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ELEMENTARY CAMPUS PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE STANDARDS-
BASED TEACHER EVALUATION
SYSTEM IN TEXAS

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving and loyal family. I cannot begin to express my deepest gratitude to Benjamin, Lucas, Isabela and my wonderfully supportive wife, Carolina. Thank you for helping me to understand that the most important things in life are not things...

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ABSTRACT

ELEMENTARY CAMPUS PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE STANDARDS-
BASED TEACHER EVALUATION
SYSTEM IN TEXAS

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The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) examine the new and experienced elementary campus principals' perceptions of the Texas standards-based teacher evaluation system which measured teacher performance and growth; and (b) identify factors contributing to the perceptions of new and experienced elementary campus principals' in regard to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). A purposeful sample of new and experienced elementary school principals representing 64 T-TESS pilot districts provided responses to the Texas Evaluator Perceptions of T-TESS Survey to assess the value, goal setting and professional development, system structure, and implementation fidelity of T-TESS. An independent samples *t* test, frequencies, and percentages analyzed quantitative findings, while an inductive coding process revealed

the qualitative data. Quantitative results indicated there were no significant differences between new and experienced principals with regard to value, goal setting and professional development, system structure, and implementation fidelity. However, there were significant barriers for campus principals to consider for effectively implementing T-TESS. Qualitative findings indicated elementary principals agreed that the T-TESS allowed teachers to receive accurate and valuable information regarding their individual instructional performance and that the teacher evaluation instrument encouraged continuous professional growth. Findings revealed six themes that explained new and experienced principals implementation perceptions of T-TESS: (a) pretentious, (b) more training, (c) ongoing journey, (d) forces fidelity, (e) owners determine the outcome, and (e) time consuming

Keywords: evaluation, teacher evaluation, standards-based teacher evaluation, standards-based evaluation, T-TESS, Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

Within the past few years, states and districts across the U.S. initiated processes to redevelop their teacher evaluation systems to provide teachers with meaningful feedback (Sartain, Stoelinga, & Brown, 2011). One outcome of this movement had been to improve student performance by increasing teacher effectiveness. Supportive of this position, national headlines had indicated teacher effectiveness as part of educational improvement efforts for years (Behrstock-Sherratt, Rizzolo, Laine, & Friedman, 2013). Furthermore, teacher effectiveness was closely aligned to student achievement which led to seeking ways to improve teachers' effectiveness (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014). Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009) found that teacher evaluators had not utilized their teacher evaluation instruments to provide adequate and accurate feedback to teachers about their teaching effectiveness – the most important factor affecting student achievement; and evaluators had not measured, recorded, or used teacher evaluations to inform meaningful decision-making. However, a principal's informed decision-making was central to improving teaching effectiveness. Effective principals had quickly removed teachers who did not correct unproductive teaching practices (Hanushek, 2011). Weisberg et al. (2009) documented teachers and administrators who had acknowledged poor teaching practices among colleagues:

- Eighty-one percent of administrators and 57% of teachers had reported a poorly performing, tenured teacher in their school, and 43% had reported a tenured teacher who should be dismissed for poor performance.

- Fifty-nine percent of teachers and 63% of administrators had acknowledged that their district had not done enough to identify, compensate, promote and retain the most effective teachers.
- More than 99% of teachers in districts using binary evaluation ratings, such as satisfactory or unsatisfactory receive a satisfactory rating; 94% of teachers in districts with a broader range of ratings had received one of the top two ratings and less than 1% had received an unsatisfactory rating.

Subsequently, lawmakers had been compelled to address the evaluation disparity through legislative reform. Federal initiatives (e.g., Race to the Top) and state legislation had promoted transparent, impartial evaluations that distinguished teacher performance based on successful student performance (Marzano, 2011; Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015). As a result, 36 states and the District of Columbia had passed legislation addressing teacher evaluations that reflected new practices (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013). Studies had indicated teacher evaluations had functioned as a credible approach to evaluating teacher performance (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2011; Hallgren, James-Burdumy, & Perez-Johnson, 2014; Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Anderson, Butler, Palmiter & Arcaira (2016) had concluded teacher evaluations in eight districts that accurately informed teachers of their strengths and challenges had greater possibilities of assisting teachers in elevating their personal educator practice, potentially leading to increased student performance. As educational guidelines continued to encourage the use of teacher evaluations, campus principals and teachers had been driven to reach agreement upon a set of valid and reliable teacher evaluation processes to improve and enhance the classroom instructional experience, thereby, leading to better students' learning outcomes.

The State of Texas legislated a teacher evaluation system under Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 that followed the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) to evaluate teachers. This legislation enabled Texas school districts to choose either PDAS or a locally developed teacher appraisal instrument to evaluate teacher performance (Sadler, 1995). Since the PDAS implementation, Texas districts had determined teacher effectiveness using 51 criteria organized within eight domains. In 2010, 1,120 Texas school districts had chosen PDAS as their teacher evaluation instrument (Texas Education Agency [TEA], n.d.). A chief purpose of this instrument had been to appraise teachers and isolate and identify potential areas in which teachers would benefit from additional training (Santiago & Benavides, 2009). Multiple studies identified critical barriers to teacher evaluation effectiveness (Brandt, Mathers, Oliva, Brown-Sims, & Hess, 2007; Donaldson, 2009; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009; Nixon, 2013). Lack of clear expectations (Brandt et al., 2007; Donaldson, 2009), observer bias (Nixon, 2013), and the impact of negative feedback on the climate and culture of the campus (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009) had been documented flaws in teacher appraisal systems. To address these shortcomings, in 2013, the Texas Commissioner of Education, Michael Williams, called for the development of a new teacher evaluation instrument to replace PDAS. During this same year, Texas updated its teaching standards and created a new teacher appraisal system based on the updated standards (TEA, 2014). These standards and the evaluation instrument had been created by a TEA appointed committee of educational stakeholders that included teachers representing various grades and subjects, principals from a variety of levels, higher education representatives, educational service center representatives and delegates from the teachers association. Their work formulated the new teacher evaluation system recommended by the Texas Commissioner

of Education and became known as the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System, (T-TESS) (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b).

Designed by Texas educators, educational leaders, and policy experts in 2013-2014 and piloted by 64 Texas districts in 2014-2015, the T-TESS process had been designed to reflect the practices, endorsements and criticism from campus and district evaluation experts (TEA, 2016a). This new performance-based teacher evaluation system evaluated teachers using six standards: "instructional planning and delivery, knowledge of students and student learning, content knowledge and expertise, learning environment, data driven practice, and professional practices and responsibilities" (TEA, 2016a, p. 5). Moreover, the Texas Commissioner's Rules regarding educator standards, also required teachers to create, aim for, and achieve professional goals to improve and support his or her instructional practice while offering support to teachers in meeting students' needs (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Teacher Standards, 2018a). Although, teacher evaluation systems in other states had research available to address effectiveness, limited research spotlighted the effectiveness of the T-TESS in improving teachers' professional practice.

Based on the research of Tucker and Stronge (2005), teacher appraisals customarily had been based on observing direct instruction and documentation had been generated almost completely derived from teacher observations. To address this gap, intense examination by accountability advocates focused the spotlight on state and local initiatives directed at improving teacher evaluation systems and processes (Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011). With the new T-TESS paradigm in 2013, many Texas school districts received permission from the TEA to participate in a pilot program aimed at implementing T-TESS within their districts. Increasing teacher efficacy had been a goal some school principals attempted to pursue for teachers (Derrington, 2011), for

acutely efficacious teachers had exemplified greater organization, incorporated more effective instructional practices throughout instruction, provided more effective feedback to struggling students and had been better able to manage student behaviors of disengagement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012). Teacher evaluation systems can affect teacher efficacy as well. Ford, Van Sickle, Clark, Fazio-Brunson, and Schween (2015), suggested that building efficacious teachers required teacher evaluation systems that offered teachers pressure and support, for pressure or support in isolation had been unmotivating and counterproductive towards growing teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, developing an effective teacher appraisal system had to jointly involve the collaborative energy of principals and teachers to develop a system that not only assessed teacher performance, but also improved teacher practice through personalized assistance (Templeton, Willis, & Hendricks, 2016). Unfortunately, research findings had indicated that past practices had not been congruent with these findings. A study released in 2009 by The New Teacher Project, *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg et al., 2009), had reported that many teacher evaluation systems across the nation had not provided meaningful and reliable evidence about individual teacher's instructional growth and deficiencies. As a result, studies such as these offered support to those individuals in Texas wishing to replace PDAS with the new teacher evaluation system, the T-TESS.

The T-TESS evaluation system encouraged an evaluation process offering teachers support while identifying areas needing reinforcement, improvement, and refinement (TEA, 2016b) - thus redirecting the focus of evaluation from compliance to that of ongoing support and collaboration. Moreover, Sheppard (2013) recommended that principals' perceptions of teacher evaluation inform stakeholders. However, T-TESS has not been scrutinized to determine if this instrument addressed those intended goals.

Some educators have viewed their teacher evaluation system with bias. Popham (2013) found some teachers believed their teacher evaluation process had been solely intended to pinpoint and remove ineffective teachers from the teaching profession. To their point, teacher appraisal systems typically had not adequately differentiated between effective and ineffective teachers, had not effectively removed ineffective teachers, or compensated skilled educators, and had not been viewed as a collaborative process to improve teacher performance and practice (Superfine, 2014). Ultimately, in some instances, these factors created a climate of teacher isolation and resulted in passive conversations with their evaluators (Danielson, 2012). Therefore, establishing a relationship of trust seemed to benefit the campus principal and teachers when collaborating to improve the teaching process. Arneson (2015) affirmed that teachers and principals had a symbiotic relationship in which the principal required teachers to internalize evaluation feedback and teachers needed to trust the principals' evaluative intentions. Undoubtedly, the principal cannot delegate or assign the responsibility of building trust to others, for this was a personal requirement. Cosner (2009) stated that principals have created trust through interactions, practices, and reciprocal engagement between self and others. Key ingredients required of principals to build and maintain teacher trust included being flexible, demonstrating empathy, ability to remain open, and communicating clear expectations (Calahan, 2014). Ultimately, in regard to teacher evaluation, the connection between principals and teachers had been vital (Arneson, 2015). Thus, when trust had not been established the conversation between some teachers and principals focused on compliance rather than on improving teacher practice and increasing student performance (The Network for Public Education, 2016).

Regarding professional development, research has indicated that when contracted services had been excluded, districts spent "2.4 percent - 5.9 percent of the operating

budgets, or from \$2,010-\$6,628 per teacher” (Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002, p. 63). The costs associated with these statistics had not only been monetary, but when left unaddressed, such discrepancies had adversely impacted student achievement (Murray, Hurley, & Ahmed, 2015). Additionally, many students did not benefit from a strategic and purposeful allocation of resources (Popham, 2013). Yet, current T-TESS effectiveness and teacher and principal expectations had not been investigated from this perspective.

Significance of the Study

This study was to inform teachers, campus principals, and especially elected officials on the value of the current Texas teacher evaluation system and its capacity to influence teacher professional performance and growth. Studies such as these helped inform law-makers without an educational background to recognize the strengths and challenges of teaching, including how educational policies adversely impact the classroom (Exstrom, 2009). While data has existed about various evaluation systems, few studies had investigated the effectiveness of the various aspects of the new Texas teacher evaluation process or the impact that the new evaluation process had on professional practice. Although, many educators affirmed that the teacher appraisal process had little impact on teacher growth and development, researchers had noted that a well-developed evaluation system, implemented with fidelity, proved to be a viable avenue for increasing student achievement (Hallinger et al., 2014; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Donaldson, 2009).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study had been to: (a) examine the perceptions of new elementary campus principals and experienced elementary campus principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system currently used in Texas in measuring

teacher performance and growth; and (b) identify factors contributing to the perceptions of new elementary campus principals and experienced elementary campus principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas. The following research questions guided this study.

1. What have been the item level statistics for the Texas Evaluator Perception of T-TESS Survey?
2. Has there been a difference in perceived value of T-TESS between new and experienced elementary school principals?
3. Has there been a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the T-TESS Goal Setting and Professional Development dimension (GSPD)?
4. Has there been a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding system structure of the T-TESS system?
5. Has there been a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the implementation fidelity of the T-TESS system?
6. What have been the implementation perceptions of campus elementary school principals utilizing T-TESS?

Definitions of Key Terms

Campus Administrator - Includes all teacher evaluators such as principals, assistant principals, or any other supervisory staff certified by the State Board for Educator Certification and who are also not identified as teachers of record. (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b).

Coaching- the formation of a helpful and supportive relationship between the (principal) coach towards the (teacher) coachee (Moen & Frederici, 2012).

Experienced Principal - characterized as a principal with four or more years of principal experience or an assistant principal with four or more years of assistant principal experience.

Formative- A process to ensure that learning has been progressing, which may include analyzing needs, offering alternative views, and demonstrating other methods for improvement (Christopher, 2007).

