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A Quantitative Study to Examine the Relationship between School Administrators' Path-Goal
Approach and Teachers' Perceived Working Conditions

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Educational Doctorate in Educational Leadership, School Leadership

by

Tierra Sherae Berry Stark

May 2022

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Dr. Virginia Foley

Dr. Heather Moore

Keywords: motivation, satisfaction, teacher working conditions, path-goal approach

ABSTRACT

A Quantitative Study to Examine the Relationship between School Administrator's Path-Goal Approach and Teachers' Perceived Working Conditions

by

Tierra Sherar Berry Stark

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach to leadership and their teachers' perceptions of working conditions. Findings from this research may help school administrators and leadership preparation programs to understand better the application of theories related to motivation, leveraging power, and goal attainment. The conceptual framework behind this study was the inherent inclinations of school administrators in approaching leadership decisions from four pathways; directive, supportive, participative, and/or achievement-oriented.

For use in statistical analysis through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), data were collected via a questionnaire to currently practicing school-based administrators regarding their path-goal approach to leadership and a download of the publicly available teacher working conditions survey results from teachers as matched to each administrator respondent. The data were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at the 0.05 level of significance. Six research questions were addressed by testing the null hypothesis. The results revealed that there were no statistical differences in teacher working conditions survey results between administrators with different tendencies toward any one path-goal approach to leadership.

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DEDICATION

To my husband and children, you are quite simply amazing. Sawyer and Zoeyana, I want you to know how much I appreciate you giving me the time to work and cheering me on as I spent countless hours furthering my own education. Daniel, thank you for doing all the things I should have been doing for the house and children while I wrote and studied. Someone asked me once why I keep going to school and I told them that I never want to be told no because I don't have the paper to back me. Earning this doctoral degree gives me a certain level of formal acknowledgement and, while it was necessary and I am thankful for everything I have learned about educational leadership, the true takeaway was perseverance, strength, and commitment. The commitment of completing a doctorate degree would not have been possible without the training and support I received from my parents. Their intelligence, forbearance, kindness, and love are what made me the person I am today. It is those strengths and the work towards growth that I hope to pass along to my children and future generations. With all my love, I dedicate this accomplishment to my parents, my husband, and my children who have been with me through it all; fighting right alongside with me.

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This accomplishment would not have been possible without God, as my lord and savior, who gave me strength and clarity when most needed. I believe God gives us strength in many forms and most certainly has a sense of humor. Thank you, God, for your many blessings.

My husband and children must be commended for their unending support of my educational pursuits and drive. They gave me strength and a mission. You are a beautiful reminder of why I keep going.

To my parents, thank you for raising, training, and believing in me. Mom, you are so much of what I want to be. Dad, maybe now I can pay back that life bill you gave me on my 18th birthday. You both are the best people I know in this world, and I thank you for giving me a small piece of your strength and knowledge.

To my brother, who is probably the smartest person on this planet but would never read this, which is the only reason I will now admit it, thank you for being the coolest person I know. Your better half and children are a bright spot in my life.

Many thanks to my entire family, both in North Carolina and Florida, who have supported me through many years of education and life. This family is large, and I thank you for believing in me and filling my heart. So much love for the Berry, Hampton, and Stark families.

To Dr. Scott, thank you for being a pillar in this journey. Your consistent support and dedication were the primary drivers in my successful completion of the program. I am so appreciative of all of the staff and faculty at ETSU who gave me knowledge and support as I worked to grow in my practice as an educational leader. A special thank you to my dissertation committee members, Drs. Flora, Foley, and Moore, as you kept at me through to the end.

So much appreciation goes out to my colleagues in Watauga County who formed me from elementary through to today. Thank you for showing me something worthwhile to attain. Thank you to the teachers who continually fueled my fire to be better.

To the leaders who helped train me, I thank you for being such strong advocates and role models. There are so many of you that continually checked in on me throughout my education, and while I may have scoffed at you, your unwavering support helped me more than you know. Without the support of my principal, Dr. Blanton, this endeavor would not have been possible. You are so much of the leader I hope to be one day, and I am thankful to have worked with you over the past five years. Dr. Eberle, thank you for your unending support and help before and throughout this process. You always look at things from the right angle, and your positivity helped me keep moving.

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And lastly, I must acknowledge the person who was with me from beginning to end of this program and for whom I would walk through fire. Rachel, you have such strength and knowledge; thank you for lending me some in the darkest moments and for the friendship I never knew I needed. I count your family as my own, and I cannot wait to see what the future has in store for us.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

School administrators are tasked with improving follower performance while maintaining follower satisfaction so that the goals of the organization and individuals can be met. Liu et al. (2003) describe leadership as a “multi-level construct that involves aspects of the leader, the follower, and the relationship between them” (p. 4). A modern reality of any educational system is the inevitability of change within the organization that requires leaders who are open to constant changes, are innovative, and have strong leadership abilities (Atasoy, 2020). The behaviors exuded by school administrators have profound effects on the overall performance of their schools and teachers resulting in the inherent need to motivate followers as they move through the organization (Baptiste, 2019). Compelling follower motivation requires the school administrator to match their leadership endeavors with what most efficiently motivates the followers to accomplish their shared goals. Organization theorists suggest viewing organizations as organisms in a living system which allows them to investigate how they function and factors that influence their well-being (Morgan, 2006). When viewed through the lens of organization theory, schools have large numbers of people who individually and collectively have complex needs that, when met, can perform more effectively within the organization (Gawel, 1996; Morgan, 2006; Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018). Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his speech *The Purpose of Education* (1947), proposes the importance of using time efficiently throughout the pursuit of legitimate goals. Further, Dr. King describes education as both utility and culture where learning is assessed by acquiring both intelligence and character by followers and leaders alike.

Northouse (2019) describes three skills necessary for organizational leaders to build their ability for motivating followers toward goal attainment: the willingness to address problems and undertake problem-solving, the responsible use of influence over followers, and the commitment

to increasing the social good and value of the organization. Organizational leaders who motivate followers best operate by focusing on goals that are based on a shared vision that emphasizes the importance of the work at hand (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The shared vision of supporting success for every student from any educational organization is both noble and straightforward (Alvy & Robbins, 2010). Success for students also requires success for teachers and is made possible by leaders who, when making decisions for action, take into account the values, commitment, and energy of the followers who work to make the shared vision a reality (Alvy & Robbins, 2010). However, leaders are ever-increasingly asked to choose what behaviors to use in motivating and satisfying their followers while requiring them to “access a repertoire of styles [which] impacts the various stakeholders profoundly” (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018, p. 262). Finding a correlation between leadership behaviors and follower satisfaction may support school administrators as they venture through multiple avenues to lead the organization in processes intended to produce the best possible outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Organizations are complex and dynamic with an entire network of individuals working toward a common goal (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Smith, 2013). School administrators are asked to maintain organizational structures (buses, schedules, programs, etc.) while also supporting the human potential (teacher satisfaction, staff mental health, human resources, etc.) within their building to achieve goals (Ware, 2019; Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018). School administrators play a vital role in the factors that affect the internal structures of schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). They act as gatekeepers to the organization who perform duties related to their leadership position through multiple processes, each having their own inputs and outputs, which are continually affected by external environments, accountability measures, effectiveness of evaluations, and the

constant need for decisions to be made (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Maintaining these organizational structures requires technical, human, and conceptual skills where the “leader’s effectiveness depends on the ability to solve complex organizational problems” (Northouse, 2019, p. 43). Although school administrators interact with numerous groups and stakeholders on a regular basis as they work to develop their organizations, their leadership role can be quite isolating which can make navigating human motivation, productivity, and satisfaction a difficult endeavor (Alvy & Robbins, 2010; Georgopoulos et al., 1957). Despite the difficulties in the pathway to an organization’s common goals, the need for both leadership and followership remains the same as the responsibilities of the leader include moving the organization forward while maintaining a keen handle on follower needs (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

While a school administrator's job is varied and certainly involves managerial tasks, at the core of the position is the need to shape school vision and cultivate teachers as instructional leaders, which, for most teachers, requires a high level of working conditions satisfaction (Burkhauser, 2017; Ramirez, 2020). Smith (2013), based on Peter Senge’s work, describes leaders as the “designers, stewards, and teachers” of organizations where they develop learning pathways so that the individuals of the organization can build for themselves a collective vision with all the support necessary to grow and adapt (para. 35). In an article entitled “Tuning in to Teachers’ Voices” from the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)’s *Educational Leadership* magazine, Jill Harrison Berg, a leadership coach and school improvement consultant, stated, “Maybe the problem to be solved isn’t getting more teachers to speak up, but creating more school routines that support administrators’ ability to tune in” (2019, p. 84). Considering the school as an organization or a social system, that is open with porous boundaries to the environment within and without, the leader must be able to conceptualize the

work of the organization for the public so that feedback for any necessary improvements can filter through the porous boundaries back to the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Smith, 2013).

One of the many human challenges facing public schools is attrition from schools, districts, or teaching entirely. National research data revealed that there is an 8% turnover rate for leaving the profession and an 8% turnover rate for moving schools or districts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Regarding North Carolina, the teacher attrition rate in 2019-2020 was 7.53%; of those leaving, 1.9% were dissatisfied with teaching, 13.7% resigned to make career changes, and 8.2% resigned to teach in a different location (NCDPI, 2021). Those leaving the profession often cite their administrator's lack of support as a reason for leaving which is one of the top five reasons for teacher attrition (Abitabile, 2020). As a proven aspect of teacher retention, school administrators have the most influence on teacher working conditions – specifically their perceptions of the principal's effectiveness (Abitabile, 2020; Burkhauser, 2017, Evans, 1970, Northouse, 2019). Every leader is faced with obstacles in their path to achieving goals, and while there is no perfect answer to the ever-changing dynamics of the leader-follower relationship, becoming a better leader through self-awareness, growth in the ability to make shifts across paths, and examining the dynamics within their follower community are methods to create a more positive and productive environment for all involved (Ramirez, 2020; Whitaker, 2012; Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018).

Significance of the Study

The overarching premise of public schools is to educate students to their greatest potential for productive lives. Creating a whole-school vision with associated goals requires the school administrator to enlist others to commit to this overarching premise (Alvy & Robbins,

2010). A leader's behavior takes place across and through various paths in search of successful completion of goals, but some paths are more direct than others (Georgopoulos et al., 1957; Ramirez, 2020). Alvy and Robbins (2010) use Abraham Lincoln as one example of a compass that leaders can use as they work through decision-making processes across differing paths. Through his work, actions, and words, Lincoln evoked “possibility, humility, hope, and moral leadership” (Alvy & Robbins, 2019, p. 1), which he used to influence followers and non-followers alike in alignment to predominant goals. The authors suggest that all leaders should work to understand their inherent leadership style rather than replicate others, and as leaders journey along their paths, it is imperative that they reflect through self-awareness and self-development so that followers stay the course and non-followers find avenues for commitment to organizational goals (Alvy & Robbins, 2010).

When used in tandem by school administrators, leading and learning can encourage the organization toward greatness (Lambert, 2003; Ramirez, 2020). Leaders who continually hone their skills and learn to match their behaviors to situations can help influence their followers' attitudes, motivations, performance, and satisfaction (Farhan, 2018; Northouse, 2019; Burkhauser, 2017; Ramirez, 2020). Evans (1970) warns that while working to direct followers, the supervisor's abilities and tendencies in leadership can put constraints on available choices in paths to goal attainment. Leaders who arm themselves with knowledge of their leadership abilities and style provide themselves with a firm foundation from which to operate and can better face the inherent criticism of any leadership position (Alvy & Robbins, 2010). Findings and knowledge gained from this study may be used to understand the preparation needs of school administrators better as they endeavor to support teachers in the collective work that is educating students. An understanding of any significant differences in perceived teacher working

conditions and school administrator tendencies in leadership approaches may help support the growing body of research in situational leadership and the abilities of administrators to adapt their actions to followers. Additionally, an understanding of the motivating and satisfaction factors affecting teachers in a post-COVID world may assist with decisions required of the school administrator as they continue to move organizations forward.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach to leadership and teachers' perceptions of working conditions. This study may be important to school administrators as they develop the skills to support teachers and students most effectively. As school administrators investigate their own tendencies toward leader-follower relationships, this study may provide statistical correlations between teacher working conditions survey data and the administrator's approach to motivating followers. A review of the relationship found between approaches to leadership and staff working conditions can inform leaders on the best path to take for goal acquisition.

According to research briefs by the Learning Policy Institute (2017) and Berry et al., (2021), the school administrator's quality and style of leadership are more prominent retention factors than salaries and workload. The success of any school to achieve academic excellence while maintaining a positive working environment is dependent on the school administrator and teachers working together as a team toward a common goal (Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018). This study examines a specific method of leader influence on followers in terms of working conditions to provide school administrators with another reference to use while forging a path toward shared goals.

Theoretical Framework

Leaders do not work in isolation; the actions required of leadership only occur within and for groups where a follower and leader exchange can occur (Northouse, 2019; Ramirez, 2020). The exchange between follower and leader is a relationship wherein the leader holds responsibility for the follower and the process outcomes, but the work is completed collectively (Northouse, 2019). Georgopoulos et al. (1957) describe a complex set of factors that affect productivity by those working toward common goals including individual, situational, phenomenal, and objective factors. The followers' behaviors during production activities are directly related to the leader's behaviors as both sets of behavior collectively influence follower satisfaction (Georgopoulos et al., 1957; House, 1971). A leader who focuses attention on helping their followers' performance and satisfaction by providing for their needs and motivations is practicing within the path-goal theory (Northouse, 2019). Path-goal theory is described in the following sections and in Chapter 2.

