff members who presented a challenge, the relationship appeared to be of low quality. For instance, BARBARA pointed out that she had to communicate with a teacher who made some negative remarks about students. Ultimately, the actions of the teacher and the conversations between BARBARA and this teacher led her not to trust the teacher. Similarly, GABRIELLE, too, had to have fierce conversations with a teacher with whom she had a low-quality
relationship. She shared that there was not much communication between her and the teacher, but the teacher took the lack of communication one step further. GABRIELLE stated:

If I'm doing something that you don't like as I would do to you, come have a conversation with me. Don't make a copy of the contract and then stick it in my box and say, "FYI!" And sign your name on it. Because I promise you the next day I'm calling your ass in when I'm calm enough to have a conversation with you. I freaked out on her over that.

The action by the teacher created a strained relationship. Nonetheless, it supports the position asserted by Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, and Gardner (2009) that a lack of communication can lead to miscues and misperceptions, resulting in troubled and unbalanced relationships. In GABRIELLE’s case, where she failed to communicate her reason behind a decision properly, it caused a tumultuous relationship.

Fierce conversations, or communication, also appeared to be an antecedent to leader-follower relationships that appeared of low or high quality. Several of the principals discussed having open and honest conversations with staff members with whom they shared a close relationship. For many of the principals, these conversations allowed them to let their guard down, share advice, and know that either party would not take offense to what was said. Additionally, several of the principals shared that they felt more inclined to have informal conversations with these staff members. They were likely to check on the staff member, have lighthearted moments, and share information they would not with other teachers. This notion corresponds to the findings in the work of Yrle, Hartman, and Galle (2002). Their study focused on the relationship between the communication styles and LMX of 164 dyads. The results of their study suggested that higher-quality dyad relationships are embodied by “communication patterns where the supervisor provides a high quality of information and permits participation by the subordinate” (p. 266). In essence, and as found in this researcher’s study, leader-follower
relationships where the leader is more open, willing to communicate, and encourage the follower
leads to what LYNNE described as “great positive working relationships.”

While communication emerged as an antecedent to the quality of the relationships
between the leaders and their followers of this study, an outcome of those relationships was trust.
Trust was a strong focus during the interviews with the participants. In the literature on LMX
and trust, Sue-Chan, Au, and Hackett (2012) suggested that trust is important in the leader-
follower relationship because of the leader’s reliance on the follower to meet organizational
objectives. A few of the participants shed light on this suggestion. BEVERLY felt that trust was
paramount because “I can't be everywhere every moment of the day and I need to be able to trust
and know that people are doing what they need to do for kids, whether I'm there or not.”
Similarly, FRED felt that on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very
important, that trust was a “5 to the fifth degree.” He went on to say:

I make 100 decisions a day, maybe more, but I'm just going to use a figure. 100. I make
100 decisions a day. They need to trust my judgment that the decision that I'm making is
right for the school, right for our kids, and right for them.

He also maintained the importance of trust rested on staff members doing their jobs. For many
of the principals in this study, it was essential that they had followers who could be trusted do
what was asked of them. These feelings are supported by the results of the study by Sue-Chan et
al. study which confirmed that a subordinate’s performance positively predicted if a supervisor
trusted the subordinate or not and how the leader evaluated the quality of the LMX relationship.
In this study, it was not uncommon for the participants to discuss the relationships they shared
with followers where trust was nonexistent.

Nearly all of the participants outlined the appearance of a relationship where trust was
absent. Often in those relationships, the leaders perceived the followers as resistant,
uncooperative, negative, or distant. One of the participants, GABRIELLE, described these
relationships as an “uphill battle” and said that she is less warm with those staff members with whom she did not have a trusting relationship. Other principals, such as NIKKI, LIONEL, and ROSA, described the relationships between them and their followers, where trust was missing, as problematic because the followers not coming to the leader with their needs or the follower was “making excuses for everything.” While the motives behind these followers are unknown, the literature on trust and leader-follower relationships may provide some answers.

Scholars such as Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) suggested that trust is established when one is willing to rely on another person in whom he or she has confidence. Likewise, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer, (1998) suggested that scholars define trust as “trust as the willingness of a party (the trustor) to be vulnerable to the actions of another party (the trustee) based on the expectation that the trustee will perform a particular action important to the trustor” (p. 395). In this study, every newly transitioned principal, except WHITNEY, entered their new school knowing no one. Building relationships, establishing trust and being willing to be vulnerable takes time. While many of the participants had been at their schools more than a year, it was clear that for many of the participants their vulnerability was safely guarded. However, in those instances where the principals were comfortable being vulnerable, the relationship also featured an enormous amount of trust. This result is line with the thoughts of Scandura and Pellegrini (2008) and Gundlach and Cannon (2010). Scandura and Pellegrini indicated that high levels of vulnerability represent high-quality relationships. Along similar lines, Gundlach and Cannon revealed that relationships with elevated levels of trust also have elevated levels of vulnerability. Therefore, while this researcher recognizes that LMX theory advances the idea that leaders aim to have high-quality relationships with each of their followers, the following conclusion is offered:
Conclusion 4: Upon transitioning to a new school, a newly transitioned principal should seek to develop a small circle of trusted followers.