Goal – The task an individual is attempting to achieve or accomplish; it is the focus of a specific performance (Alitto, Malecki, Coyle, & Santuzzi, 2016; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981).

Goal Setting - The process of creating specific and functional learning objectives that have improved teacher practice and impact student outcomes (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012; Morisano & Shore, 2010)

New Principal - A principal or assistant principal who has worked less than four years in this leadership role (Bush, 2015; Hvidston, Range, McKim & Mette, 2015; Wildly, Clarke, Styles, & Beycioglu, 2010).

Principal – See “Campus Administrator.”

Self-efficacy - The ability to see one’s self as able to successfully accomplish specific undertakings based on current ability and self-perception (Bandura, 1977; Moeller et al., 2012).

Summative - A method to evaluate progress that has been referenced to some type of recognized criterion and which usually occurs at the end of a stated timeframe (Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009).

Time Management - The art of positioning, organizing, planning, and accounting for time with the intent of producing more productive results and increasing efficiency (Carr, 2013; Khan, Farooqi, Khalil, & Faisal, 2016).

Self-Monitoring - Involves an individual observing and dissecting his or her personal actions and behaviors and strategically documenting progress towards a precise targeted objective or behavior (Bruhn, Waller, & Hasselbring, 2016; Denune, Hawkins, Donovan, McCoy, Hall, & Moeder, 2015; Lylo & Lee, 2013).

Conclusion

Chapter I has provided a concise overview of the former and current Texas teacher evaluation systems implemented in Texas public schools, this chapter has described the advantages and disadvantages of teacher evaluation and the purpose of the current Texas teacher evaluation system and the factors affecting its implementation. Specifically, the statement of the problem, significance of the study, the research purpose and questions, and definitions of key terms used throughout this study have been clarified. The ensuing chapter provides a literature review of the research and theory that has informed this study.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of relevant literature applicable to this study. This literature review has opened with an overview of teacher evaluation systems along with their purpose, distinctions, and rationale. Attention then shifted to the Texas perspective of teacher evaluation with historical perspectives analyzed and current requirements reviewed. Next, new and experienced principals' perceptions of teacher evaluation have been examined and important findings are brought forth. Then, critical components such as principal time management, andragogy, goal setting, and coaching have been scrutinized to describe their role in the teacher evaluation implementation. Lastly, the review of literature has identified the theoretical framework for the study and its rationale.

Standards-Based Appraisal Systems

Effective teacher evaluation systems have precisely and repeatedly isolated and quantified teacher strengths and shortcomings so teachers received specific, usable feedback to improve their practice, thus allowing evaluators more accurate data to effectively allocate resources for teacher and school improvement (Weisberg et al., 2009). Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a major focus of education had been to close student achievement gaps at all levels and provide students with a just, equal, and substantial opportunity to acquire a first-rate education. As a result, teacher evaluation systems had gained popularity to help meet this challenge. Researchers Kimball and Milanowski (2009), found a growing trend in utilization of standards-based teacher evaluations due to the potential these systems contributed in providing evidence of classroom effectiveness.

Standards-based teacher evaluation systems consist of specific standardized criterion that correspond with rating scales identifying each standards criteria for effective teaching (Heneman, Milanowski, Kimball, & Odden, 2006). These types of systems had been used by evaluators to determine teacher performance in relation to each standard. Moreover, standards-based evaluation systems provided evaluators with distinct guidance by providing comprehensive evaluation criteria. These criteria lowered evaluator subjectivity by providing specific criterion references to determine teacher effectiveness (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Additionally, standards-based evaluation processes had been found to forecast increases in student learning and had been useful in identifying areas of teacher growth and development (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012).

Although some researchers advocated on behalf of standards-based teacher evaluations, research has questioned the utility of using a standards-based framework. Some researchers have found evaluators had not been consistent in their application methods, thus creating evaluator bias (Nixon, 2013). Kimball and Milanowski (2009) have reported that evaluator ratings noticeably varied on student performance. Other studies documented inaccurate teacher effectiveness evaluations because processes had consistently failed to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful teachers (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2011; Toch & Rothman, 2008; Weisberg et al., 2009). Equally important had been the need to provide teachers with adequate support opportunities. Research found that some educators welcomed a robust standards-based evaluation system, but also wanted to provide input and guidance into developing these systems (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013). Supportive of this theory, most educators have held rich, first-hand experiences to improve evaluation systems; however, many teachers have felt excluded from important conversations regarding evaluation criteria, school

improvement, and improved teaching practices (Johnson, 2012). Although, these arguments have been convincing, many researchers had continued to investigate standards-based evaluation.

In the implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, this standards-based teacher evaluation model found that educators improved their instructional practices in many areas, including preparation, classroom management, formative assessments, and providing multiple avenues for student learning (Sartain et al., 2011). Standards-based teacher evaluators observe and provide feedback, which came with merit. Third parties who had provided feedback on instructional practices had made educators aware of patterns and unintended procedures (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Furthermore, standards-based teacher evaluation has impacted student achievement because standards-based teacher evaluation systems provided a positive correlation between teacher instructional practices and student performance, contributing to increased student achievement (Heneman et al., 2006). In summary, proponents have claimed that standards-based teacher evaluation systems had been a solution that offered educators direction on how to amend instructional practices and increase student achievement by isolating exact behaviors that impacted student success (Stiefel, Schwartz, Rubenstein & Zabel, 2005).

Teacher Evaluation

The implementation of the federal NCLB law supplemented by various state accountability programs increased the volume of pressure on virtually all public schools across the nation. Hughes and Jones (2011) have confirmed this trend by stating that with the dawn of NCLB and high stakes testing, schools had been further pressured to increase student achievement. Moreover, high-stakes testing has impacted student rankings, pathways, course assignments grade advancement, high school graduation, and

college eligibility (Wilkins, 2012). As a result, fundamental academic areas had monopolized the teaching spotlight while assessment and testing measures had been refined to address the accountability pressures accompanying high expectations. As teachers thinned the curriculum and only addressed objectives found on state tests, parents and educators bore witness to the impaired ramifications brought on by test-driven education (Schaeffer, 2012). Despite the arguments for and against high-stakes testing, principals and teachers were still responsible for students meeting rigorous federal and state accountability standards and for increasing student performance.

School accountability has focused attention on the importance of developing quality teacher evaluation systems that ensured continuous teacher growth and development (Range, Schertz, Holt, & Young, 2011). The philosophy behind effective teacher supervision had been that quality feedback enhanced teacher practice, which led to increased student performance (Marshall, 2005). However, conducting teacher evaluation feedback sessions has proven challenging when the administrator had not established a trusting relationship. Trust between the teacher and administrator prior to the evaluation feedback session has contributed to optimal results (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Once trust had been established, formative evaluation and supervision has been integrated into the daily functionality of the campus and led to an effective summative evaluation experience (Range et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). However, DiPaola and Hoy (2008) had identified a summative evaluation challenge when the summative evaluation generated anxiety in the teacher that had prevented both parties from candidly discussing the teachers' growth opportunities (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Conjointly, teacher evaluations have positioned both principals and teachers against one another resulting in an uneasy dialogue in which the principal has withheld information for fear of protest and the teacher has communicated guardedly

(Marshall, 2005). However, teacher evaluation has had value when supervising evaluators have appropriately provided growth opportunities to the teacher for a campus climate of continuous growth and learning had the potential to emerge (Yavuz, 2010).

Texas Teacher Evaluation System

In Texas, the teacher evaluation system has changed from the PDAS to the T-TESS. Adopted in 1997 under NCLB, the PDAS served Texas as the primary teacher evaluation instrument (TEA, n.d.). However, the 2008 election of President Barack Obama ushered in a new course in educational policy. Soon after his election he appointed Arne Duncan as the Secretary of Education. The appointment of Secretary Duncan marked the beginning of the reformation of NCLB. Also, in 2009 a report entitled *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg et. al., 2009) had influenced education (Kraft & Gilmore, 2017). The report had revealed teacher evaluations had been inflated, teacher inadequacies had not been addressed, and professional learning opportunities had been insufficient (Weisberg et al., 2009). In short, evaluators and the teacher evaluation instruments they completed had not provided teachers with meaningful feedback. As a result, educational supporters began inquiring into these results and voiced concerns while requesting further objectivity (Weisberg et al., 2009).

As the federal government had called for more nationwide initiatives, such as the Race to the Top grant program, Texas had been granted a waiver to be excluded from selected federal initiatives (McNeil, 2013). Since Race to the Top involved numerous measures of teacher success such as classroom observations and walkthroughs and confirmation of student achievement, many states had infused various evaluation processes to create a single instrument to address the Race to The Top requirements (Leon & Thomas, 2015). One significant area in which Texas had sought a federal waiver (McNeil, 2013) had been in the NCLB initiative that required all students to be

proficient in math and reading by the end of the 2013-2014 school year (Dee & Jacob, 2011). During this same period, the Texas Teaching Standards had been updated to keep pace with Texas' educational changes. These teaching standards had been formally updated and accepted in June 2014 and had been instrumental in creating a foundation for a new and more robust teacher evaluation system for all Texas educators (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Teacher Standards, 2018a).

In the fall of 2016, after 19 years of state-wide implementation, Texas officially retired the PDAS teacher evaluation system (TEA, 2016b). As a result, the State changed course and offered Texas educators a new teacher evaluation system called T-TESS (Rike, 2015; Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b). Although Texas school districts had not been required to adopt the T-TESS, many school districts had, in lieu of developing their own instrument. Approximately 64 districts had adopted T-TESS in the 2014-2015 pilot year and 250 districts had implemented T-TESS in the 2015-2016 school year (TEA, 2015). To many educators, the appeal of T-TESS derived from the intense desire of crafting an evaluation instrument that had been dedicated to providing teachers with continuous growth and development opportunities and also offered each teacher ongoing feedback and support (TEA, 2016b).

T-TESS Structure

The T-TESS system offered each teacher the opportunity to improve his or her craft by encouraging professional growth and development as well as encouraging professional goal identification and attainment (TEA, 2016b). The T-TESS evaluation rubric along with the goal setting and professional development plan had been a key process that supported teacher growth throughout his or her T-TESS journey (TEA, 2016a). A vital message of T-TESS communicated the opportunity to change the evaluation paradigm from that of teacher inadequacy to a new, robust pattern of ongoing

collaborative feedback with the encouragement of professional growth and development (TEA, 2016b). T-TESS had been a vigorous evaluation system that provided opportunities for evaluators to grow and develop teachers through regular and continuous feedback conversations (TEA, 2016a). However, the responsibility to adhere to these tenets had been left to appraisers due to their command of the system. T-TESS has offered appraisers important opportunities to provide actionable, timely feedback to teachers during the pre-conference and post conference phases, periodically through the goal setting and professional development phase, and during student growth discussions (TEA, 2016a). Each of these key areas has allowed teachers the opportunity to self-reflect on personal instructional practices throughout the year. The self-reflection process has allowed teachers the opportunity to reflect upon their pedagogy and identify improvement areas (TEA, 2016a). Moreover, teachers have been encouraged to implement necessary changes to classroom instruction as his or her reflections deemed appropriate.

In the reality of the day-to-day T-TESS operations, campus principals and teachers have been provided numerous evaluation instrument planning guidelines. The T-TESS process has begun when campus appraisers have received T-TESS training from an educational service center. All T-TESS appraisers have been required to receive certification training and to have successfully completed an online certification test on the teacher observation process (TEA, 2016b). Appraisers have been required to have met TEA requirements and any subsequent certifications through online training. T-TESS certification training has entailed an appraiser watching a video of a teaching scenario, scripting a teacher lesson, and then answering appraiser related questions based on the video. Although scripting had not been new in formal observations, the training emphasized T-TESS's scripting value. Appraisers have used scripting notes during

feedback sessions which encourages them to remain objective and supportive during the collaborative dialogue (Templeton et al., 2016). After the school year has begun, new teachers have been required to complete training prior to the 4th week of school and at least two weeks before a classroom observation had been conducted (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b).

After training has been completed, teachers and principals were required to agree to the teacher's self-identified goals for the upcoming year. TEA guidelines mandate that a goal setting and professional development conference has occurred between the appraiser and all teachers in their first year in a district (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b). After the goal-setting conference, some campus principals and teachers have maintained formative conversations about the teacher's personal goals and professional development progress. Campus principals have provided teachers with evaluative data throughout the formal evaluation process. These processes have included the required pre-observation conference and post-observation conference as well as walkthrough requirements and goal setting and professional development meetings (TEA, 2016a). The end-of-year summative conferences between teachers and principals had been the final opportunity for the evaluator to gather further evidence before completing the final written requirement as part of the T-TESS process (TEA, 2016b). Specifically, the tasks, outlined in Chapter 150 of Texas Commissioner's Rules, had impacted the entire evaluation process for an evaluation was ruled void if timelines and procedures had not been appropriately followed (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b).