Path-goal theory, as studied and researched by Georgopoulos et al. (1957), Evans (1970; 1974), and House (1971) was used as a theoretical framework for investigating the leadership tactics of school administrators as they motivate followers in productivity while maintaining satisfaction. For the purposes of this study, the path-goal approach to leadership was actively reviewed in correlation to data from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS). The NCTWCS provides data on teachers' perceived working conditions in the categories of time, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, professional learning opportunities, instructional practices and support, new principal support, school safety, and overall (NCDPI, 2020). See Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Research Study Theoretical Framework



Path-Goal Approach to Leadership

Operating within the notion that individual members of an active community have certain common goals, the decisions made to support the achievement of those goals through production and satisfaction are considered to be the path-goal approach used in each scenario (Georgopoulos et al., 1957). Path-goal approach to leadership is a theory offered to leaders as a tool rather than a guidebook for action (House & Mitchell, 1975). The tool of path-goal theory allows the leader to select the appropriate behavior to match the follower situation at hand, which requires the leader

to improve their skills and knowledge across the path-goal behaviors (Phillips & Phillips, 2016; Farhan, 2018). According to Georgopoulos et al. (1957), operating under a path-goal perception leads to behaviors focused on needs, expectations, and situations where the consequences are viewed as the motivating factors of need and usefulness in achieving goals. The purpose of approaching leadership with the tools proffered in path-goal theory is to provide staff motivation and commitment to complete tasks and work toward organizational aims (Farhan, 2018; Ramirez, 2020).

The path-goal theory focuses the leader's attention on the follower's needs and motivations as a pathway to higher productivity (Northouse, 2019; Georgopoulos et al., 1957). Leaders generate motivation when they increase goal-achievement rewards and remove obstacles in the followers' paths (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2019). Additionally, leaders motivate followers with well-defined goals, clear paths, and sufficient support (Northouse, 2019). In order for the organization to meet its collective goals and for the people within to meet their individual goals, leaders must improve their thought processes and actions to gain effectiveness in attaining worker satisfaction and outcomes (Farhan, 2018; Sagie & Koslowsky, 1994). Path-goal theory is built on the premise that leaders exert four differing behaviors on staff to increase their satisfaction, their acceptance of the leader, and their effective performance (House & Mitchell, 1975). As recognized today (2022), the four path-goal approaches used by leaders are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented (Northouse, 2019). Chapter 2 reviews each path-goal approach in detail.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ1: Are there any significant differences in the NCTWCS overall results between schools with a school administrator scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H01: There are no significant differences in the NCTWCS overall results between schools with a school administrator scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ2: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H02: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ3: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H03: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results the school leadership question regarding teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ4: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding school leadership having consistent support for teachers between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H04: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding school leadership having consistent support for teachers between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ5: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding the faculty and staff having a shared vision between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H05: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding the faculty and staff having a shared vision between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ6: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding faculty being recognized for accomplishments between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H06: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding faculty being recognized for accomplishments between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

Definition of Terms

In order to understand fully the relationship between a school administrator's leadership path and their teachers' perceptions of working conditions, several terms must be defined.

Follower: For the purposes of this study, the term *follower* is used interchangeably with *teacher* as determined by the research indicated at each use. The school acting as a social system is peopled with followers who are the operational workforce making decisions based on their needs, beliefs, and motivations, and coordinating with the leader to reach goals (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Leader: For the purposes of this study, the term *leader* is used interchangeably with *school administrator* or *principal* as determined by the research indicated at each use. Based on Peter Senge's work, Smith (2013) describes leaders as designers, stewards, and teachers of organizations where they develop learning pathways so that the individuals of the organization can build for themselves a collective vision with all the support necessary to grow and adapt.

Motivation: The power source behind an act or process of providing direction and reason to meet a certain behavior (Akdemir, 2020; Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Teacher Working Conditions: The factors within a school that teachers perceive as impactful conditions on their working climate (Kaniuka & Kaniuka, 2019).

Limitations

Limitations associated with this study include:

1. Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, raw numerical data for the last NCTWCS was unavailable. Instead, the publicly available percentage data for the last NCTWCS was used.

2. While most research indicates that the school principal is the most significant factor in teacher working conditions, outside factors or unknown issues could have skewed the NCTWCS results.
3. With updates in the survey and very specific questions, an overall TWC score was used as potentially related data to the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach on the questionnaire.

Delimitations

Delimitations associated with this study include:

1. Only currently active school principals who were in the same position at the same school during the last NCTWCS survey were included in this study.
2. Only schools with a 60% or higher response rate to the last NCTWCS survey were included in this study.

Chapter Summary

Teachers and school administrators are uniquely positioned to educate each subsequent generation, and that task is not simple nor easy; therefore, a relationship is formed between a leader (the school administrator) and a follower (the teachers and other staff members of the organization). The success of such an endeavor is only possible if those within the organization work as a team to support each process necessary to reach common goals. Working under the assumption that the school administrator is, in fact, a significant determining factor in teacher working conditions, they must develop the means to steer their teachers through various paths leading to goal attainment. Long-term and short-term goal paths are inherently filled with obstacles that the leader is charged with navigating as they motivate followers to come with them. Thus, a relationship is formed between a leader – the school administrator – and their

followers – the teachers and other staff members of the organization. The following chapters provide a review of pertinent literature, the researcher’s study methodology, the study findings, and considerations for leadership practices based on conclusions drawn from the study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Theories are used to inform learners of the practice of leadership, which is known to be a complex process with multiple dimensions (Northouse, 2019). The theories of French and Raven (1959), Herzberg (1959), House (1971), and Maslow (1943) were used to guide this study as the researcher investigated how school administrators' path-goal approaches correlate with their teachers' worker satisfaction as indicated in the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between school administrator path-goal approaches to leadership and teacher perceptions of working conditions. House and Mitchell's (1975) path-goal leadership approaches include directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented.

There is continued review amongst modern (21st century) researchers regarding the leader's role in the success of the organization where motivation, satisfaction, and goal-attainment are inherently prominent factors (Merrill, 2021; Okafor & Abraham, 2021; Ozaslan, 2018; Ramirez, 2020; Ware, 2019; Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018).

As leaders work to keep or increase worker satisfaction, they leverage power to ensure that the people within and around the organization have their needs met and are motivated to continue pushing the organization forward (Hersey et al., 1979). Successes and failures in goal attainment are dependent on the leader's ability to meet followers' needs, leverage power, determine path approaches, and apply leadership behaviors situationally (Ruslan et al., 2020). Gaining knowledge of the motivating and satisfying factors of members within an organization requires situational awareness and action.

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory

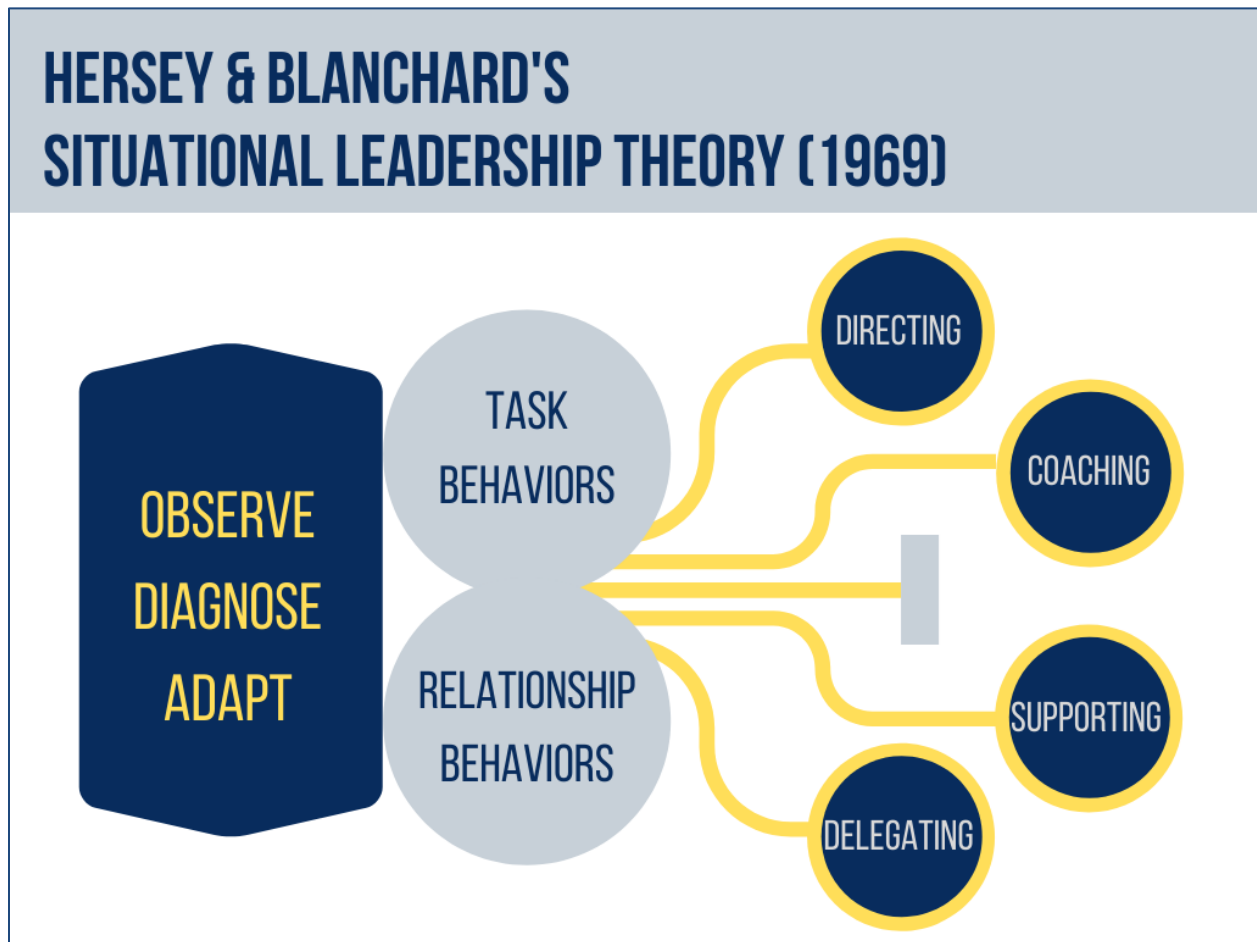
Leadership requires influence and power assertion over followers as efforts are made toward goal accomplishment (Hersey et al., 1979). The leveraging of power and influence by the leader is most effective when the leader adapts their style to each situation (Northouse, 2019). Situational leadership “offers the benefits of combined strategies that apply consideration to individual and environmental needs” (Walls, 2019, p. 31). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) describe successful leaders as those who can “adapt their leader behavior to meet the demands of their own unique environment” (p. 331). An example of approaching leadership situationally is the use of path-goal theory. Walls (2019) indicates five key benefits of situational leadership, including: flexibility, collaboration, fluidity, accommodation, and support. While a one-size-fits-all approach decreases follower satisfaction, situational leadership can support optimum growth and satisfaction by incorporating both directedness and supportiveness across various approaches based on the situation and follower at hand (Walls, 2019).

Situational leadership requires the leader to match their behavior to the follower based on an understanding, prediction, analysis, or impending influence on their behavior and characteristics (Phillips & Phillips, 2016). Additionally, situational leadership requires the leader to gain insight into followers' competence, commitment, skills, and motivations so that the leader can determine their approach based on the followers' evolution in performing a goal (Northouse, 2019). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) refer to this gaining insight action as a diagnostic tool for determining the leader behavior required of the current environment. According to Walls (2019), leaders accessing situational leadership must demonstrate a certain level of emotional intelligence as they diagnose follower and environmental needs during the matching process. The author stated that, “Situational leadership requires the person leading to be flexible and

modify their behavior to suit individuality rather than using a single approach” (p. 33). Figure 2 outlines the main components of Hersey and Blanchard’s (1969) situational leadership theory.

Figure 2

Hersey & Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory (1969)



Task and Relationship Behaviors

Ruslan et al. (2020) describe determining situational approaches as a socialization process in the organization where leaders are obligated to support followers by approaching them situationally, thus creating positive conditions and effective goal achievement. In their situational leadership theory, Hersey and Blanchard (1969) suggest two key leadership behaviors of task and relationship alongside four styles of approaching situations with followers: directing,

coaching, supporting, and delegating. Task behaviors are those set by the leader's direction as they tell followers what, when, where, and how to perform (Hersey et al., 1979). Hersey et al. also note that through task behaviors, the leaders set the organization's operating goals and define each players' roles. They also indicate that relationship behaviors are those that involve the full leader-follower exchange including listening and supporting via a two-way communication system. As discussed previously, the diagnostic measures taken by the leader to gain insights into followers and organizations allows the leader to determine the maturity of the follower(s) in order to match the level of task or relationship behavior to them appropriately. Low follower maturity requires highly task-oriented behaviors with telling, directing, highly supervisory, and highly detailed actions by the leader (Hersey et al., 1979). Low to moderate follower maturity requires both task-oriented and relational-oriented behaviors through selling, coaching, and guiding actions by the leader (Hersey et al., 1979). Moderate to high follower maturity requires a highly relational oriented behavior of participating and facilitating actions by the leader (Hersey et al., 1979). Lastly, high follower maturity requires the low task and relational oriented behaviors of delegating actions by the leader (Hersey et al., 1979).

Application to Educational Organizations

School administrators practicing situational leadership study their staff members to understand their needs and potential for supporting organizational goals so that they can make informed decisions when matching situational styles to each employee (Gyeltshen, 2020). Situational leaders determine circumstantial needs and make adjustments to their leadership styles and behaviors to achieve goals and produce favorable outcomes to each circumstance (Kovach, 2018). Teachers generally need to be able to predict a principal's reaction to typical situations based on a consistency of reactions to similar situations; a principal who consistently

and appropriately matches their reaction to the situation at hand is more often seen as just (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). Leaders who are mindful of both their inherent style of motivating and facilitating followers needs along with the possible methods of working with followers, are more readily enabled to support followers as individuals – dependent on the situational demands (Gyeltshen, 2020). Situational leadership requires that the leader have the fortitude to transfer skills between and across differing situations (Kovach, 2018). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) recognize the frustration that can occur when leaders are faced with determining leader behaviors as they assess each individual situation. The school administrator's ability to apply situational leadership with followers can influence their commitment to the organization which also supports positive working conditions (Koswara et al., 2021). Northouse (2019) describes an effective leader as one who "can accurately diagnose the development level of followers in a goal situation and then exhibit the prescribed leadership style that matches that situation" (p. 114).

