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A PAR Reflection: The Power of Teacher Voice

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This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Dr. Nannette Glenn, Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies

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Abilene Christian University

School of Educational Leadership

A PAR Reflection: The Power of Teacher Voice

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Anna Marie Warren

April 2023

Dedication

This work resulted from great sacrifice for my husband, family, and friends, and I dedicate this journey to all of them. Scott, you have been with me every step of the way, through sickness and in health, and I could not have done it without you. You are the most authentic example of 1 Timothy 3:8–13 that I know. Every night you cheered me on, brought me coffee, one cup after another, and celebrated with me when I pushed the send button at 11:59 pm, even though you should have been asleep. Your never-ending love, care, and patience gave me strength and sustenance to continue daily. With all my heart, I love you, forever always. To my daughters Sandy, Callie, and Madison, sons-in-law Josh, Daniel, and Cory, and incredible grandchildren Micah, Mialynda, Olivia, and Maisie, thank you for understanding how important this was for me; you are the ones that inspired me never to stop learning; I love you all. To Wayne and Lin, you have been incredible parents to me, and I am thankful for your support and love. To the best friends ever, thank you for waiting patiently on the sidelines for me to finish; your prayers and cheers have been so important—our Friday nights are back on. Father God, thank you for saving me, loving me, and for blessing me with my husband, family, friends, and opportunities to become all that you have made me to be.

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Abstract

voice and their involvement in the change. PAR makes a good platform for discovery in educational organizations if the culture has been readied.

Keywords: teacher voice, PAR, leadership skills, readiness, LMX serving leaders, emotion economy, culture

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the beginning of education in the United States, there has been a failure to validate teachers and their expertise when designing and making change decisions for educational policy implementation (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016). There is a noticeable lack of teacher influence in change policies and directives originating from the century-old top-down structure in educational organizations (Ozdemir et al., 2016; Tyack, 1974). Bakkenes et al. (2010) believed teachers should be involved in the change processes from beginning to end. Teachers' failure to speak up and make their voices and perspectives heard contributes to the lack of teacher involvement in the change process. Lack of vision is another factor that prevents teachers from seeing themselves as valuable agents of change in their educational organizations.

Change requirements from the federal, state, district, and campus levels have become so frequent that most stakeholders suffer from initiative fatigue (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Mason's (2016) research on implementing policy change in education supports the existence of the change problem. According to van der Heijden et al. (2018), teachers are crucial for successfully implementing educational changes in schools. Teachers bear the responsibility for student academic achievement and are the key change agents responsible for implementing educational policy and system changes inside and outside their classrooms. Because teachers possess first-hand knowledge of how change affects their ability to do their job and how changes affect their students' learning experiences, they must be seen as valuable in the change process instead of being seen as one that needs to be managed by change policy and reform (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Olson, 2002; van Veen & Sleegers, 2006). Many effects, consequences, and implications exist when implementing educational change initiatives without the input of teachers' voices;

there becomes a disconnect with the change initiatives, and teachers have no buy-in. Therefore, there is no follow-through with the change process.

To understand the disconnect experienced between administrators and teachers, the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) provides guidance on how relationships develop in the workplace and how to interpret deficiencies in those relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMX is a reciprocal exchange relationship between leaders and followers. Those relationships are linked to the enhanced development of employee self-efficacy and employee voice behaviors (Liu et al., 2021). LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) effectively influences the attitude and behavior of employees (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Chan and Yeung (2015) found that LMX was positively associated with employee voice behavior. A positive link between LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and team-level voice behavior was reported by Zhao et al. (2020). Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) was found to be significant in predicting extra-role behaviors (Prince & Rao, 2021), including voice. Because the LMX theory is a key leadership focus in this study, it also helped to create an inviting platform for the emergence of serving leaders. LMX helps build employee self-efficacy and voice behavior (Liu et al., 2021) while serving leaders provide the framework that promotes simultaneous leadership growth (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016) to sustain the employee movements.

The research of van der Heijden et al. (2018) found that little is known about teachers' perception of themselves as change agents. While teacher efficacy is paramount to the change process, teachers are not using their voice to advocate for themselves, nor do they perceive themselves as valuable change agents. It is important to find out why teachers are not speaking up for themselves and why they do not see themselves as influential change agents.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher voices are missing in educational organizations' systemic change processes. Although teachers are crucial to the change-making process, they often resist their role as change agents because they are left out of the initiation process. van der Heijden et al. (2018) stated that little is known about teachers' perceptions of themselves and their instrumental role as change agents in educational organizations. Strengthening teacher voice can help provide a positive competitive advantage for organizations and management in identifying mistakes and weaknesses while simultaneously improving trust and motivation in teachers (Hosseini & Sabokro, 2022). If change initiatives are to be effective in educational organizations, we must research teachers' roles, and "we must find new and effective ways to amplify the voices of classroom teachers…" (Borrero et al., 2018, p. 22). Hosseini and Sabokro (2022) believed that when employees are allowed to participate with their voice, they make better decisions at and about work and experience a heightened sense of understanding and commitment to the organization. When teachers are allowed to use their voice and become part of planning and improvement practices, students' learning is increased (Ingersoll et al., 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore a framework where teachers' voices will be heard in education change and where teachers become effective change agents in the planning and implementation of educational systemic change processes. Identifying influence factors will help elevate and amplify teachers' rightful role as change agents in educational organizations.

Research Questions

RQ1: What barriers exist that prevent teachers from using their voices as change agents in the systemic change processes?

RQ2: What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process?

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers can serve as change agents?

Research Design and Methodological Approach

A qualitative methodology approach was used. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) defined qualitative research as the researcher as an observer in the world where the study occurs. Using a critical lens will help me in an educational setting better understand the leader-follower relationship and will have the intent to bring about change in the teacher's voice for the future (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data collected will reveal patterns or themes and reflect the real-world situations that teachers experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A participatory action research (PAR) framework was used to gain knowledge through research and action (James et al., 2008). PAR provides an awareness to help educational stakeholders reflect and approach solutions more cohesively (James et al., 2008). According to James et al. (2008), PAR is used as a means for change in education. PAR "requires educators to work with others to build data-driven decisions into the core of their practice," which betters the community of focus (p. 7). PAR is an appropriate approach given the insider relationship with the educational community that I as the researcher have with the school of focus to be studied.

This study was non-probabilistic with purposeful sampling. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that purposeful sampling is discovery in nature and comes from the assumption that the investigator seeks knowledge and information to learn and gain insight into the area of study. The population for this study was district leaders, campus administrators, and teachers.

Data collection for this study consisted of semistructured online interviews and in-person observations and use a PAR cycle of diagnosis, action, measure, and reflection (James et al., 2008). The PAR participants learned and better understood the problems they faced from the data collection immersion process. They used the data to act and provide solutions for their educational community (James et al., 2008).

Rationale

Input and decisions can no longer come from a top-down approach; change must include the voice of teachers. This study sought to understand a teacher's perception of self and use of voice in the context of change in educational organizations and help those teachers speak up to be heard influencing change. The study aimed to (a) identify barriers that prevent teachers from using their voice, (b) provide leaders with skills needed to empower teachers as change agents, and (c) explore a framework that may support teachers as change agents in the educational community.

Definition of Key Terms

The key terms for this study were:

Agency. Agency is relative to how teachers act in their environments (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016).

Change agent. Educators with the potential and capacity to bring about movement in systems, organizations, policies, procedures, and stakeholders (Snyder, 2017).

Leader-member exchange (LMX). Leader-member exchange is a theory that is focused on the leader-follower relationship. LMX concentrates on the interactions and connections of leaders and their followers and how the developing relationship sustains or abstains through

organizational challenges and opportunities. LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) effectively influences employee attitudes and behaviors (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Readiness. According to Avolio and Hannah (2019), "The readiness of the individual and the readiness of their organization" (p. 4).

Self-efficacy. Teachers who believe in their ability to do things and a person's ability to influence goals and tasks that employees are willing to set and pursue for themselves (Bandura, 1986a, 1997; Lunenburg, 2011).

Systemic change. Joseph and Reigeluth (2010) state, "To invent an educational paradigm where all teachers succeed at helping all students succeed" (Joseph & Reigeluth, 2010, p. 107).

Teacher voice. According to Gyurko (2012), "The expression by teachers of knowledge or opinions about their work, shared in school or other public settings, in the discussion of contested issues that have a broad impact on the process and outcomes of education" (p. 4).

Voice behaviors. The expression of constructive challenge with the intent to improve rather than merely criticize to create change and recommend modifications (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Educational organizations have been the foundational cornerstone for communities since the first century of public education (Tyack, 1974). Early educational leaders were required to be proficient in education matters and all aspects of a community's social, political, and economic life (Bogotch, 2011). The first century of schools saw tremendous growth and change, with leadership driven by the choices made by individuals in the roles of school leaders (Bogotch, 2011). Like today, first-century schools bore the responsibility of serving all of society, not just the students attending. Teachers and leaders are called to uphold practices that promote the business and management trends of the day (Bogotch, 2011). At the same time, support for public education and its intended recipients varied in the beginning years; to provide the opportunity for such was considered a way to repay the families that worked so hard to build our country the blessing of education for their children (Bogotch, 2011). Visser and Kreemers (2020) attested researchers had explored various ways to include educators in policy and procedural develop since the 1980s. Still, efforts were not effective because they lacked sincerity and a degree of professionalism.

This literature review is related to the study of systemic change in public educational organizations and the lack of teacher voice represented in the change planning and implementation process. Public education organizations adhere to a top-down leadership model that requires teachers to implement change policies created and initiated by others without input. To address the lack of teacher voice represented in systemic change, this chapter review focuses on a participatory action research (PAR) theory framework where teachers and school leaders will work together in a school setting to gain experience in real-time circumstances, giving results that will inform decision-making. PAR research can challenge traditional leadership

methods and hierarchies in organizations and often helps reveal areas of ugly that can be hidden and engrained in our existing policies and systems (Visser & Kreemers, 2020). This literature review will help provide insight into the importance of readiness for educational organizations and their stakeholders when implementing change based on current research.

This literature review also (a) defines key elements within the study of systemic change in educational organizations, (b) introduces PAR research that will provide tools for educational leaders to bridge gaps between teachers and leaders in times of change, (c) connects the value of teacher's voice with the degree of efficacy when implementing change, and (d) provides insight as to the topics for leadership and teacher voice representation in change. Utilizing the PAR process will help provide opportunities for reflection and collaboration that will be beneficial in exploring possibilities and action (Visser & Kreemers, 2020). This literature review is organized by the need to reimagine the planning and implementation practices when there is a need for systemic change in educational organizations, the importance of school leaders working together with teachers in PAR to have real-time experiences to make data-informed decisions, and understanding the impact of teacher's voice in systemic change while empowering teachers to use their voice and speak up so they can be heard.

History of Public Schools

Public schools in the United States date from the 1830s; however, the first century of public schools and leadership, considered from 1837 to 1942, was filled with tremendous growth and change (Bogotch, 2011). John D. Philbrick, a contributor to the formation of school systems in the United States, believed that education directly correlated to the level of success experienced by cities as well as paved the way for the future success of our country; education was the determinant of a city's financial status and predictor of the future (Tyack, 1974). Because

of the city's desire to improve education and the governing practices of the day, Boston became the city that would lead the way in the design and implementation of a more unified system of education, leading others to follow closely behind and often inspiring new educational ideology across other cities (Tyack, 1974).

The early school, often a one-room building, consisted of various students in age and abilities; this practice was later considered inhumane (Tyack, 1974). Philbrick became the author of a more acceptable model of education, which became known as the "egg-crate school" (Tyack, 1974, p. 45). The new model consisted of a multi-story building with multiple classrooms, teachers, and principals and spread like wildfire across the United States (Tyack, 1974). With a new building design came a centralized plan and course of study (leading to promotion through the grades and graduation) for individual students, as well as the categorization based on student's standardized testing ability, academic subject matter taught, recitation ability, and discipline criteria (Tyack, 1974). Philbrick's plan included approximately 7,000 hours of instruction for each primary student in eight years, about four and a half hours a day, 200 days a year (Tyack, 1974). According to Tyack (1974), along with the adopted plan of study, students were also expected to adhere to a hidden curriculum consisting of learning traits and behaviors (with a precision that mimicked military style) that were expected but not written and resulted in a reward system that stroked intrinsic motivation in students. The later development of high schools in the nineteenth century made higher education elite, serving only 1% of the education population, causing an imbalance of opportunity and taxation for the general population (Tyack, 1974). The public began to voice their perceptions and criticize the local school systems as inefficient and no longer practical for educating all (Callahan, 1962). There became an urgency for schools and teachers to be concerned about matters that were important

outside of the classroom and more visibly contribute to the needs of society or face loss of funds and a more scrutinized budget process (Bogotch, 2011; Callahan, 1962). In McFarland's (2018) review of *Personalizing 21ˢᵗ Century Education*, he stated, "The American public school system has remained structurally stagnant and unchanged since the Industrial Revolution, as many education scholars, school leaders, and student advocates have previously pointed out" (p. 1).

History of Leadership in Public Schools

Bogotch (2011) said that "the essence of leadership always resides within the strategic and contextual choices made by individual school leaders" and that the process should involve ongoing discussions and debate to alleviate traditional leadership approaches (p. 6). Early educational leaders bore the responsibility for educating students while also being active and knowledgeable in the day's politics, actively making a societal impact, and being focused on business and community matters (Bogotch, 2011). To reflect the culture of the school's community, school leaders were required to interact and respond to the social forces that were the strongest (Callahan, 1962). Businesses also influenced educational leaders through daily writings, including newspapers, journals, speeches, and meetings (Callahan, 1962). A former lawyer and politician, Horace Mann, became the first person to hold the office of Secretary of the State Board of Education in Massachusetts in 1837. Mann was driven by a desire to impact the next generation of citizens through education (Bogotch, 2011). Although Mann faced immense persecution, he used his political influence to uphold and support an earlier doctrine that initiated the separation of church and state in public schools, which still governs the educational world today (Bogotch, 2011). Other key figures that have helped to record the history of education and educational leadership include historians Callahan (1962), Cuban (1988), and Tyack (1974).

Callahan's (1962) studies on education found educational ties to the business world as far back as 1900. He expressed surprise when noting the extent of practices and ideas applied to the daily operations and routines in schools replicated from the business world. Callahan (1962) felt that educational leaders of the day acted and believed themselves to be executives or managers instead of scholars. The actual state of educational administration caught Callahan (1962) by surprise when evidence showed that leaders were, in essence, wholly manipulated and pressured into action by criticism and demands of the day rather than by educational needs. Additionally, Callahan (1962) stated that the support and control of schools and their leaders needed an overhaul and that the financial arrangements that continue to allow local entities to control the education process needed to be changed if we want to be better than we are today. Callahan (1962) believed that business practices could help provide the best educational choices for children and should be a consideration in moving forward (Callahan, 1962).

Tyack's (1974) study focuses on big-city public schools and educational entities and the real education that comes from outside schools in the community and looks deeply at the educational system and the politics involved in shaping schools in the United States. He finds that much of what we know about educational organizations comes from those ranked at the top of the system, but instead, we should seek to obtain the accounts of teachers, students, and parents. He goes on to state that various perspectives and information could be gained by looking at urban schools that paint a realistic picture of the community and culture in our schools.

Cuban (1988) studied the relationships between teachers and administrators in hopes of building stable bridges between the two in our schools. His studies aimed to educate others on the importance of what teachers and leaders do in our schools and how their work reflects the culture and community of their schools (Cuban, 1988). Cuban (1988) believed that teachers and

administrators were responsible for three core roles (a) instructional, (b) managerial, and (c) political. The roles should reach beyond their schools and community's social and cultural aspects. Teachers and administrators are expected to simultaneously function at both ends of the spectrum, boss and subordinate, while completing unreasonable and often impossible tasks and functions that are unachievable by any person (Cuban, 1988).

Leadership and Teacher Buy-In

Bennett and Murakami (2016) referred to leadership as a gift given by others that is to be used to serve and build up people and society for the greater good. Similarly, Turnbull (2002) identified that buy-in is greater when teachers believed their administrator's buy-in. Uhl-Bien and Carsten's (2007) study brought into the conversation of relationships between leaders and followers and how they can work together to "coproduce ethical outcomes in organizations" (Hickman, 2016, p. 445). It is a common belief that excellence in education cannot be obtained without the effective practices of leaders (Fox et al., 2015) and that the pursuit of excellence should be a notable characteristic of all professionals (Scott et al., 2018). Saxton (2019) argued that for school districts to experience forward movement, organizations must subscribe to and require both influential implementation procedures and leaders. Saxton (2019) continued to place change responsibility on leaders by saying that it is a leader's responsibility to inspire stakeholders with the possibilities and potential that change can bring. With the fluidity of federal, state, and district mandates, a leader must be able to rally and move his followers positively to meet yearly directives and positively affect school success measures.

There is a great need in the organization today for change leaders driven to energize and inspire passion in others through their actions (Dungan & Hale, 2018). Fox et al.'s (2015) research focused on authentic leadership and relational trust in an educational setting. It

highlighted personal and organizational identification, which helped foster educators'

belongingness and self-awareness. The role of an educational leader is critical to the success

process of students and staff in educational organizations (Fleet et al., 2015). Knowing that

shared leadership is valuable in organizations (Hickman, 2016), why is there a question about

increasing group engagement and conferencing?

Avolio et al. (2004) noted that a leader's behavioral style is not what constitutes

authenticity; it is the interaction and collaboration of leaders with their followers in transparency

and building trust in their learning communities. Northouse (2019) stated that leaders have a

moral obligation in their leadership practices. The origins of leaders are challenged by myths and

studies that seek to prove that some people are just born great, and those that are not can be

developed (Avolio & Hannah, 2019). Leader-follower dyads researched by Kim et al. (2020)

help us better understand the connection and constructs of the relationship between leader and

follower by highlighting both perspectives of the dyad rather than the primarily reviewed single

perspective of the relationship. Avolio and Hannah (2019) believed that leadership is a mindset,

not a position. Sverdlik et al. (2020) established effective leaders continuously strive to advance

their organization by obtaining input and feedback from stakeholders to improve everyday

operations and make change decisions.

Relatively new leadership approaches are causing a second look in business and

education are shared leadership and collective leadership. Shared leadership (SL) reflects the

influence of a collective leadership by members instead of one central figure (Carson &

Marrone, 2007). Many scholars disagree on defining this type of leadership. Still, Drescher et al.

(2014) agreed that it is emergent in nature and utilizes group members to serve in a leadership

capacity. While still in the evolution stage, a skill set is needed (but can be taught) to lead in a

shared or collective manner with efficacy. Members must share responsibilities (invisible

leadership); have a "commonality of shared experiences, beliefs, or values;" be dedicated to a

common purpose; and "have self-agency and collective efficacy"(Hickman, 2016, p. 170).

Sharing responsibilities or collectively leading means that group members have an equal

investment in the organization's goals and mission. The responsibility of leadership becomes

everyone's (Fund, 2014). According to Hickman (2016), "The concept of shared leadership deals

more with the idea that multiple leaders can and will emerge over time, based on the needs and

the situation in which the group finds itself" (p. 180). Hickman (2016) stated that individuals in a

shared leadership or collective leadership approach should possess skills, knowledge, and

abilities in their service area while also being willing to follow or lead. Quite like the

murmuration of starling birds, there must be synchrony and fluidity within the group when

moving through the process to progress without chaos and running into one another (Owen,

2013). Training, resources, and administrator buy-in is a precursor to teacher buy-in, according

to Turnbull (2002). Teacher buy-in is one factor that hinders success when implementing change

(Smith, 2020).

Servant Leader

Robert Greenleaf's (1973) theory of servant leadership was often met with criticism and

resistance. He believed that in a time where corruptness was rampant in organizations and

society, there was a need to pull away from the societal norms and implore more of those who

would serve to rise to the ranks of leadership. His method of servant leadership thinking was a

sharp contrast to the leadership hierarchies of the day, and Greenleaf (1973) believed that any

leader could lead perfect people, it was a real leader that could lead people with imperfections. A

servant leader empathizes with others and accepts them where they are.

Serving Leader

Relating to Greenleaf's servant leadership theory, Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2016) stated that a leader should be a serving leader and supported their claim as the authors of the most recent literature written on serving leaders. A serving leader must have new eyes to find and connect strengths, not just focus on weaknesses. Focusing on the strengths of a person helps a leader manage identified weaknesses (Jennings & Stahl-Wert). The new eyes help serving leaders by seeing what they already have and not continuing to focus on what is missing (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). The serving leader has the job of helping everyone in their organization, team, and community find and operate in their strengths (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

The serving leader model (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016) turns the conventional leadership hierarchy upside down. Serving leaders know that leadership is a shared experience that is not meant to be experienced alone. Serving leaders focus on "Five Powerful Actions" (1) run to great purpose, (2) upend the pyramid, (3) raise the bar, (4) blaze the trail, and (5) build on strength (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016, p. 127).