Principal Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation

New Principal Perceptions

New principals have often felt overwhelmed and in survival mode (Kersten, 2010). Novice administrators have had more issues in leading their campuses than seasoned ones (Sodoma & Else, 2009) and their frustration with the time constraints and job demands as principals have been congruent with the research (Lunenburg, 2010; Wells, 2013). However, new principals experienced stress of the principalship differently than others. Acclimating to the role of principal, novice administrators have found themselves navigating and developing personal leadership skills, while learning their campus climate and building self-efficacy for their position (Hvidston et al., 2015). Further, research has indicated new principals have devoted less time and attention to instructional leadership and more time to campus managerial assignments (Hvidston et al., 2015). These managerial tasks have included budget preparation and allocation, scheduling and managing email, and a plethora of other stressful tasks such as those associated with teacher evaluation.

New principals have encountered notable stressors that have been associated with teacher evaluation including the realization that teacher evaluation is their ultimate responsibility, their lack of knowledge regarding accountability standards, the pressure to save the school or to maintain previous performance standards, and accountability to ensure the success of low-performing students (Spillane & Lee, 2014). In some cases, the stress that teacher evaluation added to the new principal's role uniquely challenged, helped or hindered a new principal's progress. As new principals have learned about their new work environments, little time has remained for cultivating instructional leadership. School principals have influenced student learning by hiring effective teachers and then supporting and developing them within a positive learning environment

rather than concentrating on the details of teaching and learning (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Novice principals have not only required an effective support system to acclimate to his or her position but, like all principals, they have required time, staff training, materials, and support to implement new systems (Derrington, 2011). Allocating their time among multiple and complex responsibilities has created a dilemma for newly appointed campus leaders. New principals have required time to learn their new position even as they have been simultaneously tasked to implement new systems, such as a new teacher evaluation system.

Developing a solid professional knowledge base supportive of the principalship has begun when the aspiring administrator entered the classroom (Kersten, 2010). This theory has supported district leader's decisions for having preferred experienced teachers as principals and assistant principals for campus leadership positions. Although not prepared to tackle instruction with full force, new principals have regarded instructional leadership as valuable to his or her professional evaluation (Hvidston et al., 2015). Furthermore, such administrators have traditionally entered their principalships close to their classroom experience. As new principals continued their novice journey, many found themselves in deep states of learning. Many new administrators have been embroiled in many campus and district professional development offerings (Kersten, 2010) such as peer meetings, trainings, workshops, and conferences for their own personal professional growth and development. However, the impact of further research of this topic has clarified the impact new principals have had on teacher development.

Burns and Badaili (2015) qualitatively studied teacher intern perceptions on the impact a new administrator had on their professional development. Their case study, part of a larger research study, investigated what transpired when reassigned classroom teachers served as supervisors for 10-12 teachers. Rigorous and sustained weekly

support had included journaling activities, group discussions and teacher feedback sessions. Pre-conferences, observations, and post-conferences had also been encouraged. Data collected from novice supervisors consisted of weekly interviews occurring each week for 21 weeks. Observational notes and reflective journals provided additional insight into this study. One finding of this study indicated that supervision *and* evaluation duties had the potential to morph into supervision *as* evaluation. Supervisors intending to provide teachers with growth and development feedback had ensured teachers had been meeting minimum teaching expectations. Secondly, novice supervisors had required proper preparation and ongoing support. When left without support, novice supervisors had reverted to providing feedback in a similar manner in which they received feedback as teachers.

Experienced Principal Perceptions

Ovando and Ramirez (2007) have suggested the need for further studies from the campus principal's viewpoint regarding the application of standards-based teacher evaluation systems. Moreover, few studies have investigated principals' perceptions of teacher evaluation (Oplatka, 2010). However, experienced principals had implemented unique practices to find time to address teacher evaluation. Sodoma and Else (2009) found some experienced principals had assigned low-level, non-instructional school tasks to secretaries thereby giving them more time for improving instruction and providing effective feedback to teachers and the community. Further research revealed years of principalship experience has indicated that more experienced administrators have reported higher gratification, personal achievement, and greater satisfaction with their school and community relationships than less experienced principals have (Sodoma & Else, 2009).

In recent years, several educational studies have examined the perceptions of experienced principals regarding teacher evaluation and leadership needs and results indicated that experienced principals required learning and growth opportunities to sustain them in their roles as campus leaders (Cardno & Youngs, 2013; Robertson, 2017). A recent qualitative study (Robertson, 2017) undertook a multiple case study approach to determine the factors that had influenced professional identity. Two principals with no experience and two principals with three and four years of experience participated in this study. The summarized findings included: (a) experienced principals had consciously manipulated their professional identity; (b) professional identity had been an endless continuing process throughout a career; and (c) principal capacity to express principles and beliefs, ability to reflect on professional practice, and maintaining peer role models and networks with other principals had been key factors contributing to their transformational identity. Therefore, these findings have indicated principals have benefitted from continuing peer networking opportunities for personal growth and development and from peer observations and job shadowing (Robertson, 2017).

Similarly, in the context of experienced principals' perceptions regarding effective leadership development, Cardno and Youngs (2013) provided 300 principals leadership training to develop their capacity to create campus conditions for effective instructional delivery and effective learning environments. Over the course of 18 months principals met face-to-face, online, and in individual or group coaching sessions during their training. This mixed methods study had surveyed principals and analyzed principals before and after training responses to measure the Experienced Principal Development Program effectiveness. Ten principals had been observed and had participated in focus group interviews. The qualitative and quantitative data had revealed that three training conditions promote principal's development: 1.) individualized learning that had been

aligned to current practice, 2.) learning that had been extensive, insightful, practical, and continuous, and 3.) valued learning resources had been sharable with those within the principals' influence (Cardno & Youngs, 2013).

Researchers had supported teacher evaluation procedures to enhance the student learning experience (Fisher, 2013; Garubo & Rothstein, 1998). Mendels and Mitgang (2013) suggested that the conduit leading to principal progress had been comprised of teacher and staff quality with an emphasis on persistent improvement, processes that ensure student learning, emphasis on higher education and career readiness, prudence, stakeholder engagement, and working towards a clear school vision. As a result, new principals and experienced principals have approached the role of campus leadership differently. However, both had been charged with improving student achievement.

Principal Time Management

U.S. principals have been required to meet various accountability standards while inundated with internal and external job demands. These demands have required principals to balance around-the-clock access from stakeholders and supervisors with the arduous task of completing numerous job-related requirements, such as teacher evaluations (Wells, 2013). These demands on the principal's time have impacted the principal's ability to build a positive school climate and improve teaching practices. Principals have been challenged to meet federal and state accountability standards while building or maintaining positive campus climate and staff morale (Drago-Severson, 2012). Ever increasing time-intensive workloads have challenged principals to find time to provide effective feedback to teachers. Burnout has been problematic among principals for whom mental and emotional exhaustion had consumed vital energy unavailable for more important job demands (Wells, 2013).

Typically elementary school administrators have worked up to nine hours a day or more than 50 hours per week, while some secondary school principals had worked up to 70 hours on job-related tasks (Lunenburg, 2010; Wilson & Winn, 1980). During working hours, campus administrators have filled this time with tasks such as parent, teacher, or student meetings, answering email, completing required paperwork, evaluating teachers, or other relevant tasks. However, due to their responsibilities, principals have had frequent interruptions such as unscheduled meetings and disturbances. The average principal has rarely had unstructured time, however, when they had extra time, many principals completed overdue tasks and other work-related requirements (Lunenburg, 2010). Campus principals' daily stress has been repeatedly documented through the research over the past three decades (Wells, 2013). Principalship studies have consistently revealed the heavy, fast-paced, ever-changing nature of the job left little time for personal endeavors (Lunenburg, 2010).

Effective campus principals have positively impacted numerous school outcomes that have supported increased student learning (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010). However, campus administrators have identified numerous principalship stressors such as budget cuts, excessive email, lack of personal time, and too many responsibilities without sufficient time to address them. Unfortunately, the role of the principal has been dominated by administrative tasks and managing unscheduled events that had left little time for instructional leadership, professional development, and teacher evaluations (Horng et al., 2010; Leonard, 2010). In summary, many campus administrators have admitted that they had abandoned all but basic instructional leadership duties to address other competing tasks even as they acknowledged teacher growth and feedback has been essential to increasing student performance (Kersten & Israel, 2005; Kraft & Gilmore, 2017).

Andragogy

Since its inception in 2014, T-TESS has been publicized as a teacher evaluation instrument that encouraged collaboration between the principals and teachers to improve the teaching process through ongoing dialogue (TEA, 2016a; Templeton et al., 2016). Sixteen dimensions encompassed the T-TESS evaluation criteria designed to support the teaching process by identifying specific reinforcement and refinement areas that would improve instructional teaching practices (TEA, 2015; 2016a). The T-TESS GSPD has enabled teachers to document goal attainment progress with a flexible tracking document based on a teacher's goals and feedback (TEA, 2015). Campus principals have applied pedagogical learning principles appropriate for children's instruction but distinctly different from andragogical principles for their adult teachers' learning and development. Pedagogy has addressed how young people learn without adult experiences (Blondy, 2007). However, adult learning principles have uniquely differed from pedagogical learning principles that apply to students. Principals have been charged to provide teachers optimal support and guidance throughout the T-TESS evaluation process and teacher goal setting (2016b). T-TESS evaluation procedures have required principals to foster their teachers' growth and development which implicitly has required andragogy rather than pedagogy. Adult learning studies have revealed that advancing teacher growth and development has correlated with increased student achievement (Drago-Severson, 2011).

High-stakes testing had created an anxious and demanding climate for elementary principals and other district leaders. Prudent campus principals have applied adult learning theory when providing direct leadership to individual teachers. Adult learning theory, andragogy, developed rapidly from Malcolm Knowles' extensive studies in the late 1960's (Merriam, 2002). Since adult learners have participated in purposeful and

non-purposeful activities and undertaken life-enduring enterprises, many researchers rightfully concluded that adult learners' needs varied from needs of younger learners (Dyran, Cate, & Rhee, 2008; Merriam, 2002; O'Neill et al., 2015). A more comprehensive adult learning theory, andragogy has asserted that adult students have taken ownership of their learning (Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, andragogy had evolved into a myriad of complex ideologies and processes synthesizing theories and drawing upon diverse philosophies, beliefs and scholarly explanations, while framing contemporary instructional practices for adult learning experiences (Merriam, 2002).

Dissecting the T-TESS goal setting and professional development component has suggested knowledge and application of andragogical practices can advance the T-TESS process for assisting individual teachers. Typically, effective professional development has been intentionally planned and implemented with learner-centered feedback opportunities that have addressed the learner's identified needs (Mizell, 2010). The T-TESS process, consistent with androgogical principles, has encouraged principals to provide many frequent feedback opportunities through multiple check-points (Templeton et al., 2016). T-TESS processes require an evaluator's participation in teacher growth through committing time and resources that support each educator in achieving his or her professional goals. When viewed from this perspective, some adult learning assumptions offered the evaluator support for moving adult teachers through the T-TESS goal setting dimension.

Individuals working with adults have recognized that adults learn and grow when they have immersed in a learning activity which repeatedly prompted their making connections with a specific task (Mizell, 2010). Through this learning process many different school stakeholders have seen positive results (Drago-Severson, 2011). To

support adult learning, Knowles' ground-breaking andragogy culminated in five assumptions (Merriam, 2002) that describe the adult learner as someone who:

- (a) had an independent self-concept and who could direct his or her own learning;
- (b) had accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that provided a rich resource for learning;
- (c) had learning needs closely related to changing social roles;
- (d) had been problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge;
- and (e) had been motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (p. 5).

These assumptions have reinforced essential concepts for campus principals who conduct T-TESS evaluations to increase adult learning capacity. In addition, three fundamental standards enhanced professional learning. These standards (Drago-Severson, 2011) had been as follows: (a) understand and implement various adult learning modalities along with research-based findings; (b) incorporate a strategic learning process based upon the needs of the learner; and (c) provide ongoing, meaningful opportunities to link learning to every-day practice. In sum, andragogy principles shifted the learning responsibility from the instructor to the learner who assumed its duty and obligation (Fornaciari & Dean, 2013). Accordingly, principals who have taken into account the needs of the learner and adult learning theory have created a positive educational outlook (Drago-Severson, 2012).