Followers and their Influence

As anticipated, the participants in this study were exposed to different types of followers and over time, those followers had an impact on their leaders. For most participants, being the new leader at the school subjected them to a variation in follower engagement styles. Research on followership theory suggests that followers enact different role orientations (Howell & Mendez, 2008; Hoption, Christie, & Barling, 2012; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Carsten, Harms, & Uhl-Bien, 2014). In his foundational work on followership, Kelley (1988) identified five types of followers: alienated, passive, conformist, pragmatic, and exemplary. Similarly, in 2008, Kellerman proposed that there were five types of followers based on their engagement styles: isolates, bystanders, participants, activists, and diehards. While the focus of this study was not specifically on follower engagement styles, Kellerman’s typology of followers helped to explain some of the exchanges between the research participants and their followers.

Many of the principals initially experienced followers who could be classified as isolates or bystanders from Kellerman’s (2008) typology of followers. An isolate is described as someone who does not care for the leader and often does not respond to them. A bystander, on the other hand, disengages from the group and chooses to stand on the sideline as an observer. Upon arriving at their school, ROSA and BEVERLY encountered isolates and bystanders. ROSA had to deal with a teacher who served as the school’s representative for the Classroom Teachers’ Association. In her interview, she used several descriptive phrases to describe the teacher: “dark cloud,” “vein of my existence,” and “thorn in my side.” She mentioned that this
individual had a problem with her every move and “kinda like boycotting the things that I wanted to do.” ROSA felt that the teacher was “creating more drama and stirring the pot.” She finally caught on to the actions of the teacher when other staff members begin to anonymously share the letters and emails sent by the classroom representative. In concluding her statements about this teacher, ROSA declared: “[T]hat was the headache. It was hard to move a school when you have that kind of individual trying to run it their way.” BEVERLY, too, experienced headaches upon her arrival to Johnson Elementary. Although she had some isolates, her greatest challenge came from those teachers who acted as bystanders. She said:

    One of the things I noticed when I first came was, like, nobody really wanted-- If somebody was not doing something that was good for kids they wouldn't even call them out on it. And much of the time it's okay for you to say to your colleague and say, "Hey, I don't know if that's the right thing to do right now." But we don't feel comfortable doing that because we always think we're just supposed to be friends.

Unlike ROSA and BARBARA, some of the principals did not encounter followers who were isolates and bystanders. DOROTHY, at her elementary school for one and one half years, and LYNNE, at her middle school for one year, shared that most of their staff members were on board and respected them from the onset. DOROTHY suggested that her reputation came with her as members of her former school community begin to communicate to her new colleagues how wonderful she was as a principal. LYNNE for eight years had served as the assistant principal at a neighboring high school which meant her reputation, too, preceded her arrival. In both of their cases, they both walked into situations where staff members were participants or activists. Kellerman (2008) advised that participants are individuals who care about the organization and want to make an impact. Activists are people who feel strongly about the organization and leaders. The last follower in Kellerman’s typology is a diehard, and this type of follower is passionate about an idea or leader and will give their all for them. The engagement level of WHITNEY’s administrative team could be described as diehard. WHITNEY mentioned
that when she took over Houston High School, she and her administrative team did not see eye to eye. Over the first two years of her tenure, she helped three of those members find different jobs within the school district, and she was able to hire new administrators who shared her “vision, passion, and philosophy on educational leadership.” In describing her administrative team, she said, “I'm pretty sure if I asked the staff to eat poop because it was right for kids, 97% of them would put the spoon to their mouths.”

Ultimately, all newly transitioned principals should aim to have relationships similar to WHITNEY’s. However, it is interesting to note, that this level of engagement did not occur for WHITNEY until she was able to choose and hire new staff. This begs the question of whether inherited or hired followers engage differently with the leader. In ROSA’s case, she believed that things were moving in the right direction and her school was “in a great place.” However, after three years she was “still in the process of getting the right people on board here.” Similar to WHITNEY, getting the right people on board for ROSA meant hiring the right individuals. It appeared that many of the principals’ relationships of high-quality occurred in relationships where the staff member was hired by the new leader. This finding corroborates the work of Wallis, Yammarino, and Feyerherm (2011) who, in a study of 11 senior level executives and their direct reports, found differences in relationships where the follower was hired or inherited. Wallis et al. noticed that when leaders hired their followers, the interview and hiring process provided an opportunity for the leader and follower to start building knowledge of and trust in each other. Interestingly, however, is that the researchers also found that in the relationships where the leader and follower were the least close, the follower was hired by the leader. The findings of this study, however, do not support that result. Given the findings of this study and
the knowledge extended through the research of Wallis et al., this researcher makes the following conclusions related to newly transitioned principals and their followers:

- Conclusion 5: A transition in leadership will expose newly transitioned principals to various engagement styles of leaders.

- Conclusion 6: Leader-follower relationships are not created equally.

This researcher reached the sixth conclusion based on the participants’ descriptions of their relationships with their followers. During the interviews, participants shared examples of positive, neutral, and negative relationships they have experienced since transitioning to their respective schools. Towards the end of the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to reflect on those relationships and share how the followers have shaped their leadership capacity. LMX theory posits that a mutual influence exists within the leader-follower relationship (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Yet, the phenomenon of followers impacting leaders is largely understudied. Consequently, the researcher used followership theory as a second conceptual framework to explore this issue.