The defining characteristics of serving leaders as they implement the five powerful actions are that they run to purpose by giving their team or organization a reason to focus (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2016) said that everyone must sense that it will take all of them to make the why to happen; go for what seems impossible. Serving leaders who upend the pyramid put themselves at the bottom of the pyramid and make room for others to rise (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Additionally, serving leaders give others the opportunity to grow in their strengths. They raised the bar by having the highest expectations for themselves, their team, and their community (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). "Serving leadership

requires a deep humility and willingness to pour yourself into the good of others" (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016, p. 116). When serving leaders blaze the trail, it means they remove the obstacles. Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2016) stated that the biggest obstacles are the ones that hinder others. Serving leaders build on strength; everyone improves when you build up strengths (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). In an organization or community, you will never be the best if others are not trying to be their best, too (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

The serving leader (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016) strives to grow up and learn personally and organizationally. As adults, growing up in the personal sense refers to a type of growth that never ends (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2016) state, "The serving leader provides a framework for the leadership growth we must do on the outside; we need a framework that helps us with the inside work that we must do, the growing-up work" (p. 129). Most Serving leaders find a large gap between the inside and outside growth processes (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2016) specifically stated there are three focus areas when examining the growing-up work:

(1) "change always starts with the heart,

(2) our response to failure is key, and

(3) work and life must integrate" (p. 130).

As leaders, if our focus is not on serving others, meaningful change will not happen in our organizations (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Good leaders realize that work, home, and communities are strengthened by the growth practices that characterize serving leaders (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Kim et al.'s (2020) study focused on the leader-member exchange theory (LMX), which looks at the differentiated relationships between leaders and their followers and the low- and high-quality exchanges and perspectives that occur as dyads develop and evolve.

Many school districts find themselves in a cyclical pattern of trying to find the latest and greatest fix for the school year, much like a flavor-of-the-month synopsis (Warren, 2021). The trouble with this cycle is that stakeholders do not have buy-in or vision because they have not been adequately prepared or readied for the required changes (Warren, 2021).

Followership requires readiness. Readiness is required by both the individual and the organization (Avolio & Hannah, 2019). Further research is needed to effectively train and develop educational leaders from the top down to fully ready their followers and experience equitable buy-in district-wide. While educational administration would demand an automatic following of orders from the top, buy-in is necessary for full implementation with fidelity. A leader's enthusiasm for change can be contagious to followers and make what seems impossible possible (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Teachers and employees will not follow a leader that has not adequately readied them to receive the vision needed for change, which requires long-term planning, communication, and time. Educational change requires a revolution from the ground up (Saxton, 2019).

Long-Term Planning

Long term planning is required for follower readiness. The benefits and resources associated with long-term planning often include effective collaboration, critical thinking practices, and data-driven decision-making. The benefits help to overcome the possible roadblocks and help to develop a successful starting point for planning in organizations (Kealey

et al., 2015). Suppose an organization does not devote the resources needed to plan long-term and strategically for the future. In that case, it will lack depth and a sense of trust in leadership and the proposed change in its implementation efforts.

Depth requires a planning strategy that gives an organization the needed process to "dive deep" into its research and decision-making. When depth is developed, a culture of collaboration often grows out of the planning process. Too often, an organization plans on the surface and does not allow for the critical thinking process to take place. Usually, these actions deliver a surface-type program that cannot weather storms. Brown et al. (2018) believe that not all school leaders have a background in skills that are needed to make informed decisions in the areas of assessment, curriculum, and data.

The most crucial reason why long-term planning is essential to the follower readiness process is that it will allow stakeholders to develop trust in a leader and the proposed change. "K-12 principals exhibiting […] the benefits derived from teacher trust in the principal beg for attention in today's educational milieu" (Fox et al., 2015, p. 6). The educational leadership study by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found that trust in leadership has a significant relationship to several positive outcomes, including job performance, organizational commitment, satisfaction with the leader, as well as organizational citizenship behaviors: altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy, and sportsmanship.

> School leaders that have the trust of their communities are more likely to successfully create productive learning environments. […] Without trust, schools are likely to flounder in the attempts to provide constructive educational environments and meet the lofty goals that our society has set for them because the energy needed to solve the complex problem of educating a diverse group of students is diverted into self-protection.

[…] Trustworthy Leadership is the heart of productive schools. (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 13)

Long term planning will allow for the successful development of a district infrastructure for implementing programs, procedures, and problem-solving.

Communication

Leader communication is vital for all stakeholders. It is paramount that leaders value the importance of communication and the fidelity of its delivery in that it paves the way for acceptance and buy-in for all. "To effectively lead others requires a shift in focus from thinking about oneself or one's work to thinking about what one's actions mean for others –from 'I' to 'Them'" (Avolio & Hannah, 2019, p. 2). Keeping in mind the time spent on long-range planning, communication has the potential to derail or set sail to a program. In today's "instant gratification" society, you must get it right the first time for complete buy-in. Educational leaders are "increasingly called upon to create open, collaborative, and positive learning communities" (Fox et al., 2015, p. 7). When a leader is responsible for implementing directives, the leader should remember the intended audience and their influence as a leader in the process. Avolio and Hannah (2019) argue that being a leader is not a position; it is a mindset. Stakeholders will be looking to the educational leaders to help form their opinions on the pathway to change. Teachers will have differing requirements for the information that they receive. Teachers will want to know how it affects them and their students in the classroom. Leaders should anticipate a what is in it for me mentality and questioning from teachers when planning to implement communication strategies. Communication should be tailored to the intended audience's needs (Brown et al., 2018). Saxton (2019) determined that teachers feel it is essential to communicate the goal of the change to stakeholders; they often feel as though they do not know what is going

on due to a lack of communication on the leadership's part, giving the perception of poor

attitudes coming from the administration regarding making the change. Some teachers feel clear

communication of change goals is often lacking (Saxton, 2019). Teachers look for supportive

leaders when change is mandated; they do not want to walk alone in the process (Ozdemir et al.,

2016; Saxton, 2019).

Time

There has been a demand to implement educational change in public education for the

past 100 years (Mitchell & Shoho, 2017). Protecting educators' time and setting attainable

change goals must be a priority for education (Morgan et al., 2019). One-percent improvements

add up over a school year and are manageable when charting success and progress (Morgan et

al., 2019). Small change practices also lessen feeling overwhelmed and help administrators and

teachers meet goals when implementing change in education (Morgan et al., 2019).

Leaders must lead the change in their schools (Esch, 2018). Educational leaders are

critical to a school district's change success or lack thereof. Mullen et al. (2021) stated that

leaders drive negative or positive progress. While change occurs consistently in educational

organizations, administrators who understand teacher perception's importance will help their

organization navigate those changes healthily. Sverdlik et al. (2020) found little research on how

leaders initiate change and what factors are used to determine the initiation of change by those

leaders. The coping style of leaders is essential to understanding how change implementation is

best approached. Berg (2019) stated that one possible obstacle to leadership and teacher

relationships is that teachers often feel they should not offer unsolicited input because it may

threaten their professional relationships. Thomas et al. (2020) stated that it is a requirement for

leaders to be present and establish relationships with followers to foster a culture that grows

achievement and success. Teachers will revert to their old ways of doing things or to a limited view of situations unless leaders become involved (Burleigh, 2020).

Culture

According to Jenlink et al. (1998), a culture that can withstand change requires a shared focus on values, beliefs, purpose, and identity. Culture is a strong indicator of success in systemic change in education. Wilkinson (2011) said that even the little things in life are important, culture is by design and that any one of us can be the architect; it is a journey rather than a destination. Also, the key to culture is understanding the existing culture and its power and potential (Jenlink et al., 1998). Goffee and Jones (2013) say that an organization operates to its fullest when it allows people to do their best work, creating an organization where people are engaged, not just going through the motions and just working to bring home a paycheck. With regards to culture, Wyk (2020) claimed stakeholders and their perception of their school climate and culture drive the buy-in for change in their organization. Educational leaders who encourage teachers can foster resilience in school cultures (Mullen et al., 2021). It is commonly known that leaders are responsible for creating the culture in their organization that causes people to move and act; however, most leaders fail to follow through with their responsibility (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016).

Workplace Culture

Goffee and Jones (2013) said that a company should add value to employees rather than extract it from them. Fleet et al. (2015) stated that workplace culture impacts leadership enactment. Leaders and others with work responsibilities should prioritize creating workspaces that benefit all stakeholders (Fleet et al., 2015). Ultimately, Barsade and O'Neill (2016) said that every organization has an emotional culture, even if it's one of suppression. They go on to say

that cognitive culture has to do with the thinking and behavior of employees at work, and emotional culture is about the emotions people have and express at work. Schein (2017) specified that every culture has shared assumptions about behavior and what is humane and not. Studying cognitive and emotional cultures helps leaders understand how and why people perform, engage, create, commit, make decisions, and show negative emotions; how people and organizations tick (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016).

Culture Architects

Culture is by design and anyone of us can be the architect (Wilkinson, 2011). Clifton and Harter (2019) stated that culture has a direct and measurable impact on a person's work performance. In a study by Hackman and Oldham (1976), work redesign was researched to gain literature knowledge about improving the work experience and productivity in organizations; their findings are relative to today in that there is a need to go beyond the apparent job description and characteristics to understand what drives motivation and interaction in the workplace. McGregor and Doshi (2015) surveyed over 20,000 workers worldwide at fifty companies and determined one definite—why we work determines how well we work. As a leader, it is essential to make decisions that fit your organization's culture; hire culture fits (Wilkinson, 2011). Culture success in an organization is achieved by maintaining a condition that is good while we strive to arrive at the right place and time on our journey (Kaufman & Guerra-López, 2013). Wilkinson (2011) noted three values that are important for culture (1) hire for culture fit, (2) hire for skill fit, and (3) live your culture values every day. Carol Dwek (2017) advocated that a positive building and workplace environment should shape and promote a positive growth mindset. Inspiring vision (Boyatzis et al., 2015), creating an approach culture through reducing threats to change (Rock, 2008), and adopting an organizational growth mindset

(Dweck, 2017) are foundational elements to build strong, sustainable collaborative relationships needed for high performance in complex environments (Scott et al., 2018).

Defining the Problem

Identifying problems in educational organizations is only the starting point (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Meyer-Looze et al. (2019) believe that most schools are looking for a magical fix in programs or initiatives when implementing change that will fix everything. Change in educational organizations is inevitable, but implementing change is often ineffective and does not render desired results. If change is going to work, there must be a purpose or why identified and a sense of urgency related to stakeholders (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). "Urgency is generated when the pain/fear/concern of staying in the current situation is greater than the anticipated pain and effort that will be needed to change" (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019, p. 176). Without urgency, Mitchell and Shoho (2017) stated that in today's secondary schools, "change is a requirement and not a suggestion" and that change must be tied to student achievement (p. 431). Meyer-Looze et al. (2019) stated that successful change initiatives involve groups of people sharing the same vision, not just individuals. Morgan et al. (2019) said that we will experience higher quality routines, instruction, and professional development when seeking feedback from stakeholders and implement that feedback when moving forward with change. Sometimes we focus solely on results when considering a change. Still, researchers say to consider a change in terms of compound interest where the small change (1% improvement) results in more significant returns (Morgan et al., 2019). Fox et al. (2015) said that we are in a state of ever-evolving change in the education world. Educational leaders tasked with policy and procedural changes lack the proper formula of time, leadership approach, and vetting processes to ensure readiness and buy-in from stakeholders.

Implementation Practices

Kaufman and Guerra-López (2013) stated that it is essential to remember that in organizations, it is not just about what and how we change and do things; it is also about our arrival at our destination. Implementing educational programs and processes must be consistently and effectively done with fidelity. Fidelity of Implementation (FoI) helps organizations, leaders, and stakeholders achieve their goals and desired outcomes (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019). If a practice or program is to be sustainable, stakeholders must be empowered by their leaders to move forward and take ownership; leaders need to get out of the way (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). When analyzing new programs within an educational organization, Lakin and Rambo-Hernandez (2019) believed that the fidelity of implementation of programs can be summed up in three steps during the planning phase: defining the problem, identifying sources and indicators for evaluation purposes, and determining a measure that will be used for indicators. Critical factors for implementation readiness for stakeholders and organizations include flexibility, confidence, effectiveness, and understanding are critical factors that must be included (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019).

Teachers and Implementation Practices

Teachers are crucial to implementing programs and processes in educational organizations and providing frameworks for appropriate implementation practices (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019). Allinder's (1996) work found that teachers are critical to the implementation process and determine whether or not a program reaches the classroom. Change implementation practices in education can be successful if change leaders acknowledge the impact and value teachers and other contributing stakeholders bring to the process. Lines (2005)

stated that literature has a central theme—the shaping of attitudes is according to the cognition and effect of a person.

Teachers need time to collaborate on mandated changes to fully understand how their perceptions are generated and what role teachers play in times of change. "All stakeholders should be given ownership over the change process, rather than just being represented in the process" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 220). Allowing teachers time and space to reflect on current practices and collaborate on change initiatives will enable learning teams and individuals to address tensions and assumptions that can arise (Jenlink et al., 1998; Ozdemir et al., 2016). Jenlink et al. (1998) stated that time is the critical consideration in change; change is a time-intensive process, and appropriate devotion will determine success or failure. Popper (2011) acknowledged that leaders can influence followers in a multitude of situations and circumstances, but "only when the spotlight is turned on the followers does it become possible to examine the sources of attraction to different leaders in different situations" (p. 34).

Yoon (2016) found that implementation practices in real-world settings are raising concerns in educational organizations. Even well-planned implementation procedures are not meeting the mark of improved outcomes and are sometimes even lowering student success levels (Yoon, 2016). According to Turnbull (2002), a teacher's perception is influenced in five areas (1) did they have a good model for implementation at their school, (2) were they better teachers because of the model being implemented, (3) did the new model personally motivate them, (4) did the model work in their classroom, and (5) was there a real understanding of how the model brought about improvement in learning.

Organizational Dissent

Wilkinson (2011) pointed out that people spend most of their time at work. Because much of our time is spent away from home, it is important for organizational leaders to create a culture that motivates stakeholders with a shared vision that inspires assessed change needs from the inside out. Likewise, it is important to remember that in organizations, it is not just about what and how we change and do things; it is also about our arrival at our destination (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013).

While change occurs consistently in educational organizations, administrators who understand teacher perception's importance will help their organization navigate those changes healthily. de Moura et al. (2018) determined that "barriers to leadership are based on social processes, such as unconscious bias, stereotyping, and failure to manage diversity effectively" (p. 166). When policies are enacted, teachers' attitudes sometimes shift and become unpredictable. Dissent in an organization occurs when there is opposition. "…there is a mismatch between understandings of professionalism, policy aspirations and the attitudes of teachers to their professionalism, and that this mismatch fuels early years teachers' sense of agency" (Tesar et al., 2017, p. 189). Inandi et al. (2020) stated that school leaders and their leadership styles determine organizational dissent and resistance to change and that leadership styles are derived from teacher opinions. Knight (2011) stressed that a destructive cycle of resistance and pressure could occur between administrators and teachers when teachers are not included or given input in decision-making. When plans are "done to" teachers, the results are often negative and lead to lower teacher morale (Sprick & Knight, 2018, p. 53). Thomas et al. (2020) stated that followers are counting on their leaders to provide consistency and structure in their policies and procedures

and to fuel their motivation and encouragement. Yoon (2016) believes that a teacher's comfort level in their school environment will determine their change actions.

Teacher's Perception of Value

The perception of value cultivated in a teacher's workplace can be the key to organizational change movements. It is stated by Gilbert (2019) that while a person's priorities can change, their values do not. Barsade and O'Neill (216) say that to cultivate a particular emotional culture, you'll need to get people to feel the emotions valued by the organization or team—or at least to behave as if they do—and you do that by harnessing what people already feel, modeling the emotions that you want to cultivate, and getting people to fake it until they feel it. Change in education challenges teachers' assumptions about themselves and their work. According to Thornton et al. (2020), there is a direct correlation between educational leadership practices and a teacher's perception of self; leaders can support the perception of value and build teacher self-efficacy. Breathnach (1996) proclaimed that gratitude is the most passionate transformative force in the cosmos. Ackerman (2021) added that gratitude is an emotion like appreciation. Winstead (2021) asserted that if we do not sincerely express gratitude and do not commit to making appreciation part of our ethos, it becomes just another gimmick.

The research of Liu et al. (2020) acknowledges that leadership styles factor in the perception of satisfaction in the workplace. This self-perception is mainly responsible for student improvement, classroom culture, enduring organizational change, foundation considerations for educational ratings, and success (Thornton et al., 2020). The European Commission finds that a teacher's perceived identity in the workplace also personifies their personal and social life (as cited by Day & Leitch, 2001). Bandura (1986b, 1997) claimed that perception affects how a person acts, thinks, and feels, while a study by Kavanagh and Bower (1985) found that a

person's belief in their abilities has more of a bearing on how they approach their job task more so than their actual knowledge and skills.

Principals with effective educational leadership practices positively impact teacher behaviors and build self-efficacy (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Fleet et al., 2015; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019). Good business practices add value to employees (Fleet et al., 2015; Gilbert, 2019). Additionally, several studies draw parallels to a teacher's (a) self-efficacy, (b) engagement of voice, (c) extra-role behaviors, (d) well-being, and (e) trust in the school setting. An employee exercises voice in workplace matters of concern, innovations, and solutions by communicating informally, discretionary, and upwardly according to their level of engagement (as cited by Duan et al., 2020). Extra-role behaviors are classified by Van Dyne and LePine (1998) as being valued by leadership and being positive and discretionary in the workplace. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) also believed that job fulfillment and a teacher's well-being are directly related. "Balancing the concepts of diversity and inclusion is vital for cultivating opportunities and creating an environment in which employees thrive" (Gilbert, 2019, p. 86). Fox et al. (2015) stated that if teachers are to educate students effectively, the trust relationship between teachers and administrators must be active. School leaders influence teachers' career decisions (Mullen et al., 2021).

Self-Efficacy

Leaders can increase efficacy in teachers by providing a platform that positively improves instruction, achievement, and change. "Research on efficacy has implications for effective school leadership; however, we fail to apply what we know about efficacy" (Thornton et al., 2020, p. 171). Research by Liu et al. (2020) looks at a person's self-view development and how life experiences and settings contribute to a leader's overall shaping through self-awareness,

self-identity, and self-efficacy. Self-view is formed by such factors as family, school, and workplace while being enhanced by peer groups, community, and country, all working together to develop a bridge with a person's processing system (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019; Liu et al., 2020). Liu et al.'s (2020) research findings align with the ecological systems theory that claims environmental forces contribute to a person's identity and leadership development, which feed a person's bias in life.

Voice

Vilson's (2014) definition of a teacher's voice is "the collective and individual expression of meaningful, professional opinion based on classroom experience and expertise" (p. 175). While teachers' voice is vastly missing in school change initiatives, teachers want greater representation, knowing that school performance evidence ties directly to their voice (Berg, 2019). Not having a venue to represent and express voice greatly hinders teacher participation and voice (Berg, 2019; Inandi et al., 2020). "If a teacher talks in a forest and no one hears, does she make a sound" (Berg, 2019, p. 84).

Most teachers feel there is insufficient teacher voice representation in educational policymaking (Bangs & Frost, 2012). To identify different aspects of voice, Gyurko (2012) pointed out there are three categories of teachers' voices (1) education, (2) employment, and (3) policy. A teacher's educational voice speaks on matters in the classroom and pedagogy and is the most vital aspect of a teacher's voice (Gyurko, 2012). The employment voice is when a teacher is heard about benefits, compensation, working conditions, and evaluations (Gyurko, 2012). A teacher's voice's weakest aspect is the policy voice (Gyurko, 2012). Math educator, José Vilson, emphasized that teachers are not using their voices and are having to fight for their causes (Solomon, 2016).

John Spencer (cited by Vilson, 2014) said, teachers don't understand the power that they have in their role to shape and develop the critical thinking of students; they are slow to use their voices and speak up in matters of injustice. John Holland (cited by Vilson, 2014) proclaimed that many people do not want to hear what teachers say. Because the teacher's voice does not command natural respect, we must change the teacher's voice and build it up to a respect level that matches that of doctors and lawyers (Vilson, 2014). He also expressed that if we teachers are given a microphone, we should use it and share our experiences, not just repeat what others have said. According to Vilson (2014), the teacher's voice needs to become bioluminescent and be prepared to answer four questions, (1) What do you want to say, and why should it matter? (2) Who is your audience? (3) How passionate are you about what you're about to say? and (4) What is your solution; do you see yourself as part of the change? Time and space must be given to teachers to allow them to reflect on current practices and collaborate on change initiatives, allowing learning teams and individuals to address tensions and assumptions that can arise.

According to Hosseini and Sabokro (2022), there is a gap in the literature defining employee voice. Sharing voice in an organizational setting is voluntary, can be formal or informal, and does not warrant any rewards (Hosseini & Sabokro, 2022). While employee voice is considered important to administrators, depending upon the discipline, voice has different meanings in administration. Additionally, employee voice is regarded as an effective neutralizer when addressing management's power scope (Hosseini & Sabokro, 2022).

Well-Being

According to Duan et al. (2020), there is still much to be learned about the effects of an employee's well-being at work and the effect it has on the exercise of voice; those who have higher feelings of well-being are more expressive with their voice. Spreitzer et al. (2005)

describe thriving at work as "an individual's experience of vitality and learning," and it is also a positive indicator when it comes to a person's mental and physical health (p. 537). Teachers need good emotional health to influence decision-making in a career full of social and external factors that change daily (Day & Leitch, 2001). A person thriving in their workplace supports the heliotropic effect that all living beings experience by gravitating towards the light or positivity (Cameron, 2018). Cherkowski (2018) believed that teacher leadership is a mindset linked to well-being. Thriving at work is "a feeling of energy, passion, and excitement—a spark" (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014, p. 45). Schwartz (2012) proclaimed that feeling genuinely appreciated lifts people up, energizes them, makes them feel safe, and frees them to do their best work.