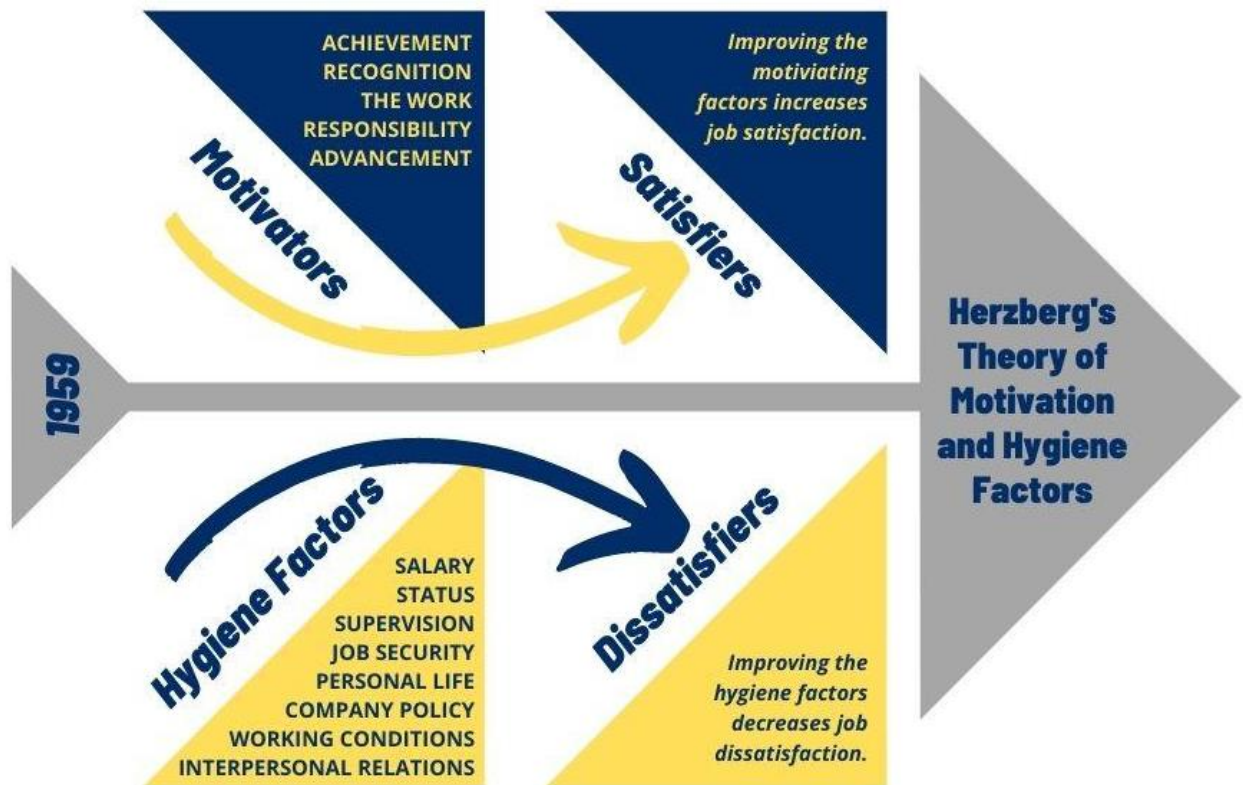
Herzberg's Theory of Motivation and Hygiene Factors

From the view of organizational theorists, organizations are populated with employees who should be seen as valuable resources and who, when given the proper motivations, can contribute to the organization in positive ways (Morgan, 2006). Motivation can be described as a "power source that determines the direction, violence, and determination of behavior" (Akdemir, 2020, p. 89). A follower's motivation level and motivating factors can change constantly, requiring the leader to reassess each situation (Hersey et al., 1979). Herzberg (1968) likens true motivation to a person running on a battery that the leader could continually recharge for their followers; however, until the followers find a way within themselves to become their own generator and be inspired to do the work, they will never truly be motivated. Therefore, leaders

are tasked with finding ways to build a generator in each of their followers through job enrichment, support in finding specific internal motivations, and working to meet hygiene factors important to followers (Pugh & Hickson, 2007). Similarly, Manalo et al. (2020), note that “employees are motivated to work due to their desire to satisfy their needs” and found that teachers specifically “who are motivated and satisfied in their job also have high levels of work engagement and organizational commitment” (p. 133). Herzberg’s theory of motivation is sometimes referred to as a two-factor theory based on the distinction between motivating and hygiene factors. Figure 3 outlines the two converse sides of Herzberg’s theory of motivation with motivators acting as satisfiers and hygiene factors acting as dissatisfiers.

Figure 3

Herzberg’s Theory of Motivation & Hygiene Factors (1959)



Motivating Factors

Through his research, Herzberg (1966) found that there were five key motivators, or satisfiers, that supported job satisfaction for employees. According to Duttweiler (1986), “motivators are the factors that arouse, direct, and sustain increased performance” (p. 371). These motivating factors are about the work itself and include achievement, recognition, the work, responsibility, and advancement (Herzberg, 1966, Morgan, 2006). Motivation through achievement involves successful completion of a specific task, successful problem-solving, or seeing successful results from a work task. Recognition, as a motivating factor, occurs when the leader praises or rewards followers for successfully reaching specific goals or for producing high-quality work (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Alshmemri et al. also contend that the work itself can act as a motivating factor for followers based on the difficulty level while making the work challenging enough to still be of interest to the follower. Motivation through follower responsibility is seen when the leader gives both freedom in action or choice and levels of responsibility to make decisions which provides the follower with some degree of operational authority. Lastly Alshmemri et al. posit that leaders can also motivate followers by advancing them in status or position within the workplace (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Motivators are based in personal growth, have limited sources, produce long-term effects, can be additive, and allow for answers to needs (Pardee, 1980). Pardee describes motivators as “complex and subjective and often too elusive to measure” (p. 11), and that, psychologically speaking, satisfying factors allow the respondent to experience meaningfulness in the work, responsibility, and knowledge of results with feedback.

Hygiene Factors

Additionally, Herzberg and colleagues (1959) found hygiene factors, or dissatisfiers, that separately caused employees to feel a lack of job satisfaction. Dissatisfiers are directly related to the conditions found in the working environment of the organization (Duttweiler, 1986). The term ‘hygiene’ typically refers to a medical background determining disease levels of health hazards and is considered a preventable variable in the environment; similarly, Herzberg’s hygiene factors can be considered as variables that correlate to reductions in dissatisfaction within the workplace (Alshmemri et al., 2017). These hygiene factors include company policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, job security, and personal life (Herzberg et al., 1959; Pardee, 1990). Hygiene factors are based in avoidance of pain, a recognition of multiple sources, produce short-term effects typically, are cyclical, and can escalate quickly (Pardee, 1980). For leaders, hygiene factors are characteristically easy to monitor, measure, manipulate, and control but management of hygiene factors can only prevent dissatisfaction (Pardee, 1980).

Application to Educational Organizations

In the case of the followers who need their own internal generator, it is imperative that leaders enrich their followers' jobs by focusing on motivating factors while consistently reviewing the hygiene factors as brought on by the work environment (Pugh & Hickson, 2007). Mehrad (2020) suggests that determining job satisfaction and understanding specific satisfiers and dissatisfiers are valuable factors in improving the workplace, increasing outcomes, and developing organizations. According to Herzberg's (1959) theory, the motivators helped support long-term job satisfaction while the lack of the hygiene factors is what caused job dissatisfaction (Gawel, 2006). Although considered a criticism of Herzberg’s work, research has shown that for

teachers specifically, both the motivating and hygiene factors produce job satisfaction (Gawel, 2006; Gardner, 1977; Hilmi et al., 2016; Wall & Stephenson, 1970). Therefore, school leaders must attend to generating motivations and to the meeting of followers' needs so that increased satisfaction can lead to increased motivation and inherent productivity (Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018). Agashi et al. (2019) declare that “needs, satisfaction, and motivation to work are very essential in the lives of teachers because they form the fundamental reasons for working in life” (p. 198).

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) agrees with most organization theorists that, while the organization can be thought of as an organism seeking to meet its needs, a warning to leaders must be shared to view the organism as utterly human in nature over animalistic. This distinction is important when determining the human needs and methods of procurement for those needs of the organization. Operating with the understanding that humans are the most crucial element of any organization, when the human needs within the organization go unfulfilled, an issue with productivity and ethics occurs (Kheirkhah & Nejad-Irani, 2017). Similar to Herzberg's (1968) description of the human generator, Maslow believed that humans are innately driven from within and have the ability to realize their potential and growth capacity (Owens & Valesky, 2021). Maslow describes the needs of the human organism as beginning with physiological needs and continuing in a staged fashion, with each level having prepotency for the next. Prepotency means that the next level of the hierarchy cannot be tried nor achieved without the previous level being met to some degree (Gawel, 1996). Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization; Figure 4.

Figure 4

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)



Note. Adapted from *A Theory of Human Motivation*, by A. H. Maslow, 1943, p. 370. Copyright 1943 by Psychological Review.

Physiological Needs

The drive to satisfy basic human needs, such as thirst, hunger, shelter, and clothing requires immediate attention as a means to developing homeostasis within and for the human body (Agashi et al., 2019; Maslow, 1943). Maslow also states that physiological needs are not always the same amongst humans and a certain level of uniqueness can occur to create localized and independent needs. Additionally, Maslow writes that specific physiological needs are not always isolable as the base for each need may not be physiological in nature but rather a source

of comfort or preference. A lack of homeostasis can lead to dissatisfaction while the satisfaction of basic needs can serve as a catalyst for higher level needs (Agashi et al., 2019). Therefore, physiological needs are considered to be a highly motivating force for teachers as their most basic human needs must be met first in order to enhance productivity (Kheirkhah & Nejad-Irani, 2017).

Safety and Security

After physiological needs have been satisfied, the next level of needs opens as a means to acquire feelings of safety, security, and stability (Agashi et al., 2019; Maslow, 1943). Maslow states that while humans do require their physiological needs to be met in order to survive, some are almost equally dominated by the need for safety and security. Unlike physiological needs which have remained fairly constant since the dawn of humanity, the needs fulfillment related to safety and security have changed over time from shelter and safety to financial security and every other human need. Maslow also maintains that safety and security needs can be consistently active, in the background, or an immediate mobilizer, and that those needs creating immediate mobilization are found during emergencies such as war, disorganization, injuries, or other life-threatening situations. He also contends that safety and security needs may manifest themselves as physical resources in the environment or through human relations.

Love and Belonging

Closely related to the feelings of safety and security with other humans is the need for love and belonging that occurs after the first two levels of hierarchy are met (Maslow, 1943). This level refers to the social needs of the human organism as they seek to love, be loved, belong, and be accepted (Agashi et al., 2019). Agashi et al. find that as a means to overcome potential loneliness or alienation, humans require “love, affection, companionship, acceptance

and friendship, [and a] sense of belonging in one's relationship with others" (p. 198). Maslow notes an important distinction of this level of the hierarchy and states that for this level to be fully satisfied, it requires both the giving and receiving of love and belonging.

Self-Esteem

Almost all human organisms desire a "stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves for self-respect or self-esteem and for the esteem of others" (Maslow, 1943, p. 97). Maslow defines firmly based self-esteem as that which is "based upon real capacity, achievement and respect from others" (p. 47). Maslow continues saying, self-esteem needs can be split into two sets with the first being "the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom" and the second being "the desire for reputation or prestige, recognition, attention, importance or appreciation" (p. 97). Okafor and Abraham (2021) found self-esteem as the most significant correlation to positive service delivery by teachers in secondary schools. While a lack of self-esteem can lead to feelings of inferiority, weakness, and helplessness, the fulfillment of self-esteem needs lead to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world" (Maslow, 1943, p. 97).

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization, at the highest level of Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs, is the most difficult to achieve and maintain. Maslow describes self-actualization as the organism's basest intrinsic need for growth where the criteria necessary for growth are already within the organism. Similarly, Farimani and Shahri (2020) note that a self-actualized teacher, one that aspires to fulfill themselves through growth and understanding of self, prospers by actualizing their capabilities. A self-actualized teacher will understand why they should continue learning, create

their own goals, seek proficiency, enjoy challenges, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, track their growth, and appreciate their achievements (Farimani & Shahri, 2020). As leaders determine ways to support their followers in developing self-actualization, they are duty-bound to use their resources to provide an accommodating environment. After the environment is built, leaders can encourage followers along their journeys of self-actualization to support the organization's goals most effectively (Morgan, 2006).

Application to Educational Organizations

Okafor and Abraham (2021) indicate that the onus for meeting the needs of teachers within the educational setting lies with the school administrator, describing needs as “the things that if provided for a teacher will motivate [them] . . . and are the expectations that employees bring to the workplace” (p. 174). Goal attainment for an organization is dependent upon the humans involved and is directly linked to the empowerment of those humans to act successfully as the generators within the organization, which requires the satisfaction of needs and the motivation to keep working when needs have yet to be met (Agashi et al., 2019). Gawel (1996) identified literature indicating that it is much easier for leaders to use Maslow’s hierarchy of needs rather than ask their followers what they need because most followers have difficulties expressing their exact needs. Therefore, organizations can implement processes to meet the needs of their people inherently, thus bringing about the inception of human resource management (Morgan, 2006). Human resource management (meeting needs as indicated by Maslow) is a complex process that requires identification, funding, and implementation (Kheirkhah & Nejad-Irani, 2017).