Followership theory is an emerging concept that has recently garnered more attention in research studies (Bligh, 2011). In fact, researchers such as Solovy (2005) have insisted that the followers of the organization determine its success more than the leader. By using followership theory as a secondary lens, this researcher was better able to make sense of the leaders’ experience in developing relationships by understanding the perceived role orientations and engagement styles of the followers. Additionally, these engagement styles and the use of this framework helped the researcher to understand the impact of followers on leaders. Oc and Bashshur (2013) proposed that followers are likely to socially influence leaders and produce a positive or negative response. This was true for each of the participants in this study. LIONEL
expressed that the negativity of one of his followers forced him to be more transparent about his administrative decisions. He also mentioned that this follower, who had been at the school for a long time and was resistant to his leadership, impacted how he introduced new concepts to the school community. He shared that before introducing new ideas to the school community, he would bring that follower in first to get a sense of what the pushback would be. In LIONEL’s case, this follower altered his leadership style and actions.

Similar to LIONEL, most of the other participants experienced followers that influenced their style of leadership and approach to their role as principal. This impact of followers was so widespread that it emerged as one of the study’s themes. In examples where followers were negative, some principals noticed that it made their “blood boil” and ultimately altered their leadership approach. In the interview with DOROTHY, it was clear that her head custodian’s lack of initiative and lack of attention to detail had shaped how she responded to those not pulling their weight. As a result, she is now more inclined to having the tough conversations. For BARBARA, however, she felt that her followers impacted her to consider her words before speaking. She conveyed that she has a “pretty quick tongue” and that she can be “very direct” without knowing she is direct. With this transition being her third, her new followers have influenced her to “keep my tongue back a little” as she has realized that her sharp tongue has damaged some relationships and trust with her followers. This awareness was also observed during the interview with GABRIELLE who shared that her followers have motivated her to be a “little bit less harsh.” The cases of DOROTHY, BARBARA, and GABRIELLE are short examples of how leaders perceived their followers impacted their leadership.

The literature on leader-member exchange theory and followership theory helped to explain many of the findings in this study. Accordingly, the theories also assisted in meeting the
purpose of the study which was to understand how newly transitioned principals describe their experiences of developing relationships with their followers and to understand their perspectives on how those followers shape their leadership. While the conceptual frameworks put the data and emerged themes into perspective, the findings in this study also illuminated implications for theory and practice and highlighted areas for future research. The next section discusses these implications and suggestions for future studies.

**Implications for Theory**

This study provides empirical research to support how leaders build relationships with staff members and how followers shape the approaches of their leader. It validates research suggesting that novice principals, in their new position, are likely to encounter tensions and resistance from those they lead. It further confirms that leaders develop different levels of relationships with their followers which dictate their level of trust and vulnerability. The research documents examples, from 12 study participants, of relationships being of high or low quality. Additionally, this research proves the need for additional studies exploring how new leaders, in a new environment, build and maintain relationships. Furthermore, an extension of understanding the role that followers play in the leader-follower relationship and their influence on the leader is worthy of additional exploration.

Graen and Uhl-Bien’s 1995 seminal research introduced leader-member exchange theory (LMX). Within this theory, they maintained that leadership had three domains: the leader, the follower, and the relationship. However, lacking in many studies using LMX as a framework is an understanding of the leader-follower exchange or relationship from the perspective of the leader and in a qualitative nature. Moreover, largely absent in the literature, although a central tenet of the framework, are studies exploring how followers influence their leaders. Focusing on
this relational, dyadic phenomenon allowed the researcher also to use the emerging followership theory as a framework for this study.

It is important to note, though, that this researcher did not attempt to generate a new theory or to modify the conceptual frameworks used in this study. Additionally, the frameworks were not used to test the theory. Simply put, LMX theory and followership theory were used as a lens to fulfill the purpose of this study. For example, LMX theory suggests that leaders develop individual dyadic relationships with their followers. Furthermore, the theory offers that each dyadic relationship is of high-quality or low-quality. In interviewing the participants, the researcher was able to understand better how the participants attempt to build relationships with staff members following a transition to a new school. Also, this study provided knowledge of how leaders felt followers shaped their leadership capacity.

Although the theories were useful in helping the researcher to understand how new leaders build relationships with their staff and the impact of followers on leaders, this researcher realizes that where this investigation and most other studies fail is in not interviewing both leaders and followers. If researchers are to use LMX theory to understand the dyadic relationship between the leader and follower, then it would be beneficial to document perspectives of both contributors of the leader-follower relationship. Additionally, while LMX theory is widely used in organizational leadership studies, the use of the theory is nearly nonexistent in the educational administration literature. In a search for the keyword “LMX” in the archives of three prominent educational administration journals, only eight results were returned. Three results returned from the January 1965 to October 2016 search of the *Educational Administration Quarterly (EAQ)*, zero results returned from 1968 to July 2016 of the *Journal of Educational Administration and History (JEAH)*, and five results returned from
the June 1972 to September 2016 archives of the *Educational Management, Administration, and Leadership (EMAL)* journal. Similarly, the term “followership” yielded eight results in the EAQ, four results in the JEAH, and 35 in the EMAL. Given that schools are organizations abound with leaders and followers, LMX and followership theories may be useful in the field of educational administration to understand the relationship between principals and their staff members. This study is an attempt to begin that integration. Thus, it is the hope of this researcher that this study will serve as encouragement to others to advance LMX and followership research in educational contexts.