Day and Leitch (2001) stated that there should be an ongoing assessment of emotions and their effect on a person's professional growth. Research by Day and Leitch (2001) had three objective perspectives for the study (1) personal, (2) professional, and (3) propositional. Day and Leitch's (2001) focus was narrowed personally by looking at the what and why we do what we do as teachers, specifically in professional development, professionally by looking at the relationship between professional and personal sense of self by a teacher and propositionally by examining the emotions and different outcomes experienced by teachers in learning and change.

Strong feelings are often the result when there is talk about emotions in educational organizations (Day & Leitch, 2001). Day and Leitch (2001) stated that leaders manage and regulate emotions in education to guarantee the smooth running of the organization. Emotions "are usually talked about only insofar as they help administrators and reformers 'manage' and offset teachers' resistance to change or help them set the climate or mood in which the critical business of cognitive learning or strategic planning can take place (as cited by Day & Leitch, 2001, p. 837). Day and Leitch's (2001) study found that teachers believe that your professional

and personal life interact when they are a teacher, which can be emotionally draining; ongoing reform causes teachers to develop a cynical attitude. Life as a teacher is much like being "an ant on a patterned carpet" (p. 407). The teachers in Day and Leitch's (2001) research discovered that it is important to acknowledge and understand the emotional requirements of the teaching profession. Day and Leitch (2001) went on to state that common emotions such as guilt, fear, injustice, shame, hurt, and resentment are often unacknowledged in the teaching profession; these emotions often affect a teacher's professional identity. "Teaching at its best requires motivation, commitment, and emotional attachment, and this requires a deep knowledge of self as well as student" (Day & Leitch, 2001, p. 414).

Hannon et al. (2017) researched a person's capabilities and perceived freedom. "The capability approach is a theoretical framework that entails two core claims: first, that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance and second, that this freedom is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities" (Hannon et al., 2017, p. 1225).

Trust

People will follow others based on their level of trust, enthusiasm, and ability to exercise free will (Popper, 2011). Experiences are related to the level of trust and job satisfaction that a teacher realizes; it is not just found in times of change (Kondakci et al., 2017). According to Bass (1985), leaders can motivate others to go above and beyond the norms in the environment (as cited in Popper, 2011). When there is purpose in the process of change, people will engage and collaborate authentically because trust has been established, inspiring learning at a deeper level and creativity in decision-making (Quinn, 2016).

Recent research by Hosseini and Sabokro (2022) found that a necessity in organizations is to promote trust among employees, seek out managers that are deemed reliable, and build a

culture that provides an infrastructure that encourages collaboration, motivation, and participation among employees. Trust must be a key tenet for managers to support employee voice (Hosseini & Sabokro, 2022).

Teacher's Readiness for Change

According to Kondakci et al. (2019), there are four aspects of change readiness, readiness for change (RFC), cognitive readiness for change (CRC), emotional readiness for change (ERC), and intentional readiness for change (IRC). Readiness for change "indicates the belief, attitudes, and intentions of an organizational member about the necessity of change and the capacity of the organization for accomplishing that change successfully" (Weiner, 2019, p. 74). Cognitive readiness for change is the belief that change is beneficial, is right for the situation, and can be accomplished (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Emotional readiness for change is related to individuals' positive feelings that help foster ERC (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Intentional readiness for change is the intent of individuals to promote and support change practices (Armenakis & Harris, 2002).

Hinnant-Crawford (2016) acknowledged that there had been an ongoing failure to recognize that teacher expertise should be considered when deciding and implementing educational policies. School leaders often conflict with pressures from stakeholders who want to maintain their organizations' status quo instead of moving forward with innovative practices (Dungan & Hale, 2018). Taking the time to develop readiness is crucial to followership and provides opportunities for leaders to exercise a shift from first-person pronouns to a third-person pronoun mentality. Zdroik and Veliz (2020) researched literature on stakeholder management and participative decision-making (PDM) to find that participatory decision-making practices benefit an organization and provide quality implementation and support from stakeholders. PDM

helps organizations build transparent relationships and trust with stakeholders and fosters long-lasting benefits (Zdroik & Veliz, 2020). Hinnant-Crawford's (2016) research utilizing the social cognitive theory found that teachers do not believe their voices and efforts matter regarding policy initiatives and classroom improvement. Lack of teacher confidence in themselves and their perception of ability to make effective change is critical for readiness in educational organizations (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016).

Attitudes Toward Change

Attitudes toward change have been an interest for the past twenty years, and a person's perception most likely determines the success or failure of change in an organization (Kondakci et al., 2017). Contributors and predictors of readiness for change (RFC) are job satisfaction, trust in administrators, policymakers, and colleagues, workload perception, and process factors (Kondakci et al., 2017). Teachers need designated time to collaborate on mandated changes to fully understand how their perceptions are generated and what role teachers play in times of change. Lakin and Rambo-Hernandez (2019) stated that flexibility, confidence, effectiveness, and understanding are considered key factors for implementation readiness for stakeholders and organizations. Jenlink et al. (1998) believed that systemic change in an educational organization should advance learning and development, not just change for change's sake, and that preparedness is essential when initializing change.

Kubler-Ross (1969) used the grief construct framework in organizational change (as cited in (Anfara & Mertz, 2015). Organizational change causes strong emotion, making the grief construct a plausible theory and viable consideration moving forward with research. "The Kubler Ross (1969) model was the result of a collaborative research project by the author and students at the Chicago Theological Seminary on the experience of death" (Anfara & Mertz, 2015, p. 183).

This theory examines individuals and their change-related emotions within an organization (Anfara & Mertz, 2015). Teachers are in a constant cycle of grief with every new policy change in our schools. According to the grief study, "five stages of grief are directly associated with specific emotions" (Anfara & Mertz, 2015, p. 182). The five stages are denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Schoolfield and Orduna (1994) said, "denial can give individuals needed time to understand that the change is going to occur and what it may mean for them" (p. 64). Kubler-Ross (1969) indicated that the stage of anger includes "feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment associated with impending death and loss" (p. 64).

"In organizations, bargaining may be subtle and is often designed to weaken the proposed change so that it can more easily be condemned or sabotaged" (Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994, p. 227). Schoolfield and Orduna's (1994) findings on depression relate to the medical field but apply to education. "The staff nurse discovers that his or her ordinarily protective defense mechanisms are useless. It is during this phase that mourning for the past occurs" (p. 227). There is a desire for the way things used to be in the workplace. Kubler-Ross (1969) brought hope into the grieving process of acceptance. "Perhaps it is during the stage of acceptance, then, that hope reasserts itself as the primary emotion for the stayers who have experienced grief as a result of imposed organizational change" (as cited in Anfara & Mertz, 2015, p. 185).

> Woodward and Buchholz (1987) address organizational change to grief in this manner:
> At first…to compare change and death seemed a little heavy. But the more we thought about it, the more we realized that the process was very similar. In many ways, it is identical to it…When a loss occurs, the remaining people must finally go through some basic states—denial, anger, bargaining, depression—to achieve acceptance. (p. 185)

Later cannot be a word used for readiness; capacity building is ongoing, according to Jenlink et al. (1998). Teachers believe that principals are essential when it comes to changes; they must lead the way for changes to be successful (Smith, 2020). Kondakci et al. (2017) stated that leaders should focus on limiting the teacher's workload, building a culture that fosters trust, and facilitating communication and sharing knowledge with teachers to ready teachers.

Organizational Improvement

Systematic and intentional change is critical if an organization wants to see improvement continually (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019; Meyer-Looze et al., 2019; Mitchell & Shoho, 2017). To realize continuous improvement, leaders must possess a life-long learning and growth mindset (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Saxton (2019) proposed that good results correlate with good leadership. If we are expecting substantial improvement, leadership must value its people and must employ systems and structures that help build its organizational culture for change (Qasim, 2015). Stephen Covey (2004) expressed that next to physical survival, people need to be understood, validated, and appreciated. Focusing on the effect of leaders on the perception of inclusion and fairness in the workplace will strengthen educational entities' grooming of leaders and foster a positive vision for future goals and change (Martins, 2020). Viewing teachers as assets in schools can bring change that has the potential to reach beyond the classroom. Developing communication, meeting, and relationship routines in educational organizations will help magnify each teacher's expertise. They will significantly increase success in our schools, paving the way for overall improvement for all stakeholders (Berg, 2019).

Storytelling can also be an essential tool for school leaders to help navigate organizational improvement and change (Aidman & Long, 2017). Hall (2019) advocated "storytelling is one of the most powerful business-building tools in existence" (p. 17). Stories

help soften stakeholders and increase their receptiveness (Biesenback, 2018). While there is not a lot of literature on storytelling as a tool to foster change, it is becoming a topic of interest in leadership. Denning (2011) believed that anyone with an idea who wants to change their world will fare better if they tell stories rather than stating reasons. However, leaders' success depends on the nature and consistency of the storyteller (Denning, 2011). Hall (2019) advised that resistance to change can dissipate when leaders incorporate storytelling into the process.

Systemic Change

While there is a strong need for change, there is uncertainty about how to go about the change (Beabout, 2012). Beabout (2012) urged that disruption should be the first choice when implementing change. "Change by disruption is that a significant disruption in work conditions or processes will lead to changed (and presumably better) performance" (Beabout, 2012, p. 16). Beddoes et al. (2019) stated that change is constant in education, and we must understand the nature and its sources and forces to be empowered in the change process. According to Joseph and Reigeluth (2010), the most crucial aspect of the systemic change process is when efforts are made to change stakeholder mindsets and mental models. "When teachers critically explore, reflect and problematize existing practices while watching critical incidents that contain proposals for change, we identified tensions arising. The tensions emerged between teachers' established practices grounded in national regulations (e.g., National tests, exams, documentation, etc.) and their basic assumptions, values, and beliefs" (Lysberg & Ronning, 2021, p. 469). Joseph and Reigeluth (2010) provide a conceptual framework for the systemic change process that includes six essential elements for change (1) broad stakeholder ownership, (2) learning organization, (3) understanding of the systemic change process, (4) evolving mindsets about education, (5) systems view of education, and (6) systems design.

While educators understand that they must deal with change, doing so positively and effectively requires understanding systemic change and culture change. In a study conducted by Ganon-Shilon and Schechter (2019), three themes evolved when principals implemented systemic change: (1) caring for teachers' needs, (2) preserving leadership discretion, and (3) adjusting to school reality. Ganon-Shilon and Schechter (2019) found that principals are essential to directing and inspiring their staff in times of change.

Cameron (2013) reminded us that all change is accompanied by resistance. Perception of change determines its success or failure (Kondakci et al., 2017). Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013) told us that "change is inevitable, and it is a matter of whether you become the master of change or the victim of it" (p. 3). "Why wouldn't you want to live in a place that feeds you rather than depletes you of energy?" (Wilkinson, 2011, 19:37. Saxton's (2019) phenomenological qualitative research approach to leadership style and qualities is an essential contribution to the literature in that it investigates the problem of

> determining the leadership qualities needed for actual change to take place and become
> engrained affects all stakeholders: the immediate impact is on the classroom teacher, but
> the effects of the transformation impacts the students, their families, and the community
> at large. (p. 6)

To change and improve our organizations, leaders, and assessment methods of needs, we must be prepared for the journey and be headed in the right direction. There is no longer the question that education needs to change, but with the change, there is a need to understand how to change better. "Finding the right direction is absolutely vital" (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013, p. 1). "If you can't predict the future, create it" (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013, p. 3).

Leadership in Change

Saxton (2019) emphasized that there is a need for more research to find the leadership traits and qualities that are necessary to implement positive systemic change in school organizations that is lasting and will help to eliminate resistance and lack of compliance from teachers. Previous research places the blame on the lack of training teachers have received without considering an alternative option; that is, educational leaders were trained differently, which could be the missing piece (Saxton, 2019). Saxton's (2019) research results found that teachers need strong leaders, leaders that communicate and provide purpose when change is necessary, as well as leaders that will ask those that are affected (teachers) by change to give input on the implementation process. Also noted in Saxton's (2019) study were teachers' needs for (1) adequate time, (2) appropriate training, and (3) ongoing support during times of change.

Decision Making

Dungan and Hale (2018) found that utilizing real-world experiences and practice helps to create an adaptive decision-making process that is effective and useful in change situations. Successful change requires consistency in efforts over time (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). When implementing improvement and change needs, one of the keys to sustainability is to share professional responsibility (Mitchell & Shoho, 2017). According to Hickman (2016), shared leadership is an option for decision-making in large organizations. "Together, organization members generate and commit to the organization's common purpose and cultivate its leadership" (Hickman, 2016, p. 164). Change leaders are charged with building coalitions that help get people on board (Dungan & Hale, 2018; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019; Mitchell & Shoho, 2017). Fleet et al. (2015) looked at the perceptions and expectations that evolve in periods of change, often met with conflicting feelings of being viewed as disruptive. Mitchell

and Shoho's (2017) study found vetting change in educational organizations is costly and time-consuming. Based on frameworks of change researched by Mitchell and Shoho (2017), to experience student academic achievement, leaders must embrace and manage the change. Fleet et al.'s (2015) evidence showed that anxiety and confusion are often the emotions experienced by leaders when defining their leadership roles in change initiatives. In comparing the process of change in education to that of the trophic cascade that considers reactions and entire ecosystem effects, Morgan et al. (2019) said that change must be regarded as for the individual, the system, and how the results of the change will spill over and affect the educational ecosystem. There is a caution to be carefully issued in the vetting process by researchers (Morgan et al., 2019); it is often easier to keep doing what you have always done if the change seems unattainable. Using professional development communities to train educators and vet change can help eliminate confusion and feelings that overwhelm educators when faced with abundant choices and resources (Morgan et al., 2019). Fleet et al.'s (2015) research focused on identifying leaders' expectations, roles, and responsibilities to help support change in the future and eliminate confusion and anxiety during change initiatives.

According to Chen (2015), it is vital that all decision-makers, not just leaders, have the needed information to make appropriate implementation and intervention decisions for their clients. When evaluating systems and the factors that influence them, Chen (2015) noted that open systems are affected by external factors such as cultural norms and economic, social, and political conditions. The logic model (Chen, 2015) of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes helps stakeholders evaluate the development of our students and the effectiveness of our instructional practices. Likewise, systems thinking (Stroh, 2015) allows leaders and stakeholders to identify their connection with the current reality of their organization. Systems thinking helps

organizations with change challenges (Stroh, 2015). Notably, Stroh (2015) stated systems thinking helps in four areas, to

> motivate people to change because they discover their role in exacerbating the problems they want to solve, …catalyzes collaboration because people learn how they collectively create the unsatisfying results they experience …, focuses people on working on a few key coordinated changes over time to achieve systemwide impacts that are significant and sustainable…, stimulates continuous learning, which is an essential characteristic of any meaningful change in complex systems. (p. 21)

Employees need to be empowered to make decisions that affect their work (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014). Debnam et al. (2020) stated that while a significant amount of research data are available that finds collaborative leadership between leaders and teachers important to the change process, teachers are still left out of decision-making for implementing change. The lack of a venue or platform for teachers to share their voices is often an obstacle to educational decision-making (Berg, 2019). While teachers are burdened with ensuring students learn, they are not included in decision-making (Heneveld, 2007). There is an increase in ownership and fidelity of implementing policies when teachers are involved in the decision-making process (Bangs & Frost, 2012; Heneveld, 2007; McLaughlin, 1987, 1990). Taylor and Bogotch (1994) found that there is a need to change to a collaboration style of decision-making for administrators and teachers to increase job satisfaction, attendance, and participation. The study by Burleigh (2020) found that school leaders are responsible for creating an environment where ethical practices are encouraged, and all faculty and leaders collaboratively work together to achieve an ethical standard for decision-making. Teachers are in the trenches; giving them decision-making responsibilities will help positively engage them and foster buy-in to turn school districts around.

An ethical leadership approach helps to guide decision-making and is a compass for all stakeholders' moral situations. Dinh et al. (2014) stated that ethical/moral leadership theories focus on altruistic behavior and include authentic, servant, and spiritual leadership theories.

Saxton's (2019) findings reinforced the need for qualities and characteristics in the administration to help bring about success in the change process.

> The qualities or characteristics include the inclusion of teachers in decision-making and discussion of the process, ongoing support of teachers with follow-up check-ins and inquiry as to progress and needs, providing dedicated time to work collaboratively, and target and appropriate training offered promptly with mandated attendance for participants who will be implementing or involved in the change. (Saxton, 2019, p. 94)

Change Agents

Teachers must be considered and involved when implementing new changes in educational organizations. Today, there are high demands and expectations placed on teachers that include teaching in diverse classrooms, continually using new curricula, and fulfilling the requirement for continual professional development (van der Heijden et al., 2018). Teachers must be seen as change agents to influence change in their classrooms and professional community. Teachers must also be supported by their schools if they are to be agents that impact change. Tonna and Bugeja (2018) discovered that while teachers are held accountable for change in schools, they are often not trusted to lead change and reform activities, leading to the fundamental question of the extent of learning and change educators are willing to undertake. To achieve sustainable change, collaborative cultures must be fostered instead of a destructive tearing apart of schools and rebuilding from scratch (Beabout, 2012).

Kondakci et al. (2017) stated that it is important to acknowledge and validate the human aspect of change. There is a disconnect between behavioral and systemic change from a professional's perspective, making change riddled with obstacles (as cited by Kondakci et al., 2017). Researchers found that the principal, "by demonstrating behaviors as a change agent, a creator of vision, and a provider of necessary support and strategies, rather than adopting numerous programs, the school personnel were able to increase and sustain the academic achievement of the students…" (Kondakci et al., 2017, p. 1). The findings of Bennett and Murakami (2016) noted that "principals are working hard towards transformation, with an authentic desire to improve the conditions of students within their schools and society" (p. 26). Change cannot come from a top-down view; instead, if change is to be successful in educational organizations, teachers must take ownership of the change (Kondakci et al., 2017). Kondakci et al.'s (2017) study argument emphasized that teachers' attitudes related to change are important for interventions. This is a problem because administrators often design, create, and implement change exclusive of teacher input (Kondakci et al., 2017). The second argument (Kondakci et al., 2017) is that a teacher's attitude is not just pertinent at the time of change; it culminates from a total job satisfaction perspective.

Action Research

Action research is research that takes place in the field rather than in a lab (Lewin, 1946). Lewin's (1946) model consisted of a spiraling of planning, action, and fact-finding. McNiff (2017) described action research as "a practical form of inquiry that enables anyone in every job and walk of life to investigate and evaluate their work" (p. 9). This receptiveness originated with Lewin (1946), who is considered one of the originators of the idea of action research. Lewin (1946) "believed that if all members of a workforce were involved collaboratively in creating

and implementing strategy, the organization itself would grow" (as cited by McNiff, 2017, p. 26). Sowell (1987) gave value to having an open vision in action research because it lends itself to embracing possibilities and innovation instead of having specifics and closure for the results. McNiff (2017) argued that in action research, we should all be free to speak on our needs and actions that need to happen so that we may grow in ways unique to ourselves.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) is a tool for educators to improve their practices and decision-making while working with others and focusing on data to cause change in schools (James et al., 2008). PAR can be used for personal and professional growth and development (James et al., 2008). The action research (AR) part of PAR is a multi-stage work that delivers results that seek to improve practices and procedures (James et al., 2008). PAR is an iterative process that allows educators at every level to collaborate while they problem-solve (James et al., 2008). PAR helps to build community, improve educational practices, increase involvement in decision-making, allows for critical reflection, provide relevant professional development training opportunities, and increases participants' professionalism level (James et al., 2008).

Summary

The current climate of change in education lacks a teacher's voice. While educational change is necessary, leadership practices are void of effective inclusion strategies that inspire teacher readiness and buy-in and are primarily responsible for silencing teacher voice. In educational change, leaders continue to implement and plan initiatives and directives with an authoritative mindset instead of collaborative, making change futile. As stated in the literature review, the teacher's voice must be represented in change to be effective. Without the proper

representation of teachers, the key figures that are charged with implementing change policies in educational organizations, there will be little success or change movement with fidelity.

Research shows that the relationships between administrators and teachers are the determinant of success in schools. This knowledge is a directive for educational leaders in that they must work to grow authentic relationships with teachers in the workplace by building trust, fostering belongingness, and adopting the mindset of serving others if they want change to happen. The alternative to building the necessary reciprocal relationships is to expect compliance and buy-in because of the leader's position. Followership will not occur if leaders do not spend time developing the relationships needed to carry out change.

As stated in the cumulative research, providing PAR investigative opportunities for teachers and leaders in real-time will give iterative data collection cycles for stakeholders. The data collected in PAR will allow education stakeholders to collectively examine results and collaborate with equal representation when planning for future change. Leaders and teachers together will be able to understand organizational needs from their varying perspectives through collaboration and be better equipped to solve and anticipate organizational change needs moving forward.