French and Raven's Bases of Power

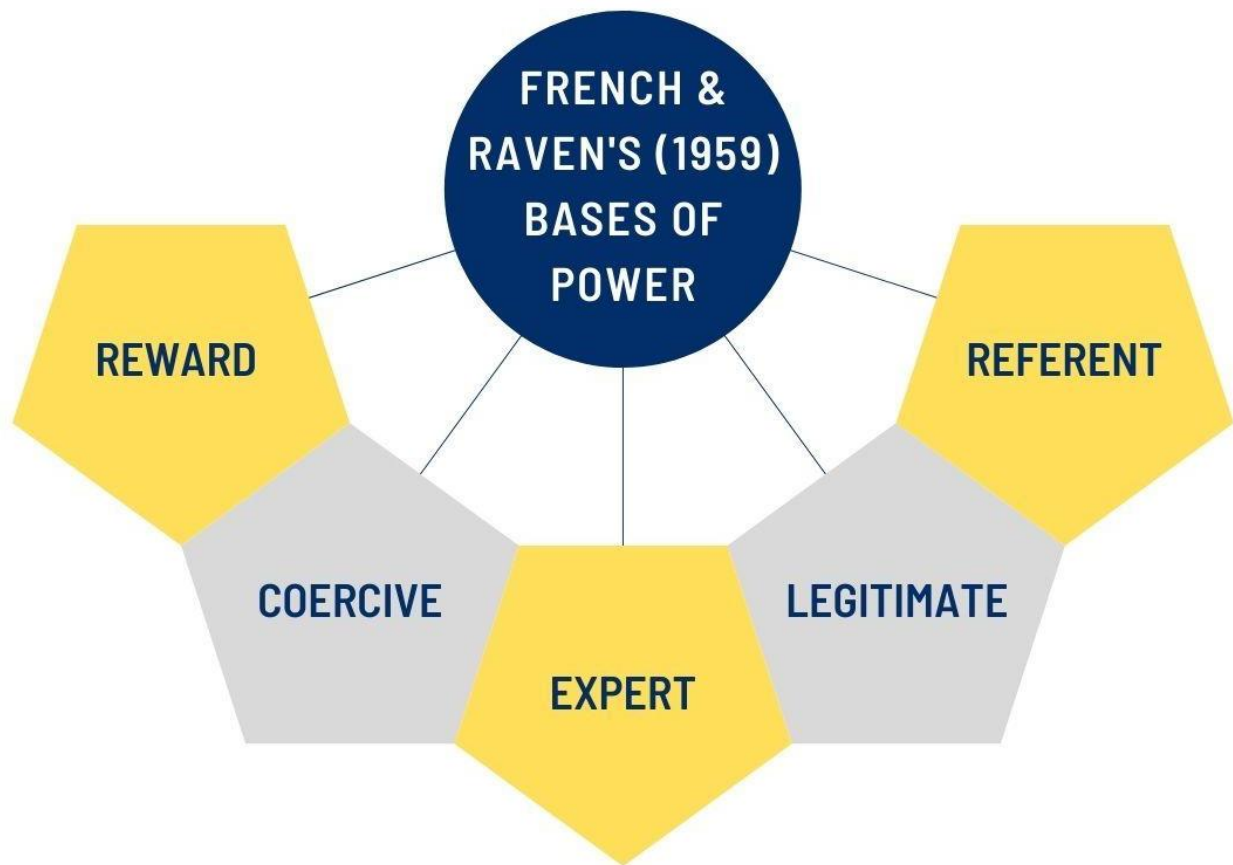
Leadership involves leveraging power to facilitate the work involved in meeting common goals with followers (Northouse, 2019). Educational leaders work within, for, and around power each day that they facilitate human interactions. In this context, using the term "power" does not refer to leadership tactics as overlording or requiring complete submission of their staff but rather the leader's ability to leverage socially derived influence mechanisms (Elias, 2008; Raven, 2008; Alapo, 2018). Northouse (2019) describes power as “the capacity or potential to influence” and that it “is related to leadership because it is part of the influence process” (p. 9). Hoy and Miskel (2013) explain that “all social organizations control their participants [and that] the essence of organizational control is power” (p. 230). Similarly, Lyons and Murphy (1994) describe principals as holding “key power positions . . . [where] principals use power to influence the behavior of teachers and students” (p. 4).

When stripped of historical references, the most basic use of power is simply as an instrument for achieving goals (Alapo, 2018). French and Raven (1959) identify and describe five sources of power that they deem as bases for influencing others, including: reward, coercive, expert, legitimate, and referent; see Figure 4. Raven (2008) refers to the leader as an influencing agent who leverages the power bases on the targets – followers – both within and outside the organization. Northouse (2019) explains that “each of these bases of power increases a leader’s capacity to influence the attitudes, values, or behaviors of others” (p. 10). Raven (2008) reminds leaders and potential implementers of the power bases that each will differ in manner, permanence, establishment, and maintenance. Educational leaders can best choose their power resource(s) by reviewing their own emotions toward the target as well as possible perceptions from the target toward them as the influencing agent (Raven, 2008). A cost-benefit analysis can

be helpful for leaders when determining which power to use for certain actions, but it is important to consider how “third parties will perceive and evaluate [their] use of particular influence strategies” (Raven 2008, p. 5-6). Hoy and Miskel (2013) warn that “there is no guarantee that those who gain power will use it rationally or justly, but power and politics are not always demeaning and destructive” (p. 249).

Figure 5

French & Raven's (1959) Bases of Power



These bases of power can be separated as positional versus personal; positional power includes legitimate, reward, coercive, and informational, and personal power includes expert and referent (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” (n.d)). Northouse (2019) describes positional power as “the power a person derives from a particular office or rank” and personal power as “the

influence capacity a leader derives from being seen by followers as likable and knowledgeable” (p. 10-11). An additional categorization is based on the method of social change (Raven, 2008); Raven indicates, “Power that leads to socially independent change” is information power (p. 2), and “power[s] that result in socially dependent change” include reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent (p. 2-3). Raven also contends that of the socially dependent powers, reward and coercive powers require surveillance, while legitimate, expert, and referent powers do not require surveillance. Hoy and Miskel (2013) remind principals of the need to “see and understand organizational life as it is so that [they] may have some chance to move it toward what [they] believe it should be; hence, power and politics cannot be neglected” (p. 246). Based on their literature review, Lyons and Murphy (1994) presumed that power provides an ability to influence behavior, that principals rely on their positional and personal power, that power directs an organization, and that a principal's confidence affects the pressure and use of power.

Reward Power

A positive use of power by the leader is in the ability to grant rewards to followers – providing both tangible and intangible rewards – for accomplishing work tasks and goals (Alapo, 2018). Raven (2008) describes leaders who provide incentives and recognition to staff members as those exerting reward power. The power of reward is “derived from having the capacity to provide rewards to others” (Northouse, 2019, p. 10) as compensation for compliance and accomplishment. While everyone in the organization should be treated well, it is appropriate for the leader to recognize the so called “superstars” in the organization through reward systems while supporting others in growth measures toward reward opportunities (Whitaker, 2012). Aseltine et al. (2006) asks school administrators to recognize quality instructors by celebrating their individual and collective successes often and publicly. Berg (2019) noted the importance of

school leaders developing specific recognition routines where their individual areas of expertise or passion can be tapped as assets, which provides benefits schoolwide. The influencing agent's ability to offer positive incentives requires surveillance and positive feelings from the target regarding the reward (Raven, 2008). Sometimes, recognizing followers' strengths is a powerful incentive to keep high-producing members in sync with the goal which gives the less-skilled members a model to emulate in the organization (Whitaker, 2012). Showcasing teacher success so that others can learn from them also helps to "ensure [that] faculty continue to develop and grow in their teaching . . . provid[ing] reasons for [the] teachers to be creative, passionate, and curious" (Tucker, 2018, p. 89). Rewards are typically used to increase productivity or social likability but require follow-up from the leader and cannot survive with empty promises (Lunenburg, 2012; Raven, 2008). Educational leaders need to be aware of the costs associated with rewards but follow the axiom that praise and thanks are free ("French and Raven's Five Forms", n.d.). A leader's potential to affect their followers negatively, including the authority to penalize, punish, or terminate, transforms reward power into coercive power (French & Raven, 1959).

Coercive Power

The power of coercion is "derived from having the capacity to penalize or punish others" (Northouse, 2019, p. 10) for noncompliance. Leaders looking to streamline operating procedures may look to coercive power as a tactic to push followers into or through certain tasks, but the outcomes are typically negative for the leader-follower relationship due to feelings of resentment and loss of trust (Alapo, 2018). Unlike reward power, Lunenburg (2012) describes that even the perceived threat of punishment by the leader is an exertion of coercive power. Additionally, the use of coercive power with followers can lead to a decline in the productivity of followers which,

in turn, affects the entire organization (Alapo, 2018). The difference between reward and coercive power lies in the ability of the leader to use reward tactics in a way that ends in the follower holding a liking for the leader rather than the typical resentment that happens with coercive tactics (Ozaslan, 2018). Educational leaders are warned to use this power as a last resort due to the potential for dissatisfaction, resentment, and attrition (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” n.d.). Coercive power, being socially dependent, may cause employees to hide their noncompliance and making surveillance costly (Raven, 2008).

Expert Power

A leader who uses their knowledge, skills, and expertise to influence others is leveraging their expert power (Lunenburg, 2012). With expert power, targets have “faith that the agent has some superior insight or knowledge about what behavior is best” (Raven, 2008, p. 3) which enables trust in the influencing agent. Expert power requires no formal position and relies on the power’s ability to provide skills, knowledge, and a reputation that is valuable to the target (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” n.d.). Expert power may derive from the leader’s organizational and human capital knowledge or from having certain specialized skills that others cannot replicate (Alapo, 2018). Leaders who gain compliance using their expertise can easily fall into the path of coercive power and can sometimes be cast aside by those exerting referent power (Elias, 2008; Raven, 2008). A key difference between expert power and coercive power is the softness versus harshness factor; expert power is considered a soft exertion of power whereas coercive tactics are typically exerted against the follower through harsh means (Ozaslan, 2018).

Legitimate Power

At the core of any social organization is the widely accepted notion of the superior and subordinate relationship which provides legitimate power to the superior based solely on their position (Raven, 2008). Legitimate power is the most formal of the bases and provides authority to the leader for decision-making and staff management (Lunenburg, 2012). Influencing agents with targets that accept the rights of the agent for compliance, demands, and expectations are using legitimate power (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” n.d.; Raven, 2008). This type of power is limited to rights associated with a position and, therefore, can be unpredictable or unstable (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” n.d.); they contend that educational leaders need to remember that targets keep their own beliefs on rights of control which can result in differing levels of compliance. French and Raven's (1959) caveat to legitimate power is the notion that the use of one's position is bound within limits. Legitimate power is generally recognized by obedience, inherent reciprocity, equity, responsibility, and obligatory actions (Ozaslan, 2018). Followers, while potentially more compliant when faced with legitimate power, may not inherently commit to organizational goals simply based on the legitimacy of the leader (Alapo, 2018).

Referent Power

Leaders are inadvertently exercising referent power when others identify them as someone to be liked, emulated, and considered socially attractive (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 2008). Referent power has various influencing factors: respect, admiration, trust, likability, and charisma (Lunenburg, 2012). Reward and coercive power can easily be disguised as referent power but is distinguished by the leader's actions (French & Raven, 1959). Leaders exhibiting referent power protect their productive staff which elicits positive influences and

staunch support for the leader (Whitaker, 2012). Referent power requires the target to view the agent as a model and to have a certain degree of liking for the agent (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” n.d.; Raven, 2008). As a personal source, referent power can carry a substantial degree of responsibility because of the adoration factor from the target (“French and Raven’s Five Forms,” n.d.). With referent power, the followers do not require surveillance from the leader and are likely to keep along the path set by the leader based on their camaraderie as mutual partners in the endeavors at hand (Ozaslan, 2018).

Application to Educational Organizations

For school administrators, several reasons to acquire and exercise their available power bases are inherent to the position: (a) to assist in goal-achievement, (b) to reward followers, (c) to overcome obstacles (outside stakeholders, follower obstinance, actions), and (d) to gain knowledge or ideas (Alapo, 2018). Owens and Valesky (2021) profess that the strength of a leader's ability to influence others is dependent on the range of powers they utilize. Northouse (2019) describes the use of powers as a potential toolkit that could allow leaders to leverage each power base as needed to match the people or the situation at hand. Ozaslan (2018) suggests that school administrator and teacher preparatory programs include course components on these bases of power so that leaders understand their potential for influence. French and Raven (1959) alert potential power wielders to use as broad a spectrum as possible without stretching too far over their limits. Additionally, these power bases can be applied to situations within organizations to support and meet the system's requirements as recognized as a living organism with needs that must be satisfied to survive (Morgan, 2006).

Path-Goal Theory

Path-goal theory, as it is known today, was formed from several iterations, studies, and updates and is most often attributed to Robert House. Foundationally, the theory was proposed in 1968 and 1970 by Martin Evans, extended in 1971 by Robert House, and elaborated by Robert House and Terence Mitchell in 1975 (Evans, 1996). House and Evans, separately, continued work on the theory and its application to leadership through 1996 (Evans, 1996). Path-goal theory explains how leaders support their followers by selecting specific behaviors that best meet their needs and situation, forming a relationship between the leader's behavior, the followers' motivations, and the work environment as they progress together on pathways toward common goals (Jabbar & Hussin, 2019; Northouse, 2019). Figure 6 provides a graphical representation of the premise of path-goal theory as introduced in the Northouse (2019) text.

Figure 6

The Premise of Path-Goal Theory



Note. Adapted from *Leadership Theory & Practice*, by Northouse, 2019, p. 134. Copyright 2019 by Sage Publications.

As detailed by House and Mitchell (1975), the four kinds of leadership behavior are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented.

Directive Approach

Directive leadership is thought to increase follower focus on their tasks through explicit standards (Northouse, 2019). Leaders exhibiting directive behaviors provide followers with

specific guidance, expectations, and instruction (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2019). Being used as a tool by school administrators, directive leadership is characterized by planning and organizing activities for followers using directions and instructions with expectations of high standards (Farhan, 2018). Banjarnahor et al. (2018) found in their review of research that the directive approach to school leadership was characterized by decision control, task-oriented action, and dominated work processes. Leaders who use the directive approach provide clear guidelines and operational rules with defined expectations of subordinate work (Shamim et al., 2019).

Supportive Approach

Supportive leadership is guided by the hope of increasing follower well-being through actions to make the workplace more pleasant (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2019). Leaders exhibiting supportive behaviors are seen as friendly and approachable (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2019). Supportive leadership, being used as a tool by school administrators, is characterized by the development of relationships with followers by providing emotional support and taking the followers' ideas into consideration (Farhan, 2018). Leaders who are characterized as patient, considerate, helpful, interested, and friendly are considered to be approaching leadership from a supportive path (Shamim et al., 2019).