Goal Setting

In the middle of the last century, researchers began delving into the field of adult motivation as never before. Prior to the 1950's, the topic of motivation had been uneventful and untapped. However, as Locke (1968) entered the field of goal setting this discipline began to develop. Through his research, Locke (1968), has developed a theory that linked motivation to an individual's conscious actions and intentions. As a result, the modern theory of motivation, goal setting, and goal-setting research began with Locke

(1968), who resurfaced the landscape of psychology when he theorized a link between individuals attempting to achieve a predetermined goal and the actions they would achieve. Still relevant to the research today, early theories related to goal setting have indicated that (a) more challenging goals produced higher results as compared to easier goals, and (b) challenging goals produced better results compared to no goal or goals that focused on an individual doing their best (Locke et al., 1981). In summary, an individual's conscious goal-setting progress has been a determining factor in positive goal-setting outcomes. This has supported the research that has indicated a positive correlation between motivation and the value effort and persistence has played on overall achievement (Locke et al., 1981).

Further research found four distinct measures directly influencing motivation, goal setting, and goal attainment. These measures (Locke et al., 1981) have been described as (a) setting a clear and direct purpose; (b) focusing effort on challenging and obtainable goals; (c) persistent dedication to seeing the goal to fruition; and (d) devoting time and attention to strategically planning a viable course of action for goal attainment. A positive correlation was documented between the T-TESS goal-setting process and the goal-setting research (Templeton et al, 2016). Early goal-setting research has provided teacher evaluators with specific direction and guidance to help teachers successfully navigate the goal-setting process.

Goal-setting theory has built on the previous ideologies and findings of this field. Waters, Marzano, & McNulty (2003) had conducted a meta-analysis of 70 studies that substantiated a strong relationship between 21 school principal leadership activities and student achievement. With regard to T-TESS, goal setting had been a process that required teachers to establish clearly defined professional development plans in which teachers self-reflected throughout the process (Templeton et al., 2016). Moreover, to

assist campus leaders in helping teachers set and achieve goals, Waters et al. (2003), have established several methods administrators could implement to delineate goals, such as establishing specific curriculum goals, ensuring goals aligned to school functionality, and maintaining a continuous focus on established goals.

Campus principals who used the T-TESS evaluation system have found the GSPD essential to the teacher evaluation process (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b; TEA, 2016a; 2016b). The T-TESS system has included a detailed evaluator's rubric, a goal setting and professional development dimension, and a student growth measure designed to encouraged teacher growth and development through teacher reflection on their relevant strengths and challenges and student needs (TEA, 2016b). School leaders have been compelled to design teacher-learning venues that have supported teacher growth and development of instructional practices (Drago-Severson, 2011). The T-TESS goal-setting process has been designed to identify areas of teacher professional growth and further development and to remedy the needs of students and stakeholders in an inclusive school community (TEA, 2016c). Research has indicated a positive correlation between goal setting and increased teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Templeton et al., 2016). In sum, campus administrators who have adopted effective goal setting strategies have participated in the growth and development of teachers (Robinson, Loyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Coaching

Effective leaders understood that maintaining a positive campus culture and climate while pushing for change had been a delicate path important for principals to navigate (Waters et al., 2003). The art of encouraging teachers to reflect on current instructional practices had been important to teacher evaluation. The T-TESS evaluation instrument has required ongoing and continuous feedback loops that supports principals'

efforts to improve teacher practice (TEA, 2016a). Moreover, deep feedback conversations have encouraged teachers to dissect teaching practices and philosophies and analyze methods to engage students (Collet, 2011). Researchers of andragogy have concluded that learners should be allotted time to internalize newly acquired information (Matulich, Papp, & Haytko, 2008). Furthermore, coaching teachers on their instructional practices has resulted in positive instructional practice adjustments (Shidler, 2009). Therefore, some campus principals have considered the idea of providing coaching opportunities to staff as a method to engage in constructive dialogue.

The T-TESS has been an opportunity for principals to add value to his or her campus by expanding their instructional leadership capacity (Templeton et al., 2016). More significantly, the new teacher evaluation instrument has established the principal as the premier leadership coach of his or her school. Reinforcing this statement, TEA (2016b) adopted similar language by stating T-TESS evaluators coaching teachers to reflect on personal instructional practices had been considered a useful and approved method to support teachers throughout the goal setting process.

A meta-analysis had revealed the effectiveness of coaching programs on achievement test performance (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, & Kulik, 1983). Four variables addressed time spent coaching and four variables evaluated the sample's methodological characteristics and, the total amount of coaching time positively correlated to the coaching effect size. Better outcomes have resulted from increased teacher coaching time (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1983; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). Schools with an effective teacher coaching program increased student performance scores by approximately 2.5 months (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1983).

Coaching has affected teacher efficacy which has played an important role on student achievement. Student achievement outcomes had been associated with the

number of hours teachers and coaches had devoted to improving instructional practices (Shidler, 2009). Teachers of 360 Head Start students in 12 central Florida school district classes had been randomly selected and assigned one of three coaches based on taught curriculum. In the first year of the three-year study, teachers who had received 40 hours of training had also received coaching instruction through modeling and discussing instructional practices related to training. In year two, teachers had been coached on random teaching practices. In year three, teachers received coaching instruction on all curriculum areas such as reading, math, science, and literacy. Data had been collected at each year's beginning and end. Coaching hours were positively related to teacher efficacy and student achievement test scores. Coaching had increased teacher self-efficacy when the coach and teacher had been given clear instructional practices to incorporate in year one. Outcomes were most dramatic when the teacher had received modeling, consulting, and instructing on specific student outcomes with specific measures. On the other hand, when the coach moved away from specific tasks in the study's second and third year, teachers reported that coaches were less helpful.

Educational leaders have been responsible for their campus students' achievement under different conditions. Ross (1992) had investigated the relationship between student achievement, teacher efficacy and the teacher-coach interactions. Eighteen 7th- and 8th-grade history teachers in 36 rural district classes had been assigned one of six coaches based on geographic proximity. Analysis of students' pre-test and post-test achievement as measured by 15 randomly selected items from the *Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool* indicated that achievement had been positively correlated with teacher efficacy, personal teaching efficacy, and general teaching efficacy. Additionally, more student growth had been measured in classes with teachers that used coaches more frequently. Coaching has been a powerful tool to increase teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Coaching has consistently demonstrated the positive impact these methods produced for teachers and other educators (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1983; Grissom et al., 2013; Shidler, 2009). Studies have documented that formal coaching and mentoring programs have improved teaching practices and student learning (Grissom et al., 2013; Kersten and Israel, 2005). Coaching has encouraged trust and opportunities for rich instructional conversations (Templeton et al., 2016). Collectively, these studies have supported campus principals incorporating coaching into their teacher evaluation repertoire. People have transitioned to new paradigms only after they have first embraced new attitudes, values and behaviors (Reeves, 2009). This mindset had been essential when providing coaching feedback, for coaching has challenged the participant to reflect on personal philosophies. Coaches who have used non-judgmental reflective questioning strategies and prompted deeper responses have improved teacher practice (Barnett, 1995). Moreover, coaching studies have indicated a strong relationship between cognitive coaching and educator self-efficacy outcomes (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, & Kilinc, 2012). Coaching has promoted teachers new beliefs and instructional practices within their craft through contextualized specialized training (Collet, 2011). Equally important, research has had positive results for teachers and coaches who have engaged in coaching relationships (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1983; Grissom et al., 2013; Shidler, 2009). Teachers' positive change and growth opportunities had emerged when they had become more introspective about their personal instructional practices (Collet, 2011).

Summary of the Literature on Teacher Evaluation

Campus leadership has required clear focus, timely action, and thoughtful, deliberate decisions (Quong & Walker, 2010). This chapter has reviewed teacher evaluation theory and research with implications for the Texas teacher evaluation system.

Studies that investigated key components of teacher evaluation systems, such as goal setting, andragogy, and coaching, have also been included to provide a rationale for this study. Evidence has suggested that principals who have enhanced their leadership skills based upon important teacher evaluation components have increased positive teacher and student outcomes. Still, few studies have investigated the administrator's perspective on standards-based teacher evaluation instruments (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Campus culture has been a direct outcome of principal actions and interactions (Price, 2012). As an result, to improve our schools, campus principals should embrace teachers as part of the solution (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Although research failed to uncover a silver bullet that has produced great teachers (Finnegan, 2013; Ziebarth-Bovill, Kritzer, & Bovil, 2012), professionally centered dialogues have been suggested for improving teacher practices and enhanced learning outcomes (Nidus & Sadler, 2011). Teacher evaluation and supervision practices have moved to a more inclusive model that has emphasized refined classroom practices and professional development opportunities to strengthen teacher practice (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009). Studies on this topic indicated that specific types of professional development benefitted student achievement and enhanced teacher quality. Specifically, staff training that had been curriculum centered and provided ongoing support had been found to influence campus achievement outcomes (Goe & Stickler, 2008). However, teacher efficacy, the perceptions teachers have had of their ability to positively influence student learning outcomes, had been identified as a major factor in determining teacher motivation and influencing teacher actions and student success (Finnegan, 2013; Shidler, 2009).

One theoretical framework that has explained campus elementary principals' T-TESS evaluation system perceptions has been self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been

measured using the Texas Evaluator Perceptions of T-TESS Survey (TEPT-TESS) and individual interviews. Teacher self-efficacy has been related to teacher success with students (Ebmeier, 2003; Hazi & Rucinski, 2009; Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011). Highly efficacious teachers have persisted in helping students succeed, and they have demonstrated teaching practice resiliency. Teacher self-efficacy has contributed to classroom improvement and student performance (Ebmeier, 2003) this has justified evaluators' efforts to build teacher efficacy.

High self-efficacy teachers have demonstrated more practice resiliency and persistence when helping students succeed than low self-efficacy teachers have (Finnegan, 2013; Pendergast et al., 2011). A study by Caprara et al. (2006) compared the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and student academic achievement. Over two-years, data had been collected from teachers and principals at three different times to measure teacher self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction while also measuring student achievement. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs have positively correlated with teacher job satisfaction, and previous student achievement had reliably predicted their future achievement (Caprara et al., 2006). Teachers in a supportive culture have developed professionally, enhanced their instructional practices and, increased their teacher effectiveness regardless of their background or experience (Finnegan, 2013; Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin, Sobel, Townsend, Davis, & Kalisher, 2011). A teacher evaluation system that has supported and developed each individual teacher has benefitted both teachers and students. The T-TESS evaluation system had been designed to provide specific teacher growth and development opportunities through requirements in the evaluation process (TEA, 2015; 2016a; 2016b).

In the period of school reform and accountability, teacher ability and student learning have been associated with effective student outcomes (Finnegan, 2013).

Teacher evaluation has been an effective tool to build teacher self-efficacy and, as a result, increased student performance. Enhancing teacher practice through continuous feedback opportunities between teacher and evaluator has been promoted as an effective method for improving student performance (Ford et al., 2015; TEA, 2016c). Research has supported the effectiveness of building teacher efficacy through teacher evaluation. Principals occupy a leadership position that inherently imbues them with the influence to develop teacher efficacy and collective school efficacy (Protheroe, 2008). Effective teacher evaluation instruments have supported teacher self-efficacy and enhanced teacher resilience, effort, and perseverance (Finnegan, 2013). Building teacher efficacy through teacher evaluation has benefitted teachers and increased student performance. Strong teacher efficacy benefits have included (Protheroe, 2008):

- better planning and organization;
- openness to new ideas and willingness to experiment with new methods to address student needs;
- more persistence and resilience when confronted with challenges;
- less critical of students when they made errors; and
- less inclination to refer difficult students to special education.

Teachers who have had a mastery experience, that is perceiving their teaching has been effective, have improved their teaching efficacy which has served as encouragement when difficulties emerged (Finnegan, 2013). Therefore, teacher self-efficacy has been intertwined with teacher evaluation methods which have promoted teacher self-efficacy, and both have informed this study's research and theory foundations. Together they have provided an approach to investigating the T-TESS.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study had been to: (a) examine the new and experienced elementary campus principals' perceptions of the T-TESS, the current Texas standards-based teacher evaluation system measuring teacher performance and growth; and (b) identify factors contributing to new and experienced elementary campus principals' perceptions of the T-TESS. This investigation encompassed Texas standards-based teacher evaluation and legislation that mandated evaluation methods and changed the way Texas school districts evaluated teachers. This chapter reviewed research on teacher evaluation, standards-based appraisal systems, Texas teacher evaluation systems, T-TESS outcomes and expectations, principals time management, andragogy, goal setting, coaching, and self-efficacy.

The following section, Chapter 3, has presented the study methodology, the research problem, operational constructs, the research purpose and questions; the research design, population and sample, the instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis; privacy and ethical considerations, and study limitations.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Problem Overview

Implementing a teacher evaluation system has effectively increased classroom effectiveness (Brandt et al., 2007; Donaldson, 2009; Hallinger et al., 2014; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009; Nixon, 2013; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). In addition, researchers agreed that effective teacher evaluation methods had been needed (Marzano, 2011; Superfine, 2014; TEA, 2016a; 2016b; USDE, 2017; Weisberg et al., 2009). However, few studies have investigated the administrators' perceptions of the various aspects of the new Texas teacher evaluation process or the effect the new evaluation process had on professional teacher practice. Examining the role T-TESS played in encouraging teachers continuous professional growth and moving from the previous mindset of compliance toward a new paradigm of feedback and support would validate the implementation of T-TESS. Therefore, there existed a need to examine how the current Texas teacher evaluation system had been performing and to determine if it had been meeting the expectations communicated by TEA.