Utilizing PAR as a framework for this change study, the reaching effects of leadership in change, and the use of teacher's voice in change provided a platform for teachers to speak up and be heard in a way that could enhance teachers' perceived value of self and efficacy of implementation actions in daily educational practices. The platform was established during the reflective processes of PAR based on the cycles of diagnosis, action, measurement, and reflection and helped facilitate the underutilized teacher voice in brainstorming, planning, implementation, collaboration, and communication of educational change. Efficiently executed

PAR research in the school's learning community served as a bridge for building relationships

between leaders and teachers and worked towards promoting substantive change in educational

Chapter 3: Research Method

This qualitative study aimed to understand teachers as change agents and their use of voice to express their thoughts and ideas in planning and implementing educational organization change. Teacher voice brings experience and perspective to change policies and practices (Frost, 2008) and provides tangible actions, consequences, and expressivity (Gozali et al., 2017). In decision-making, a teacher's voice is considered both a source and a solution to problems in our schools today (Conley, 1991; Gozali et al., 2017; Hargreaves, 1996; Kahlenberg & Potter, 2015; McDonald, 1988).

Previous studies lacked an exploration into why teachers do not voice their concerns and why they, as critical stakeholders, are not part of the change process when there is much research to support the benefits of their inclusion. There was also a need to understand how teachers' self-efficacy affects their view of significance and worth in their workplace and voice behavior. This study sought to understand why teachers do not voice their concerns and how moving forward in an ever-changing educational world, teacher voices can be amplified to create relevant and successful change.

The study also looked at systemic change in educational organizations and how teacher engagement and output correlate with the level of inclusion by leadership when planning change and implementation. While earlier practices of change and implementation worked well to meet the educational needs of the schools and the public, those practices are no longer sufficient (Joseph & Reigeluth, 2010). Thus, there is an urgent need to change the mindset of leaders in public schools today to ensure the inclusion of teachers in the planning and implementation of systemic change in public schools and change the trajectory of public education. This investigation's goal was to better understand a teacher's perception of self and use of voice in the

context of change in educational organizations and to help those teachers speak up to be heard and influence change. Additionally, it was also a goal to influence leaders to better understand their role in teacher voice behaviors and how they have the power to encourage or discourage teachers to speak up.

Research Questions

RQ1: What barriers exist that prevent teachers from using their voices as change agents in the systemic change processes?

RQ2: What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process?

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers can serve as change agents?

Research Design and Method

This study used a qualitative methodology within the framework of participatory action research (PAR). Qualitative methodology supported flexibility to implement changes in the PAR process cycle as discovery took place by participants.

PAR was an appropriate framework for data collection given the insider relationship with the educational community that I had with the schools of focus to be studied. According to James et al. (2008), the PAR process can provide relevant data to help stakeholders discover the best solutions for school improvement and practices in their communities. PAR studies value participants' reflection and a viable data form (James et al., 2008). PAR also includes a collaboration aspect to the study that, in this case, involved district and campus leadership teams and teachers as part of the solution process (James et al., 2008). Merriam and Tisdell (2016)

stated, "critical PAR studies can affect and transform people from both an individual and societal perspective" (p. 58).

Coding

According to Saldaña (2021), coding is an organizational method that is cyclical and helps the researcher classify, group, and categorize information gathered in research through analysis and synthesis. I reviewed, coded, and processed all data collected in the research process using qualitative analysis techniques and presented it in varying formats that included charts, tables, diagrams, citations, and quotations.

Coding helped develop an interpretive description that identified patterns determined by me; codes and patterns were identified, revised, and refined throughout the data collection process, and actively summarized and determined the meaning of the information gathered (Saldaña, 2021). Saldaña (2021) stated that it is a necessity that the qualitative researcher who codes be a critical thinker that possess logical and cognitive skills, as well as these seven characteristics: organization, perseverance, ambiguity, flexibility, creativity, ethics, and a substantial vocabulary (Saldaña, 2021). Saldaña and Omasta (2018) identified five Rs, five descriptors of people, that give substantial insight and meaning into people's lives and actions, which can be critical in coding. The five Rs are routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018) and were a consideration in this study. Identifying patterns and determining meaning is essential to establishing trust in the evidence gathered in data collection (Saldaña, 2021).

Coding for this study was done manually and electronically and was executed using descriptive, In Vivo, and emotion coding. Descriptive coding was achieved by giving labels to collected data and helped to provide subtopics of the study (Saldaña, 2021). The codes applied

single meanings and concepts (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The descriptive codes that emerged in

this study were trust, respect, compliance, communication, frustration, surrender, disconnect,

confidence, authority, harm, approachability, complacency, hierarchy, attitudes, resistance,

emotions, rewards, equality, value, shame, behaviors, and consequences. In Vivo coding,

described as literal coding (Saldaña, 2021), followed-up to the descriptive topics identified and

helped me establish a focus on the actual spoken words of the participants in the study, serving

additionally as a reminder that the experiences of the participants are authentic and valid. The

descriptive topics that evolved included trust is reciprocal, expertise of teachers, fear of

humiliation or targeting, there will be change, disconnect between teachers and leaders, lack of

compliance, token inclusion, emotional intelligence, equality for all stakeholders, bridge the gap,

and assumptions need to change. Lastly, emotion coding was utilized because of the nature of

identity related to the study (Saldaña, 2021). Acknowledging the emotions, the nonverbal clues,

and the inferences through emotion coding was critical for determining the organization's

authentic climate and environment, giving additional insight into why teachers are not voicing

their opinions on change matters (Saldaña, 2021). The codes were identified manually by me and

were inductively analyzed. The emotion code labels culminated from the PAR team discussions,

observations, and reflections recorded. One example of emotion coding came from a scenario on

site one where an observation of teachers revealed frustration and resistance with a procedure

change that required them to change their schedule with little notice. Reflections by PAR team

participants and observations also noted a lack of compliance with the change. Initially the

manual code label could have stopped at frustration, but with observations and reflections, the

emotion code ultimately became value—the teachers were frustrated because they did not feel

they or their time was valued (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Coding Thought Process

CODING THOUGHT PROCESS
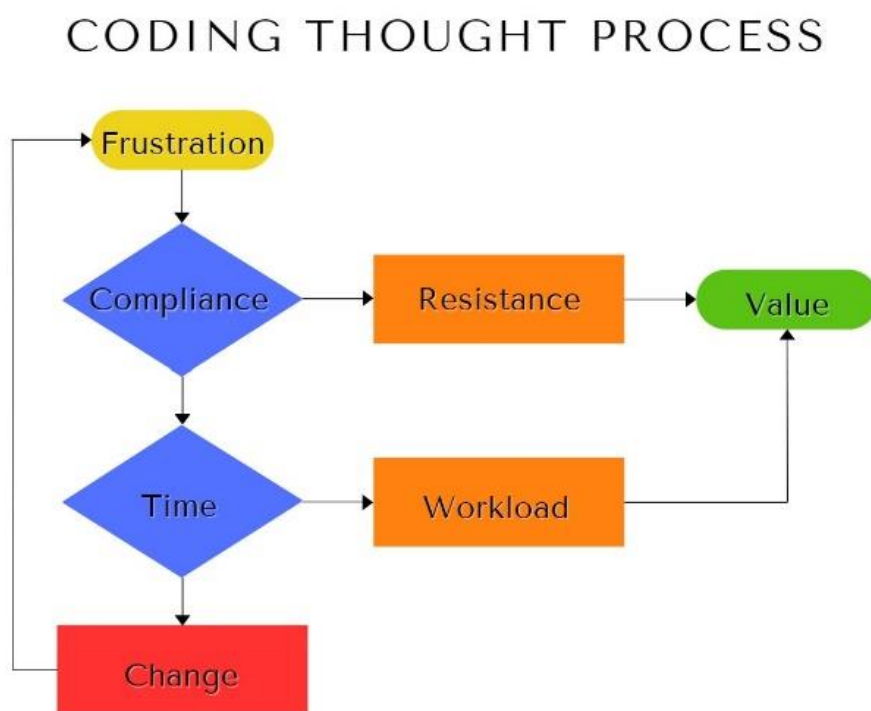
Note. I used an inductive thought process to label codes. This figure is a visual representation of my coding process.

While there is some disagreement about the amount of data that needs to be coded (Saldaña, 2021), all data gathered in this study was coded as it was collected. While coding was approached inductively in this study, the spiraling and cyclical nature of PAR in data collection and analysis helped in the pursuit of relevant "practice-based evidence" (Azulai, 2021, p. 15). The initial step for coding involved laying out all collected data in printed form, utilizing margins for notes, questions, and codes (Saldaña, 2021). Data were color-coded by hand in the margins to identify and organize patterns and themes in the data better. As suggested by Saldaña (2021), codes were compiled in a separate codebook as they are accumulated, and study participants were included in the analytical coding process during PAR meetings.

Triangulation

Triangulation is comparing data from one set to another (as cited by James et al., 2008). The triangulation data points in this study were PAR forms, journal reflections, and Likert surveys Coding from triangulation was determined by the myselfinductively. The PAR form codes identified were supported, concerned, trust, understanding, safe, harm, fear, frustration, doubt, equality, and value. The journal reflection codes consisted of frustration, confusion, concern, helplessness, gratitude, trust, distrust, failure, enjoy, bothered, lost, supported, respect, negative, confident, joy, and fear. The Likert survey codes revealed that most teachers on the sites felt as though there was a lack of trust and respect being shown to teachers. The teachers also did not feel supported by the administrators and did not trust administrators to make the best decision for them. Teachers also did not believe that their voice was heard on their campus. Most teacher respondents said that they were rarely ever consulted on change decisions for their campus.

Population

The target population for this study was a PK–12th-grade public school organization located in a small suburban town in Texas. The state classifies the organization as a 4-A school district. Over 86% of the district students are classified as socio-economically disadvantaged, and 58% are at risk of not graduating. The largest student demographic in the district is Hispanic, at approximately 57%. Currently, there are 250 plus full-time equivalent teachers on staff in the district. Most full-time teachers are White. The district is ranked among the state's highest for yearly teacher turnover. The district's organizational leadership is structured with a school board, superintendent, two assistant superintendents, numerous directors, and various leadership positions at the district and campus levels. This educational organization is experiencing a

disconnect between teachers and administrators when implementing systemic change, which is relevant to this study. Because teachers currently have no voice in organizational change in the district, there is a lack of fidelity when implementing at the campus level. It was my hope that the PAR research could identify ways to amplify teacher's voice. It was also anticipated that improved implementation of change would occur as well as greater teacher agency in the district of focus.

Study Sample

The sampling techniques was purposeful. The sample consisted of teachers and administrators on two secondary campuses in the school district of focus. There were 10 PAR team participants from the two secondary campuses that participated in the study. The research on both campuses was conducted concurrently. Each campus had its own PAR team and separate meetings. The PAR teams on each campus consisted of two district level administrators and three teachers. The volunteer participants had varied years of experience in teaching and administration.

The first campus, site one, was the secondary high school that supports about 1,000 students with about 68 teachers and staff. The second campus, site 2, was a secondary middle school that supports approximately 1,000 students with about 59 teachers and staff. The PAR meetings took place at each respective campus at a predetermined time and place that correlated with the school-day schedule. It was necessary for the meetings to take place on the school campus during the school day to help facilitate the relevant and timely implementation of goals for each campus. The meetings took place during lunch or conference times and were attended by all participants and myself.

Materials/Instruments

The materials and instruments used in this study consisted of journals and a digital recording app. The journals and Otter.ai were used throughout an iterative series of cycles of research with all PAR participants. The lead researcher facilitated the study with a distinct focus on the diagnosis of the problem, action, measurement, and reflection for each cycle of the study. Focus and responsiveness was the primary tenets that helped anchor all PAR team collaborations and cycle sessions (James et al., 2008).

Each study participant used a reflective journal provided by me to record their journey through the PAR process and cycles (James et al., 2008). The journal was instrumental in guiding the next steps for the growth and improvement of stakeholders and schools and the next cycle in the PAR process.

The Otter.ai ™ was used for recording interviews and meetings. The Otter.ai ™ was used on my phone and utilized in all meetings. Additionally, the Otter.ai ™ transcribed the meeting recordings, export them to a computer and external hard drive, and require a password to access them. The recordings were uploaded to my secure computer for transcription and analysis.

To acquire the qualitative data required for this study, I utilized various data collection tools in each PAR cycle consisting of digital self-report questionnaires, observations, interviews, participant journals, and Likert surveys. The questionnaires were designed as written reflections that helped participants respond to recent experiences in the PAR process. Questionnaires were administered digitally and kept online throughout the data collection process. Each questionnaire was composed of approximately 10 questions and took about 10 minutes to complete.

Forms used to organize information for analysis were resources that originated from James et al. (2008). The PAR data collection forms used included a data-planning matrix,

surfacing assumptions activity, a logic model, critical friend interview reflections, and analyzing

force fields. These forms helped to provide a foundational anchor for organizing the reflective

information generated in the study in each cycle of PAR on teacher's voice while helping to

scaffold for the different levels of experience and understanding of each researcher.

Data Collection Forms and Tools

I used James et al.'s (2008) PAR data collection forms to organize information in each

cycle of PAR, which drove the next steps for the study. The forms were the critical friend

interview reflections, data-planning matrix, surfacing assumptions, analyzing force field, and the

logic model.

- The critical friend interviews reflection form was a tool that was used to record

  interactions with a trusted friend that worked on each site that was not a PAR team

  participant. The interviews happened before any data were collected for the first

  interview and after the data were collected for the second interview to help eliminate

  bias. The friends offered an outsider view and perspective on the research progress that

  helped me identify bias and areas of concern. The critical friend interview reflection form

  (see Appendix H) was used to examine those that advocate for the research project

  (James et al., 2008). Critical friends' documentation helped participants understand the

  research study's context and helped eliminate bias in the study (James et al., 2008).

- The data-planning matrix form was used on both sites. This form helped organize team

  discussions based on pre-assessments of current knowledge on the topics of discussion as

  well as creating schedules and goals for reporting new findings by the team. The data-

  planning matrix (see Appendix C) focused on the study's purpose statement, research

  questions, and ethical issues. The matrix recorded and identified the needs of individuals

and groups of the study throughout the PAR process (James et al., 2008). The matrix also

served as an organizational system for creating and collecting information obtained

throughout the research.

- The surfacing assumptions form tool was used by the PAR team to critically think

  through assumptions that evolved while conducting research. The form directed the team

  to locate more information on the topic or purpose as well as a schedule for obtaining

  additional resources on the subject matter. To help identify the validity of assumptions

  (James et al., 2008), a surfacing assumptions activity form (see Appendix E) was used to

  record the observations throughout the process. This form was also useful when

  evaluating and defining the problems and the collaborative ideas, assumptions, and

  counter-assumptions of participants. The form served as a qualifier when it was difficult

  to determine the validity and goodness of an idea.

- The analyzing force fields form addressed conflicting views, motivations, and discussions

  on the PAR team. Team members brainstormed to determine areas that needed to be

  addressed on the site and identified views and actions that might contribute to certain

  behaviors. It is important to note that the research project was not always a smooth

  process. When discrepancies surfaced in the research process, an analyzing force fields

  form (see Appendix D) was used to help slow the process (James et al., 2008). According

  to James et al. (2008), three steps are required in change or vision casting, (1)

  mobilization must occur to break through resistance, (2) imbalance consisting of data and

  action has to be introduced, and (3) when forward movement and change occur, it must

  be measured, and efficacy has to be determined if there is to be movement towards

stabilization. Analyzing force fields helped to balance change and action plans (James et al., 2008).

- The logic model form was a tool used to focus on a specific topic or purpose that required the team to act as well as locate applicable research. The form identified PAR team questions, previous studies that were relevant. The logic model (see Appendix I) helped design and develop PAR (James et al., 2008). It was essential to understand that the logic model wase ever-changing as research revealed new ideologies and understanding (James et al., 2008). The logic model also functioned as a graphic model of the research in real-time. It also served as a visual reminder of information that was recorded in past observations or reflections throughout the PAR process. The visual recording of information helped keep a true perspective of the emotions and reality of reflections and data recorded and collected.

Observations

Observations were unstructured and were conducted in the field. Observations were recorded as a written record in the participant's journal. The observations' results were shared in PAR meetings with all study participants and used to further research in the next cycle.

Interviews

Interviews occurred in each PAR cycle and were semistructured based on the cycle's objectives. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions with a physical copy of questions given to participants. A secure digital device was used to obtain and store electronic recordings from all interviews and meetings. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and coded accordingly.

Journals

Each participant received a journal to record thoughts, observations, reflections, and notes throughout the data collection process. The journals were unique to each participant and were then turned in to me at the end of the data collection process. Participant journal records were vital in substantiating the authenticity of the study and were coded to add to the research data results. However, there were multiple occasions where extra duty and work roles interfered with the participant's ability to write their reflections in their journals.

Likert Surveys

Additionally, Likert surveys were administered throughout the study to participants and other educators and administrators at the district of focus to obtain additional information to calibrate participant observations and views. Questions for the survey were created by the PAR team of participants and myself, and I coded the results.

The data helped connect cognitive factors that influenced secondary teachers in a suburban, Title 1, 4A high school in Texas with systemic changes required by state and district mandates. The analysis procedure looked at previous studies and involved setting goals in the PAR cycle that included an iterative process of diagnosis, action, measurement, and reflection (James et al., 2008). The participants met weekly throughout the data collection process. The forward planner document (see Appendix H) was used in weekly meetings and created on chart paper to record the learning process of each cycle of the PAR process. It was a foundational document in group discussions (James et al., 2008). This document worked to keep the research focused and within time restraints that were necessary during research.

The data findings were coded as patterns evolved throughout the collection cycles (Saldaña, 2021). Some of the patterns that were looked at included similarities, differences,

frequencies, sequences, correspondence, and causations (Saldaña, 2021). Other patterns evolved

in the triangulation process of PAR (Azulai, 2021). The triangulation patterns included

identification of emotion economy in education, a need for leadership accountability plan, and

culture reset for readiness.

The PAR process provided data during each cycle of diagnosis, act, measure, and reflect

(see Figure 2). The process of diagnosis involved two parts that included collecting the data and

questioning associated with the data. James et al. (2008) believed that teachers are often strong

with their questions from the beginning of the diagnosis process and that the experiences and

actions mature with each cycle. Diagnosis is the cycle where participants identify issues or

problems that need movement from the status quo. A questionnaire for participants was used to

initiate the design process. As the relationships and the sense of accountability grew with

participants, the action steps in the action stage became more productive with each cycle (James

et al., 2008). The action stage is where participants acted with the intention of increasing

effectiveness (James et al., 2008). In the measurement cycle, participants collected data and

measured action results and outcomes. The reflection cycle of the logic model is where

participants brainstormed the next steps for repeating the cycles (James et al., 2008).

Figure 2

The PAR Process
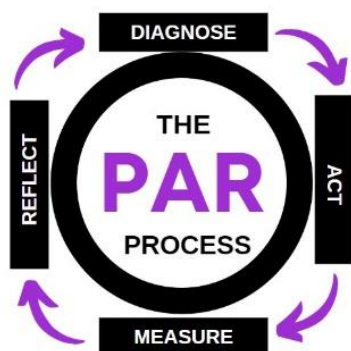
Note. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage.

PAR participant meetings were recorded. Participants also shared notes and reflections (see Appendices G & J) during the meetings and were then reviewed and coded along with additional findings and notes shared at every meeting. PAR participants were also able to correspond via text message or email, understanding that all correspondence was to be communicated to move research forward and find a way to improve current practices in the stated problem of practice area.

Trustworthiness

Maintaining the trustworthiness of this study has been a key consideration. Qualitative research is considered trustworthy when data collection occurs with a framework that ensures rigor, like a PAR framework. Data collection must meet credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability constructs to be considered trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 2009). PAR is a research framework established and proven with measures that fulfill the criteria for obtaining trustworthiness.

Credibility is deemed the most important construct of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). Credibility is established by proven research methods, familiarity with the organization or culture where the study takes place (Shenton, 2004), triangulation of different data collection methods, iterative questions, background and experience of the investigators, and member checks. All of these constructs related to credibility are built into this study in triangulation, the selection of PAR participants, PAR as a methodology, and member checks.

Transferability is an essential aspect of trustworthiness and requires the findings to transfer to other sites or scenarios (Shenton, 2004). Other educational organizations could relate to or identify with the data findings in this study and use them for improvement or change. Transferability in this study extends to coding and code thought processing. Dependability relates to the details and reliability of the study (Shenton, 2004). Having two study sites simultaneously involved in research with the same PAR method model helped promote dependability for this study. Both sites utilized similar approaches to their pursuit of data and had much the same results.

Confirmability in the findings and results was a consideration when collecting data due to the relationships between the participants and myself. Triangulation with PAR forms, Likert surveys, and participant journal reflections provided a built-in checks and balances system when recording data. Also utilized to substantiate confirmability were member checking procedures.

Ethical Considerations

The study's credibility was ensured by obtaining approval to proceed with any data collection from the Abilene Christian University (ACU) Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix MM). Once approval was received, this study followed all FERPA guidelines mandated by educational organizations to ensure compliance and safety for all participants.

Participants were notified of the study's purpose and intent before any acknowledgments or consent was established. Informed consent forms were obtained, and data were confidential to protect all participants. All means possible were used to protect all participants from harm. None of the participants were related to me to negate potential bias. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants could opt out at any time, with or without notice. All participants were provided with sufficient information to help them make informed decisions. While the lead researcher knew the identity of the participants, personal information about participant identity was not made public. The data collected were kept as confidential as possible so that it was not linked to any one participant in the study. Even though there was a concentrated effort to keep information confidential, a team setting made it hard to guarantee that no one talked about the information discovered in the meetings outside the perimeters of the scheduled meeting times. Finally, I housed all data collected during the study on a secure, password-protected computer.