Participative Approach

Participative leadership is thought to improve followers' dedication as the leader consults with them and integrates their ideas into the organization (Northouse, 2019). Leaders exhibiting participative leadership invite followers to participate in shared decision-making and show appreciation for their input into the process (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2019).

Participative leadership, being used as a tool by school administrators, is characterized by open

communication methods and shared responsibilities across the organization (Farhan, 2018).

Banjarnahor et al. (2018) found that the participative approach to school leadership was characterized by consultative decision-making and a gathering of minds.

Achievement-Oriented Approach

Achievement-oriented leadership is thought to improve follower performance through expectations guided by high standards and high confidence (Northouse, 2019). Leaders exhibiting achievement-oriented leadership tend to set challenging goals, expect followers to perform at their highest potential, and continuously seek improvement measures (House & Mitchell, 1975). Achievement-oriented leadership being used as a tool by school administrators is characterized by high confidence in their followers' abilities to meet expectations and to achieve challenging goals (Farhan, 2018). Leaders who are characterized as goal-driven, challenging, confident, and as having high standards are usually found to be charging a path through achievement-orientation (Shamim et al., 2019).

Application to Educational Organizations

Facing leadership dilemmas is an unavoidable and consistent occurrence for the school administrator (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Naranasamy and Abdullah (2019) state that the leader is the agent in charge of a positive relationship with follower performance. Evans (1970) and Kovach (2018) position the leader, described as the most potent factor in path-goal theory, as the responsible party for creating a framework, designing the path, moving the organization to achieve results, and establishing the goal in situations where the success is follower-dependent but leader-controlled. Similarly, Hoy and Miskel (2013) charge leaders with the duty of finding ways to preserve benefits to followers as they approach various pathways to goal-attainment through coordination and communication of efforts. When viewed as an instrument of

leadership, the path-goal theory looks at individuals' perceptions of ways each potential path could lead to achieving their goals (Evans, 1970).

Teacher Working Conditions

Hiring and retaining high-quality teachers is a critical factor in providing and maintaining a high-quality education for students and communities (Berry et al., 2021; Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016). Other than outside personal factors, teacher working conditions are the most significant factor in teacher retention, and research agrees that the specific conditions set forth by the school administrator are the most important (Berry et al., 2021; Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016). Kaniuka and Kaniuka (2019) describe teacher working conditions as "teachers' perceptions of factors that define the working climate of the school" (p. 39). Merrill (2021) completed a thorough synthesis of research on teacher working conditions (TWCs) and constructed a working definition of TWCs as "those elements related to a teacher's ability to do their job" (p. 172). Merrill's (2021) research indicated two meta-categories of TWCs, including actors (items dealing with influential people) and constructs (items dealing with tangible and intangible resources and processes).

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey

The NCTWCS began in 1999 based on a governor's initiative to research and support teacher working conditions in North Carolina. While several small-scale NCTWCS surveys were piloted throughout 1999-2001, the first true iteration of the NCTWCS occurred in 2002, included 39 questions, and received over 42,000 responses (NCTWCS, 2022). NCTWCS analysis of the data provided from surveys between 2002 and 2006 highlighted five consistent areas of school working conditions: allocation of time, provision of professional development, the quality of school leadership, shared decision-making, and adequacy of facilities/resources. In 2006, the

NCTWCS became a permanent part of the state budget and has been conducted every two years in March since then. As it is used today, the survey is anonymous, accessed online with a secure code, and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. The NCTWCS is divided into sections and asks participants to answer if they agree or disagree with a series of statements. The 2020 NCTWCS had the following sections with multiple questions in each section:

- Time;
- Facilities and resources;
- Community support and involvement;
- Managing student conduct;
- Teacher leadership;
- School leadership;
- Professional learning opportunities;
- Instructional practices and support;
- Overall;
- New teacher;
- Equity;
- School safety.

Berry et al. (2021) cite the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions survey as a critical step in the continued investment in high-quality educational systems, recommend that the biennial survey continue to be given, and the results used for further improvement endeavors.

School Administrator's Effect on Working Conditions

Classrooms and schools with satisfied teachers report higher rates of teacher physical well-being, higher-quality instruction, and stronger job commitment (Kraft et al., 2021;

Toropova et al., 2019). Sterrett et al. (2018) describe the school administrator as being uniquely positioned to affect the conditions in which teachers work and students learn. Researchers with the Learning Policy Institute stress the need for principal leadership programs that prepare and develop school leaders who are supportive and cognizant of positive teacher working conditions (Berry et al., 2021; Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016). Baptiste (2019) found that the school administrator's leadership style directly affected both teacher satisfaction and organization success, noting how critical it is for school administrators to "understand the politics of their positions and the capacity for meeting the expectations" (p. 7). Through extensive review and investigation into leadership behaviors and teacher satisfaction, Cansoy (2019) found evidence revealing several positive and significant relationships between the school administrator's leadership style and their teachers' job satisfaction alongside the notion that leadership behaviors were also a predictor of that job satisfaction.

While teachers are the driving force of instructional success, school administrators are the main determining factor behind the motivation for that necessary driving force, and their style of leadership is the primary influence for that motivation (Duraku & Hoxha, 2021). Casteal (2021) indicates that teacher retention was heavily affected by how their school administrator's leadership propensities influenced workplace satisfaction. Specifically, Casteal noted the importance of school administrators' awareness of how their leadership behaviors and styles affected their teachers' motivation and success as proponents of satisfaction. A report by the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium (Becker & Grob, 2021) found school administrator support and leadership as a strong correlate to teacher retention, and highlighted the effectiveness of the principal in executing their roles and actions as a primary influencer of teachers' choosing to stay in the profession and their success in meeting the vision of the school.

Perceptions formed by teachers regarding their principal's capacity for leadership influence their job satisfaction and their abilities to perform effectively (Ansley et al., 2019). Therefore, a high need exists for school administrators to be aware of their leadership style and their influence on teacher working conditions (Ansley et al., 2019, Ramirez, 2020; Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018).

Chapter Summary

Theories related to motivation, power, and goal attainment paths were essential to review as references to studying the relationship between school administrator's approaches to leading and their teachers' perceptions of working conditions. Teachers, as followers in the school organization, operate under motivating factors that support them as satisfiers to their work; however, certain hygiene factors that can act as dissatisfiers to their work must be monitored by the school administrator as the leader of the organization. Additionally, school administrators must be aware of the hierarchical nature of human needs, which is the prepotency of leveled needs as described by Maslow, as they make decisions to support their followers motivating and hygiene factors for the purposes of increasing satisfaction and decreasing dissatisfaction. As school administrators work to assist followers toward work satisfaction, they have choices to make in the power(s) that they leverage during the process. As leaders work to motivate and satisfy followers through the use of power bases, they also must assess their followers and the environment to determine their support techniques for each situation. The school administrator's behavior, exertion of power, and situational approach methods were reviewed for both positive and negative effects on teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Specific to this study, the path-goal approach to leadership and teacher working conditions were reviewed as potential corresponding factors in school success and teacher retention.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there was a significant difference in school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions. School administrator path-goal approaches were determined by asking participants to complete the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire as found in the Northouse (2019) text (Appendix A). The four path-goal approaches assessed were (a) directive, (b) supportive, (c) participative, and (d) achievement-oriented. Teacher working conditions were determined for each school administrator by accessing publicly available data from the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS). An analysis of variance, one-way ANOVA, was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the four approaches of path-goal theory of practicing school administrators and the NCTWCS overall score for their school. An ANOVA provides confirmation of any statistical differences between each path-goal approach and the mean population NCTWCS scores. A quantitative post hoc examination of the ANOVA data was also prepared to determine precisely which path-goal means had a statistical difference.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ1: Are there any significant differences in the NCTWCS overall results between schools with a school administrator scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H01: There are no significant differences in the NCTWCS overall results between schools with a school administrator scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ2: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H02: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ3: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H03: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results the school leadership question regarding teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ4: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding school leadership having consistent support for teachers between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H04: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding school leadership having consistent support for teachers between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ5: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding the faculty and staff having a shared vision between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H05: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding the faculty and staff having a shared vision between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

RQ6: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding faculty being recognized for accomplishments between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H06: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding faculty being recognized for accomplishments between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

Instrumentation

In order to conduct a study on the relationship between school administrators' path-goal tendencies and their teachers' perceived working conditions, the researcher used (with open permission) an adapted questionnaire based on House's (1975) path-goal theory of leadership from Northouse (2019) and data from the well-established North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS).

Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire

As adapted in the Northouse (2019) text, the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire is a 7-point Likert type scale consisting of 20 questions (Appendix A). The researcher developed an

online survey using the 20 questions from the questionnaire, informed consent document, and the participant letter indicating IRB approval (Appendix B). Scoring of the questionnaire answers requires a reversal in scores for four of the 20 questions and each path-goal style had five corresponding questions which required mathematical addition to compute a score for each style. The researcher then used the scoring interpretation to determine respondents' highest, common, and lowest scoring styles thereby determining their tendencies toward each path-goal approach to leadership.

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey Results

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS) is conducted biennially in March to teachers and other certified instructional staff and uses an anonymous code system. The survey asks participants to respond to statements in agreement or disagreement; the percentage results for each responding school and district are posted on a publicly accessible website. For the purposes of this study, the 2020 NCTWCS data were downloaded from the public-facing website and used in an analysis to investigate any relationships between school administrator's path-goal tendencies and their teachers' perceived working conditions. The 2020 NCTWCS had a statewide educator response rate of 84.45% with 102,545 respondents which provided a representative sample of teacher perceptions of working conditions in North Carolina public schools. Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, raw data for the 2020 NCTWCS survey was not available from the research center. Therefore, and for the purpose of this study, percentage results from the 2020 NCTWCS, available publicly, were used as correlating data to the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire responders. For the working conditions data, the researcher used the results from six questions on the 2020 session. These questions included:

- Overall: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement about your school:
 - Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.
- School Leadership: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about school leadership in your school:
 - There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.
 - Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.
 - The school leadership consistently supports teachers.
 - The faculty and staff have a shared vision.
 - The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.

Site Selection, Population, and Sample

This study was conducted using North Carolina public school administrators and teacher working conditions survey data specifically because North Carolina has a well-validated and long-serving teacher working conditions survey. There are 115 local education agencies (LEAs) in North Carolina, with each consisting of between three and 46 schools across 100 counties. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) hosts a public-facing directory site with school and personnel information available for public downloading – the Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange (EDDIE). The researcher downloaded the most current list of school principal emails from across all 115 North Carolina LEAs via EDDIE. This list provided the researcher with 2298 potential participants in the research study.

Those 2298 school administrators were emailed a request to participate in the study; 102 chose to participate, yielding a 4.4% response rate to the request for participation. Respondents to the survey represented 58 different LEAs in North Carolina. Of the school administrator

respondents, 23 were at high schools (9-12), 39 were at K-5 elementary schools, 7 were at K-8 elementary schools, and 31 were at middle schools (6-8). The vast majority of the respondent's schools were traditional in nature, and 10 were non-traditional (alternative, early college, magnet, vocational/technical). This quantitative study of school administrators' path-goal approaches used a representative sample consisting of North Carolina public school system school-based administrators who were in the same administrative position during the 2020 NCTWCS session. In an effort to use valid data in the statistical analysis for this study, only participants at schools with a 60% or higher response rate on the 2020 NCTWCS were used for the study; one of the 102 respondents was excluded – yielding a sample size of 101 participating school administrators.

Data Collection Strategies

The Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire was sent to North Carolina school administrators who had a valid email address in EDDIE. The Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire (original in Appendix A; virtual version in Appendix B) was sent electronically through Google Forms with a letter (Appendix C) indicating East Tennessee State University (ETSU) Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval, the researcher's dissertation committee approval, and the purpose of the study. The survey first asked the recipients if they were in the same position at the same location during the 2020 NCTWCS session and requested their informed consent. If respondents confirmed the initial question, they were prompted to continue with the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire which determined their scores for each path-goal leadership approach.

Regarding the NCTWCS results from the 2020 session, the researcher attempted to collect raw survey data from the Duke Research Center which houses most of the data sets

available for researchers from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 prevented the researcher from accessing the raw results from the 2020 NCTWCS. The 2020 NCTWCS opened in March 2020 at the very beginnings of the pandemic-related shut-downs. The research center was not able to process the data from the 2020 session in time for the researcher to access in this study. Therefore, the researcher used the publicly available results which consisted of question and overall percentages only for each participating school in North Carolina.

Data Analysis Strategies

As indicated in Appendix A, respondent answers on the Path-Goal Approach Questionnaire, a survey using a 7-point Likert scale, require a score interpretation. Four of the 20 items on the questionnaire required a reversal in scores. Each path-goal approach had five questions within the questionnaire specific to ascertaining the respondent's tendency in using that specific approach with a scoring procedure yielding a potential score of up to 35 on each approach. This section contains a narrative of the scoring procedures; graphic form is found in Figure 6. For the directive style, a score of 23 is considered common, a score of above 28 is considered high, and a score below 18 is considered low. For the supportive style, a score of 28 is considered common, a score above 33 is considered high, and a score below 23 is considered low. For the participative style, a score of 21 is considered common, a score above 26 is considered high, and a score below 16 is considered low. And finally, for the achievement-oriented style, a score of 19 is considered common, a score above 24 is considered high, and score below 14 is considered low.

Figure 7

Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire Scoring Interpretation



Note. Based on the scoring interpretation provided in the Northouse (2019) text.