**Implications for Practice**

This study was situated in an urban school district which has experienced over 250 principal transitions within the last 10 years. It focused on the experiences of 12 newly transitioned principals, who had been at their school site no more than 3 years, and how they developed relationships as the new leader in a new environment. Additionally, it aimed to understand how the leaders’ encounters with their new followers shaped their leadership capacity. After completing the study and reviewing the data, this researcher can offer several implications for practice to public school officials.

Findings from this study indicate that observations and evaluations impede a leader’s ability to develop relationships. Several of the participants discussed walking into their new school environment, and the first order of business was observing and evaluating teachers. In these instances, the leaders were evaluating teachers with whom they had no prior relationship. Often, the focus of the principals to meet deadlines for submitting evaluations and observations did not allow time for them to sit back, observe, and truly acquaint themselves with their new staff. FRED touched on this during his interview. He shared that his transition to Hammond
High School was the result of the former principal retiring. He went on to state that everyone knew of the retirement, but the school district chose to move him in the middle of the school year. Upon his official hire date, he arrived at the school to find “60 or more classroom observations to finish… and then I had 153 spring evaluations yearlong summary.” During the interview, he voiced his frustration that the evaluations and observations pulled him out of the “mainstream” and left him feeling “hog-tied.” Similarly, CARTER felt his transition put him in “an uncomfortable position.” Upon his official transition date, at the beginning of January, he walked into his new school where only 20% of the observations had been completed. However, he needed to be at a 65% completion rate by February. This researcher recommends school district officials plan better and consider other mitigating factors when transferring school leaders.

While this researcher understands that in some cases these factors may be unavoidable, the findings of this study show that school districts could aid transitioned school leaders in developing relationships with new staff members by considering appointment and transfer dates. No other principal experienced this worse than BARBARA who has transitioned three times (April, October, and January). In her interview, she affirmed that regardless of when one transfers, it is still hard for the leader and staff. However, she was firm in her remarks that, with her last transition, there was no reason the district could not have waited to transfer her at the end of the school year instead of in the middle. Likewise, in a case like FRED’s, where everyone knew of the former principal’s imminent retirement, proper planning by the school district may have helped him more in getting acquainted with his new staff.

The research is clear that without followers there can be no leaders. It is also clear that leaders form high or low-quality relationships with their followers. Additionally, research
indicates that leaders face varying levels of challenges based on whether they are an outside or inside appointment (Lee, 2015). This study originally began with a potential participant list of 97 principals who were appointed or transferred in the last three years within the school district. Of those, 72 were outside appointments. This study’s findings support the results of Lee’s (2015) study and reveal that principals who transition to schools as outside appointments are likely to experience greater challenges in cultivating trust and building relationships. Even more notable is that the results of this study show that urban school principals (8 out of 12 participants in this study) experienced these challenges more poignantly. Since nearly 75% of the school districts new principals were transferred from outside the school, this researcher would suggest that districts consider additional training and support on relationship development, establishing trust, and managing people for those principals transitioning to new schools.

The school district where this study is situated does an outstanding job of preparing individuals to become principals. For instance, individuals interested in becoming an assistant principal go through six-months of training before being eligible to apply for assistant principal jobs. Once the individual becomes an assistant principal, she or he is paired with a mentor and then goes through a 2-year training that focuses on select competencies including relationship-building. By completing this program and serving an additional year as an assistant principal, the individual is eligible for a 3-year training program where the individual is mentored daily and receives hands-on experience relevant to the principal role. Once that program is completed and the individual obtains a role as a principal, they enter the final stage, which takes place over 2 years, and provides an opportunity to work weekly with principal coaches.

LYNNE and SIMONE, who were both appointed from the role of an assistant principal at another school, referenced this training in their interviews. However, what is unknown is if this
training and support are offered to those leaders who have previously served as principals and are ushered into a new environment. The findings in this study would suggest that those individuals not enrolled in the training provided to new principals should be supported by the school district with additional professional development on relationship building, establishing trust, and managing people. At a minimum, principals who are transferred from one school to another should be provided a principal coach for additional support. In her latest transition, BARBARA was assigned a principal coach, and she spoke of the valuable resources the coach offered her. She mentioned that the coach encouraged her to be more transparent with her new staff and gave her advice on how to handle various situations she encountered regarding follower resistance. Although some may believe that leaders who have previously served as principals or have been in the position for a few years may not need additional support on how to build and manage relationships, they may. As a result of the daily grind of the job, sometimes the leaders need reminders of the importance of this process. LIONEL shared that his priority was not on building relationships. Likewise, the interview with BEVERLY helped her realize that in three years as principal, she had strayed from focusing on building relationships. This researcher contends that providing newly transitioned principals with coaches can continuously reinforce the importance of building high-quality relationships with their staff as the principals seek to advance their school community.

It is also equally important to offer practical solutions to principals who may find themselves in the role of a newly transitioned principal. As principals enter new conditions, it may be critical for them to handle their initial meetings with staff members differently. Given that it is likely that most principals will have a staff meeting, this researcher encourages school leaders to go further and plan to meet with teams or one-on-one with staff members. In
transferring to a new school, it is important that a connection is established and that teachers are provided with an opportunity to meet in smaller gatherings, or one-on-one, with the new leader to begin that process.