Positionality

This research focused on exploring the power of teacher voice and the leadership skills needed to empower teacher voice. Before becoming the researcher, I had been a teacher for many years outside of the district of focus and was a district administrator on both PAR sites during the research period. Admittedly, it was hard to witness the expressions and raw emotions of the participants and respondents that sometimes surfaced. I also found it hard to believe that teachers would not want to speak up and share their opinions or concerns. To address my own bias on the need to speak up, it became necessary to research further into literature that would confirm a teacher's need to remain silent. Literature support was found in the works of Beabout (2012) that claimed educational change brings chaos and turbulence to schools, and teachers

resist the uncertainty that change brings; not wanting to add to the chaos. Voicing their opinion in the turbulence is hard for them to see as valuable or beneficial (Beabout, 2012).

Educators are passionate about their calling to teach. It became hard for me to not acknowledge the real feelings that were observed, even if it was just on paper. To address my bias, I had to make observation notes on the context of the situation being discussed along with my own thoughts or concerns, and then leave the evaluation of the emotions until the end of the day or the next day to help remove my own feelings in the process. Being an administrator, I believe, served as an advantage because it provided a lens that helped me stay focused on the big picture instead of little things that could distract from evidence of progress or action. It was also a challenge because of the strong working relationships that I had developed with all the teachers and staff on both study sites. Maintaining the role of listener and looking through the eyes of the PAR team participants during PAR team meetings and discussions helped me address my own assumptions that would often surface during research.

The teachers that were on the PAR teams taught on the campus they researched, and the district administrators had responsibilities on the campus they researched. The administrators did not have evaluative authority over the teachers they served with on the PAR team, they served as administrative support for teachers. The PAR teams were extremely cohesive and collaborated well throughout the research process. There was never an occasion where the climate was hostile or dysfunctional on either site; all participants were professional in their actions and demeanor and were respectful with their words and time. The tone of the PAR meetings encouraged brainstorming and collaboration between all team members.

Assumptions

For this study, I assumed that all participants in this qualitative study participated with efficacy and contributed honest assessments throughout the PAR process. I further assumed that the participants maintained integrity and protected the anonymity of everyone throughout the iterative cycles of PAR. Finally, I assumed that the participants genuinely desired to see improvement in the systemic change process in educational organizations, especially in identifying ways to empower teacher voices in change.

Limitations

While educational organizations have a firm top-down leadership hierarchy in place, the effectiveness of that leadership is strained when change initiatives and mandates are planned and implemented without input from all stakeholders. Today, educational entities and leaders have bypassed the developmental foundation required for followership and readiness. Leaders must also validate a sought-after follower's need to be part of the process if it is to be implemented with fidelity. Followership in organizations and individuals requires the developmental practices of readiness for all stakeholders and the development of followers instead of demanding followers. The disconnect between leaders and teachers in change is getting worse in education today and is the primary influence of this study. Every year, the school district of focus experiences a significant turnover in personnel which further exasperates the divide in implementing change. The lack of leader and teacher retention, the onslaught of new change policies throughout the school year, and the frequent reactive habits to problem-solving could be contributors to the limitations of this study.

The time commitment to a PAR study could have been a limitation for this study as educators were already overcommitted with their day-to-day job responsibilities. Additionally,

the collaborative nature of a PAR study could have initially hindered the cyclical process at the beginning of the study. I did not note any further limitations.

Delimitations

Although it could be argued that every school district has experienced a disconnect between leaders and teachers when implementing change policies and procedures, this study was intentionally limited to one educational organization that adequately represents the size and demographics of a large majority of school districts in the region of focus. The decision to limit the study to one school district is based on my ability to manage the scope of the study in the current climate where the safety of educational stakeholders is a significant consideration in education today, and the preservation of privacy was of the utmost importance for all parties involved. Teachers need to be empowered to speak up and share their voices in all aspects of change in education. This study provided a platform for teachers to speak out and the data to corroborate and contribute to changing policies and procedures of the future.

The variables in this study included different teacher content voices represented by participants, different years of experience of educators, and different roles in the focus district. The participants' approach to problem-solving in the PAR process differed according to their role in the district; with that said, the role difference could have also enhanced the collaboration process.

Summary

There is a need to increase teacher voice opportunities in the educational change process. The goal for expression of teacher voice in this study was to be used for improvement and to inspire positive change, not to become a haven for complaining and negativity (Page et al., 2019). If educational organizations provide a safe platform and a process for teachers to exercise

their voices, leaders will be better equipped to hear what they have to say. Ingersoll (2007) and Roberts and Dungan (1993) stated that incorporating teachers' voices improves (1) relationships between teachers and administrators, (2) participation and collaboration on campuses, and (3) an overall high level of satisfaction. When teachers are involved in the policymaking process, they become better policy implementers because of an increased sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes (Bangs & Frost, 2012; Heneveld, 2007; McLaughlin, 1987, 1990). Today, it can be argued that there is a shortage of teachers' voices in decision-making in educational organizations (Hargreaves, 1996; Ingersoll, 2007; Llorens, 1994), and academic leaders need to determine why teachers are not sharing their voices. Begin with a brief introductory paragraph in which you remind the reader of your problem and purpose and research questions and preview the order of the chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Participatory Action Research Cycle

This qualitative participatory action research (PAR) study based on the PAR framework of James et al. (2008) explored teachers' voices and their effectiveness in and as change agents in the planning and implementing educational systemic change processes. The study collected data through routinely scheduled discussions, observations, semistructured interviews, Likert surveys, and reflections from teachers and administrators. Data were coded and categorized into themes. Themes revealed how and why teachers used or did not use their voices in educational settings. The study also sought to understand the authentic barriers that may prevent teachers from using their voices, the role administrators play in facilitating teacher voice on their campus, and PAR's ability to provide beneficial insight for vision and action.

This chapter describes the study sites, data collection tools, and participants. A triangulation of PAR forms (James et al., 2008), journal reflections, and Likert surveys were used to establish and maintain the study's trustworthiness. The PAR forms were additionally coded to correlate connections and themes. Included is an overview of the PAR team's discussions, observations, journal reflections, and cumulative work for both educational organizations.

Study Sites

The research was conducted on two secondary sites labeled site 1 and site 2. Each site had a PAR team with correlated names; site 1 PAR team and site 2 PAR team. The teams met weekly and explored how to amplify teacher voices and speculated on the leadership skills needed to empower teachers to use their voice. The real-time engagement with change on the

campuses helped participants see and feel the emotions in others and themselves, providing

relevant responses, reflections, and actions.

PAR Team Participants

Both sites' PAR team participants included teacher and administrator educators. The

participants contributed to the research with varied years of experience in their current positions.

They brought a large spectrum of expertise from their work in education and diverse levels of

education and degrees. While the makeup of the two teams was vastly different, both teams were

high functioning and dedicated to the research. Each PAR team had a participant that stepped up

and kept the meetings on track. For site 1 it was teacher participant #2, and on site 2 it was

teacher participant #8. The PAR team members came to meetings ready to share observations

and reflections from the week. The meeting space became a safe place to ask questions, evaluate

policy and procedural practices, and offer alternate solutions for problem solving. There was no

friction between teachers and administrators on the sites.

Member Checking

To avoid bias with my experiences, reflections, and observations, I used a member

checking exploration with PAR team members. The member checking took place after all data

had been collected at the last PAR team meetings. I used an informal member checking interview

format to verify results.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) found four components provide stability in research and

establish trustworthiness in qualitative studies. The components of trustworthiness include

transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Multiple

components in this study worked together to establish trustworthiness. Additionally, the

openness of this study and trustworthy components created favorable conditions for future research that are aligned with Quantilope's (2023) vision for using data that involves emotion from participants and promotes trustworthiness and duplication capabilities.

The transferability in this study can be found in the coding and coding thought processes. Dependability in this research was established in the PAR meeting structure and the utilization of James et al. (2008) PAR forms, especially using the critical friend interview form. Confirmability is tracked in the Likert survey forms from site 1 and site 2 teacher respondents. Finally, credibility was verified through member checking after data were collected.

Site 1 PAR Team Participants

Participant 1 was a male administrator that has been in education for 10 years. His educational experience included teaching middle school and elementary grades in a core content, tested subject area. He was very engaged throughout the process and helped keep the team on track when discussions would detour. He was also instrumental in helping the team look at different perspectives when controversial ideas were presented and fostering a safe and calm climate for collaboration—his passion for teaching and leading is driven by an innate passion for learning.

Participant 2 was a female teacher that has been in the field of education for four years. Her educational experience includes teaching high school grades in a core content and college prep classes. She is currently working on her doctoral degree and was able to share a lot of current research on topics of focus. No matter how busy the week became, she could always share reflections from her journal and annotations from research articles posted in the team's research folder. Her passion for teaching is that she sees so many obstacles in the world of

education, and she wants to make significant contributions to future generations outside of her classroom.

Participant 3 was a female teacher that had been in education for 18 years. She had worked at the study site for 4 years and was able to share a vital perspective of the site's culture because of her longevity. She taught a core content-tested subject and brought a teacher's compassion to the team when looking at the teacher's voice. Her passion for teaching is to motivate and positively inspire and affect as many people as possible through education.

Participant 4 was a female administrator new to the school site and district this school year. She has 14 years of experience in education; this was her first year as an administrator. Her previous teaching experience had been at the elementary and secondary levels in a core content-tested area. She had an unbridled passion for doing what is right for teachers and students and could always be counted on to lead the hard conversations. Her passion for education stems from the necessity to teach history to teachers and students, it is not always pretty, but it is factual.

Participant 5 was a male teacher new to the school district and school site this school year. His experience included teaching a vocational content area at the secondary level. He had been a teacher for 4 years and is also married to a teacher. He did a great job helping the team think outside the box when brainstorming and always appreciated the other team members' experiences and expertise. He offered a consistent tone of calm at all meetings. His passion for teaching comes from his desire to inspire others to always look for an opportunity to learn.

Table 1

Site 1 PAR Participants

PAR team	Title/role	Gender	Years in education	Highest degree
Participant 1	Administrator	Male	10	Master's
Participant 2	Teacher	Female	4	Master's
Participant 3	Teacher	Female	18	Bachelor
Participant 4	Administrator	Female	14	Master's
Participant 5	Teacher	Male	4	Bachelor

Note. PAR team participants were invited to participate because of their role, experience level, desire to help bring about change in the education field, and willingness to commit to the study's needed time requirements.

Site 2 PAR Team Participants

Participant 6 was a female administrator that had been in her position for 2 years. She brought 9 years of educational experience to the study, and her teaching experience was in a core content-tested area in secondary education. She values education and how it can be life-changing and knows first-hand its life-changing benefits. Most notable was her incredible passion for teaching math.

Participant 7 was a female teacher with 5 years of educational experience in a core content-tested area in secondary education. She was extremely helpful in organizing our time and space. She kept our conversations grounded in the facts and provided a needed reality check to our ideas and assumptions. Her passion for teaching is the joy she feels when her students grasp a new concept.

Participant 8 was a female teacher with 4 years of experience in education. She was in a new position this year but had been in the district and at this school site all 4 years of teaching. Her passion for reflection during the PAR process was contagious and inspiring. Her heart was burdened with others before the research began, and it grew greater each week of study. Her passion for teaching is that she wants to help students feel seen.

Participant 9 was a female teacher that taught a core content-tested area. She brought 17 years of experience at the secondary and collegiate levels to the team. Her boldness to speak honestly and share her own experiences helped put the team at ease when the conversations were hard. Her passion is fueled by students. She loves it when students get it, especially when they have experienced nothing but failure in the past.

Participant 10 was a female administrator that brought 14 years of educational experience to the team. She had content teaching experience at the elementary level and vocational and college prep content experience at the secondary level. She kept us laughing with her always positive and sunny disposition through the apparent pain we all witnessed in real time. She was passionate about providing a safe place for teachers in the trenches to voice their concerns and help alleviate their frustrations. While experiencing trials of her own, her encouragement for others throughout the PAR process was moving for the entire team.

Table 2

Site 2 PAR Participants

PAR team	Title/role	Gender	Years in education	Highest degree
Participant 6	Administrator	Female	9	Master's
Participant 7	Teacher	Female	5	Master's
Participant 8	Teacher	Female	4	Master's
Participant 9	Teacher	Female	17	Master's
Participant 10	Administrator	Female	14	Doctoral

Note. PAR team participants were invited to participate because of their role, experience level, desire to help bring about change in the education field, and willingness to commit to the study's needed time requirements.

Journal Reflections

All PAR team members received a writing journal to record thoughts, observations, reflections, and notes throughout the data collection process. The writing journals were then used to identify patterns and themes in the data collection process. Every PAR team meeting began with the participants' opportunity to share journal reflections. The writing reflections from each PAR team member helped to transition the meetings to the next steps, research, and questions from the team. The participants used the writing journals to record questions and comments that would arise after observations on the site or in the PAR meetings. At the end of the data collection process, the participants turned in their dated pages from their writing journal, these pages became known as reflection sheets. The emotion coding (Saldaña, 2021) identified the emotions experienced by the participant and written or reflected in their journal writings. Frustration, confusion, concern, helplessness, gratitude, trust, distrust, failure, enjoy, bothered,

lost, supported, respect, negative, confident, joy, and fear were the codes identified. In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2021) used actual phrases that were written or spoken by participants in their journal writings or in meeting reflections. The In Vivo reflection codes identified were "what is happening?" "abuse of power," "the spirit of the school," "matter of emotion," "multi-tiered system of support," "gotcha meeting," "us vs them," "stop the bleeding," "learned helplessness," "lack of support," and "no one size fits all."

Coding

I used the triangulation tools of PAR data forms, journal reflections, and Likert surveys to expand the codes for analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that quality in research could be determined by the ethical attributes of trust and authenticity, which would then become an activator for action. The emotion codes determined in this process included interest, concern, hope, wonder, trust, understanding, safe, harm, threatened, defeated, helplessness, fear, doubt, frustration, favoritism, inequality, respect, value, and aggression. The In Vivo codes identified included "survey fatigue," "raw emotions," "increased responsibilities," "reciprocal trust," "positions of power," "working against," "in the know," "all stakeholders," "lack of response," "might be hard," and "leadership styles affect people." Together the emotion codes and In Vivo codes were categorized into the themes of this study.

An example of my coding is documented in the Critical Friend Interviews (see Appendices P and BB), where the identified emotions were interest, concern, hope, fatigue, and wonder. Those emotions were then tied to the In Vivo codes of "survey fatigue," "raw emotions," "increased responsibilities," "lack of response," might be hard," and "piled on teachers." Correlating both the emotion and In Vivo codes from this tool, along with the dialogue from the

interview, provided the emergence of a theme that indicated a "Disconnect from the Top Down" between teachers and administrators.

Themes

The triangulation of the PAR forms (James et al., 2008), participant journal reflections, and Likert surveys provided the information needed for theme analysis for the study on both sites. I organized the cumulative emotion and In Vivo codes (Saldaña, 2021) on chart paper to correlate the data from both sites and to identify reasons why teachers do not use their voice in change. The themes that evolved were determined to be barriers for teacher's voice; therefore, in this study they are referred to as barrier themes. The identified themes were relative and applicable to both sites in this study. The barrier themes discovered in the coding process were: The true and authentic spirit (culture) of the school is found in the emotions, abuse of power, top-down disconnect, hurtful actions lead to harmful reactions, respect and trust determine value, lack of communication, and learned helplessness is contagious.

The Authentic Culture of the School is Determined by the Emotion Economy

When researching the study sites, it was evident that the current culture was the main factor that determined the degree of participation from PAR team members and teachers, as well as the level of emotions displayed in responses from each site. It was also determined that culture was the most prevalent barrier that appeared to hinder the teachers in their actions. The culture included the emotions, feelings, atmosphere, and actions of stakeholders observed by me the PAR team on the sites. PAR team participant 8 said, "There needs to be more accountability for administration's emotional impact on a school's culture." Additionally, participant 8 stated, "The emotional economy is the fuel tank of a school." The authentic emotions I observed and recorded in this study ranged from frustration, fear, disconnect, hurt, harm, and helplessness. Because the

study sites were heavily involved in systemic change from campus and district levels, the emotions were raw and, in the moment. A reflection from PAR team participant 9 stated, "I have realized how my school climate stifles my voice." Findings by Beatty (2000) support that the emotional economy of a school paves the way for teachers' success and inspiration to try. PAR team participant 4 stated, "Leaders need to know their audience, so many teachers feel trapped and unable to voice concerns." Likert survey respondent #13/19 stated, "I will work hard for an administration that is honest no matter what."

Expectations of Position

A study by Blase and Blase (2000) found that abuse in the educational workplace can be verbal and nonverbal and affect teachers' well-being. Because administration leaders were the governing body on the study sites, their presence and actions affected the participants. PAR participant 8 said, "When teachers ask questions, they are publicly chastised and spoken to in a very demeaning way." It was observed and reflected that the abuse of power led to frustration, fear, and public humiliation.

Site 2 teacher J.W., a nonsurvey respondent expressed frustration and fear of taking off work for mental health day because request for time off had been declined. He shared in the hallway, "Teachers come to work sick due to fear of consequences of taking off."

Participants noted that when administrators abuse their position and power, it creates an "us versus them" mentality on the campuses as stated by PAR team participant 5. Teacher survey respondent #4/21 stated, "I generally feel like respect in the workplace should be mutual between teacher and administrators; I want to have input and not just told what to do." On a positive note, respondent #4/21 went on to state, "I feel like administration on the campus level respect the work of teachers." "Real and trust-forming respect is shown when all voices are considered and

consulted in decision-making," said Likert survey respondent #15/21. "If I don't feel like what is being done is in the best interest of staff and students, then I don't feel comfortable coming to work every day" was stated by Likert survey respondent #11/19.

A Disconnect From the Top Down

A recent study by Hurst and Hurst (2016) found that leadership connections paved the way for a culture to change. Participants on the sites stated that the lack of respect and trust caused a disconnect in their school community. The consensus of the PAR team was that there needed to be accountability at the top for the evident disconnect between teachers and administrators. PAR team participant 10 stated, a disconnect, "causes fractures in every area from the top-down, both externally in campus culture and internally in teacher/student confidence and self-worth." When PAR team participant 10, administrator, was asked about the importance of respect in her job, "Respect is incredibly important to me because I think it has a trickle-down effect, you have to treat everyone as equals in value even if lower in rank."

The Kicked Dog Cycle

Data studied by Blase and Blase (2000) showed that teachers believed that aggressive behaviors are intended to be hurtful and harmful and that responsible leaders are aware of the harm they cause. PAR team participant 2 referenced that it is like kicking a dog while it is down, "if you keep kicking the dog, eventually, he will stop barking," teachers have feelings of being kicked and are not getting up anymore. The PAR team discussions considered that teachers are tired of being abused and of having more and more things piled on them to do, but the more it keeps happening, the more he or she just takes it. Likert survey respondent #14/21 stated, "Respect works both ways and is based on trust and mutual politeness." The PAR team

participants on site 1 struggled with the hurtful actions and collectively stated, "the amount of disrespect coming from administration is extremely disheartening."

The Measure of Value

Teachers and PAR team participants identified value as being determined by the amount of respect or trust shown to them by others. "Respect means trust in decision making with my education and knowledge as an educator," stated Likert survey respondent #6/21. Site 1 identified trust as a potential barrier for teacher voice. "Trust is second only to encouragement and understanding." The majority, 53%, of the teacher Likert survey responders stated that trust was never or rarely truly felt on their campus. Respondent #9/18 stated, "Trust is when you can rely on someone or something to help or come through for you."

Respect was the focused barrier at site 2. Thirty-three percent of survey respondents stated that they rarely or never felt respected by the administrators as shared in their responses. "Respect is a priority that leads to professionalism which in turn leads to higher campus morale," stated Likert survey respondent #12/21. Respondent #20/21 explained, "respect is showing me I am important by the decision being made about me. Respect is listening to my concerns even though you may have a different opinion than me." "Respect is speaking to a person with the mindset that they have legitimate, valid input that matters," stated respondent #13/21. "Respect to me is being thought of as an expert in my area and being heard," said respondent #1/21.

The Communication Barrier

Communication was determined to be a big barrier on both campuses. "We are often given expectations with no guidance on how to meet them, said Likert respondent #2/19." The communication on a site was linked to trust by Likert survey respondent #13/19 when he said,

"Lying manipulation and lack of communication are trust breakers for me." PAR team participant 9 claimed,

> When teachers ask questions, they are publicly chastised and spoken to in a very demeaning way…hence, even when instructions/directions are unclear (which is pretty much all of the time) no one will ask for clarification…they would rather just be confused and keep their dignity intact.

While communication was determined to be a contributing factor for encouraging teacher voice, the study did not allow for the time needed to explore in great detail. It was shared by PAR team participant 10, "teachers were very emotional and dissatisfied due to the lack of respect and communication from administration" when discussing variables in the study. It was also discussed by PAR team participants on site 2 that previous communication trends and "nothing ever coming from surveys or changes on the sites in the past" may have determined the tone and lack of participation on Likert surveys for this study. PAR team participant 3 expressed concern, "I didn't realize so many teachers felt so trapped and unable to voice concerns."