The research questions were investigated through an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine if a statistical difference in the four approaches of path-goal theory of practicing school administrators and their NCTWCS scores existed. School administrator path-goal leadership approach data were used as the independent categorical variable for the ANOVA test, resulting in four groups. The ANOVA dependent interval variable for each subject came from the scores on the NCTWCS overall domain and the questions regarding school administrators as matched to the representative sample of school administrators. A post hoc examination of the ANOVA data, using a Tukey procedure, was prepared to highlight which path-goal approach had the statistical difference. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Assessment of Quality and Rigor

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) (2018), the NCTWCS is "a statistically valid and reliable instrument to assess whether educators have working conditions in their school that support effective teaching" (para. 6). The 2020 NCTWCS was conducted through an external vendor, the Center for Optimal Learning Environments (COLE) and through their initiative, the Action for School Quality (ASQ) (COLE, 2020). The NCTWCS was established as a permanent part of the state budget in 2006 with Senate Bill 622 (COLE, 2020). As part of the data collection process for this study, the researcher used schools with a 60% or higher response rate. The Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire from the Northouse (2019) text was previously verified as valid and reliable.

Ethical Considerations and the Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this quantitative study was to gather pre-existing data from the NCTWCS and to request survey completion from fellow school administrators in North Carolina. As an assistant principal in North Carolina, the researcher's school NCTWCS results were not used, nor was their principal contacted for the questionnaire. After the data were collected, the researcher used SPSS to complete the statistical analysis. As an ethical consideration, no findings were discussed with individuals, and any inquiries were referred to the impending published dissertation.

Chapter Summary

For the purposes of this study, the researcher obtained IRB approval before conducting and data collection processes. This study reviewed the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach to leadership and their teachers' perceived working conditions. The researcher's instrument was the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire, as

provided in Northouse (2019), and overall scores from the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS). The 2020 NCTWCS results were collected from the public-facing website provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). The path-goal questionnaire results were interpreted based on the provided scoring process in the Northouse (2019) text. For each respondent on the path-goal questionnaire who also had a 60% or higher response rate on their school's 2020 NCTWCS, the school administrator's highest-scoring approach to leadership was connected to their NCTWCS overall scores and analyzed using an ANOVA test. This statistical analysis was used to aid the researcher with reviewing the data for any specific relationships with statistical significance or differences between the four path-goal approaches to leadership. There were 101 eligible participants in the study which, based on their path-goal questionnaire results, yielded 119 records for use in the statistical analysis.

Chapter 4. Findings

Through this study, the researcher attempted to determine any statistical differences between the four path-goal approaches to leadership – directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented – and perceived teacher working conditions by using school administrators’ responses from across North Carolina. Using the Path-Goal Approach to Leadership Questionnaire, found in the Northouse (2019) text (Appendix A), the researcher received 102 responses from currently practicing school administrators across North Carolina. Those responses were scored using the interpretation methods for the questionnaire (Appendix A) and then matched to their school’s overall teacher working conditions score from the 2020 NCTWCS. One survey response was removed from the records due to a less than 60% response rate on their school’s NCTWCS. Nine of the respondents on the path-goal questionnaire had more than one highest scoring path-goal style; therefore, their records were duplicated for statistical analysis in each of their highest scoring styles as paired with their school’s NCTWCS data; yielding 119 total records for analysis.

Path-Goal Approach Results

The Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire, from the Northouse (2019) text (Appendix A), consists of 20 questions that asked respondents to determine how often each statement is true in their typical behaviors using a 7-point Likert scale. For each of the four path-goal approaches – directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented – five of the 20 questions are corresponding indicators of each approach. The questionnaire provides scoring directions for the survey with a common, high, and low interpretation for each approach; see Figure 6. This section indicates the breakdown of scores for each approach from the 101 survey respondents in narrative format as well as in graphic form (Table 1). Of the 101 respondents, 11 were

considered as scoring high on all four approaches, 39 were considered as scoring high in three approaches, 32 were considered as scoring high in two approaches, and 17 were considered as scoring high in one approach. Additionally, of the 101 respondents, only one had an interpretatively low score and only two had non-categorized scores in all four approaches. This section provides a narrative breakdown of scoring interpretations and results for each path-goal approach from the researcher’s online questionnaire.

Table 1

Respondents’ Path-Goal Approach Breakdowns

| Path-Goal Approach | High | Common | Low | No-Category |
|----------------------|------|--------|-----|-------------|
| Directive | 73 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| Supportive | 12 | 9 | 1 | 74 |
| Participative | 65 | 2 | 0 | 34 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 92 | 0 | 0 | 9 |

Directive Approach Results

For the directive style, a score of 23 is considered common, a score of above 28 is considered high, and a score below 18 is considered low. Of the 101 responding school administrators, no respondents scored at the common level, 73 were considered as scoring high, no respondents were considered as scoring low, and the remainder scored above or below the common level but above the low level in directive. Of the 73 respondents who were considered high scoring in directive, 72 of them also scored high in another path-goal approach. There was 1 unique respondent who scored high only in the directive approach.

Supportive Approach Results

For the supportive style, a score of 28 is considered common, a score above 33 is considered high, and a score below 23 is considered low. Of the 101 responding school administrators, 14 scored at the common level, 12 were considered as scoring high, 1 was considered as scoring low, and the remainder scored above or below the common level. Of the 12 respondents who were considered high scoring in supportive, all also scored high in another path-goal approach. There were no unique respondents who only scored high in the supportive approach.

Participative Approach Results

For the participative style, a score of 21 is considered common, a score above 26 is considered high, and a score below 16 is considered low. Of the 101 responding school administrators, 2 scored at the common level, 65 were considered as scoring high, and the remainder scored above or below the common level but above the low level in participative. Of the 65 respondents who were considered high scoring in participative, 60 of them also scored high in another path-goal approach. There were 5 unique respondents who only scored high in the participative approach.

Achievement-Oriented Approach Results

For the achievement-oriented style, a score of 19 is considered common, a score above 24 is considered high, and score below 14 is considered low. Of the 101 responding school administrators, no respondents scored at the common level, 92 were considered as scoring high, no respondents scored at the low level, and the remainder were above the common level but below the high level. Of the 92 respondents who were considered high scoring in achievement-

oriented, 81 of them also scored high in another path-goal approach. There were 11 unique respondents who only scored high in the achievement-oriented approach.

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey Results

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (2020) (NCTWCS) process required respondents to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement on the survey. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the results from six questions on the 2020 session. These questions included:

- Overall: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement about your school.
 - Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.
- School Leadership: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about school leadership in your school.
 - There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.
 - Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.
 - The school leadership consistently supports teachers.
 - The faculty and staff have a shared vision.
 - The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.

The table below shows the breakdown of NCTWCS results from across the path-goal survey participants in this study.

Table 2

2020 NCTWCS Result Breakdowns

| NCTWCS Question | Agree Low | Agree High | Average |
|---|-----------|------------|---------|
| Overall | 57% | 100% | 88% |
| School Leadership: Trust | 25% | 100% | 79% |
| School Leadership: Raising Issues | 32% | 100% | 77% |
| School Leadership: Support | 40% | 100% | 81% |
| School Leadership: Shared Vision | 54% | 100% | 85% |
| School Leadership: Recognition of Accomplishments | 41% | 100% | 88% |

Research Questions and Responses

Research Question One

The following research question was addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ1: Are there any significant differences in the NCTWCS overall results between schools with a school administrator scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H01: There are no significant differences in the NCTWCS overall results between schools with a school administrator scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions. The factor variable, the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach, included four groups: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The dependent variable

was the teacher working conditions overall score from the 2020 NCTWCS. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,115) = .731$, $p = .536$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions, as assessed by η^2 , was small (.019). The results indicate that the teachers' perceived working conditions were not significantly related to the school administrator's tendency toward a specific path-goal approach. The means and standard deviations for the four path-goal approach groups are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

R1: Means and Standard Deviations of Path-Goal Groups (Overall)

| Path-Goal Approach | N | M | SD |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Directive | 58 | .8679 | .10047 |
| Supportive | 13 | .8777 | .11606 |
| Participative | 21 | .8967 | .08856 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 27 | .8963 | .09866 |

Research Question Two

The following research question was addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ2: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H02: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions with regard to trust and mutual respect between the administrator and the teachers. The factor variable, the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach, included four groups: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The dependent variable was the teacher working conditions results from the school leadership question on trust from the 2020 NCTWCS. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,115) = 1.050$, $p = .373$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions from a trust-between-themselves-and-the-administrator standpoint, as assessed by η^2 , was small (.027). The results indicate that the teachers' perceived working conditions with trust were not significantly related to the school administrator's tendency toward a specific path-goal approach. The means and standard deviations for the four path-goal approach groups for research question two are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

R2: Means and Standard Deviations of Path-Goal Groups (School Leadership: Trust)

| Path-Goal Approach | N | M | SD |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Directive | 58 | .7653 | .17958 |
| Supportive | 13 | .7931 | .19610 |
| Participative | 21 | .7829 | .17263 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 27 | .8378 | .15998 |

Research Question Three

The following research question was addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ3: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H03: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results the school leadership question regarding teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions in regard to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns to the administrator. The factor variable, the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach, included four groups: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The dependent variable was the teacher working conditions results on the raising issues question from the 2020 NCTWCS. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,115) = 1.019$, $p = .387$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions in comfort of raising issues, as assessed by η^2 , was small (.026). The results indicate that the teachers' perceived working conditions were not significantly related to the school administrator's tendency toward a specific path-goal approach. The means and standard deviations for the four path-goal approach groups for research questions four are reported in Table 5.

Table 5*R3: Means and Standard Deviations of Path-Goal Groups (School Leadership: Raising Issues)*

| Path-Goal Approach | N | M | SD |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Directive | 58 | .7479 | .17534 |
| Supportive | 13 | .7869 | .22036 |
| Participative | 21 | .7810 | .16263 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 27 | .8189 | .17372 |

Research Question Four

The following research question was addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ4: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding school leadership having consistent support for teachers between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H04: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding school leadership having consistent support for teachers between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions in regard to having consistent support for teachers from school leadership. The factor variable, the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach, included four groups: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The dependent variable was the teacher working conditions results on the consistent support question from the 2020 NCTWCS. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,115) = .170$, $p = .916$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the school administrators' path-goal approach

and teachers' perceptions of working conditions on having consistent support, as assessed by η^2 , was small (.004). The results indicate that the teachers' perceived working conditions were not significantly related to the school administrator's tendency toward a specific path-goal approach. The means and standard deviations for the four path-goal approach groups on research question four are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

R4: Means and Standard Deviations of Path-Goal Groups (School Leadership: Support)

| Path-Goal Approach | N | M | SD |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Directive | 58 | .8053 | .16587 |
| Supportive | 13 | .8423 | .19664 |
| Participative | 21 | .8219 | .14063 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 27 | .8089 | .17890 |

Research Question Five

The following research question was addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ5: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding the faculty and staff having a shared vision between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H05: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding the faculty and staff having a shared vision between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions

regarding having a shared vision among the faculty and staff. The factor variable, the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach, included four groups: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The dependent variable was the teacher working conditions results on the shared vision question from school leadership section of the 2020 NCTWCS. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,115) = .476$, $p = .700$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions on a shared vision, as assessed by η^2 , was small (.012). The results indicate that the teachers' perceived working conditions were not significantly related to the school administrator's tendency toward a specific path-goal approach. The means and standard deviations for the four path-goal approach groups for research question five are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

R5: Means and Standard Deviations of Path-Goal Groups (School Leadership: Vision)

| Path-Goal Approach | N | M | SD |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Directive | 58 | .8407 | .13883 |
| Supportive | 13 | .8592 | .14494 |
| Participative | 21 | .8600 | .12008 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 27 | .8774 | .13449 |

Research Question Six

The following research question was addressed through testing the null hypothesis:

RQ6: Are there any significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding faculty being recognized for accomplishments between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented?

H06: There are no significant differences in NCTWCS results on the school leadership question regarding faculty being recognized for accomplishments between schools with administrators scoring highest in directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions regarding faculty being recognized for their accomplishments. The factor variable, the school administrator's highest scoring path-goal approach, included four groups: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The dependent variable was the teacher working conditions results on the accomplishment recognition question from the school leadership section from the 2020 NCTWCS. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,115) = .407, p = .749$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions on being recognized for accomplishments, as assessed by η^2 , was small (.010). The results indicate that the teachers' perceived working conditions were not significantly related to the school administrator's tendency toward a specific path-goal approach. The means and standard deviations for the four path-goal approach groups for research question six are reported in Table 8.

Table 8*R6: Means and Standard Deviations of Path-Goal Groups (School Leadership: Recognized)*

| Path-Goal Approach | N | M | SD |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Directive | 58 | .8702 | .11022 |
| Supportive | 13 | .8685 | .14253 |
| Participative | 21 | .8719 | .11387 |
| Achievement-Oriented | 27 | .8985 | .12053 |

Chapter Summary

Through this study, the researcher attempted to determine a relationship between the school administrator's path-goal approach to leadership and their teachers' perceived working conditions. The researcher reviewed the path-goal tendencies of the participating school administrators and found that 82 of the 101 participants showed high inclination toward the use of more than one path-goal approach while only 17 participants showed unique inclinations in one approach. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS was used to review statistical differences in the participating school administrator's four path-goal approaches to leadership (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented) and their school's matching working conditions scores. This analysis was completed for six research questions based on the NCTWCS results from the 2020 session which included overall results and five school leadership question results in regard to trust, comfort in raising issues, support, shared vision, and recognition of accomplishments. An ANOVA of the data yielded no significant differences in the four path-goal approaches and teacher working conditions for each research question; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained in each analysis. The researcher was prepared to use a post hoc analysis via the Tukey assessment; however, due to finding no significant relationship

between any path-goal approach and NCTWCS results on the six research questions, the additional analysis was not necessary.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Introduction

Leaders are “often regarded as the single most important factor in the success or failure of institutions” (Hoy & Miskel, 2013, p. 427). The purpose of this quantitative study was to highlight the relationship between school administrator path-goal approach tendencies and their teacher’s perceived working conditions. The researcher used a Path-Goal Approach to Leadership Questionnaire (Appendix A) and the results from the publicly available 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS) to assist with the study. The questionnaire yields scores for participants on the four path-goal approaches to leadership: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. While the NCTWCS includes multiple questions relating to teacher working conditions, the researcher used the overall results and five of the eleven school leadership question results for the purposes of this study. Using a one-way analysis of variance, the researcher tested the matched data from school administrator’s highest rated path-goal approach and their school’s NCTWCS results for each research question and found no statistical differences between the four path-goal approaches to leadership and any of the NCTWCS results from questions used in this study.