Interestingly, SIMONE stated that none of her staff members knew about her personally. She professed that the happenings in her personal life were for her friends to know. This researcher would promote the opposite. It was evident in this study that being transparent was one way of building relationships. This researcher recommends that new principals, and even those who have been in the position for a while, allow their staff members to get to know them personally and professionally. As new principals, the leaders have an opportunity to establish a new school culture. One suggestion to new principals would be to increase team-building activities during faculty meetings to learn about staff members. Another suggestion would be to coordinate an external social event that removes staff members from the professional setting and promotes friendliness and a different level of rapport. Certainly, leaders must balance their role of being an authority versus an acquaintance or friend. However, this researcher would suggest leaders not distance themselves for the sole purpose of increasing authority. Lessons learned from the participants in this study would indicate that attempting to exert authority over building relationships inhibits connections.

Lastly, this researcher would encourage new principals not to be caught up in the daily grind of being a new principal to the extent that which this obstructs the ability to build new relationships. In the first few weeks or months of being on a campus, new principals should be visible to the campus community. This researcher would also encourage new principals to make classroom visits without commenting on teachers’ work if they have the capacity to do this and are not pressed by an unreasonable evaluation processes. Similar to the actions of LIONEL and
CARTER, new principals could use these walkthroughs to leave personal handwritten notes behind. As this leader found, a small touch went a long way. LYNNE provided each teacher with a candy bar and personal note for their birthday. This researcher advocates for leaders to find yearly routines unique to them that could be used to show teachers that they are valued and supported. In doing so, the leaders are not only attempting to build high-quality relationships but also maintaining high-quality relationships.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This narrative research study, with 12 participants, is only one way to understand the experiences of leaders in developing relationships with their followers and to learn how those followers shape the leaders. To manage the study and obtain a perspective often ignored in the LMX literature, this research study focused solely on the experiences of leaders. A future research study may choose to do the opposite and seek to understand how followers believe they build relationships with leaders. Additionally, another study might focus on the followers’ perceived influence of their leaders. This researcher believes that if one is to study the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers, then it is in the best interest to obtain the perspective of both the leader and the follower.

Having completed this study, extraneous variables enhanced this position. A few weeks after interviewing the last participant included in this study, the school district released the results of a survey administered to the teachers of each school. One of the questions in the district-wide survey focused on the concepts, mutual respect and trust, from LMX theory. What was observed was an incongruence between what the study’s participants shared in their interviews about trust and respect and how the followers perceived trust and respect. The district’s quantitative survey result was confirmed by the present study when two research
participants, in their interviews, forewarned the researcher that leaders and followers may view trust differently. Thus, it would be useful for a future research study to explore the congruency – or lack thereof -- between leaders’ and followers’ perceptions regarding concepts within the LMX and followership frameworks. The researcher also noticed lower percentages regarding trust and mutual respect in those schools labeled as Title I. Eight of the 12 schools featured in this study were labeled Title I, and it was apparent in the data that the four schools not identified as Title I did not share the same engagement styles of teachers. In most of the Title I schools, the leaders initially encountered resistance and followers who challenged their authority. A future study could choose two or three highly similar schools and to focus on how the leaders work through these difficulties to sustain high-quality relationships, controlling for the variable of Title I/non-Title I more precisely.

The criteria used for participation in this study required that the principals had arrived to their post through an outside appointment and had served at their respective schools no more than 3 years. The researcher believed that studying participants who were outside appointments and had no immediate previous connection would yield significant data. With 25% of the potential participants not meeting this qualification because they were internally promoted to the principalship from the assistant principal role, studying this population on how insider appointees build and maintain relationships in their new role would also be worthy of study. Additionally, a comparative study with data from both externally and internally appointed leaders could provide a different set of insights regarding how leaders perceive the impact of their followers.

In the future, additional qualitative research options may be pursued for greater insight into the development of leader-follower relationships. For instance, employing a longitudinal
study to investigate how the leader-follower relationship is developed and stabled over time would be extremely useful as would a study on the effects of high-quality and low-quality relationships. In the latter case, the question could be asked: Do high-quality or low-quality relationships between a leader and follower increase or decrease turnover? Another option for study might require reducing the number of study participants and using a case study approach to follow only one type of principal: elementary, middle, or high school. This study revealed that, as the size of the school increased, relationships differed. For instance, most of the elementary school principals discussed their relationships with other teachers. The middle and high school principals discussed their relationships with their administrative staffs. One high school principal spoke of hiring employees that shared her same ideals. Her remark leads the researcher to offer another suggestion for future study -- investigating and analyzing more explicitly the relationships of principals between inherited and hired followers.

Finally, while this researcher employed a qualitative methodology to meet the purpose of the research, utilizing a quantitative approach could expand the scope of the study. For instance, future research could quantitatively explore correlations found in this study and future studies, for a mixed-methods approach. Additionally, the instruments often used in LMX studies, such as the LMX-7 assessment scale, which examines the degree to which leaders and followers have mutual respect for each other, may be insightful when applied to an educational context. Also, a comparative analysis of different sample populations may provide insight into the various methods principals use to engage in building and maintaining relationships.