The Plague of Quietness

Likert survey respondent #15/21 identified a trust scenario as, "When my administration trusts my voice as a teacher, then I can trust myself." There was a perception of teacher unimportance on the study sites. It was determined that a learned helplessness was plaguing teachers because they felt devalued. Survey response from respondent #13/21 stated, "No trust = no appropriate relationship in a workplace." PAR team participant 1 said that people generally have little respect for teachers, so no one listens to them, "why use your voice if no one is listening?" The perceived unimportance on the campus sites leads to a pattern of learned helplessness that become contagious. Previous attributes study of learned helplessness examined

how people feel they lose their way and control in their work situation and give up (Abramson et al., 1978).

Likert Surveys

The initial meeting on each site began with brainstorming to identify themes and barriers to the teacher's voice. Using the data-planning matrix form, me and the PAR team on site 1 identified trust as a barrier, while site 2 identified respect as a barrier. Teachers and administrators on each site were given seven multiple-choice questions and one constructed response question to answer. The PAR teams then created a Likert scale survey to understand teacher perspectives. The Likert surveys for both sites were distributed digitally from my password protected email. The email contained a google form link and a QR code to access the survey. Figures 1 – 4 reflect data collected from a Likert scale survey.

Figure 3

Site 1 Survey Responses

Site One Demographics

Demographics for Study - Gender
19 responses

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

21.1%

78.9%
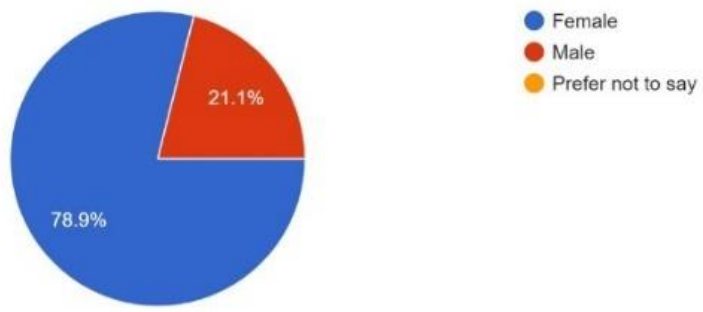
Demographics for Study - Teaching Years of Experience
19 responses

- 0-3 years of teaching experience
- 3-5 years of teaching experience
- 5-10 years of teaching experience
- 10+ years of teaching experience

36.8%

15.8%

21.1%   26.3%
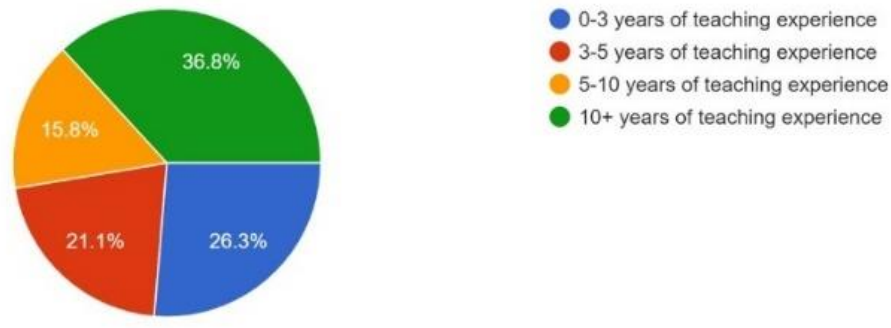
Note. Demographics of respondents from site 1.

Figure 4

Teacher Trust Multiple Choice Survey Results Site 1

Question	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes, But Infrequently True	Neutral	Sometimes True	Usually True	Always True
My voice as a teacher is heard and appreciated on my campus.	11%	32%	21%	0%	11%	14%	11%
Administration trusts me as a teacher to make decisions that benefit our campus.	16%	16%	21%	0%	16%	31%	0%
Administration consults me when I am a primary stakeholder in campus decisions.	31%	16%	26%	0%	11%	5%	11%
I feel supported and trusted by campus administrators.	21%	16%	16%	5%	5%	32%	5%
I trust administration on my campus and trust them to make decisions that best benefit me as a teacher along with the staff.	26%	15%	11%	11%	11%	21%	5%

Note. Site 1 had a 28% survey return response out of 68 Likert surveys sent.

Figure 5

Site 2 Likert Survey Responses

Site Two Demographics

Demographics for Study - Gender
21 responses

28.6%

66.7%

● Female
● Male
● Prefer not to say
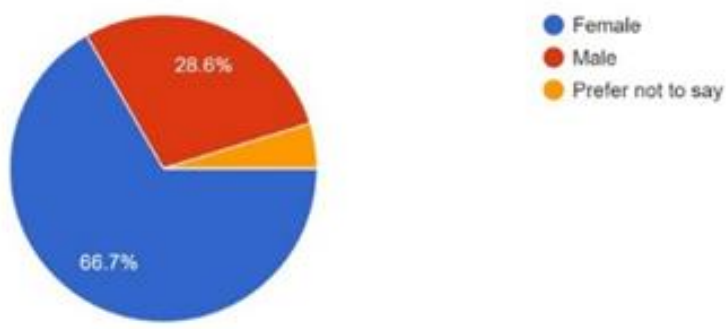
Demographics for Study - Teaching Years of Experience
21 responses

47.6%

14.3%

14.3%

23.8%

● 0-3 years of teaching experience
● 3-5 years of teaching experience
● 5-10 years of teaching experience
● 10+ years of teaching experience
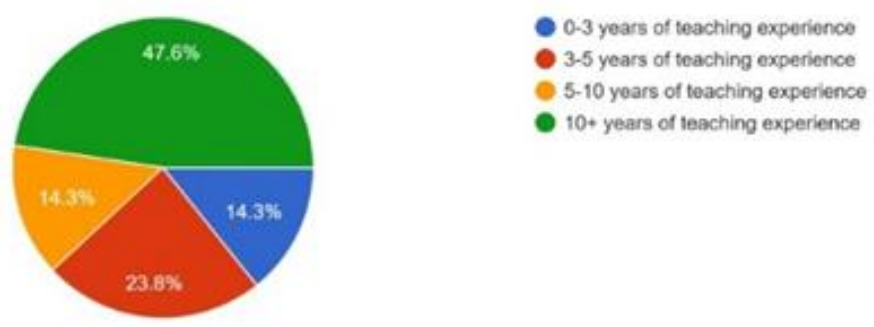
Note. Demographics of respondents from site 2.

Figure 6

Teacher Respect Survey Results Site 2

Question	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes, But Infrequently True	Neutral	Sometimes True	Usually True	Always True
My voice as a teacher is heard and appreciated on my campus.	0%	9%	24%	0%	24%	43%	0%
Administration respects me as a teacher to make decisions that benefit our campus.	5%	14%	9.5%	9.5%	24%	24%	14%
Administration consults me when I am a primary stakeholder in campus decisions.	14%	19%	19%	14%	9%	19%	5%
I feel supported and respected by campus administrators.	5%	14%	14%	0%	24%	19%	24%
I respect administration on my campus and trust them to make decisions that best benefit me as a teacher along with the staff.	0%	9%	5%	14%	29%	29%	14%

Note. Site 2 had a 36% survey response return out of 59 Likert surveys sent.

Site 1

Site 1 was a high school that educates students in grades 9–12 and houses 68 teachers. This site was a new administration team of four and they had to replace one of the new administrators due to a mid-year administrator resignation. The administration team systemically

changed every former initiative from the previous administration. The team also brought several teachers and staff from their former school districts to fill open positions at the school.

Overview of PAR Process Site 1

The site 1 PAR team met in my office twice a week for six weeks. The team maintained the PAR process focus of diagnosing, acting, measuring, and reflecting by engaging in an agenda that included sharing weekly reflections, field observations, investigating relevant research, group discussions with visual brainstorming charts, and planning the next steps. All meetings were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The site 1 PAR team began the research process being familiar with each other through their work at the school, so introductions consisted of sharing educational teaching experiences, current job titles, roles, and how to change on the study site has affected each one of them personally in their roles the current school year. After the initial introduction, the participants were introduced to the purpose of the study and the research questions that had shaped the study thus far.

Critical Friend Interviews

A site 1 critical friend was invited to participate based on her experience in education and various positions held at the site of focus. Critical friend #1 was a teacher that works with grades 9-12 and teaches both tested and nontested subject areas and college-prep classes at the secondary level. This friend was instrumental in offering neutral perspectives on potential areas of study before the study began and at the end of the study as well as discussing expanded topics of interest. Table 3 is a summary of the interviews.

Table 3

Critical Friend Interviews

Critical friend	Date	Interview focus	Interview outcome
Critical Friend #1	1/3/2023	I presented an overview of the PAR study on the school site of focus and discussed the PAR team participants that had expressed interest and were being considered for the study.	My friend was supportive yet concerned about the current cultural climate on the study site. She hoped I could get teacher support with Likert surveys, given the survey fatigue experienced on campus. She also pointed out that it might be hard for participants to devote much time to the study given the increased responsibilities that continued to be piled on teachers and administrators.
Critical Friend #1	2/6/2023	An overview of the research progress was presented, as well as a discussion of emerging themes and reflections that had been recorded and shared. There was also discussion about teacher voice, the lack of response from the administration team, and the raw emotions revealed in the teacher voice Likert surveys.	My friend commented on how the discussions and themes accurately portray the emotions that were prevalent in being shown on the campus. She wondered about the lack of administrative responses and questioned if they might have felt threatened to know the research was currently happening. She also encouraged me not to let this be a study on paper; please identify and plan some next steps for teachers to share their voices.

Note. Critical friend feedback at the beginning and end of the PAR process on site of focus.

Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix E)

PAR Team Site 1 Discussions

Site 1 team discussions were focused on the components of the PAR process and focused on the research questions.

First PAR Team Meeting: January 06, 2023

The discussion at the first meeting of the PAR team was initiated with an overview of the study and the initial research questions to be considered. It was agreed upon by the team that we would look at RQ1 first to help determine the next steps in the process. Some of the PAR team's initial discussion on RQ1 was that teachers' voice is an important piece to saving the future of education, there is a disparity between different voices in education, teacher voices are not prioritized, and teachers feel trapped and unable to voice their concerns.

RQ1: What barriers exist that prevent teachers from using their voices as change agents in the systemic change processes?

The team brainstormed to create questions to help provide an action path at the initial meeting.

- What is teacher voice?

- How is teacher voice utilized on our research site?

- Why do administrators omit teacher voice when planning and initiating change?

- Why would a teacher use their voice when they are threatened or targeted in a harmful way when they speak up?

- How do we fix the threats and targeting teachers are experiencing that is muting teachers' voices?

- Why are teachers not considered or treated like experts in their field?

- Why do teachers not think of themselves as experts in their field?

- Who is responsible for fixing the learned-helplessness traits being displayed by teachers?

- Where is the value disconnect between administrators and teachers?

- What is one thing that is needed to amplify teachers' voices?

Also covered in the meeting were the communication expectations and using a team folder to collect research documents and articles to be read and annotated between meetings. Then the focus was narrowed to what defines teacher voice and what is needed to empower teachers to speak up and use their voices. The unanimous topic of focus related to the teacher's voice, decided on by the team to move our research forward, was trust and how it factors into teacher voice and the leadership relationship.

PAR Team Meeting: January 10, 2023

After identifying the potential barrier of trust for teachers and leaders, this meeting needed the help of a form that would help the team explore the focus of trust in teacher-leader relationships. The team generated the information needed for a data-planning matrix (see Table 5), and a plan was made to research during the week to gain a deeper understanding of how trust factors into providing a platform for teachers' voices. Throughout the meeting, team discussions generated assumptions tied to trust in education. Therefore, a surfacing assumptions activity form was created (see Figure 7). The team read and annotated research articles applicable to the theme of trust on their own, and the findings were discussed with the whole group. In looking at the administrator-and-teacher relationship disconnect that had become evident, the leader-member exchange theory (LMX; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) was discussed and noted to be a valuable lens for future administrative observations. I also discussed leadership styles on the site and the team. Also addressed in this meeting was the need to create a Likert-type survey for teachers and administrators addressing the topic of trust for gathering additional data.

Figure 7

Data-Planning Matrix

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	What kind of data will answer the question?	Where can I find the data? Whom can I contact for access?	What is my timeline for acquisition?
How important is trust in the workplace for teachers?	To gain an understanding of how/if trust helps to amplify teachers' voices in change.	Qualitative data were gathered from observations, interviews, reflections, and Likert surveys.	Peer-reviewed Articles Periodicals Educational Trade Magazines	One Week

Note. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix A) Form includes the following:

- Ethical issues associated with your study area: No known issues have been noted or observed.

- Validity/trustworthiness of your study: Use triangulation of observations, reflections, and Likert surveys

- Role in the study: Researcher

- Working Purpose Statement: This exploration aims to identify the role and importance of trust in the educational site of focus.

- Working Research Question(s): What barriers prevent teachers from using their voices as change agents in the systemic change processes?

    o Is trust a barrier that prevents teachers from using their voices?

Table 4

Surfacing Assumptions Activity

Assumptions about trust How important is trust in the workplace?	Qualitative data available to verify this knowledge
If teachers feel trusted, they will feel it is safe to use their voices.	(Gozali et al., 2017) (Page et al., 2019) (Herman et al., 2008) (Zeng & Xu, 2020)
Trust must be reciprocated to be beneficial, and reciprocal trust is needed to do our jobs properly. Lack of trust can be harmful, leads to threats, and could cause targeting and abuse of power by the administration.	(Page et al., 2019) (Herman et al., 2008) (Zeng & Xu, 2020) (Gozali et al., 2017) (Lee et al., 2019) (Page et al., 2019) (Herman et al., 2008) (Zeng & Xu, 2020)

Note. The qualitative data resources were beneficial in acknowledging the noted assumptions. (See Appendix C) They also provided additional information on the importance of trust in the leader-teacher relationship, supporting the LMX theory. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage.

This study aimed to identify the barriers that prevent teachers from using their voices in change and the significance of trust in the leader-teacher relationship in change.

PAR Team Meeting: January 12, 2023

The team began the meeting by discussing observations and reflections on the topic of trust from the week while finalizing the upcoming survey to be distributed to teachers and administrators. A generous amount of information was beginning to accumulate on our anchor charts and in our journal, clouding our discussion. It was discussed that people do not like and often resist change and that our culture is involved in an enormous amount of change almost daily. The team began researching additional articles about the benefits or potential harm in

teacher-leader relationships that could be considered barriers to systemic change. Participant 2

took the lead in creating an analyzing force fields document (see Figure 8). Participant 1 began

formulating questions to be considered and discussed for the teacher survey at the next meeting.

Figure 8

Analyzing Force Fields

1. List the forces that work to change the situation under study by the PAR group and those that work against it.
a. Open door policy and hierarchy thereof
b. Teachers can interrupt admin meetings with pressing issues/students can if needed.
c. Specialty teachers considered experts on curriculum (trusted) *Could this be because the administrator was a non-content director before becoming an administrator?
d. Administrators are visible in hallways/readily accessible.
e. Administrators readily approachable
Opposing Views from Teachers that were at Site 1 before administration changeover:
a. Have not built trust
b. Leftover culture
c. Not properly implementing the changes that are necessary for school-wide success
2. Brainstorm other data, communication systems, or actions that can be added to create a tipping point that propels change to occur.
a. Adult accountability – follow through on procedures
b. Individual attention to problems
3. List major stakeholders, including yourself.
a. Leadership
b. Teachers
4. Reflect on the areas of action or change in personal and institutional behaviors likely to cause defensive behaviors.
a. Blanketed all staff emails that do not apply to everyone (when there is an issue)
b. BUT individuals could be defensive as well
c. Must relay policy and be diligent/careful in how the recipient perceives the message *in-person conversations take away the guessing on tone/intent.
5. List possible underlying motivations and ideals for education that can be enlisted to ease defensive behavior.
a. Addresses individual behaviors
6. Note which motivation may be driven by an assumption. Does data exist that challenges the assumption?
a. The assumption that nothing will change in education as a whole
b. Find additional research/studies
7. Brainstorm ways to confront defensive mechanisms both in yourself and in others.
a. Reminders of policy/expectations
b. Information is not dispersed until the changes are already in motion
c. Teacher leadership meetings/town hall-style meetings to voice opinions/concerns

Note. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James,

M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix B.) Emotion coding: trust,

ownership, defensiveness, concern, complacency, and care. In Vivo coding: "tipping point,"

"nothing will change," "could this be," "readily approachable," and "leftover culture."

PAR Team Meeting: January 17, 2023

The meeting began with a reflective discussion on the analyzing force fields document from the previous meeting, and a move to devote time to RQ2 was initiated.

RQ2: What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process?

The team discussion led to the creation of the logic model document (see Figure 9) to address additional questions from the previous meeting. Participants created anchor charts that helped move the conversation toward the next steps, including utilizing the logic model to enrich the discussion on potential discovery and questioning approachability. As the team completed the logic model form, they used it to inspire and finalize questions for a school site-wide survey to be sent to all teachers (see Table 5) and administrators (see Table 6).

Purpose of Action Research: To explore why teachers are often causing a force that is working against them—perhaps we (teachers) are the reason there is no change?
The purpose of this study is to address the belief that nothing will change in education. Things are always going to be the way they are today.

Research Question(s): What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process? Why does approachability not equate to a certain level of trust between administrators and teachers?

Figure 9

Logic Model

Questions to be addressed	Previous studies	Variables	Local measurements	Form of analysis
Why do some teachers resist any change?	(Reigeluth & Karnopp, 2020)	Revolving door leadership Campus Structure Schedules	Observation Discussion	Survey
Why do professional adults foster a culture that buys into the attitude that nothing will change?	(Qutaiba, 2010)	Feelings of Defeat Lack of Trust Teachers are often causing a force that is working against themselves Learned Helplessness	Observation Discussion	Survey
Why do teachers not use an open-door policy when offered?	(Blase & Blase, 2000)	Frustration Fear Doubt Approachability	Observation Discussion	Survey

Note. Logic Model addressing the culture, variables, measurements, and analysis of site 1 and

how change is perceived. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational*

Leadership by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix G)

Table 5

Survey Statements for Teachers

Survey Statements for Teachers using a Likert-Scale
My voice as a teacher is heard and appreciated on my campus.
The administration trusts me as a teacher to make decisions that benefit our campus.
Administration consults me when I am a primary stakeholder in campus decisions.
I feel supported and trusted by the campus administration.
I trust the administration on my campus and trust them to make decisions that best benefit me as a teacher along with the staff.
Explain your definition of trust and the level of importance trust is to you as an administrator.

Note. Likert-Scale choices include *Never True*, *Rarely True*, *Sometimes True*, *Neutral*,

Sometimes True, *Usually True*, and *Always True*.

Table 6

Survey Statements for Administrators

Survey Statements for Administrators using a Likert-Scale
My voice as an administrator is heard and appreciated on my campus.
Teachers respect me as an administrator to make decisions that benefit our campus.
Teachers consult me when I am a primary stakeholder in campus decisions.
I feel supported and trusted by campus teachers.
I trust teachers on my campus and respect them to make decisions that best benefit me as an administrator along with the staff.
Explain your definition of respect and the level of importance respect is to you as an administrator.

Note. Likert-Scale choices include *Never True*, *Rarely True*, *Sometimes True*, *Neutral*,

Sometimes True, *Usually True*, and *Always True*.

PAR Team Meeting: January 23, 2023

This meeting began with a discussion on communication based on the need for more responses from the survey sent to teachers. A surfacing assumptions activity form was completed (see Table 7) to guide our research and the next steps to address communication between leaders and teachers. The team used the meeting time to collaborate in two different teams on the takeaways from the Likert surveys and their observations from the week. In reviewing some of the survey responses, the team noted:

a. respect and trust go hand in hand

b. trust is a response that honors cultural, racial, gender, creed, and other societal factors while acknowledging the individuals value as an important asset to the setting

c. trust is of the utmost importance; trust is believing in another's ability to be responsible, efficient, and effective in their role

d. and that we should trust someone as they are with kindness and understanding and not have a demeaning spirit

Other noted observations were of leaders and ineffective methods of communication in change and trust. The research readings noted that leaders are responsible for a school's emotional economy (Beatty, 2000). We find no accountability for a failing economy of emotions on the site. The participants would like to see a communication change in their PAR cycles.

Table 7

Surfacing Assumptions Activity

Assumptions about Leadership and Communication	Qualitative data available to verify this knowledge
Leadership styles affect people's natural communication tendencies and emotions.	(Beatty, 2000) (Gozali et al., 2017) (Lee et al., 2019) (Zeng & Xu, 2020)
Just because I have a relationship with an administrator does not mean I should get more information than other or before others. All stakeholders should be "in the know."	(Cherkowski, 2018) (Joseph & Reigeluth, 2010) (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016) (Lee et al., 2019) (Joseph & Reigeluth, 2010)
Communication inequality should be based on something other than the content area taught. (Tested content areas are more important?)	(Cherkowski, 2018) (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016)
There needs to be more trust from the administration in the teachers.	(Beatty, 2000) (Gozali et al., 2017)

Note. The qualitative data resources were beneficial in addressing the noted assumptions and guiding them to the next steps. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix C)

Surfacing Assumptions Activity

This study aimed to identify the barriers that prevent teachers from using their voices in change and the significance of leadership styles and communication in the leader-teacher relationship.