While the leadership styles and behaviors exuded by school administrators do not have complete control over the vastness that is teacher working conditions, their methods of leveraging power and consistent awareness of available pathways to connect with followers holds influence within the organization (Ansley et al., 2019; Becker & Grob, 2021). Liu et al. (2003) suggest that due to the comprehensive nature of the educational setting as an organizational setting, “the effectiveness of a leader in motivating and satisfying employees is likely to be influenced by the degree to which they can adapt their leadership behavior and styles

to match the characteristics of the employment groups” (p. 3). Pardee (1990) acknowledges the importance of school administrators having an understanding of their role in motivating followers and developing operational norms that support positive working conditions. Hoy and Miskel (2013) explain that “humans have a natural capacity to follow as well as lead” (p. 458) but not every leader has the necessary capacity nor skills to foster a positive leader-follower relationship. It is important to the satisfaction of teachers and organizational performance for leaders to hone the ability of choosing appropriate tactics or methods for each goal and situation when making decisions and interacting with followers (Banjarnahor et al., 2018; Gyeltshen, 2020).

Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between school administrators’ path-goal approach and teachers’ perceptions of working conditions. An understanding of motivation, follower needs, and power bases were all essential to understanding the school administrator’s role in providing a positive environment for their teachers who are working to support student performance. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire and the 2020 NCTWCS results to conduct an analysis of variance on 119 records from the data collection process. The data were analyzed at the 0.05 level of significance and no significant differences between the leader’s highest scoring path-goal approach and their teacher’s perceived working conditions were found. This section discusses in summary reviewed literature alongside this study’s findings regarding path-goal theory and teacher working conditions.

Path-Goal Theory

In 1975, House and Mitchell described path-goal theory as a promising approach to leadership studies due to the focus on leader behavior and situational factors on which those behaviors are contingent. While they proffered path-goal theory as an explanation of leader behaviors on follower acceptance, satisfaction, and expectations, they acknowledged that other variables and behaviors are available making the theory malleable to future additions and updates (House & Mitchell, 1975; Yang & Lim, 2016). Additionally, leaders may exert more than one path-goal approach and may use them situationally dependent on available time and the follower's needs (Olowoselu et al., 2019). Although some research suggests that the use of a participative approach is best for leaders when looking to remove obstacles in the path to reaching organizational goals, a leader who participates in learning focused on leveraging each of the approaches situationally is optimal (Banjarnahor et al., 2018; Farhan, 2018; Yang & Lim, 2016).

While there were some evident tendencies toward path-goal approaches by administrators, no significant differences between the four path-goal approaches were found through the statistical analysis when tested against their school's teacher working conditions survey data. Of the respondents on the path-goal questionnaire, 81% showed an inclination to use more than one path-goal approach in their standard practice. Conversely, 17% of respondents showed inclination to only one path-goal approach. Considering the findings of this study, a broader approach to employing the path-goal approaches to leadership is highlighted rather than presenting a series of specialized administrators who access one approach or behavior based on their own tendencies and inclinations.

Teacher Working Conditions

While it is accepted that school administrators do not have complete control over all the factors affecting working conditions, effective leadership, as perceived by teachers, does have tremendous influence on job satisfaction and work contexts leading to positive outcomes for both teachers and students (Ansley et al., 2019; Baptiste, 2019; Cansoy, 2019; Ladd, 2011). There are various recognized behaviors embedded in effective leadership; leaders who work to improve their skills in implementing those behaviors in a flexible manor, allowing for innovations in practice, tend to have happier teachers with better performance and who plan to stay in the profession longer (Cansoy, 2019; Ladd, 2011). School administrators who operate under the assumption that their use of leader behaviors has a profound effect on teacher satisfaction and school performance are more readily equipped to respond to their dynamic role in the leader-follower relationship (Baptiste, 2019; Duraku & Hoxha, 2021). Based on the results from the researcher's analyses that yielded no significant relationships between any specific path-goal approaches and overall nor school leadership teacher working condition factors, a reinforcement of situational leadership – where the leader-follower relationship is adaptive in nature – was indicated.

Implications for Practice

This study may be useful to school administrators as they develop the skills necessary to retain excellent teachers in the organization and to enhance the abilities of their faculty in meeting organizational goals. Recognizing that leaders may lean toward more than one path-goal approach and that there are many outside factors affecting leader behavior, an individual's understanding of one's typical behaviors can be helpful to leaders as they work to motivate followers in varying situations (Evans, 1996; House & Mitchell, 1975). Based on the findings of

this study, the researcher suggests a highly situational approach to determining the leadership behaviors and styles leaders access when working to move organizations across the ever-changing landscape of goal-attainment. Regarding the effectiveness of these strategies, administrators are challenged with defining their outcome, coping with necessary shifts, and responding to stakeholders as they learn to hone their leader behaviors and application measures (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). This section suggests the use of a leadership toolbox, implementing path-goal approaches as integral pieces in that toolbox, professional learning regarding innate leadership behaviors and growth potential, and the option of strategic planning as techniques to operate situationally as a complement to leader-follower relationships with complete accessibility to an array of leader behaviors and tools.

Accessing the Leadership Toolbox

As school administrators understand their own tendencies toward leader behaviors, they may gain valuable tools in implementing a more situational approach to motivating and providing for their followers by moving past their tendencies and implementing practices that use varying leadership strategies (Ruslan et al., 2020). Recognizing that leadership is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach is the first step in building a toolbox to support follower motivation and goal achievement (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Instead, leader behaviors and styles must be “selected and adapted to fit organizations, situations, groups, and individuals” (Amanchukwu et al., 2015, p. 9). School administrators make decisions daily, and while it would be optimal to have the time to develop a complete sequential process to decision-making, that is rarely the reality (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). When administrators understand that decision-making is a never-ending cycle, that they operate under bounded rationality, and that they are never free of personal or organizational values, they will gain the ability to work within the decision-making action

cycle where a satisfactory solution can be reached (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Accessing available tools, such as one of French and Raven's (1959) power bases, can help sustain goals and provide organizational structure in the authority dynamic between leaders and followers (Alapo, 2018). The leader's capacity and forethought in choosing between the different leader behaviors and power bases will have direct effects on their ability to lead followers toward common goals (Alapo, 2018).

School administrators who access their toolbox of leader behaviors and styles in a responsive manner to the context(s) at hand are more successful in leading the organization in a common vision (Leithwood et al., 2020). Hoy and Miskel (2013) remind school administrators that time and availability of information can be their largest enemy in making decisions along pathways. Leaders who do not access their toolkits of leader behaviors and powers or use them poorly as matched to the follower or task at hand, can find themselves in situations without support wherein followers take on non-compliant or resistant stances (Alapo, 2018). Taking leadership style surveys, such as the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire, is one way for school administrators to discover their inherent skill sets and determine ways to implement their currently operating tools while developing those that have yet to emerge. An adept school administrator ensures predictability and coherence in the organizational structure while anticipating external and internal pressures with an ability to adapt to those pressures (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Hoy and Miskel recognize that decision-making is fraught with stress, anxiety, and a myriad of potential consequences, prompting them to suggest vigilance in risk-taking, determined actions, and engaging in reflective thinking. This section provides implications for school administrators as guided by path-goal approaches to leadership.

Path-Goal: Directive Tool. A directive approach is best used by leaders who need to give initial directions, provide structure, or set standards. Leaders implementing this tool may wish to use this when followers have confusion with pathway strategies or require additional instructions (Farhan, 2018). When directions and potential obstacles are unclear, school administrators can use directive behaviors to support followers through to clarity based on structures and guidelines (Khan, 2013; Olowoselu et al., 2019). Leveraging the power bases of legitimate and expert may assist leaders who require the use of the directive tool with followers. The use of the directive tool is best matched to followers who are new, unfamiliar, or untrained with the basic structure of the organization or task (Phillips & Phillips, 2016).

Path-Goal: Supportive Tool. A supportive approach is best used by leaders seeking or needing emotional bonds and trust amongst followers (Farhan, 2018; Olowoselu et al., 2019). Additionally, leaders who implement this tool may help support followers' self-confidence as they work toward common goals (Farhan, 2018). When tasks are highly structured and redundant, school administrators can access supportive behaviors with followers showing them empathy as they progress through potentially stringent and unsatisfying work elements (Khan, 2013). Leveraging the power bases of reward and referent may come naturally with actions taken by leaders using the supportive tool with followers. The supportive tool is most appropriately used with followers who have reduced job satisfaction or with whom the leader is struggling to develop a relationship in the context of organizational commitment (Olowoselu et al., 2019).

Path-Goal: Participative Tool. A participative approach is best used by leaders who wish to manage the organization in a more progressive manner where the suggestions, feedback, and opinions of followers are appreciated and necessary as the organization moves forward in goal-attainment (Farhan, 2018; Olowoselu et al., 2019). The implementation of this tool supports

innovation and creativity alongside shared responsibility which allows the leader to work outside of isolation with various stakeholders (Farhan, 2018). When goals become ambiguous or followers request a voice in the decision-making process, school administrators can take advantage of operating under participative behaviors to the satisfaction and growth of their followers (Khan, 2013). Leveraging the power bases of reward and referent may be helpful to leaders implementing the participative tool with followers. The use of the participative tool is most effective with seasoned, well-performing, and collaborative followers who have valuable input for the task or decision at hand (Phillips & Phillips, 2016).

Path-Goal: Achievement-Oriented Tool. When faced with daunting or new challenges, an achievement-oriented approach may be necessary for school administrators to use as they work with followers to achieve goals (Farhan, 2018). The use of this tool requires the leader to have and show confidence in their followers so that the accompanying high expectations and high standards are believed to be achievable (Farhan, 2018; Olowoselu et al., 2019). When leaders assess situations and deem them as potentially challenging and demanding of the organization, they can implement achievement-oriented behaviors to carry their followers through to success (Khan, 2013). Leveraging the power bases of reward and coercive may be necessary in assisting leaders who require the use of the achievement-oriented tool with followers. Showcasing teacher success so that others can learn from them helps to “ensure [that] faculty continue to develop and grow in their teaching . . . provid[ing] reasons for [the] teachers to be creative, passionate, and curious” (Tucker, 2018, p. 89). The achievement-oriented tool is best matched between leaders who are trusted and exhibit multiple power bases successfully and followers who are trusted by the leader as highly capable organizational members (Olowoselu et al., 2019).

Leadership Development

As Alvy and Robbins (2010) noted, Abraham Lincoln's adept abilities in leading others is an example that the most successful leaders do not work in isolation. Instead, they pull helpful insights from those around them, communicate regularly with neighbor leaders, and take every opportunity to learn about the followers' needs and thoughts (Alvy & Robbins, 2010, Ramirez, 2020). Operating with this knowledge, administrator preparation programs and districts looking to grow leaders from within must make critical efforts in supporting potential school administrators with implementing effective leader behaviors in relation to follower motivations and needs (Baptiste, 2019; Duraku & Hoxha, 2021; Gyeltshen, 2020). Additionally, the use of leadership questionnaires by school administrators and district leaders may provide solutions to challenging leadership situations where their current practices are not effective with followers; such questionnaires can also be beneficial during professional development (Baptiste, 2019; Olowoselu et al., 2019). Although inherent behaviors and traits are not easily changed, a leader can take assessments and personality inventories to "develop a deeper understanding of who they are and how they will affect others in the organization" (Northouse, 2019, p. 32). Gandolfi and Stone (2020) note in their research that leaders are developed, not born, and that the cultivation of a leader is only achieved through a leadership journey forged within relationships with followers and other stakeholders.

Whitaker (2012) reminds leaders how essential reflection is, and specifically looking at what actions are being taken, how they are taking those actions or making those choices, and how they are living their professional lives. Similarly, Casteal (2021) warns that the school administrator must be aware of the effects their use of leader behaviors and styles have on their teachers as a component of satisfaction and culture. Liu et al. (2003) posit that "the effective

management of human capital will likely depend on the match between leadership style and the demands and expectations conveyed in the employment exchange with employees” (p. 13). Leaders must be trained to recognize “the different and often divergent objectives sought for a particular employment arrangement and understand the associated demands placed on [them]” (Liu et al., 2003, p. 26). A follower’s view of leadership effectiveness is directly tied to the leader’s ability to inspire, to prioritize needs, and being driven in their work which gives followers a certain sense of safety within the organization (Gandolfi & Stone, 2020). Preparing current and future leaders for successful endeavors requires a vision and persistence in the process of continuous improvement so that obstacles in the path to goal-attainment can be overcome (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

Strategic Planning

School administrators who fill their leadership toolbox and hone those tools through development can begin the process of strategic planning while they determine the best use and timing of each tool. Ayodele and Ali (2010) determined that strategic planning is a management tool that gives administrators the ability to "plan for the future as [they] try to overcome challenges which may influence institutional achievement . . . and [to] deal with any rising turbulence and other challenges confronting the educational environment" (p. 79). The authors describe educational planning as "an effective and efficient managerial procedure which brings change" (p. 80) to the organization. Grissom and Bartanen (2019) describe a process of strategic retention whereby school administrators review their teachers to determine low and high performers. The administrator can use their toolbox of behaviors and power bases to support high performers to encourage their staying with the organization and assist low performers in growth activities or to a change in profession. Administrators who know their leadership

tendencies, gathers information on their followers, and focuses on pathways to goal attainment are better equipped to participate in strategic planning. School administrators offer the best protection to the organizational structure and their followers by buffering, decoupling, planning and forecasting, managing images, spanning boundaries, adjusting operations, shaping malleable environments, and establishing favorable linkages (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

With any process, planning and preparation is required and should be focused on achieving specific goals (Ayodele & Ali, 2010). Followers may find greater respect for the motivating efforts of leaders when the forethought, planning, and practice of situational leadership behaviors are easily recognized (Walls, 2019). School administrators are uniquely positioned to leverage their power bases and leader behaviors in ways that support the organizational goals. Ayodele and Ali also note that these "management activities of foresight" (p. 80) should keep in mind the "economic and political realities" of the organization. Educational planning is used as a blueprint for future events and outside stressors, according to Ayodele & Ali, and they note that administrators should frame the management of strategic and educational planning via reflective activities and looking for improvement or deviations. Hoy and Miskel (2013) explain that school administrators, acting as planners, are "expected to identify the important environmental elements and to analyze potential actions and counteractions by other organizations" (p. 274). Grissom and Bartanen (2019) found that school administrators who are strategic in their planning are more effective in maintaining positive teacher working conditions and encouraging low teacher turnover for their high performing staff members. Similarly, Hoy and Miskel remind school administrators that within the extensive planning process, that conditions can change quickly and, therefore, they must maintain the ability to update and adapt as necessary to each rising situation. Walls (2019) stated, "Changing

the face of the future workforce all starts by supporting education through effective leadership” (p. 33).