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

To navigate the role of principal, campus leaders have relied on experiences, beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions which formed their leadership foundation for leading, guiding, and coaching. Teacher appraisal, a significant component of a campus principal's job, has enabled them to effectively lead a school to success (Arar & Oplatka, 2011). Although a principal's experiences and perceptions have contributed to a principal's leadership foundation, few researchers have studied the relationship between principals' perceptions and their principalship experiences.

One study has revealed that experienced principals tenure had specific leadership and developmental needs (Cardno & Youngs, 2013). A new principal had been defined as a principal or assistant principal working less than four years in this leadership role (Bush, 2015; Hvidston et al., 2015; Wildly et al., 2010), whereas an experienced principal had four or more years. Topics suitable and relevant for new principals have differed from those for experienced principals (Cardno & Youngs, 2013). Experienced principals have required personal and relationship competencies to sustain their positions (Cardno & Youngs, 2013). This difference has suggested that campus principal's approaches to a standards-based teacher evaluation system, such as T-TESS, has varied based upon the principal's experience level.

This study has investigated experienced and new principals' perceptions on four constructs: (a) the value of T-TESS; (b) the value of the T-TESS GSPD; (c) the value of the T-TESS system structure; and (d) the value of the implementation fidelity of T-TESS. New and experienced elementary school principals' perceptions of T-TESS had been measured with the TEPT-TESS. The survey responses identified T-TESS activities performed by new and experienced elementary school principals and captured their perceptions.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study had been to: (a) examine the perceptions of new and experienced elementary campus principals of T-TESS, the Texas standards-based teacher evaluation system that measured teacher performance and growth; and (b) identify factors contributing to the perceptions of new and experienced elementary campus principals toward the T-TESS. The following research questions guided this study.

1. What were the item level statistics for the TEPT-TESS Survey?
2. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school

- principals' in their perceived value of T-TESS?
3. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals' perceptions of the T-TESS GSPD?
 4. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals' perceptions of the T-TESS system structure?
 5. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals in T-TESS implementation fidelity?
 6. What were campus elementary school principals' T-TESS implementation perceptions?

Research Design

The research study had followed a sequential explanatory design that began with quantitative data collection and evaluation followed by qualitative data collection to explain the quantitative data (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). The qualitative phase was built upon the initial quantitative phase. The combined quantitative and qualitative data offered a more comprehensive analytical technique appropriate for answering the research questions (Ivankova et al., 2006). Combining qualitative data to explain quantitative data has yielded a more meaningful, accurate, and complete analysis for explaining original or intricate relationships (Shifferdecker & Reed, 2009). Two phases of the mixed methods study have been summarized.

During the first phase, elementary T-TESS evaluators completed an online survey administered to 64 T-TESS pilot districts (see Appendix A). The survey collected quantitative data on principals' perceptions of the T-TESS in the following areas: value of the system, GSPD, structure, and implementation fidelity. Survey response descriptive statistics were summarized with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The numerical value for each participant's responses corresponded with their total score. I analyzed and described survey response data trends.

During phase two, I interviewed the highest scoring and lowest scoring survey participants in semi-structured personal interviews. Survey participants were rank ordered by their TEPT-TESS scores from highest to lowest total scores. I selected the three highest and three lowest scoring participants representing the campus principals with the most positive and most negative T-TESS perceptions respectively to interview. These six participants represented the most extreme, diverse T-TESS perceptions. Qualitative studies have frequently interviewed a small sample for more in-depth data (Patton, 2002). The interview questions had been based upon quantitative data from the initial survey responses to align with the study research questions (Appendix B). I analyzed the elementary school principal survey responses to identify the factors that accelerated and limited T-TESS implementation with teachers. The open coding analysis began by transcribing all interview data from the six interview participants. Voice recorded data was transcribed into written text by Rev.com transcription service. Each participant reviewed his or her completed transcribed interview. I asked participants to accept or edit his or her interview transcription to ensure its accuracy.

I classified interview questions by the appropriately relevant research question. Within each question classification, participant responses had been organized based on similar words, phrases, and content. This further categorized the responses as similar trends emerged. Axial coding confirmed the concepts and categories of the emerging themes and their relationships. I coded the classified interview data into relevant categories that increased, decreased, and changed as the coding progressed. Coded interview data were organized into a table.

Population and Sample

Of the 784 elementary and middle/intermediate school principals in 64 T-TESS pilot school districts who were invited to participate in this study, 154 (20%) completed the online survey. All but two of the participants were teacher evaluators who were principals, or assistant principals; the two exceptions identified as “other” who were supervisory staff certified by the State Board for Educator Certification and who had also not been identified as teachers of record. (Texas Commissioner’s Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b).

Instrumentation

The standards-based survey instrument, the TEPT-TESS (see Appendix A), and nine core interview questions (see Appendix B) solicited opinions and attitudes towards the T-TESS. The survey required evaluators to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with positive statements about T-TESS support activities.

The TEPT-TESS included 32 Likert-scale items with four response options, 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, and 4 = *Strongly Agree*. Seven items, numbered six through 12, measured respondents’ T-TESS value perceptions. Seven items, numbered 13 through 19, measured respondents’ T-TESS GSPD value perceptions. Ten items, numbered 20 through 29, measured respondents’ T-TESS system structure value perceptions. Eight items, numbered 30 through 37, measured respondents’ T-TESS implementation fidelity value perceptions.

I developed the instrument with input from 18 educational experts including campus administrators, principals, doctoral students, and doctoral candidates. I drafted the TEPT-TESS based on the theoretical framework presented in the literature review and questions adapted from the Louisiana Educators’ Perceptions of COMPASS survey (Auguste, 2015). Five experts independently reviewed the initial draft of the survey for

item clarity and appropriateness. I edited the draft survey to address experts' written review comments and questions about clarity and grammar. Most were minor changes to clarify wording and correct punctuation and grammar, such as changing "Please answer the following questions by selecting the response that you best identify with" to "Please answer the following questions by selecting the response with which you most identify". Part II, question 6 was changed from "T-TESS is the worth the effort for me" to "T-TESS is worth the time it takes to complete" and, a demographic question about ethnicity and one about gender were irrelevant to the study. Hence both "select the ethnic and/or racial background with which you most identify" and "please identify your gender" were removed from the instrument.

The revised survey had been piloted with 13 campus principals who met the following five criteria: (a) successfully passed the T-TESS online certification test, (b) currently implementing the T-TESS process, (c) held a current principal certification, and (d) willingness to participate. Their responses were used to calculate a Cronbach's Alpha of .92 that measured survey internal consistency and reliability. I developed nine interview questions (see Appendix B) prior to participant interviews, based on the quantitative survey data analysis and designed to solicit in-depth T-TESS evaluator responses.

Data Collection Procedures

I obtained University of Houston-Clear Lake Committee for Protection of Human Subjects study approval prior to distributing my survey to principals. Principal email addresses were obtained from a TEA mailing list, via an open records request. I emailed the principals information about the study purpose, process, and ethics and requested their voluntary, confidential participation by completing a brief survey linked from a second forthcoming email sent five days later (see Appendix C). The first email advised

potential participants that they may withdraw from the study at any time but also might be asked for a follow-up personal interview. I sent the second email five days after the first with a link to the SurveyMonkey survey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>) (see Appendix D) that included demographic questions and the TEPT-TESS. Participants who had not completed the survey within three days received a reminder message, and if still not responding after seven days, a second reminder; and a third reminder to non-responders followed after ten days. All survey and demographic data was securely stored on a password protected computer hard drive to be archived for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

I selected three principals with the highest TEPT-TESS scores and three principals with the lowest TEPT-TESS scores, all of whom agreed to interviews by Skype or phone, whichever they preferred. Interviews, a qualitative data collection technique, have captured what others think and feel (Lichtman, 2006). I began the interview by describing the estimated interview time and the types of questions. The first questions were about the participant's background, experiences, and their teacher support activities. I had recorded each interview with two recorders, each of which had been tested for audio and were monitored during the interview for recording functionality.

For each interview I read each of nine core interview questions about the T-TESS evaluation process (see Appendix B) and asked follow-up and probing questions that elicited more in-depth responses. I asked core questions in the same order unless the participant had answered the question previously. The number and type of unscripted follow-up or probing questions depended upon each participant's response to core questions. Follow-up questions elicited additional factors that influenced the participant's T-TESS evaluation system experience and revealed what had worked and what challenges had hindered the T-TESS process.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

The TEPT-TESS collected quantitative data on principals' perceptions of the T-TESS process in four areas: value, GSPD, system structure, and implementation fidelity. The descriptive statistics calculated for 154 respondents in SPSS included their item and total means and standard deviations (see Tables 4.4); response percentage by item (see Table 4.5); and, frequency distributions and response percentages by new and experienced principal classification (see Table 4.6). Participant TEPT-TESS total scores determined their rank order for selecting interviewees who had reported the most and least positive T-TESS perceptions.

Research question one (RQ1) was answered with TEPT-TESS frequencies and percentages to identify similarities, differences and trends between new and experienced principals' perceptions. An independent samples *t* test answered research question two (RQ2), was there a significant difference between new and experienced principals' perceptions of the T-TESS's value. An independent samples *t* test of four T-TESS mean scores answered research questions three, four and five (RQ3; RQ4; RQ5) to determine if there were significant differences between new and experienced principals' perceptions of T-TESS's value, and value of the GSPD, system structure, and implementation fidelity. An independent *t* test has compared mean scores of two groups to estimate sample variability (Rojewski, Lee, & Gemici, 2012).

Qualitative

Interview data answered research question 6 (RQ6): What were principals TEPT-TESS implementation perception? I sorted, coded, and organized collected transcribed principals' interview data using NVivo software. Open coding theory has proposed classified grouping organizes data into emerging themes and patterns (Lichtman, 2006)

that may be color-coded by question. A coding chart separated data into three informational categories: codes/nodes, themes, and supporting data. Using a constant comparison analysis method (Lichtman, 2006), I matched data from each interview with relevant data from other interviews in the same category. Captured data, codes/nodes in the first column were drawn from individual responses to specific interview questions. Axial coding identified relationships among open code groupings based on similar relationship and meaning. Axial coding had been a product of the open coding process due to the categories being closely related (Chua, Tie, & Don, 2013). Responses entered in the third column provided supporting data for each theme. I organized all data based on frequency, participant reflection, or by experiences. Furthermore, all notes, thoughts, inferences, and ideas expressed by the participants had been analyzed and utilized in this process as needed. I reviewed the final codes to determine if any other method of sorting the results had been prevalent. This process consisted of a thorough reinactment of the coding process and all data within each category. This method proved in agreement with the research for according to Lewis (2015), codes had been classified into themes and subthemes before data had been deduced and prior to the results being presented in script, tabular, or numeral formats.

A final review of researcher notes written for each item had been conducted to ensure accuracy and to validate this procedure. Moreover, throughout this process, I also bracketed data, utilized member checking, and implemented a peer-review process to ensure all information had been accurately documented. Bracketing, member checking, and peer review helps prevent the researcher from contaminating the findings with their own thoughts and contributes to seeking the truth within a study (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2005). At this stage of the process, information that did not fit into the chosen themes had been removed. Lastly, each column had been reviewed to ensure each code

truly captured the idea behind the theme. Known as selective coding this process built on the axial coding technique by identifying the core variable of all data and selectively coding this data based on a core area. This process had been used to refine the categories. Axial coding is mainly used when groupings had been in the advanced phase of development, while selective coding had been utilized when the “core category” or essential grouping that linked all other groupings in the scheme had been branded and associated to the other groupings (Lichtman, 2006).

Validity

Transcribed audiotaped interviews and interview field notes that captured administrative observations, emotions, and non-verbal expressions have assured qualitative data reliability. At the conclusion of each interview I orally restated interviewee’s key points to confirm I had accurately captured each administrator’s meaning. Quantitative and qualitative data triangulation confirmed consistency and accuracy from multiple perspectives. Interviewees had reviewed and confirmed their transcribed interview for accuracy prior to analysis. I had used bracketing, a qualitative research technique to mitigate effects of potential prejudices that may distort data interpretation (Tufford & Newman, 2012). A journaling system incorporating reminders and updates on the data collection process enabled me to reflect upon and record my thoughts about the study during the process. Lastly, the journaling process allowed me to remain focused on the study while being able to document changes, ideas, and to uncover what had been working and what needed to be improved in this study. This journal had been mainly used at the end of each session to document thoughts, reminders, and other valuable information. This information had been kept in a locked location with all other data.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

I obtained permission to conduct this study from the University of Houston - Clear Lake's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects before collecting data. The names of the school districts in which the study had been conducted had not been mentioned. Names of participating campus principals had been assigned a number to aid in confidentiality. A survey cover letter had also been attached to the survey instrument stating the purpose of the study, ensuring that participants had been aware that participation had been voluntary, and that responses and identities would remain completely anonymous. All quantitative data had been transferred from a Survey Monkey spreadsheet into an Excel document. At this point, member checking by individuals ensured the accuracy of all data. Each participant completed a consent form and the data collected throughout this study remained in a locked cabinet for five years before being destroyed.