PAR Team Meeting: January 25, 2023

This week's team discussion focused on Beatty's (2000) article that highlighted the importance of emotional accountability for leaders and the economy they create in their organizations. This discussion led back to LMX theory and entered the talk of the need for serving leaders (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016). Participants felt the need to discuss and suggest

future leadership accountability and evaluation practice changes for all administrators. Of

specific interest to the team was the evidence that all stakeholders should be in the know, not just

those that are regularly shown favoritism. It was discussed that favoritism affects people's

natural communication tendencies and leads to how to improve leadership communication (see

Table 8). The PAR team also reviewed the survey results from teachers and administrators. It

was noted that no administrators completed a survey form.

Table 8

Question and Variables

Question	Variables
How can communication be improved between administration and teachers?	a) Staff favoritism b) Top-down examples c) Long-term planning d) Value of teachers e) Personal agenda of leaders f) Lone-ranger mentality

The site team determined the next steps to be observation and reflection on the

communication patterns of the site more diligently and begin to purposefully change the

communication patterns in their areas of reach to help inspire and facilitate change at a higher

level. Likert survey respondent # 6/21 stated, I feel as if this campus has very serious

communication issues and the blame is shifted to the teachers and staff because of it. I would

love to see improvement in this area." There was no official launch of this action concerning

communication due to an ice storm that shut down the school site for one week and changed the

calendar options for future collaborations.

PAR Team Meeting: February 6, 2023

The team discussion this week was the final for this site. The participants turned in their

journals and discussed the next steps for amplifying teacher voices, including an inspiring

change to administrative practices, so that teacher voices are heard. The participants also gave
final thoughts to questions that drove our research through the PAR cycles and reviewed the
site's survey results. There was a renewed interest in the reasoning for the absence of
administrative participation in the survey process. The final action of the team was to answer
RQ3.

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers
can serve as change agents? (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

Site 1 PAR Team RQ3 Results

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers can serve as change agents?

Participant One:	Participant Two:	Participant Three:	Participant Four:	Participant Five:
Yes	PAR could be an effective forum where teachers can serve as change agents because it creates a platform for the participants to safely discuss issues within schools. The cyclical nature of it allows for continuous growth/re-evaluation.	Yes, most definitely! It felt like a "safe space for teachers and team to have an open discussion/open forum.	If a safe and trusting environment like this is created, yes, it would be effective. PAR creates a safe place for needed discussion.	I am still unsure of the answer to this.

Note. Answer to RQ3 in site team February 6th meeting.

Observations Site 1

Observations on the site were disaggregated at every PAR team meeting. Each team
member took the lead according to their passion level for the content of the observation. The
entire team felt more personally empowered as a change agent due to the study. The weekly

observations served as a guide to confirm the next steps and provide organization when discussing the research. The observations also helped eliminate participant bias in the study, almost like a weekly check-up or check-in.

Journal Reflections Site 1

Although all team members engaged in personal journal reflections throughout the process, written reflections by team members were shared at the discretion of the individual team members at the beginning of every site team meeting. At the end of the final cycle of the PAR process, each PAR team participant turned in their journal notes.

Site 2

Site 2 was a middle school that educates students in grades 6–8 and houses 59 teachers. The administration team consisted of two returning, one new to the district and one new to administration members. This team worked with daily changes to policies and procedures from their administration team and was expected to comply with the changes immediately.

Overview of PAR Process Site 2

The PAR team on site 2 met one to two days a week in a team member's classroom. Site 2 had many time challenges often dictated by campus student challenges and last-minute administrative schedule changes. The team maintained the PAR process focus of diagnosing, acting, measuring, and reflecting by engaging with an agenda that included sharing weekly reflections, field observations, investigating relevant research, group discussions with visual brainstorming charts, and planning the next steps. All meetings were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Critical Friend Interview

A critical friend (see Table 9) was invited to participate based on her experience in education and various positions held at the site of focus. Critical friend #2 was an interventionist who works with the district's elementary and secondary students. This friend was instrumental in offering neutral perspectives on potential areas of study and topics of interest. Her willingness to help was immeasurable, and her calming demeanor was invaluable to me. She offered a new perspective on the assumptions and observations recorded.

Table 9

Critical Friend Interviews

Critical friend	Date	Interview focus	Interview outcome
Critical Friend #2	1/3/2023	An overview of the PAR study on the school site of focus was discussed, as well as the time commitment needed and the number of PAR team participants being considered for the study, which included teachers and administrators.	My friend was concerned about the study site's climate, which frequently creates chaos for teachers. She wanted to ensure that I had considered the emotions that may surface and that I could implement focus documents to keep the discussion on track.
Critical Friend #2	2/8/2023	An overview of the research progress was presented, as well as a discussion of emerging themes and reflections that had been recorded and shared. There was also a discussion about teacher perception of respect and value on the campus site. The aggression, emotions, potential bias, and diffusion practices in the PAR meetings were noted. Survey results were also shared.	My friend felt strongly about the definition of respect on the study site. She felt that respect should be considered in gender, culture, and society and that perhaps we did not see that representation on the study site. She also shared that her personal experience in the district had been such that she rarely experienced respect. This goes back to the earlier caution about the cultural climate.

Note. Critical friend feedback at the beginning and end of the PAR process on site 1. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix E)

PAR Team Site 2 Discussions

Site team discussions were focused on the components of the PAR process and focused on the research questions.

PAR Team Meeting: January 10, 2023

The discussion at the first meeting of the PAR team on site 2 was initiated with an overview of the study and the initial research questions to be considered. The members of this team needed to be better acquainted, so time was devoted to introductions and sharing background information about their educational experiences and their passion for making a positive change in education. The team decided to focus on RQ1 to help with the first steps.

RQ1: What barriers exist that prevent teachers from using their voices as change agents in the systemic change processes?

Some of the site team's initial discussion on RQ1 was that teacher's voice makes a school a school; people generally show little respect for teachers today, and no one listens—so why use your voice if no one is going to listen, and talking about it helps confirm that teachers do not have a voice. The meeting proceeded with brainstorming on the things we wanted to know more about regarding the formal research questions.

- What is teacher voice?

- How is teacher voice utilized on our research site?

- Why is gaslighting happening here?

- Where is the safe and beneficial platform needed in our profession on this campus?

- Where is the respect for teachers?

- Why would a teacher use their voice when publicly shamed, threatened, or targeted in a harmful way when they speak up?

- How do we fix the threats and targeting teachers are experiencing that is muting teachers' voices?

- Why are teachers not respected on this campus?

- Why are all teachers not treated equally?

- How can we change the preconditioned assumptions?

- Who is responsible for fixing the abuse of power displayed by administrators?

- Where is the lack of respect, disconnect between administrators and teachers?

The participants came to a consensus to focus on the lack of respect on their study site. A secondary thought was to find the importance of respect, whether it is a critical factor in determining the level of teacher voice utilized and displayed daily, and how leadership factors into the level of respect needed. A data-planning matrix was completed to support diagnosis with supportive resources (see Figure 11).

Data-Planning Matrix

Working Purpose Statement: You show value when you respect people.

Working Research Question(s): Why are we working against each other—leaders and teachers?

1) Ethical issues associated with your area of study: Abuse of power must be defined and reported if results show evidence of truth.

2) Validity/trustworthiness of your study: Triangulation of data

3) Role in the study: Researchers

Figure 11

Data-Planning Matrix

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	What kind of data will answer the question?	Where can I find the data? Whom can I contact for access?	What is my timeline for acquisition?
How important is respect in the workplace for teachers?	To gain an understanding of how/if respect helps to amplify teachers' voices in change.	Qualitative data were gathered from observations, interviews, reflections, and Likert surveys.	Peer-reviewed Articles Periodicals Educational Trade Magazines	One Week
Why is the leadership abuse of power and negativity allowed to continue?	To understand what hinders teachers from speaking up.	Qualitative data gathered from observations, Likert surveys, and reflections	Peer-reviewed Articles Periodicals Educational Trade Magazines	One Week

Note. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix A)

PAR Team Meeting: January 12, 2023

This meeting focused on respect using a data-planning matrix and the relationship between teachers and administrators; the role that respect plays. Team members first debriefed from change implementations that validated a lack of respect shown on the study site. The team members were able to identify their emotions and reflect on how their new experience could help identify needed areas of focus and additional research. Also discussed at this meeting was the need to create a Likert-type survey for teachers and administrators addressing various aspects of respect to gather additional data for the study. A surfacing assumptions activity (see Figure 12) was completed to explore the impact of respect in amplifying a teacher's voice.

Surfacing Assumptions Activity

The purpose of this study was to explore the role and importance of respect in the educational site of focus.

Working Research Question(s): Is the evidence of respect or lack of a barrier that prevents teachers from using their voices?

Figure 12

Surfacing Assumptions Activity

What do you know or think about your topic?	Qualitative data available to verify this knowledge
Lack of Respect hinders professional relationships between administrators and teachers	(Beatty, 2000)
You show value when you show respect to people.	(Page et al., 2019)
Lack of respect causes negativity.	(Johee & Young, 2022)

Note. The qualitative data resources were beneficial in bringing awareness to the noted assumptions and guiding them to the next steps. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix C).

PAR Team Meeting: January 17, 2023

The discussion for this meeting began with reflections on the leadership disconnect that has been prevalent and has strained psychological safety on the campus. This led to discussion and reflection on RQ2.

RQ2: What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process?

Team members discussed that leaders need to respect teachers as professionals and experts in their content, administration needs to empower their teachers by letting their voices be

heard, and by implementing some of the teacher's suggestions on campus, leaders need to

practice humility and exercise relational skills. The PAR team also developed survey questions

for all campus teachers (see Table 10) and administrators (see Table 11).

Table 10

Survey Statements for Teachers

Survey Statements for Teachers using a Likert-Scale
My voice as a teacher is heard and appreciated on my campus.
Administration respects me as a teacher to make decisions that benefit our campus.
Administration consults me when I am a primary stakeholder in campus decisions.
I feel supported and respected by the campus administration.
I respect administrators on my campus and trust them to make decisions that best benefit me as a teacher along with the staff.
Explain your definition of respect and the level of importance respect is to you as an administrator.

Note. Likert-Scale choices include *Never True*, *Rarely True*, *Sometimes True*, *Neutral*,

Sometimes True, *Usually True*, and *Always True*.

Table 11

Survey Statements for Administrators

Survey Statements for Administrators using a Likert-Scale
My voice as an administrator is heard and appreciated on my campus.
Teachers respect me as an administrator to make decisions that benefit our campus.
Teachers consult me when I am a primary stakeholder in campus decisions.
I feel supported and trusted by campus teachers.
I trust teachers on my campus and respect them to make decisions that best benefit me as an administrator along with the staff.
Explain your definition of respect and the importance of respect to you as an administrator.

Note. Likert-Scale choices include *Never True*, *Rarely True*, *Sometimes True*, *Neutral*, *Sometimes True*, *Usually True*, and *Always True*.

PAR Team Meeting: January 19, 2023

The team meeting had a staggered start, with participants required to take on additional duties during lunch and conference time. Participants shared their reflections from the past week with the team. The team saw common threads that tied our themes and observations together. The team concentrated on additional questions concerning administrators and had the vision to create additional tools for accountability and restoration between administrators and teachers. The team discussed questions that can be answered utilizing the logic model (see Figure13) as a template for organizing this inquiry step.

Purpose of Action Research: To explore why gaslighting techniques and the aggression and consequences of such are not addressed.

The purpose of this study is to address the consequences experienced with abuse of power; emotional extortion.

Research Question(s): What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process?

Figure 13

Logic Model

Questions to be addressed	Previous studies	Variables	Local measurements	Form of analysis
Where is the leadership accountability? Who is responsible for school culture?	(Page et al., 2019)	Lack of unified vision and action Devaluation of teachers as human beings	Discussions Observations	Survey
Why is there a refusal to grow and learn together with administrators and teachers? Where is the capacity for change?	(Reigeluth & Karnopp, 2020) (Page et al., 2019)	Lack of unified vision and action Lack of respect	Discussions Observations	Survey
What role does communication play regarding respect?		Lack of unified vision and action Devaluation of the job of a teacher	Discussions Observations	Survey

Note. Logic model addressing questions about leadership skills and the importance of culture and change. Adapted from *Participatory Action Research for Educational Leadership* by E. A. James, M. T. Milenkiewicz, & A. Bucknam, 2008, Sage. (See Appendix G)

PAR Team Meeting: January 25, 2023

This extended meeting covered the time allotment that would typically have been two meetings due to schedule changes on the campus site. The discussion continued with the logic model (see Table 12) from the last meeting and examined the measurement of leadership skills needed to help amplify teachers' voices. At the top of the discussion was the fact that teachers

are not a one size fits all; leaders need to possess the ability to identify differences in their

teachers as well as be aware of unique strengths and weaknesses. There was also a realization of

an abundance of abuse of power noted in reflections and observations.

Table 12

Question and Variables

Question	Variables
How should teachers react to the abuse of power behavior of leaders?	a) Leadership styles of leaders b) Experience of leaders c) Lack of training for leaders d) Personal agenda of leaders e) Personality of leaders

The site team determined next action steps should be to create an evaluative leadership

tool with tiered training and instruction to help better train leaders based on current needs in

school settings rather than the outdated procedures of the past. An abundant display of leadership

inefficiency and lack of responsibility actions (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2016) occurred, resulting

in emotional displays from teachers with a consequence of severed trust of administration were

noted this week in team discussions.

PAR Team Meeting: February 7, 2023

The discussion at this meeting started with the whole group's reflection on the PAR

process as it evolved at the site. The participants could see the big picture and how each research

stage fit with themes, assumptions, and changes. They saw the benefits of their involvement and

how the educators they worked with and observed daily responded to the Likert surveys

throughout the process. It was a bittersweet meeting as the team realized the change that had

occurred in themselves while hoping to instigate change in others. The final action of the team

was to answer RQ3.

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers can serve as change agents (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

RQ#3 Site 2 Results

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers can serve as change agents?

Participant Six:	Participant Seven:	Participant Eight:	Participant Nine:	Participant Ten:
Yes, it could be very effective. It gives teachers a voice and empowers teachers to serve as a change agent.	PAR could be an effective forum where teachers can serve as change agents because it creates a platform for the participants to safely discuss issues within schools. The cyclical nature of it allows for continuous growth/re-evaluation.	I personally think that PAR is an effective tool, especially for reflecting upon the world of education, because it gives the people on the ground floor the voice to speak. Many surveys or studies seem to give more weight to "experts"--typically people who have been removed from the nitty gritty for quite some time. PAR gives a voice to the people who are having daily exieriences in the field	I think PAR is effective in eliciting information and feedback from teachers. Whether they can serve as change agents is influenced by their administration.	PAR is definitely effective as it relates to collecting the data needed to target issues within our education systems. The part that is left untouched is the follow through for the solutions/outcomes to be implemented over time to be the change that is necessary to improve these areas of focus. Often times the teachers are in the trenches of these issues.

Note. Answer to RQ3 in site team February 6th meeting.

Observations Site 2

Observations on the site were disaggregated at every PAR team meeting. Each team member took the lead according to their passion level for the particular content of the observation. The weekly observations served as a guide to confirm the next steps and provide organization when discussing the research. The observations helped eliminate participant bias in the study regularly, like a weekly check-up or check-in.

Journal Reflections Site 2

Although all team members engaged in personal journal reflections throughout the process, written reflections by team members were shared at the discretion of the individual team

members at the beginning of every site team meeting. At the end of the final cycle of the PAR

process, each PAR team participant turned in their journal notes, and I coded.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study focused on the problem that teachers' voices needed to be included in systemic change. Two teams of educators studied the problem on two secondary grade-level sites. The teams used PAR as a framework to listen, validate, and amplify teachers' voices in a cycle of diagnosis, action, measure, and reflection on the focus sites. The teams identified barriers preventing the equality of teachers' voices and the leadership skills needed to empower teacher voices in educational organizations and answered the research questions. The research questions helped provide a foundational focus of the study's purpose and a platform where teachers' voices could be heard. The study occurred on two secondary educational sites referenced in this chapter: site 1 and site 2. A non-probabilistic sampling method of teachers and administrators was used on both sites to collect data for the study.

Two PAR teams of educators committed the time and effort to explore barriers that hindered teachers from using their voices in change matters. Each PAR team participant brought multiple years of experience from other school districts to the table, which helped expand their perspectives in identifying barriers for teachers and leaders and promoted initiatives toward positive change. Through an iterative collaboration process of dialogue, reflection, analysis, and coding, the PAR teams identified themes and areas of focus from authentic experiences lived on the study sites, looking through the leader-member exchange (LMX) lens. This chapter will share the findings of the PAR research process, which could help determine and eliminate barriers that prevent teachers from using their voices and the leadership skills needed to empower them in change.

This chapter compares the findings of the two sites of the study and shares their identified barriers. Also included are the details and analysis from team discussions, limitations

encountered, recommended next steps for me, and suggested future research. The chapter ends with a conclusion of the study.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Past Literature

For this study, it is necessary to note that while it is known that teachers are crucial to the change-making process and the fidelity of implementing change in our schools, findings show that teachers often resist using their voices. Heneveld's (2007) findings are that teachers are expected to make changes in our schools but are not invited to contribute to and decide what is essential in change processes. Similarly, when it comes to education reform, Hargreaves and Shirley (2011) noted that teachers are usually the last to know, hear, and speak.

RQ1: What barriers exist that prevent teachers from using their voices as change agents in the systemic change processes?

Addison's (2005) definition of voice is an individual's manifestation. At the same time, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) defined voice as expressing constructive opinions about work-related issues. Gyurko (2012) promoted the definition of a teacher's voice as "the expression by teachers of knowledge or opinions about their work, shared in school or other public settings, in the discussion of contested issues that have a broad impact on the process and outcomes of education" (p. 4). Gozali et al.'s (2017) findings showed us that it is critical for teachers' voices to be included at all levels of change so that change may be negotiated rather than merely implemented because teachers were found to have more grounding and understanding of situations than policymakers.

During this study, most teachers resisted using their voice even when given an opportunity or platform with open-door policies of the administration and open calls for questions and Likert surveys. This led the research team to ask other questions about why

teachers resisted when allowed to speak. Through the PAR team reflection process, it became evident that the culture had not readied teachers to share their voices. Avolio and Hannah (2019) stated that both the individual and the organization require readiness. Reigeluth and Karnopp (2020) found that readiness is a crucial factor for success when implementing change in an organization.

Several studies have focused on identifying the challenges that hinder the expression of teachers' voices in matters of change in educational organizations. For example, Barry and Wilkinson (2016) noted that voice was a crucial subject area for studies in organizational behavior literature and that voice was expressive and relayed an employee's desires and choices regarding the organization. Studies that connect an employee's sense of well-being and voice expression are sparse and at the beginning stages (Cortina & Magley, 2003; Knoll & van Dick, 2013). Duan et al. (2020) found that when well-being is higher, the likelihood of an employee's voice expression is increased. Grant et al. (2007) confirmed that voice was essential and that there is a need to understand how well-being affects the voice.

The research teams for sites 1 and 2 initially engaged in the research process with the thought that teachers were left out of change conversations because of a top-down mindset often found in education. PAR revealed that culture was a significant barrier preventing a teacher's voice expression or initiation. To support the finding, researcher Gozali et al. (2017) found that the opportunity to speak and be heard is only one part of the equation; the cultural conditions to speak must also be right. Zayim and Kondakci (2015) also supported cultural readiness conditions, noting that change readiness includes cognitive, emotional, and intentional aspects to prepare for and receive the change. While there was a need to increase teacher voice opportunities in educational change processes on both research sites, for teachers to speak up, the

evidence showed they must first feel trusted and respected in the culture. The PAR team quickly

understood that the culture on both sites would be the first hurdle to overcome if teachers were to

be heard in change.

A compare diagram is used to share the findings and attempted answers to the research

questions for sites 1 and 2 (see Figures 9, 10, 11). These findings (see Figure 15) reinforce that

change requirements must include cognitive, emotional, and intentional readiness.

Figure 15

RQ #1 Comparison

Comparison RQ #1
Barriers that existed that prevented teachers from using their voices in change

SITE ONE BARRIERS	SITE TWO BARRIERS
Trust	Respect
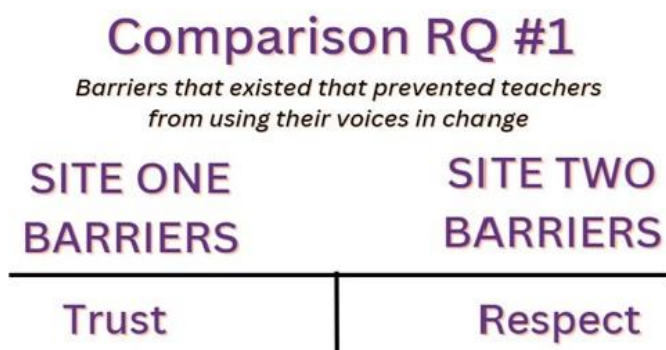
Note. Site 1 focused on trust and Site 2 focused on respect.

Naicker and Mestry (2016) stated that the lack of teacher voice representation caused a

disconnection between vital parts of a part-whole relationship in our schools as if "the whole

were greater than that of its parts" (as cited by Banathy, 1992, p. 10). Me and the PAR team from

site 1 identified trust as a significant barrier preventing teacher voices from being heard.

Respondents from site 1 were asked to share the meaning of trust and said,

a) trust is highly important to me

b) trusting 1 another to do their job correctly and efficiently with proper training is a large

portion of this job

c) no trust = no appropriate relationship in a workplace

Zeng and Xu (2020) found that trust is a cause of voice behavior and that employees are more likely to exercise their voice when they work in an environment of trust.