**Reflections as a Scholar-Practitioner**

Completing this research study has been a journey. This researcher decided on the study’s topic after speaking at a high school in Colorado. After being on the school’s campus for
nearly three hours and speaking to its 1,500 students, an unpleasant interaction with the school principal caused the researcher to question how certain principals obtain their appointments. These concerns were heightened when one of the school’s assistant principals shared with the researcher that the principal did not attempt to build relationships with the school’s staff and as a result had no relationships with teachers. The assistant principal continued to discuss in detail the level of apprehension he and other members of the administrative team shared regarding the principal’s leadership characteristics. This led the researcher to develop a strong intellectual curiosity regarding the ways in which principals build – or fail to build – dynamic, effective relationships with their staff members.

As the researcher reviewed the literature outlining the conceptual frameworks used in the study, he realized further the significance of the study’s topic and the data that could emerge. It was determined that even theories that are not entirely current or that more commonly are used in other subject areas can have relevant applications and can be transferred to other disciplines. Conducting this study qualitatively provided the researcher an opportunity to contribute to an established theory in a meaningful manner. The adoption of a second framework allowed the researcher to bring forth an emerging theory that can also be applied to a diversity of organizations. The review of literature also heightened the researcher’s awareness of issues that plague organizations and new leaders every day. The review of the literature also increased this researcher’s knowledge of the depth of wisdom found in empirical studies.

To say that this study has changed this scholar-practitioner would be an understatement. The findings of this study will profoundly assist the researcher in his professional life and will have a profound effect on his leadership style because he has acquired a keen understanding of what it means to be new to an organization, and the anxiety that is involved in the process of
having to establish authority, build relationships, and foster trust. The researcher also understands, from personal experience, that leaders must have followers on their side to move their organizations forward. The results from this study can help provide invaluable lessons that can be shared with other leaders to increase their leadership capacity. It is the hope of this researcher that by sharing the results learned from this study, he will be able to encourage leaders to build high-quality relationships with their followers.

**Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore how newly transitioned principals in a large urban school district in the southeastern region of the United States experience the process of transition and the experiences they have developing relationships with their followers; it also aimed to understand their perspectives on how followers shape their leadership. This study confirms that leaders and followers engage each other differently and that all leader-follower relationships are not created equal. Additionally, it confirms that new leaders in an organization are likely to encounter different follower engagement styles as they begin to develop relationships and promote a new school culture. In this chapter, a discussion of the emerged themes occurred. The chapter also examined implications for theory and practice and considered future research opportunities.
References


In Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.


Appendix A

Recruitment Letter

DATE

Dear SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,

My name is Laymon Hicks, and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University under the guidance of Dr. Margaret Gorman. I am preparing to conduct research for my dissertation and would like to invite you to take part in my study. Specifically, I am looking to interview new principals appointed to their current position within the last three years.

The title of my study is **Leading in Unfamiliar Territory: A Narrative Research Study Exploring How Newly Transitioned Principals Describe Their Experiences Developing Relationships Amongst Followers in a Large Urban School District in the Southeast US.** This study will seek to explore how recently transitioned principals develop relationships with their followers (teachers) and how they understand the various influences of those members on their role as a leader. Your participation in this study will help me contribute to two limited bodies of literature—how educational leaders develop relationships with their followers and how followers may shape the leadership of their leader. Your participation in this study will allow you to share your experiences in developing, navigating, and maintaining relationships with the new staff at your school. Additionally, it will allow you to reflect on how your leadership style has changed or evolved as a result of your new staff.

To conduct this study, I am asking for volunteers to dedicate 45-60 minutes for an interview about their experiences. My preference is to do the interview face-to-face in a location and at a time convenient for you. During the interview, I will ask you to answer a series of questions about your relationships, the process of developing those relationships, and how those relationships and followers have shaped you. With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. After the interviews are transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review your transcript for accuracy and clarification.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Additionally, your participation in this study is strictly confidential, and your identity will not be disclosed. My advisor and I will be the only individuals to know of your involvement. Although there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study, you may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question.

By participating in this study, your experiences may help new principals transition into their role more seamlessly and help school districts better equip incoming and future leaders. Consequently, a summary of the research findings and excerpts from each participant’s interview will be published in my dissertation. These results may also be used in future scholarly publications and presentations.
Although a select number of participants will be used for this study, I ask that you please consider participating in this study. For your participation, you will receive a $20 gift card to Starbucks or Chick-Fil-A. If you are comfortable with the purpose of this study and are willing to participate, please let me know by DATE at XXXXX or call XXXXX.

Thank you for your consideration,
Follow-up Recruitment Email

Dear SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,

Hope this message finds you well. My name is Laymon Hicks, and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University under the guidance of Dr. Margaret Gorman. On DATE, I mailed you a letter requesting your participation in my doctoral study. I wanted to follow up through email and again invite you to take part in my study. In my research, I am looking to interview new principals appointed to their current position within the last three years.

The title of my study is **Leading in Unfamiliar Territory: A Narrative Research Study Exploring How Newly Transitioned Principals Describe Their Experiences Developing Relationships Amongst Followers in a Large Urban School District in the Southeast US.** This study will seek to uncover how recently transitioned principals of no more than three years develop relationships with their followers (teachers) and how they understand the various influences of those members on their role as a leader.

In the mailed letter, I discussed how your participation would help me in my doctoral study. In short, though, your participation may help new principals transition into their role more seamlessly and help school districts better equip incoming and future leaders. I am asking participants to dedicate 45-60 minutes for an interview about their experiences. Your participation in this study will be confidential and your identity will not be disclosed.