Research Design Limitations

Although great lengths had been taken to ensure an unbiased study, a few limitations existed and should be noted to ensure full disclosure. First, sample participation remained limited to 64 Texas pilot districts and therefore results are limited to Texas school districts and administrators and not generalizable to other states. Secondly, the sample size had been smaller than the population and therefore not generalizable to all of Texas. Third, access to study participants had been limited to elementary principals and other elementary T-TESS evaluators. Therefore, this study excluded the perceptions of secondary campus principals and evaluators. Providing a secondary perspective and/or teacher perspective would prove insightful and add to the richness of this study. Fourth, each participant's knowledge of the T-TESS standards varied based on prior experiences and training. Moreover, the focus and interpretation of

T-TESS varied between districts. This may have affected the overall participant response outcomes on the survey. Finally, the survey instrument used in this research study relied on self-reporting by each individual. Therefore, the data had been only as accurate as the honesty of the person completing the survey. These factors can influence the responses and thus, affect the findings.

Conclusion

This study has revealed (a) the new and experienced elementary campus principals' perceptions of the T-TESS, a Texas standards-based teacher evaluation system that has measured teacher performance and growth; and (b) factors that contributed to new and experienced elementary campus principals perceptions of the T-TESS. This included campus administrator perceptions of the value of the evaluation system, the value of the system regarding the T-TESS goal setting and professional development component, the value regarding the system structure, the value regarding the implementation fidelity, and implementation issues campus administrators' faced with the T-TESS evaluation system.

I purposefully sampled elementary campus principals representing 64 Texas school districts who participated in the T-TESS pilot program during the 2014-2015 school year. Many principals responded to the TEPT-TESS. The quantitative component analyzed frequencies and percentages data utilizing *t* tests while an inductive coding process analyzed the qualitative data. To uncover these findings, Chapter Three has focused on participants, sites, setting, and instrumentation utilized in this study. The selection of participants, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures have also been discussed. The next chapter presents the overall findings of this study.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

The purpose of this study had been to: (a) examine the perceptions of new elementary campus principals and experienced elementary campus principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system currently used in Texas in measuring teacher performance and growth; and to (b) identify factors contributing to the perceptions of new elementary campus principals and experienced elementary campus principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas. This chapter presents the data analysis results from the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study by offering a detailed description of the demographic characteristics of the participants, followed by the findings of RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, RQ5, and RQ6. The data from this study had been collected via a 32-question survey that asked T-TESS pilot principals to rate T-TESS using a four-point likert scale. Six personal interviews had been collected from the three highest and lowest-scoring participants to offer greater insight into T-TESS perceptions.

Participant Demographics

Principals from 784 elementary and middle/intermediate schools, working in the 64 T-TESS pilot school districts, received an invitation to participate in this study. Of the 784 principals contacted, 154 completed and submitted a survey via SurveyMonkey. This resulted in a 20% response rate of all surveyed participants. In addition, six of the principals responding to the survey participated in a follow-up interview. The demographic statistics of all participants, including administrative position and experience level are summarized in Table 4.1. The largest group of participants had been identified as principals (60.4%, $n = 93$), followed by assistant principals (38.3%, $n = 59$), then those that identified as other (1.3%, $n = 2$). Regarding experience level, the majority

labeled themselves as an experienced principal (70.1%, $n = 108$), followed by those who identified as new principals (29.9%, $n = 46$).

Table 4.1

Participant: Demographic Data

	%	n
1. Position		
Total Participants	100.0	154
Principal	60.4	93
Assistant Principal	38.3	59
Other	1.3	2
2. Experience Level		
New Principal (1-3 Years)	29.9	46
Experienced Principal (4 or More Years)	70.1	108

Table 4.2 has each participant's years of T-TESS teacher evaluation experience. Ninety of the 154 participants, 58.4%, had three or more years of T-TESS experience; 54, 35.1%, had two years experience; and ten, 6.5%, had one year of experience with T-TESS.

Table 4.2

Participant: T-TESS Experience

Years	%	n
1 Year	6.5	10
2 Years	35.1	54
3 or More Years	58.4	90

Research participants had also reported their years of experience with any teacher evaluation system. Many participants had one to five years of experience (39.0%), 32.5% had 6-10 years of experience, 24% had 11-19 years experience, and 4.5% had 20 or more years experience (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Participant: Teacher Evaluation Experience

Years	%	<i>n</i>
1-5 Years	39.0	60
6-10 Years	32.5	50
11-19 Years	24.0	37
20 or More Years	4.5	7

Research Question One

RQ1 asked what were the item level statistics for the TEPT-TESS. Descriptive statistics for TEPT-TESS items six through 12 on T-TESS perceived value have included percentages (see Table 4.5) and means (see Table 4.4). Participant number varied because the combined new principal and experienced principal responses chosen were in the most selected response, “Agree.” Elementary principals disagreed slightly overall with the positive *perceived value* of T-TESS as a teacher evaluation system ($M = 2.8$, $n = 154$). The highest item of perceived value had been question 9, The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices, ($M = 3.1$, $n = 119$). The lowest items of perceived value had been Question 11, The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete ($M = 2.6$; $n = 75$) and Question 12, I would choose to participate in T-TESS if it was not required ($M = 2.6$, $n = 84$). These

two questions received the lowest *perceived value* of T-TESS scores as indicated by all respondents.

Table 4.4

Mean of Perceived Value of T-TESS: Each Question and Overall

Survey Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
6. The T-TESS has improved the reputation of the teacher observation process.	2.8	.59	105
7. The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers.	3.0	.57	113
8. The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering teachers individualized support.	3.0	.62	104
9. The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices.	3.1	.49	119
10. The T-TESS provides teachers with the means with which to improve teaching methods.	2.9	.61	100
11. The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete.	2.6	.79	75
12. I would choose to participate in T-TESS if it was not required.	2.6	.69	84
All Questions: Perceived Value	2.8	.65	154

Note: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree. T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Further analysis into each survey item in this section of the survey gleaned more insight into these statistics. Table 4.5 simplifies the combined results of the elementary principals' responses by highlighting the survey items addressing the perceived value of T-TESS. Overall, the majority of elementary principals indicated they agree that the responses provide a positive perception of T-TESS. The most selected response within this section had been Question 9, The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices (77.3%), while the least selected response in this section had been Question 11, The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete (48.7%).

Table 4.5

Percentage of Perceived Value of T-TESS

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. The T-TESS has improved the reputation of the teacher observation process.	2.6	23.3	68.1	5.8
7. The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers	1.9	9.1	73.4	15.6
8. The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering teachers individualized support.	1.9	14.9	67.5	15.5
9. The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices.	0.6	7.1	77.3	14.9
10. The T-TESS provides teachers with the means with which to improve teaching methods	1.3	22.1	64.9	11.7

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete.	8.4	31.8	48.7	11.0
12. I would choose to participate in T-TES if it was not required.	5.1	33.1	54.5	7.1

Note: T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

As previously outlined in Table 4.1, the majority of principals participating in this study had been labeled as “Experienced Principals” (70.1%, n = 108), while those considered as “New Principals” consisted of 29.9% of participants (n = 46). Table 4.6 illustrates the combined results of elementary principals responses by showcasing the principal perceived value per experience level. The highest response regarding the perceived value of T-TESS, question 9, indicated that most experienced principals believed, The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices (80.5%, n = 87). On the other hand, the highest response for new principals, question 7, found 80.4% of new principals believed The T-TESS had shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers (n = 37). Of the most popular segment, labeled “Agree,” the question both experienced and new principals ranked lowest had been question 11, The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete. Within this category only 50% (n = 54) of experienced principals and 45.7% (n = 21) of new principals agreed with this statement. Combining both “Agree” responses (strongly agree and agree) from the perceived value section of this survey found 93.5% of experienced principals believed question 9, The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices (n = 101), while 95.7% of new principals believed question 7, The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers (n = 44). Combining

both categories of disagree (strongly disagree and disagree) from the perceived survey responses found 40.7% of experienced principals rejected question 11, The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete (n = 44). While 39.1% of new principals found the least value in questions 11, The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete and question 12, I would choose to participate in T-TESS if it was not required (n = 18).

Table 4.6

Percentage of Principal Perceived Value per Experience Level (%)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Improved Reputation	New	0.0% (n=0)	26.1% (n=12)	71.7% (n=33)	2.2% (n=1)
	Experienced	3.7% (n=4)	22.2% (n=24)	66.7% (n=72)	7.4% (n=8)
7. From Compliance to Feedback	New	0.0% (n=0)	4.3% (n=2)	80.4% (n=37)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	2.8% (n=3)	11.1% (n=12)	70.4% (n=76)	15.7% (n=17)
8. From Compliance To Support	New	0.0% (n=0)	8.7% (n=4)	71.7% (n=33)	19.6% (n=9)
	Experienced	2.8% (n=3)	17.5% (n=19)	65.8% (n=71)	13.9% (n=15)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Improves Instructional Practice	New	0.0% (n=0)	10.9% (n=5)	69.5% (n=32)	19.6% (n=9)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	5.6% (n=6)	80.5% (n=87)	12.9% (n=14)
10. Improves Teaching Methods	New	2.2% (n=1)	23.9% (n=11)	58.7% (n=27)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	21.3% (n=23)	67.6% (n=73)	10.1% (n=11)
11. Worth the Time	New	4.3% (n=2)	34.8% (n=16)	45.7% (n=21)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	10.1% (n=11)	30.6% (n=33)	50% (n=54)	9.3% (n=10)
12. Would Participate	New	0.0% (n=0)	39.1% (n=18)	52.1% (n=24)	8.7% (n=4)
	Experienced	7.4% (n=8)	30.6% (n=33)	55.6% (n=60)	6.4% (n=7)

Further frequency and percentage statistical analysis for each survey level question proceeds each research question beginning with RQ3 and ending with RQ5.

Research Question Two

RQ2 asked was there a difference in perceived value of T-TESS between new elementary school principals and experienced elementary school principals. An

independent samples *t* test was performed to compare the perceived value of T-TESS between these two principal groups. The DV is total perceived value of T-TESS and the IV is the grouping variable new/experienced principals. Table 4.7 shows the mean for both groups.

Table 4.7

Perceived Value of T-TESS

Experience	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
New Principal	46	96.07	10.911	1.609
Experienced Principal	99	93.53	11.612	1.167

There had been no significant differences between new and experienced principals $t(143) = 1.2, p = .21$. Undoubtedly, this finding indicated that both new and experienced principals found the perceived value of T-TESS in similar standing.

Research Question Three

RQ3 asked if there was a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals' perceptions of the T-TESS GSPD. The question was initially answered with TEPT-TESS responses utilizing frequency distributions and percentages. Table 4.8 summarizes the mode results of all participants with regard to each individual question pertaining to the perceived value of the GSPD. The varying number of participants in this section had been reflective of the combined number of new and experienced principal responses chosen in the most selected category, "Agree." Data revealed that elementary principals tend to "Disagree" that the activities related to the GSPD of T-TESS add value to this teacher evaluation system ($M = 2.9, n = 154$). The highest item of perceived value had been question 18, I am generally supportive of the T-TESS GSPD dimension ($M = 3.1, n = 111$). The lowest items of perceived value had been Question 14, Through the T-TESS GSPD process, teachers self-reflect on teaching

practices to engage in continuous professional learning ($M = 2.8$; $n = 113$), and Question 15, Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers use self-reflection to develop action plans for improvement ($M = 2.6$; $n = 106$). These two questions received the lowest value from the GSPD dimension section of the TEPT-TESS as indicated by all respondents.

Table 4.8

Mean of Perceived Value of GSPD Dimension: Each Question and Overall

Survey Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
13. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to improve their instructional effectiveness.	2.9	.50	121
14. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to engage in continuous professional learning.	2.8	.52	113
15. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers use self-reflection to develop action plans for improvement.	2.8	.55	106
16. The feedback teachers receive regarding the goal setting and professional development dimension has led to personal growth in teachers.	2.9	.45	121
17. The T-TESS goal setting and professional development process has a positive impact on teaching practice.	2.9	.55	108
18. I am generally supportive of the T-TESS goal setting and professional development dimension.	3.1	.52	111

Survey Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
19. I would choose for my teachers to participate in the T-TESS goal setting and professional development dimension even if it was not required.	3.0	.65	98
All Questions: Perceived Value	2.9	.54	154

Note: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree. GSPD = goal setting and professional development dimension. T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Additional analysis into each survey item in the GSPD section of the survey sheds further insight into these statistics. Table 4.9 explains the combined results of the elementary principals' responses by highlighting the survey items addressing the value of the GSPD dimension of T-TESS. In summary, the majority of elementary principals indicate they agree that the responses provide a positive perception of the GSPD dimension of T-TESS. The most selected response within the most popular category, "Agree," had been Question 16, The feedback teachers receive regarding the GSPD dimension has led to personal growth in teachers (78.6%). The least selected response in the "Agree" section had been Question 19, I would choose for my teachers to participate in the T-TESS GSPD dimension even if it was not required (63.6%).