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for further research are:

- A quantitative study on the relationship between school administrators’ path-goal approaches to leadership and student performance measures;
 - This study would allow the researcher to review any relationships between school administrators’ tendencies in leader behaviors and the school’s student performance.
- A quantitative study exploring the relationships between school administrators’ path-goal approaches to leadership and results from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey in 2022 and 2024;
 - This study would allow the researcher to compare findings in relationships post-COVID.
- A qualitative study of school administrator preparation programs that are designed to instruct potential school leaders regarding implementing varying leader behaviors successfully and situationally;
 - This study would provide researchers with insights into administrator preparation program methods that offer leader behavior training and the perceived effects on those taking part in the programs.
- A qualitative study exploring district level support programs for school administrators and other leaders and the methods used to enhance or grow their abilities to use varying leader behaviors.

- This study would provide researchers with insights into leadership development through the eyes of participants.

Additionally, the researcher suggests a repeat of this study on a larger scale with in-depth demographic data on participants as potential avenues for a more specific study into the nuances found in leadership behaviors and styles. Similarly, there is an opportunity to complete this research as a longitudinal study using a larger participant pool and looking at growth, stagnancy, or unique variances of school administrator leadership tendencies and teacher working conditions.

Chapter Summary

The researcher sought to determine if any significant differences in school administrator tendencies in path-goal approaches and their teachers' perceived working conditions existed by analyzing data provided by a path-goal approach to leadership questionnaire and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Results from the questionnaire and survey completed by 101 participating school administrators from across 58 counties in North Carolina were used. The four tested path-goal approaches were directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. An analysis of variance on the data revealed no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of working conditions and school administrators' leadership across the four path-goal approaches as revealed through six research questions related to overall conditions and school leadership. Therefore, the researcher discussed an alternative, and potentially more successful method of leadership where the school administrator matches their behaviors to their followers through the use of a leadership toolbox with a situational approach to the leader-follower relationship.

The original authors of path-goal theory acknowledged that the leveraging of leader behaviors had potential for growth with additions in outside factors and the abilities of leaders to use multiple behaviors, styles, and actions. As with any leadership position, school administrators are faced with decision-making for various stakeholders and typically have very little time or information available which then creates a sense of urgency and the need for a multi-leveled process. With the understanding that any decision made for members of the school organization affects the overarching goal of successful education for all students, school administrators must look at how they can enact behaviors with followers and that their decisions lead to success for the organization. Therefore, successful administrators motivate followers to complete the necessary work to eliminate obstacles in the path to goal attainment through the leveraging of power; successful administrators must also keep in mind follower needs and satisfaction factors based on unique follower pairings of behaviors. Followers look to the ability and skills of the school administrator to lead situationally as a way to measure their commitment to the organization as well as their perceptions of working conditions.

The findings of this quantitative study highlighted the importance of having a process where school administrators review their leader behavior tendencies while exploring the use of multiple behaviors when engaging with followers in organizational strategy. Administrators who develop a leader behavior toolbox and then hone their ability to apply them appropriately to each situation and follower will be more successful in leading others toward the organization's end goal. An administrator's toolbox would not be complete without background knowledge in motivating factors, recognition of followers' needs and satisfaction, the ability to leverage power, adaptive qualities, and experience in matching approaches to followers. The use of varying tools situationally requires the administrator to be comfortable with re-defining their

work and applications to their role in the leader-follower relationship. Additional research is needed to understand more completely what learning and skills may be required of future and current leaders as they work to motivate followers in moving organizations forward to goal-attainment through situational approaches and using a breadth of leader behaviors and styles. Even so, the building and use of a leader toolbox with strategic planning for the purpose of organizational goal-attainment can be an exciting challenge for the school administrator who favors growth and positive teacher working conditions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Northouse (2019) Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire

Chapter 7 | Path-Goal Theory 155

Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire contains questions about different styles of path-goal leadership. Indicate how often each statement is true of your own behavior.

Key: 1 = Never 2 = Hardly ever 3 = Seldom 4 = Occasionally 5 = Often
6 = Usually 7 = Always

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. I let subordinates know what is expected of them. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. I maintain a friendly working relationship with subordinates. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. I consult with subordinates when facing a problem. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. I listen receptively to subordinates' ideas and suggestions. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. I inform subordinates about what needs to be done and how it needs to be done. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. I let subordinates know that I expect them to perform at their highest level. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. I act without consulting my subordinates. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. I do little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9. I ask subordinates to follow standard rules and regulations. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. I set goals for subordinates' performance that are quite challenging. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11. I say things that hurt subordinates' personal feelings. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12. I ask for suggestions from subordinates concerning how to carry out assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 13. I encourage continual improvement in subordinates' performance. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14. I explain the level of performance that is expected of subordinates. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 15. I help subordinates overcome problems that stop them from carrying out their tasks. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 16. I show that I have doubts about subordinates' ability to meet most objectives. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 17. I ask subordinates for suggestions on what assignments should be made. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 18. I give vague explanations of what is expected of subordinates on the job. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 19. I consistently set challenging goals for subordinates to attain. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 20. I behave in a manner that is thoughtful of subordinates' personal needs. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Scoring

1. Reverse the scores for Items 7, 11, 16, and 18.
2. Directive style: Sum of scores on Items 1, 5, 9, 14, and 18.
3. Supportive style: Sum of scores on Items 2, 8, 11, 15, and 20.
4. Participative style: Sum of scores on Items 3, 4, 7, 12, and 17.
5. Achievement-oriented style: Sum of scores on Items 6, 10, 13, 16, and 19.

Scoring Interpretation

- Directive style: A common score is 23, scores above 28 are considered high, and scores below 18 are considered low.
- Supportive style: A common score is 28, scores above 33 are considered high, and scores below 23 are considered low.
- Participative style: A common score is 21, scores above 26 are considered high, and scores below 16 are considered low.
- Achievement-oriented style: A common score is 19, scores above 24 are considered high, and scores below 14 are considered low.

The scores you received on the path-goal questionnaire provide information about which style of leadership you use most often and which you use less often. In addition, you can use these scores to assess your use of each style relative to your use of the other styles.

SOURCES: Adapted from *A Path-Goal Theory Investigation of Superior Subordinate Relationships*, by J. Indvik, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1985; and Indvik (1988). Based on the work of House and Dessler (1974) and House (1977) cited in Fulk and Wendler (1982). Used by permission.

Path-Goal Approach to Leadership

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1 of 5

A Quantitative Study to Examine the Relationship between School Administrator's Path-Goal Approach and Teacher's Perceived Working Conditions.



This survey will include three sections. 1) Informed Consent 2) Participant Information 3) Path-Goal Questionnaire

After section 1 Continue to next section



INFORMED CONSENT



Dear Participant:

My name is [Tierra Stark](#), and I am a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my dissertation in educational leadership. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The title of my research study is A Quantitative Study to Examine the Relationship between School Administrator's Path-Goal Approach and Teacher's Perceived Working Conditions.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions. I would like to give a brief online questionnaire to current school-based administrators who were in the same position at the same location during the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey using Google Forms. It should only take about 5-10 minutes to finish. You will be asked questions about your approach to leadership. Since this study deals with your own leadership capacity, there is minimal risk, although possible risk of loss of confidentiality associated with completing the questionnaire. This study may benefit you and other school administrators as you develop the skills to best support teachers and students. As school administrators investigate their own tendencies towards leader-follower relationships, this study may provide statistical correlations between teacher working conditions survey data and the administrator's approach to motivating followers.

Your confidentiality will be protected as best I can. Since I am using technology, no guarantees can be made about the interception of data sent over the internet by any third parties, just like with emails. I will make every effort to make sure that your name is not linked with your answers. By using Google Forms, IP addresses will not be collected.

Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the research records may be looked at by individuals that have the legal right to see that information. This may include the [ETSU IRB](#) overseeing this research, other individuals at the University with the responsibility for ensuring we follow the rules related to this research, the federal Office of Human Research Protections ([OHRP](#)) that protects participants like you, and the research team.

All information that can identify you will be removed from the data. This data will then be stored for possible use in future research studies. We will not ask for additional consent for those studies.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to take part in this study.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, [Tierra Stark](#), at [\(###\) ###-####](#). I am working on this project with my Advisor, Dr. Pamela Scott. You may reach her at [\(###\) ###-####](#). This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board ([IRB](#)). An [IRB](#) is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies. You may also contact the [ETSU IRB](#) at 423-439-6054 or IRB@etsu.edu for any issues, questions or input that you may have about the research or your rights as a research participant.

Sincerely,
[Tierra Berry Stark](#), Doctoral Candidate

INFORMED CONSENT

Clicking the I AGREE button below indicates:

- I have read the above information
- I agree to volunteer
- I am at least 18 years old
- I am physically present in the United States
- I am a currently practicing school-based administrator at a public school in North Carolina
- I was in the same position and at the same location during the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey

INFORMED CONSENT *

I AGREE

I disagree

Participant Information



Description (optional)

FRIST NAME *

Short answer text

LAST NAME *

Short answer text

EMAIL ADDRESS *

Short answer text

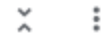
SCHOOL DISTRICT *

Short answer text

SCHOOL NAME *

Short answer text

PATH-GOAL QUESTIONNAIRE



Northouse (2019): SOURCES: Adapted from A Path–Goal Theory Investigation of Superior Subordinate Relationships, by J. Indvik, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1985; and Indvik (1988). Based on the work of House and Dessler (1974) and House (1977) cited in Fulk and Wendler (1982). Used by permission.

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire contains questions about different styles of path-goal leadership. Indicate how often each statement is true of your own behavior.

KEY: 1 = Never 2 = Hardly ever 3 = Seldom 4 = Occasionally 5 = Often 6 = Usually 7 = Always

1) I let subordinates know what is expected of them. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

2) I maintain a friendly working relationship with subordinates. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

3) I consult with subordinates when facing a problem. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

4) I listen receptively to subordinates' ideas and suggestions. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

5) I inform subordinates about what needs to be done and how it needs to be done. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

6) I let subordinates know that I expect them to perform at their highest level. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

7) I act without consulting my subordinates. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

8) I do little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

9) I ask subordinates to follow standard rules and regulations. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

10) I set goals for subordinates' performance that are quite challenging. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

11) I say things that hurt subordinates' personal feelings. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

12) I ask for suggestions from subordinates concerning how to carry out assignments. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

13) I encourage continual improvement in subordinates' performance. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

14) I explain the level of performance that is expected of subordinates. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

15) I help subordinates overcome problems that stop them from carrying out their tasks. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

16) I show that I have doubts about subordinates' ability to meet most objectives. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

...

17) I ask subordinates for suggestions on what assignments should be made. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

18) I give vague explanations of what is expected of subordinates on the job. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

19) I consistently set challenging goals for subordinates to attain. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

20) I behave in a manner that is thoughtful of subordinates' personal needs. *

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Never | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Always |

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear Participant:

My name is Tierra Stark, and I am a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my dissertation in educational leadership. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The title of my research study is *A Quantitative Study to Examine the Relationship between School Administrator's Path-Goal Approach and Teacher's Perceived Working Conditions*.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between school administrators' path-goal approach and teachers' perceptions of working conditions. I would like to give a brief online questionnaire to current school-based administrators who were in the same position at the same location during the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey using Google Forms. It should only take about 5-10 minutes to finish. You will be asked questions about your approach to leadership. Since this study deals with your own leadership capacity, there is minimal risk, although possible risk of loss of confidentiality associated with completing the questionnaire. This study may benefit you and other school administrators as you develop the skills to best support teachers and students. As school administrators investigate their own tendencies towards leader-follower relationships, this study may provide statistical correlations between teacher working conditions survey data and the administrator's approach to motivating followers.

Your confidentiality will be protected as best I can. Since I am using technology, no guarantees can be made about the interception of data sent over the internet by any third parties, just like with emails. I will make every effort to make sure that your name is not linked with your answers. By using Google Forms, IP addresses will not be collected.

Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the research records may be looked at by individuals that have the legal right to see that information. This may include the ETSU IRB overseeing this research, other individuals at the University with the responsibility for ensuring we follow the rules related to this research, the federal Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) that protects participants like you, and the research team.

All information that can identify you will be removed from the data. This data will then be stored for possible use in future research studies. We will not ask for additional consent for those studies.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to take part in this study.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, Tierra Stark, at (###) ###-####. I am working on this project with my Advisor, Dr. Pamela Scott. You may reach her at (###) ###-####. This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies. You may also contact the ETSU IRB at 423-439-6054 or IRB@etsu.edu for any issues, questions or input that you may have about the research or your rights as a research participant.

Sincerely,
Tierra Berry Stark, Doctoral Candidate

Ver. 09/23/21

VITA

TIERRA STARK

Education: Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University,
Johnson City, Tennessee, 2022
M.A. School Administration, Appalachian State University,
Boone, North Carolina, 2018
B.S. Family & Consumer Sciences Secondary Education,
Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, 2011

Professional Experience: Assistant Principal and Career & Technical Education Director,
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Graduate Assistant, East Tennessee State University, Educational
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Honors and Awards: “4 Under 40” Leadership Award in Education, Boone Area
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