Although a select number of participants will be used for this study, I ask that you please consider participating in this study. If you are comfortable with the purpose of this study and are willing to participate, please let me know by DATE at XXXXXX or call XXXXXX. You may also contact me with any questions at the mentioned email and phone number.

Thank you for your consideration,
Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies
Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Margaret Gorman (Principal Investigator) & Laymon A. Hicks
(Student Researcher)
Title of Project: Leading in Unfamiliar Territory: A Narrative Research Study Exploring How
Newly Transitioned Principals Describe Their Experiences Developing Relationships Amongst
Followers in a Large Urban School District in the Southeast United States

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but
the researcher, Laymon A. Hicks, will explain it to you first. You may ask any questions that
you may have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want
to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to
participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this doctoral thesis project is to understand how newly transitioned principals
describe their experiences of navigating among different stakeholders while leading a new school
initiative. Specifically, this study seeks to uncover how newly transitioned principals develop
relationships with their stakeholders and how they understand the various influences of those
stakeholders on their role as a leader.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are a principal, appointed
within the last three years, to a school within the district.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured
interview to describe your experiences of developing and maintaining relationships with your
stakeholders and how those stakeholders shape your leadership. The interview will be 60-90
minutes in length. The interview will be scheduled preferably face-to-face. If a face-to-face
interview is not possible, interviews will be scheduled using a technology such as Skype,
Microsoft Live, Lync or Go-to-meetings. You retain the right to decline answering any
questions at any time. With your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital voice
recorder and saved as an MP3 file for later transcription by a confidential third party, Rev.
Following the transcription, the transcription will be sent to you to check for accuracy and
clarification.
**How much of my time will it take?**

The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes for the interview and approximately 15 minutes for member checking via email.

**Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?**

There is no foreseeable risk to you for taking part in this study. However, there may be discomfort as you reflect on the developed relationships with your stakeholders and their influences on your leadership. Therefore, any question that may provide discomfort may be declined.

**Will I benefit by being in this research?**

There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, the information learned from this study may assist future school leaders in developing relationships with their future stakeholders. Additionally, it may help us understand how followers may shape the leadership of leaders.

**Who will see the information about me?**

Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers of this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being part of this project. The researcher will take every precaution to keep all information confidential. Research data is used only for reporting of the findings. Pseudonyms will be used for interviewees to protect identity and school names will not be disclosed. The research will only describe characteristics of the school. Audiotapes, transcriptions and other identifying information will be kept in a personal locked cabinet and on a secure personal computer accessible only to the student researcher. All recordings and transcripts will be maintained by the student researcher until the thesis has been approved. Afterwards, all transcripts, recordings, and data files will be destroyed.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board to see this information.

**What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?**

No special arrangements will be made for compensation solely because of your participation in this research.
Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. At any point in time, you may withdraw from this study without explanation, penalty or consequences of any kind. Your participation or nonparticipation will not affect your relationship with Northeastern University or any other organization.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact the student researcher, Laymon A. Hicks, at XXXXX or by email at XXXXX. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Margaret Gorman, Principal Investigator at XXXXX or by email at XXXXX.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Will I be paid for my participation?

You will be given a $20 gift card as a token of gratitude for your participation in the study.

Will it cost me anything to participate?

There will be no cost to participate in this study.

I agree to take part in this research.

_______________________________________  _________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part  Date

_______________________________________
Printed name of person above

_______________________________________  _________________________
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent  Date

_______________________________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix D

Pre-Interview Confirmation Email

Dear SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study *Leading in Unfamiliar Territory: A Narrative Research Study Exploring How Newly Transitioned Principals Describe Their Experiences Developing Relationships Amongst Followers in a Large Urban School District in the Southeast US.*

The purpose of this email is to confirm some background information about your employment history with the school district. I obtained this information from the archives of the school district when you were appointed to your current role. Please see below and confirm your employment history.

Additionally, I would like to reiterate that your participation in this study will help me contribute to two limited bodies of literature—how educational leaders develop relationships with their followers and how followers may shape the leadership of their leader. Your participation in this study will allow you to share your experiences in developing, navigating, and maintaining relationships with the new staff at your school. Furthermore, it will allow you to reflect on how your leadership style has changed or evolved as a result of your new staff.

Lastly, I would like to schedule a time and place for our interview. Since I am working with 6-12 participants, would you please provide me with at least two 45-60 minute periods where you are available to be interviewed? Also, if other than the school, please provide a place for the interview.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,
Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Introduction
Thank you for being available to speak with me today. You have been selected to participate in this research study because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about your experience as a principal transitioning to a new school and trying to lead a new school initiative.

This research project focuses on the experiences of newly transitioned principals. Specifically, it explores how newly transitioned principals describe their experience in developing relationships with their stakeholders and how the principals’ leadership is shaped by the followers. The hope is that this research can be used to help future school principals transition seamlessly and assist school districts in their principalship trainings.

Therefore, again, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. As I mentioned in one of my previous emails, I am in the final phase of my doctoral studies at Northeastern University, and I am interested in gathering stories about how newly transitioned principals develop relationships with their new staff members and how those staff members shape the leadership of the principal.

First, I want to emphasize that all of my participants will remain anonymous, and that your participation is completely voluntary. If you don’t mind, I would like to review these consent forms with you before we begin.