Table 4.9

Percentage of Perceived Value of GSPD of T-TESS

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to improve their instructional effectiveness.	1.3	13.6	78.5	6.5
14. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to engage in continuous professional learning.	1.3	20.8	73.4	4.5
15. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers use self-reflection to develop action plans for improvement.	1.3	25.3	68.8	4.6
16. The feedback teachers receive regarding the goal setting and professional development dimension has led to personal growth in teachers.	0.0	16.9	78.6	4.5
17. The T-TESS goal setting and professional development process has a positive impact on teaching practice.	0.0	17.5	70.1	12.4
18. I am generally supportive of the T-TESS goal setting and professional development dimension.	0.0	9.1	72.1	18.8
19. I would choose for my teachers to participate in the T-TESS goal setting and professional development dimension even if it was not required.	2.0	17.5	63.6	16.9

Note: T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

To summarize Table 4.1, the majority of principals participating in this study had been labeled as “Experienced Principals” (70.1%, n = 108), while those considered as “New Principals” consisted of 29.9% of participants (n = 46). Table 4.10 illustrates the results of all elementary principal responses regarding the perceived value of the GSPD dimension. The highest response regarding the perceived value of the GSPD dimension, question 13, indicated that the majority of experienced principals believed that through the T-TESS process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to improve their instructional effectiveness (78.8%, n = 85), while new principals selected two responses: question 16, The feedback teachers receive regarding the GSPD dimension has led to personal growth in teachers and questions 18, I am generally supportive of the T-TESS GSPD dimension. Both responses found 80.4% of new principals supported these statements (n = 37). Further, focusing on the most popular segment of the survey, “Agree,” the lowest-ranking item within this cluster indicated by experienced principals had been question 19, I would choose for my teachers to participate in the T-TESS GSPD dimension even if it was not required (62.0%, n = 67). While lowest-ranking items selected by new principals had been question 17, The T-TESS GSPD process has a positive impact on teaching practice (63.0%, n = 29).

Combining both “Agree” responses (strongly agree and agree) from the perceived value section of this survey found 88.0% of experienced principals believe in question 18, I am generally supportive of the T-TESS GSPD dimension (n = 95); while 98% of new principals had been in agreement with question 18, I am generally supportive of the T-TESS GSPD dimension (n = 45). Meanwhile, combining both categories of “Disagree” (strongly disagree and disagree) from the perceived survey responses found 28.7% of experienced principals (n = 31) and 21.8% of new principals (n = 10) rejecting

question 15, Through the T-TESS GSPD process, teachers use self-reflection to develop action plans for improvement.

Table 4.10

Percentage of Perceived Value of GSPD Dimension per Experience Level (%)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Improved Effectiveness	New	2.2% (n=1)	8.7% (n=4)	78.3% (n=36)	10.8% (n=5)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	15.7% (n=17)	78.8% (n=85)	4.6% (n=5)
14. Engage in Professional Learning	New	2.2% (n=1)	15.2% (n=7)	76.1% (n=35)	6.5% (n=3)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	23.2% (n=25)	72.2% (n=78)	3.7% (n=4)
15. Utilize Self-Reflection	New	2.2% (n=1)	19.6% (n=9)	71.7% (n=33)	6.5% (n=3)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	27.8% (n=30)	67.6% (n=73)	3.7% (n=4)
16. Feedback Leads to Growth	New	0.0% (n=0)	13.1% (n=6)	80.4% (n=37)	6.5% (n=3)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	18.5% (n=20)	77.8% (n=84)	3.7% (n=4)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. Positive Impact on Teaching	New	0.0% (n=0)	19.6% (n=9)	63.0% (n=29)	17.4% (n=8)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	16.7% (n=18)	73.1% (n=79)	10.2% (n=11)
18. Supportive of GSPD Dimension	New	0.0% (n=0)	2.2% (n=1)	80.4% (n=37)	17.4% (n=8)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	12.0% (n=13)	68.5% (n=74)	19.5% (n=21)
19. Participate in GSPD if Not Required	New	2.2% (n=1)	10.% (n=5)	67.4% (n=31)	19.6% (n=9)
	Experienced	1.9% (n=2)	20.4% (n=22)	62.0% (n=67)	15.7% (n=17)

Note: GSPD = Goal Setting and Professional Development

RQ3 asked if there was a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals' perceptions of the T-TESS GSPD dimension. An independent samples *t* test compared the perceived value of T-TESS between new and experienced principals. The DV is total GSPD of T-TESS and the IV is the grouping variable new/experienced principals. Table 4.11 shows the mean scores for both principal groups.

Table 4.11

Perceived Value of T-TESS: GSPD

Experience	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
New Principal	46	2.969	0.407
Experienced Principal	99	2.875	0.423

Although minor variances exist, findings indicate there had been no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the GSPD dimension of T-TESS $t(143) = 1.3, p = .21$. Therefore, these findings indicated that both new principals and experienced principals hold the GSPD dimension of T-TESS in comparable regard.

Research Question Four

RQ4 asked if there was a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding system structure of the T-TESS system. Frequency distributions and percentages for the TEPT-TESS responses (see Table 4.12) have been reported with the mode results of all participants, in regard to each individual question pertaining to the perceived value of the T-TESS System Structure. The diverse number of participants in this section had been reflective of the combined number of new and experienced principal responses chosen in the most selected category, “Agree.” Data revealed that elementary principals tend to “Agree” that the activities related to the System Structure of T-TESS add value to this teacher evaluation system ($M = 3.1, n = 154$). The highest items of perceived value had been questions 25, T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension ($M = 3.3, n = 101$) and question 27, The goal of the post conference is to support the teacher in his/her professional growth ($M = 3.3, n = 101$). The lowest item of perceived value had been Question 20, The T-TESS goal setting and professional development conference provides an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices, ($M = 2.8; n = 114$).

Table 4.12

Mean of Perceived Value of T-TESS System Structure: Each Question and Overall

Survey Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
20. The T-TESS goal setting and professional development conference provides an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices.	2.8	.53	114
21. T-TESS evaluators support teachers through the goal setting and professional development process.	3.0	.47	120
22. The T-TESS rubric effectively measures teacher performance.	2.9	.67	92
23. T-TESS evaluators meet with the teacher prior to the formal observation to ask pertinent background questions about the lesson plan.	3.2	.53	103
24. T-TESS evaluators meet with the teacher prior to the formal observation to ask pertinent background questions about students in the class.	3.2	.57	100
25. T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension.	3.3	.53	101
26. During the post-observation conference, T-TESS evaluators use coaching questions to guide the teacher through a discussion of the observation.	3.1	.53	113
27. The goal of the post conference is to support the teacher in his/her professional growth.	3.3	.57	101
28. The T-TESS post-conference process is an effective method to deliver observation results to teachers.	3.2	.60	101

Survey Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	n
29. The T-TESS instrument facilitates a collaborative approach for teachers and administrators towards improving teacher performance.	3.1	.57	106
All Questions: Perceived Value	3.1	.58	154

Note: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree. T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Additional analysis into each survey item in the System Structure section of the survey illuminates further insight into these statistics. Table 4.13 explains the combined results of the elementary principals' responses by highlighting the survey items addressing the System Structure of T-TESS. In summary, the majority of elementary principals indicated they agree that the responses provide a positive perception of the System Structure of T-TESS. The most selected response within the most popular category, "Agree," had been Question 21, T-TESS evaluators support teachers through the goal setting and professional development process (77.9%). The least selected response in the "Agree" section had been Question 22, The T-TESS rubric effectively measures teacher performance (59.7%).

Table 4.13

Percentage of Perceived Value of System Structure of T-TESS

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. The T-TESS goal setting and professional development conference provides an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices.	1.3	18.8	74.0	5.9
21. T-TESS evaluators support teachers through the goal setting and professional development process.	0.0	13.0	77.9	9.1
22. The T-TESS rubric effectively measures teacher performance.	2.0	22.7	59.7	15.6
23. T-TESS evaluators meet with the teacher prior to the formal observation to ask pertinent background questions about the lesson plan.	0.0	5.2	66.9	27.9
24. T-TESS evaluators meet with the teacher prior to the formal observation to ask pertinent background questions about students in the class.	0.7	5.2	64.9	29.2
25. T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension.	0.7	1.9	65.6	31.8
26. During the post-observation conference, T-TESS evaluators use coaching questions to guide the teacher through a discussion of the observation.	0.7	7.1	73.4	18.8
27. The goal of the post conference is to support the teacher in his/her professional growth.	1.3	2.6	65.6	30.5
28. The T-TESS post-conference process is an effective method to deliver observation results to teachers.	1.3	6.5	65.6	26.6

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. The T-TESS instrument facilitates a collaborative approach for teachers and administrators towards improving teacher performance.	0.7	9.1	68.8	21.4

Note: T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Table 4.14 illustrates the combined results for all experienced elementary principals and all new elementary principals by showcasing their perceived value of the system structure of T-TESS. The highest response regarding the value of the System Structure of T-TESS, question 20, indicates that most experienced principals believed, The T-TESS system structure provides an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices (77.8%, n = 84). On the other hand, the highest response for new principals, question 21, found 82.6% of new principals believe T-TESS evaluators support teachers through the goal setting and professional development process (n = 38). Of the most popular segment, labeled “Agree,” the question experienced principals ranked lowest had been question 22, The T-TESS rubric effectively measures teacher performance (n = 61), while new principals ranked question 25, T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension as the lowest statement within the “Agree” category.

Combining both “Agree” responses (strongly agree and agree) from the system structure section of this survey found that 96.3% of experienced principals highly and equally believed in question 25, T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension (n = 101), and question 27, The goal of the post conference is to support the teacher in his/her professional growth (n = 101). On the other hand, 100% of new principals accepted question 25, T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension (n = 44). Combining both categories of “Disagree” (strongly disagree and disagree) from the system structure survey responses found 26.0% of

experienced principals rejecting question 22, The T-TESS rubric effectively measures teacher performance (n = 28), while 26.1% of new principals disagreed with question 20, The T-TESS goal setting and professional development conference provides an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices (n = 12).

Table 4.14

Percentage of Perceived Value of System Structure per Experience Level (%)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. Improves Teaching	New	0.0% (n=0)	26.1% (n=12)	65.2% (n=30)	8.7% (n=4)
	Experienced	1.9% (n=2)	15.7% (n=17)	77.8% (n=84)	4.6% (n=5)
21. Support Through GSPD	New	0.0% (n=0)	6.5% (n=3)	82.6% (n=38)	10.9% (n=5)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	15.7% (n=17)	76.0% (n=82)	8.3% (n=9)
22. Rubric Measures Performance	New	0.0% (n=0)	21.7% (n=10)	67.4% (n=31)	10.9% (n=5)
	Experienced	2.8% (n=3)	23.2% (n=25)	56.4% (n=61)	17.6% (n=19)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. Lesson Plans	New	0.0% (n=0)	2.2% (n=1)	60.8% (n=28)	37.0% (n=17)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	6.5% (n=7)	69.4% (n=75)	24.1% (n=26)
24. Students in Classroom	New	0.0% (n=1)	2.2% (n=1)	58.7% (n=27)	39.1% (n=18)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	6.4% (n=7)	67.6% (n=73)	25.1% (n=27)
25. Evidence Drives Ratings	New	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	54.3% (n=25)	45.7% (n=21)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	2.8% (n=3)	70.4% (n=76)	25.9% (n=28)
26. Use of Coaching Questions	New	0.0% (n=0)	8.7% (n=4)	73.9% (n=34)	17.4% (n=8)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	6.5% (n=7)	73.1% (n=79)	19.5% (n=21)
27. Goal of Post Conference	New	2.2% (n=1)	2.2% (n=1)	56.5% (n=26)	39.1% (n=18)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	2.8% (n=3)	69.4% (n=75)	26.9% (n=29)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
28. Post Conference Process	New	2.2% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	63.0% (n=29)	34.8% (n=16)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	9.3% (n=10)	66.6% (n=72)	23.2% (n=25)
29. Teacher Performance	New	0.0% (n=0)	8.7% (n=4)	60.9% (n=28)	30.4% (n=14)
	Experienced	0.9% (n=1)	9.3% (n=10)	72.2% (n=78)	17.6% (n=19)

Note: GSPD = Goal Setting and Professional Development

To answer RQ4, was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding system structure of the T-TESS system, an independent samples *t* test had been administered to compare the perceived value of T-TESS between new principals and experienced principals. The DV is the total System Structure of T-TESS and the IV is the grouping variable new/experienced principals. Table 4.15 shows the perceived value of the T-TESS System Structure for both principal groups.