Although 53% of teachers on site 1 stated they never, rarely, or infrequently felt supported and trusted on their campus by their administrators in a Likert survey, 42% of the teachers believed that sometimes, usually, and always they were trusted and supported by their administrators. Neutral feelings of trust and support were expressed by 5% of the teacher respondents to the Likert surveys. Even though administrators were given the opportunity to respond to the Likert survey two times, no administrators responded.

Me and the PAR team from site 2 identified respect as a significant barrier preventing teacher voices from being heard.

Site 2 PAR team members discussed respect as being,

a) Respect means to trust in decision-making with my education and knowledge as an educator.

b) Allowing me/trusting me to do my job and treating me with kindness.

c) When we admire or recognize someone, we feel is important to us, and when we can agree or disagree yet still accept each other as we are.

Investigating the lack of trust and respect on the study sites through observations, reflections, and Likert surveys, the PAR team concluded that the barrier that prevented teachers from using their voices was the need for more readiness in the culture. The culture had yet to be ready for change; therefore, it was the reason why teachers did not and would not use their voices. For educational change to happen, it requires a revolution from the ground up (Saxton, 2019).

The Likert survey results on site 2 contrasted the site 1 results. Although 33% of teachers on site 1 stated they never, rarely, or infrequently felt supported and respected on their campus by their administrators in a Likert survey, 67% of the teachers on site 2 believed that sometimes, usually, and always they were respected and supported by their administrators. Even though administrators were given the opportunity to respond to the Likert survey two times, no administrators responded.

RQ2: What skills do educational leaders need to empower teachers as change agents in the systemic change process?

The PAR teams were unanimous on both sites in identifying communication-type skills as skills needed to empower teachers. Reflections from site 1 on communication recorded that communication was a significant issue on the campus; we are often given expectations with no guidance on how to meet them. A site 2 reflection indicated that lack of communication was a trust breaker.

The communication skills on both sites encompassed safety, well-being, pride, emotions, and culture. During the study, both sites experienced displays of aggression in leaders, and a lack of empathy for teacher's needs, while also revealing a lack of accountability from top-down administration to campus-level administration, which opened up the campuses for a free-for-all leadership model that is stifling teacher voice instead of empowering teacher's voice. The site 1 team found a culture of favoritism and inequality debunked proclaimed open-door policies. Gozali et al. (2017) claimed that equality in education mostly remained stagnant in its efforts. The site 2 team found that the lack of accountability led to unquestionable behaviors and offensive aggression by leadership that targeted teachers. Findings of Johee and Young (2022) supported that administrators are responsible for and play an important role in creating a

necessary cultural climate that reduces violence and fosters communication and friendliness. Page et al. (2019) found that leadership availability and accessibility were equally important in a culture.

Some leaders found that a teacher's voice challenged their authority; therefore, for fear of rejection, employees chose to refrain from speaking up, and as a result, teachers did not feel empowered (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Liu et al. (2021) found that LMX created a more open environment, which made employees feel more comfortable communicating, expressing, and voicing their opinions and thoughts in work situations. Johee and Young (2022) reported that any perception of negativity in the workplace had an effect on an employee's commitment to the workplace.

Through research Likert surveys, observations, and reflections, the PAR team was concerned about needing more administrative input on both sites. The PAR teams noted that although the administrators on both sites were invited to answer Likert surveys, none chose to participate. Findings show that there has long been the acknowledgment that all stakeholders should be part of change processes (Gozali et al., 2017); when entertaining the opportunity for teacher voice input, there is often resistance from leaders and administrators (Conley, 1991; Hargreaves, 1996; Kahlenberg & Potter, 2015; McDonald, 1988; Roberts & Dungan, 1993); causing a great divide between administrators and teachers.

Although 73% of teachers on site 1 stated they never, rarely, or infrequently were consulted by administration when making campus decisions in a Likert survey, 27% of the teachers believed that sometimes, usually, and always they were consulted by their administrators. Even though administrators were given the opportunity to respond to the Likert survey two times, no administrators responded.

Site 2 Likert survey results found that 52% of teachers on site 1 stated they never, rarely, or infrequently were consulted by administration when making campus decisions in a Likert survey, 33% of the teachers believed that sometimes, usually, and always they were consulted by their administrators. Neutral feelings on being consulted on campus decisions were expressed by 14% of the teacher respondents to the Likert surveys. Even though administrators were given the opportunity to respond to the Likert survey two times, no administrators responded.

Investigating the skills needed to empower teachers, communication was determined to be the first place to start. Observations, reflections, and Likert surveys showed the PAR team that leaders on both sites communicated that they are more concerned about their own leader agendas rather than attending to the needs of others on the school sites. Avolio and Hannah (2019) declared that being a leader is not a position but a mindset. "To effectively lead others requires a shift in focus from thinking about oneself or one's work to thinking about what one's actions mean for others—from 'I' to 'Them'" (Avolio & Hannah, 2019, p. 2). Leaders' mindset showed how communication occurred on the sites. There is no evidence of skills or developing LMX relationships on the sites or any platforms or events promoting serving leaders that would lead to empowering teachers. The overwhelming conclusion is that no high-quality exchanges of communicative information or vision casting happened on the sites, there were only top-down orders and demands requiring followership, which empowered only leaders. Teachers felt that communication was essential in change and that they often did not know what was happening because of leaders' lack of communication (Saxton, 2019). The result was that teachers did not feel empowered and would not follow a leader that does not communicate a vision for change.

Figure 16

RQ #2 Comparison

Comparison RQ #2

Leadership skills needed to empower teachers as change agents.

SITE ONE BARRIERS	SITE TWO BARRIERS
Open-door	Empathy
Accessible	Organization
Visible	Expectations
Accountability	Accountability

Note. Both sites identified accountability as a needed leadership skill. Accountability starts with communication that is both internal and external.

RQ3: Is participatory action research (PAR) effective in creating a forum where teachers can serve as change agents?

Even though this study revealed a great deal of teacher resistance to using their voice, it was believed by the PAR team participants that teachers would respond if the culture was first readied, and the opportunities given. The PAR teams on both sites overwhelmingly 100% agreed that PAR was an effective forum for empowering teachers' voices; we needed the right setting, a culture change. The PAR study on both sites allowed participants to experience more awareness of current conditions and work more cohesively towards suggestions for change and solutions (James et al., 2008).

Figure 17

RQ#3 Comparison

Comparison RQ #3

Was PAR effective in creating a forum where teachers serve as change agents?

SITE ONE BARRIERS	SITE TWO BARRIERS
Yes	Yes

Note. Both sites answered yes to PAR being an effective platform.

PAR discussions and reflections provided the root of information for the teams. PAR provided our teams with a platform for community-building, focusing on data, problem-solving, and decision-making (James et al., 2008). Meetings were semiformal yet organized by focusing on the acknowledged elements of PAR, including diagnosis, action, measurement, and reflection. The meetings were allowed to develop according to the day's needs and the team's goal, but they generally followed the evolved pattern below.

Figure 18

PAR Site 1 and 2 Meeting Structure
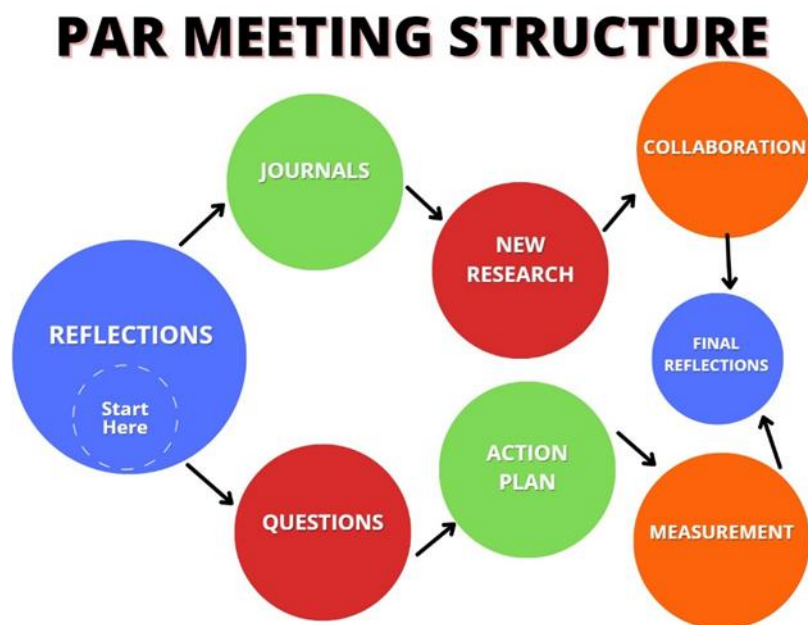
Note. Meetings were informal and were allowed to develop according to the perceived needs of the day.

In the education world, where everyone is suffering from survey fatigue, the conclusion of PAR being an effective tool for providing a platform for teachers to use their voice was yes, but only after prep work had been done on the culture first. Gozali et al. (2017) stated that a requirement for exercising teacher voice includes having the right leaders' reactions to go with conditions that are right. Us versus them barriers must be addressed and communicated intentionally in change and action. The PAR team believed that the study would only render authentic results in an educational organization if it first addressed cultural matters. Wilkinson (2011) said that you cannot leave culture to chance, you have to design and create your culture.

Limitations

This study did have some limitations. One of the significant limitations was the inactivity and lack of engagement of the administrative leadership team on both campuses; no leaders outside the PAR team participated in the Likert surveys. This lack of involvement caused limitations in other aspects of educational business experienced on both study sites. It also caused a significant disconnect between teachers and administrators and their ability to communicate effectively and authentically.

An additional limitation was that although it was a goal to have male and female representation on the campus PAR teams for each site, one site team had only female representation due to the limited number of male teachers available during the agreed-upon meeting time. While gender did not hinder the sites' productivity, it was a revelation on site 1 that gender could affect the communication practices from administrators to teachers and vice versa. It was discussed that men often do not get the appropriate communicative opportunity because the status quo is that men should know or need little information to figure things out.

Additionally, a limitation of the study could have been the site culture climate; impromptu schedule and policy changes created and implemented by administrators during the time of the research affected most of the PAR team at one time or another, tainting participants' responses during the discussions. The changes fed and contributed to heightened emotions during team discussions.

A weather emergency that affected most of the state could also be considered a limitation. Both campus site teams were out of school for a week unexpectedly for an ice/snow emergency. The teams did all they could to communicate via text and email to make up for lost time. In the end, the team extended their meetings for one week, but testing schedules did not

allow additional meeting times. To help mitigate possible limitations and address the out of our control variables that sometimes affected the tone of our meetings, the reflective practices of James et al. (2008) were used. A time of debriefing and reflection was implemented at the beginning of each meeting to allow and discuss voice, emotions, and experiences to be heard and actions analyzed. This time of debriefing and reflection served as a diffuser of raw emotions that could have hindered the study and allowed for transition into new and productive next steps and focused topic discussions concerning change and other ideas on each study site.

Consideration also must be given to the fact that one school district is represented in this study; however, the PAR team researchers brought a vast array of experience from other educational organizations that helped to keep things in perspective and focused. Also, with the current state of education, the current attrition rate of teachers, and the growing number of educational vacancies, the study sites represented current conditions in educational organizations.

Recommendations

The research showed that while teachers desire to be heard, seen, and valued in their workplace, with the use of voice being just one outlet, the most significant barrier for teachers is the culture of the organization where they work. Most teachers surveyed on both sites stated they did not feel their voices were heard or appreciated. The teachers also believed they were not valued on their campuses and had settled into a pattern of quietness to survive.

Based on the study findings, it is recommended to focus on a culture reset where all stakeholder voices are considered and valued and a heightened emphasis on the emotional aspect of culture. The rework of culture in a district must include the cognitive, emotional, and intentional elements to better prepare for and empower stakeholders to receive change—

authentic change will not happen without considering and planning for all aspects of culture. A culture change must also consider the voice of teachers, not just leaders, so that they are all working towards the same goal, as supported by the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) for leader-follower relationships.

Because of these findings, there are also recommendations to provide additional opportunities for growth in educational leaders, emphasizing how to foster teacher relationships and become "other" centered leaders, much like serving leaders. On both study sites, the evidence showed that teachers did not feel supported by their administration team and did not trust the administration in their decision-making abilities. As a result of standing leadership practices, teachers have become what Cochran-Smith (2003) calls "linchpins" in matters of reform and change (p. 5). It is the recommendation by the PAR team to change the evaluation process for educational leaders so that there is more accountability at the top. The current evaluation method lacks responsibility for the results of culture on campuses; therefore, it is the recommendation from the team to suggest the creation and implementation of a multi-tiered system of support for educational leaders for a future action item, much like it has been implemented for students and teachers when they need help reaching their goals. This leadership evaluation tool would consist of intervention levels for all leaders and model good leadership practices—modeled and focused intervention—strategic and specific support.

This study also found that giving teachers a voice in decision-making is not fulfilled by having an already planned agenda and asking teachers to sign off on the plan. It is also not appropriate to invite teachers to meetings to check a box that teachers were included for state, district, and campus meeting and planning requirements. There needs to be a true collaboration between teachers and leaders when planning or vision casting. There must not be retaliation,

targeting, public chastising, or aggressive behavior directed at those who disagree or have different ideas in matters of discussion. Hinnant-Crawford (2016) found that a top-down mentality in educational administration creates a landscape that omits teacher voice in planning, even though teachers are ideal partners in policymaking. The PAR team recommends that there be an expectation for teacher input on matters that will affect them in their job. One recommendation is to implement a teacher-led culture committee that focuses on change and voice in school. Other suggestions are holding district town hall meetings with teacher representation on every agenda. It is also recommended that the practice of department heads for teacher voice not be the only consideration; there should be an opportunity for all teachers to be heard in what is going on in their workplace, not just department heads that are receiving a stipend and often an extra planning period in their schedule. Teachers in the trenches need a platform to express their concerns or questions without being filtered through an appointee. A different form of communication would be more beneficial and inclusive to the whole of the organization.

Based on the findings of this study, I recommend that additional studies be conducted on the emotion aspect of culture, the accountability that leaders should have for their state of emotional culture, and how positivity can have a far-reaching effect on the entire community of an educational organization. Hosseini and Sabokro (2022) found that rapid culture change is one of the most challenging movements for an organization, and in those movements, employee voice was crucial. Another recommendation for additional study would be to create a new multi-tiered evaluation system for educational leaders that focuses on positivity and their ability to serve as serving leaders instead of being focused on their own agenda. A new evaluation system would provide leaders with additional training in areas of responsibility that affect others.

Using PAR in an educational organization is an effective diagnostic and evaluation tool to determine problems that need to be addressed from all stakeholder's perspective. PAR provides a platform for all voices and an opportunity for discovery for all levels of administration, teachers, and staff. Although PAR is an organic research process, it is recommended that novice PAR teams use the meeting structure developed in this research to help streamline the beginnings of the meeting process.

Lastly, a recommendation would be made to study how gender and years of experience may affect a teacher's perception of culture. In looking at the study results, there is evidence that gender and experience may play a role in cultural perception. Future study could also include elementary grade levels.

Conclusions

This study attempted to discover the power of the teacher's voice, the impact leaders have on the teacher's voice, their ability to empower voice in a school setting, and identify a forum that helps to promote the use of the teacher's voice. In this study, the cultural climate proved to be a massive barrier that prevented most personal and professional growth in administrative leaders and teachers on the sites. The real change that needs to happen in education starts with the culture. When the culture has been readied, leaders and teachers will become empowered to use their voices and embrace the change. Culture must also be understood to include not just a physical place; there are cognitive and emotional aspects of culture that are equally important. For culture change to be effective, there needs to be a paradigm shift in culture accountability and the responsibility for emotional casualties that often result in unhealthy cultures. This accountability and responsibility need to start at the top in educational organizations.

From a leader's point of view, with the high stakes of testing in schools now, it is hard to devote attention to other aspects of education, even to focus on empowering your people; however, investing in your people and the workplace conditions would provide more success statistics than a one-day test would indicate. How leaders and teachers interact with each other trickles down to the students and the community. Using the century old top-down leadership model no longer works. Using the attributes of LMX leadership with a focus on a serving leader model would benefit educational communities that are experiencing a teacher leader disconnect.

A community working hard to empower others in a place where it is safe to discover who you are, whether you are a leader, a teacher, a parent, a student, or a community member, says that we care about all our stakeholders. We value how you feel, think, and what you have to say, well beyond the school doors. PAR is an effective method of research to empower teachers and leaders to work through change together. To restate Avolio and Hannah (2019), being a leader is not a position but a mindset. Changing the mindset of leaders would begin with changing the model of leadership and the accountability of leaders to include the emotional culture they create in their educational organizations. A multi-tiered system of support for leaders is a recommendation that evolved from this PAR study.

Educators want to feel valued and that they matter. With effort spent on resetting culture communities, we can change the future of education and help repair the damage done to those who have dedicated their lives to inspiring learning in others. Teachers' voices can be heard when we take the time to get ready and listen to what they are saying, but effective change will only be realized once the forest echoes the teacher's voice.

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Appendix A: Data-Planning Matrix

Working Purpose Statement:

Working Research Question(s):

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	What kind of data will answer the question?	Where can I find the data? Who can I contact for access?	What is my timeline for acquisition?

1) Ethical issues associated with your area of study:

2) Validity/trustworthiness of your study:

3) Role in study:

Appendix B: Analyzing Force Fields

Purpose:

1. List the forces that work for change in the situation under study by the PAR group and those that work against it.

2. Brainstorm other data, communication systems, or actions that can be added to create a tipping point that propels change to occur.

3. List the major stakeholders, including yourself.

4. Reflect on the areas of action or change in personal and institutional behaviors that are likely to cause defensive behaviors.

5. List possible underlying motivation and ideals for education that can be enlisted to ease defensive behavior.

6. Note which motivation may be driven by an assumption. Do data exist that challenge the assumption?

7. Brainstorm ways to confront defensive mechanisms both in yourself and in others.

Appendix C: Surfacing Assumptions Activity

The purpose of this study is:

What you know or think you know about your topic	Qualitative data available to verify this knowledge	Quantitative data available to verify this knowledge	Rate on a scale of 1-10, where 10 constitutes a convincing argument and 1 is a pure assumption

Reflective Questions:

1. Have you recently investigated a topic by searching the Internet for new resources?

2. What is exciting and what is frustrating about investigating resources?

3. What standards do you apply to determine the credibility of your resources?

Appendix D: Template for Triple Entry Reflections

Triple Entry-Reflections

	What happened?	How does this inform Your PAR next steps?	What have you learned about your leadership?
Event #1			
Event #2			
Event #3			
Event #4			

Appendix E: Critical Friend Interview Reflections

Template for Critical Friend Interview Reflections

Date of interview	Critical friend	Interview focus	Interview outcome and how outcome informs PAR study and personal leadership

Appendix F: Forward Planner

FORWARD PLANNER from CYCLES?
The purpose of this study is:
Overarching Question:

Guiding Research Questions for CYCLE?

Diagnosis: Questions and Data	Actions	Measurement of Actions	What Has Been Learned

Appendix G: Logic Model

Purpose of Action Research:

The purpose of this study is

Research Question(s):

LOGIC MODEL #?

Questions to be addressed	Previous Studies	Variables	Local Measurements	Form of Analysis

Purpose of Action Research:

The purpose of this study is

Research Question (s):
1.
Purpose of Action Research:

The purpose of this study is

Research Question(s):

LOGIC MODEL #?

Questions to be addressed	Previous Studies	Variables	Local Measurements	Form of Analysis

Purpose of Action Research:

The purpose of this study is

Research Question(s):

LOGIC MODEL #?

Questions to be addressed	Previous Studies	Variables	Local Measurements	Form of Analysis

Appendix H: Triple Entry Reflections

Triple Entry Reflections #?

Key Events #?	Making Sense and Informing PAR Next Steps	Personal Leadership Learning
Describing	Analysis and Application	Analysis and Application

Appendix I: IRB Approval

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Anna Marie Warren ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

IRB-2022-136 - Initial: Initial - Exempt – ACU
1 message

▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇   Mon, Dec 19, 2022 at 2:55 PM

Date: December 19, 2022

PI: Anna Warren

Department: 17205-ACU Dallas CGPS, ONL-Online Student

Re: Initial - IRB-2022-136

NS Warren Exempt

The Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *NS Warren Exempt*. The administrative check-in date is –.

Decision: Exempt

Category:

Research Notes:

Additional Approvals/Instructions:

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable. All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in Cayuse IRB.

The following are all responsibilities of the Primary Investigator (PI). Violation of these responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of research by the Institutional Review Board. If the Primary Investigator is a student and fails to fulfil any of these responsibilities, the Faculty Advisor then becomes responsible for completing or upholding any and all of the following:

• When the research is completed, inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. If your study is Exempt, Non-Research, or Non-Human Research, email orsp@acu.edu to indicate that the research has finished.
• According to ACU policy, research data must be stored on ACU campus (or electronically) for 3 years from inactivation of the study, in a manner that is secure but accessible should the IRB request access.
• It is the investigator's responsibility to maintain a general environment of safety for all research participants and all members of the research team. All risks to physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as any risks to confidentiality should be minimized.

For additional information on the policies and procedures above, please visit the IRB website
http://www.acu.edu/community/offices/academic/orsp...
or email orsp@acu.edu with your questions.

Sincerely,

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Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board