[Review NEU Consent Forms]

Thank you. I have a few more administrative items to discuss before we begin. Two more administrative items to discuss before we begin. Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today so I can focus on our conversation. Is that okay? Also, I will have a professional transcriptionist to transcribe the interviews. The transcriptionist will receive the audio labeled by a pseudonym, meaning they will never know your name to maintain confidentiality. Once the audio recording is transcribed, I will email you a copy for your review. Is that okay? Finally, I will forward you a copy of my overall findings soliciting your comments or corrections? Will that be fine?

I have planned for this interview to last no longer than 45-60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. Therefore, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete the line of questioning. Additionally, there may be times where I may probe you to go deeper in your explanations. Also, I want to thank you for confirming by email your employment history and school’s demographic information. It will save time here today. Do you have any questions before we start?

Awesome. Let’s begin.
Interview Questions

I am now going to ask you questions focused on the topic of the study, exploring how you have developed relationships with your followers. First, let me say, I hate the word follower. I think we need a different word. However, the way scholarly literature has identified individuals in a subordinate position that works with a leader is by the word follower or subordinate. Thus, for this interview, as I use the word follower, think of it from a more scholarly approach as defined as an individual that is working with a leader to accomplish a specific goal.

1. Tell me about your experience transitioning here to SCHOOL NAME.
   - What did you experience? What were some of your emotions?

2. As a newly transitioned principal, can you share with me some specific experiences that will help me understand your particular process in developing relationships with your new staff?
   - What actions did you take?
   - Please describe things that worked well, and things that did not work?

3. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a strong working leader-follower relationship?
   - Can you describe any relationships that you have developed here that come close to that?
   - What are the characteristics of more challenging interactions?
   - How would you describe one or some of your more challenging interactions after you became principal?

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important, how important do you believe trust is in a relationship between a leader and follower? Why?
   - Can you describe for me what a leader-follower relationship with you looks like once trust has been established?
   - Can you describe for me what a leader-follower relationship with you looks like when trust has not been established?

5. When you arrived at SCHOOL NAME, share with me some specific examples of the different characteristics, behaviors, or work/collaboration styles that you identified in teachers following your transition as the new school principal?
   - Have those behaviors and characteristics changed?
   - What type of roles and behaviors are you experiencing now?

6. Tell me about a time when a follower or followers were most helpful to you as a leader.
   - What were their styles, behaviors, or actions?
   - Least helpful?

7. Identify 2-3 followers that have had a positive influence on you since you have arrived here.
   - How did the relationship develop? What happened? (series of events, behaviors, actions, etc.) What were the outcomes?

8. Identify 2-3 followers that have had a neutral influence on you since you have arrived here.
   - How did the relationship develop? What happened? (series of events, behaviors, actions, etc.) What were the outcomes?
9. Identify 2-3 followers that have had a negative influence on you since you have arrived here.
   • How did the relationship develop? What happened? (series of events, behaviors, actions, etc.) What were the outcomes?

10. Given that you have experienced various styles and roles of followers, please describe a time when you navigated these different styles to lead the school?

11. Thinking of each of these followers and your experiences, describe how these experiences and relationships have shaped your leadership?

12. If I were a new principal transitioning to a school, what advice would you give to me about developing relationships with my new staff?
   • What advice would you give to help me deal with the various followers I may experience?

Thank you, that concludes the interview questions for this interview.

If I come across a need to ask any follow-up questions, which would most likely only be the case if I felt clarification was needed in regards to one of your responses, would it be alright for me to contact you? Would you prefer I contact you via email or telephone?

Sometime over the next month, I will email you word-for-word transcripts. If you chose, you can review the information, and you will have one week to provide me with any feedback, alterations, or corrections. Can you please confirm the email address you would like for me to email the transcripts to?

Also, I would like to send you a gift card for your participation in this research study. Can you please let me know where you would like me to mail the gift card? Great, I’ll be able to send that to you two weeks from now. And once this thesis study is complete, which will most likely be 3-6 months from now, would you like to receive an electronic copy of the document?

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study!
Appendix F

Member Check Email Template

Dear SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,

Thank you for your time and willingness to share your experiences with me on (date). I thoroughly enjoyed learning about your experience as you transitioned to (school). As we discussed, I am sending you this follow-up email so you can review the transcription of the interview for accuracy (please see attached). Please feel free edit the transcription as necessary, as well as to offer any additional thoughts, ideas, or reflections you may have had since our interview.

When you are finished, please send back to me. If you have nothing to change or report, please send me a quick email to let me know. You can also contact me by phone at XXXXX. Again, thank you for your valuable time!

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,
Sample of Codes Grouped by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples of In Vivo / Pattern Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Relationships</td>
<td>Accessibility, Celebrate Others, Conversations, Get Others Involved,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Know Your People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Relationships</td>
<td>Burned Out, Dishonest, Contentment, No Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established Trust</td>
<td>Comfortable, Dependable, High Expectations, Personable, Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower Characteristics</td>
<td>Hard Worker, Not Open, Lazy, Involved, Has Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Followers</td>
<td>Come to work. Leave at bell, Just do their job, Not Involved, Timid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Follower</td>
<td>Gossiping, Resisting, Sensitive, Stubborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Influence</td>
<td>Influenced Mindset, Motivate, Empowered, Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Relationships</td>
<td>Candid, Collaboration, Coachable, Follow Through</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>