Table 4.15

Perceived Value of T-TESS: System Structure

Experience	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
New Principal	46	3.187	.371	.055
Experienced Principal	99	3.076	.417	.042

Although statistical variances had been present, findings indicate there had been no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the perceived value of T-TESS $t(143) = 1.5, p = .14$. Clearly, these findings propose that both experienced principals and new principals hold the System Structure of T-TESS in similar comparison.

Research Question Five

RQ5 asked if there was a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals' perceptions of the T-TESS system implementation fidelity. Descriptive statistics for TEPT-TESS items 30 through 37 on T-TESS implementation fidelity have included frequency distributions with percentages (see Table 4.17) and means (see Table 4.16). The varying number of participants in this section is reflective of the combined number of new and experienced principal responses chosen in the most selected category, "Agree." Data revealed that elementary principals tend to disagree that the activities related to the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS adds value to this teacher evaluation system ($M = 2.9, n = 154$). The highest items of perceived value had been questions 35, Through the T-TESS process, teachers receive accurate information regarding individual instructional performance ($M = 3.1, n = 124$), and question 36, The T-TESS encourages continuous professional growth ($M = 3.1, n = 104$). The lowest item of perceived value had been Question 32, Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school ($M = 2.4; n = 62$).

Table 4.16

Mean of Perceived Value of Implementation Fidelity: Each Question and Overall

Survey Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
30. The T-TESS establishes a system of support for teachers.	2.9	.63	102
31. Teachers evaluated with T-TESS consistently hold themselves to a high standard of performance.	2.7	.61	83
32. Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school.	2.4	.63	62
33. Teachers involved in T-TESS engage in targeted professional learning.	2.9	.56	106
34. Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance.	3.0	.42	127
35. Through the T-TESS process, teachers receive accurate information regarding individual instructional performance.	3.1	.44	124
36. The T-TESS encourages continuous professional growth.	3.1	.57	104
37. The T-TESS provides the teacher with the means with which to identify effective instructional strategies.	2.9	.53	110
All Questions: Perceived Value	2.9	.59	154

Note: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree. T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Additional scrutiny into each survey item in the Implementation Fidelity section of this survey provided further insight into the statistics. Table 4.17 explains the

combined results of the elementary principals' responses by highlighting the survey items addressing the value of the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS. In sum, the majority of elementary principals indicated they agree that the responses provide a positive perception of the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS. The most selected response within this most popular category, "Agree," had been Question 34, Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance (82.5%). The least selected response in the "Agree" section had been Question 32; Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school (40.3%).

Table 4.17

Percentage of Perceived Value of Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. The T-TESS establishes a system of support for teachers.	2.0	17.5	66.2	14.3
31. Teachers evaluated with T-TESS consistently hold themselves to a high standard of performance.	0.6	39.0	53.9	6.5
32. Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school.	5.2	51.9	40.3	2.6
33. Teachers involved in T-TESS engage in targeted professional learning.	0.7	21.4	68.8	9.1
34. Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance.	0.0	7.1	82.5	10.4

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
35. Through the T-TESS process, teachers receive accurate information regarding individual instructional performance.	0.0	7.1	80.5	12.4
36. The T-TESS encourages continuous professional growth.	0.0	13.7	67.5	18.8
37. The T-TESS provides the teacher with the means with which to identify effective instructional strategies.	0.0	17.5	71.4	11.1

Note: T-TESS = Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Table 4.18 illustrates the combined results of elementary principals responses by revealing the principal perceived value of the T-TESS Implementation Fidelity explained by experience level. The highest response regarding the perceived value of T-TESS, question 34, indicated that most experienced principals believed, Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance (84.3%, n = 91). On the other hand, 73.3% of new principals selected two questions that tied as their most popular choices. Question 34, Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance, and question 35, Through the T-TESS process, teachers receive accurate information regarding individual instructional performance, had been the two most selected choices by new principals (n = 36). Of the most popular segment, labeled “Agree,” the question both experienced and new principals ranked lowest had been question 32, Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school. Within this category 40.7% (n = 44) of experienced principals and 39.1% (n = 18) of new principals agreed with this statement. Combining both “Agree” responses (strongly agree and agree) from the perceived value

section of this survey found 92.6% of experienced principals selected questions 34 and 35 as their most popular responses. Question 34, Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance (n = 100), and question 35, Through the T-TESS process, teachers receive accurate information regarding individual instructional performance (n=100), had been the most selected responses in the agreed category by experienced principals. Suprisingly, 93.5% of new principals also selected questions 34 and 35 as their most agreeable response (n = 43). Therefore, both experienced and new principals agreed on these lowest selected responses found in the “Agree” column regarding T-TESS Implementation Fidelity. Lastly, combining both categories of “Disagree” (strongly disagree and disagree) from the perceived survey responses found 56.5% of experienced principals (n = 61) and 58.7% of new principals (n = 27) believed question 32, Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school, as the most disagreeable question in the Implementation Fidelity section of the survey.

Table 4.18

Percentage of Perceived Value of Implementation Fidelity per Experience Level (%)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. System of Support	New	2.2% (n=1)	17.4% (n=8)	65.2% (n=30)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	1.9% (n=2)	17.5% (n=19)	66.7% (n=72)	13.9% (n=15)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31. High Standards	New	2.2% (n=1)	37.0% (n=17)	56.5% (n=26)	4.3% (n=2)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	39.9% (n=43)	52.8% (n=57)	7.4% (n=8)
32. Methods to Collaborate	New	6.5% (n=3)	52.2% (n=24)	39.1% (n=18)	2.2% (n=1)
	Experienced	4.6% (n=5)	51.9% (n=56)	40.7% (n=44)	2.8% (n=3)
33. Targeted Learning	New	2.2% (n=1)	21.7% (n=10)	65.2% (n=30)	10.9% (n=5)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=1)	21.3% (n=23)	70.4% (n=76)	8.3% (n=9)
34. Valuable Information	New	0.0% (n=0)	6.5% (n=3)	78.3% (n=36)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	7.4% (n=8)	84.3% (n=91)	8.3% (n=9)
35. Accurate Information	New	0.0 % (n=0)	6.5% (n=3)	78.3% (n=36)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	7.4% (n=8)	81.5% (n=88)	11.1% (n=12)

Survey Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
36. Professional Growth	New	0.0% (n=0)	13.0% (n=6)	60.9% (n=28)	26.1% (n=12)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	13.9% (n=15)	70.4% (n=76)	15.7% (n=17)
37. Instructional Strategies	New	0.0% (n=0)	17.4% (n=8)	67.4% (n=31)	15.2% (n=7)
	Experienced	0.0% (n=0)	17.6% (n=19)	73.1% (n=79)	9.3% (n=10)

To answer RQ5, Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the implementation fidelity of the T-TESS system?, an independent samples *t* test had been administered to compare the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS between new and experienced principals. The DV is the total Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS and the IV is the grouping variable new/experienced principals. Table 4.19 illustrates the perceived value of T-TESS for both principal groups.

Table 4.19

Perceived Value of T-TESS: Implementation Fidelity

Experience	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
New Principal	46	2.883	.434	.064
Experienced Principal	99	2.854	.393	.039

Although minimal statistical variances exists, findings indicate there had been no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS $t(143) = .39, p = .70$. Therefore, these findings propose that both new principals and experienced principals hold the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS in an equivalent regard.

The quantitative portion of this study detailed the descriptive statistics of 154 campus principals representing 64 T-TESS pilot districts since the 2014-2015 school year. Utilizing the TEPT-TESS, results from 46 new principals and 108 experienced principals indicated that both principal groups regard T-TESS as having limited strengths and challenges as related to four key areas: perception, GSPD, system structure, and implementation fidelity. Further analysis utilizing an independent samples t test indicated that there had been no significant differences between new principals and experienced principals regarding the key areas described above. Therefore, both new and experienced principals perceived the value of T-TESS equivalently. To provide further scrutiny, additional insights delve into the qualitative findings derived from RQ6.

Research Question Six

RQ6 asked campus elementary school principals to identify implementation perceptions regarding their utilization of T-TESS. The qualitative findings showed that new and experienced elementary campus principals found value in T-TESS; however, challenges with T-TESS had also been identified. Qualitative data collected through elementary campus principal interviews provided a general insight into how elementary evaluators utilized T-TESS in their buildings. Six elementary campus principals had been interviewed and pseudonyms assigned to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. Analysis from the qualitative data identified six major themes that characterized the elementary campus principals' perceptions of T-TESS. The six themes

that emerged regarding the elementary campus principals' perception of T-TESS had been as follows: pretentious, more training, ongoing journey, forces fidelity, ownership outcomes, and time consuming.

Pretentious

Many of the principals in this study felt that T-TESS was a pretentious evaluation instrument. The following four of six participants summarized how T-TESS was a pretentious evaluation instrument. From these four participants three subthemes emerged as follows: Too lofty, theory versus practice, and standardized test results versus T-TESS evaluation. The first subtheme belonged to Stacy, an experienced principal with two years of T-TESS practice under her belt. She had been critical of T-TESS and suggested its being too lofty. Stacy stated, "[I] thought it had been too lofty and there had been a lot of obligatory steps that led to more of a compliance issue than a true improvement issue." Similarly, Gail, a new principal with one year of T-TESS experience, found a discrepancy between T-TESS theory and practice. She claimed the [coaching] questions had been too canned. There was not been a natural flow. I think part of the idea had been to have a teacher really start thinking about what they had been doing, but those questions really constrained the conversation ... it seemed more theoretical than practical.

Cindy and Tammy found T-TESS to be one part of the evaluation solution and linked T-TESS to other important campus issues. Cindy, an experienced principal with two years of T-TESS experience, stated, "administrators had to use it correctly, and know that [it] had been a tool. It cannot be viewed as the end all." Tammy, an experienced assistant principal, had three years of practice with T-TESS. Tammy claimed that standardized test scores possessed more value than T-TESS on her campus. She stated, "the bottom line had been test scores on this campus had been very important because they had been published, that's what the parents saw or that's what they recognized."

These statements had been reflective of four of the six participants interviewed regarding how T-TESS had been perceived as a pretentious teacher evaluation instrument.

More Training

Five of six elementary principal participants involved in this study indicated that more T-TESS training was necessary for teacher and/or principal acceptance. Moreover, interviews indicated a need for further training to solidify a new teacher evaluation paradigm. To analyze this area, two pronounced subthemes emerged that indicated more T-TESS training had been required: A need for understanding the mechanics of T-TESS and linking the relevance of T-TESS to everyday application.

Understanding. One factor that emerged indicated a need for further training by ensuring an understanding of T-TESS. Three elementary campus principals shared comments that reflected the need for further T-TESS understanding. Cindy focused on the T-TESS standardized expectations when she stated, “they [teachers] did not understand what proficient meant. It's really not about T-TESS, but it is teachers’ understanding of what the rubric had been about.” Similarly, Gail focused on T-TESS semantics and how new T-TESS evaluation terminology affected evaluation. She commented, “we had to say proficient meant rock solid, and no one liked that.” Tammy agreed with a need for more terminology training by stating, “T-TESS confused and intimidated them.” When pressed on this further she commented:

Teachers didn’t want to spend a lot of time getting to know the instrument.

Nevertheless, a teacher did not like to see "developing" as their score and they did not really like to see "proficient." If you told them "proficient" meant fantastic, rock-solid, exactly where you wanted to be, they saw on the scale there had been two more rungs to get to ... and that had been their focus. They wanted to be scored at the highest possible [level].

Principal interviews indicated that teachers had several misunderstandings of the new teacher evaluation instrument. These three comments highlighted a need for more training to ensure a precise understanding of the spirit and nature of what T-TESS had been attempting to offer throughout the evaluation process.

Relevance. Another area that required more training was linking the relevance of T-TESS to everyday application. Four of six participants indicated that teachers failed to make connections between T-TESS and everyday use. Tammy and Beth found the connections between practice and the evaluation process to be scarce, while Allison and Cindy saw the variance between administrators and indicate that initial T-TESS training has not have adequately prepared educators for the challenges T-TESS was meant to address - teacher growth and development. Gail summed up the need for more training by stating the T-TESS instrument had “not been very life changing.” For example, Beth, a new principal with two years of T-TESS experience, cited the goal-setting process as an area of disconnection between T-TESS and everyday practice. When discussing goal setting, she stated that very little progress occurred in this area “because teachers wrote the goal but there had been nothing where they had been practicing specifically on their goal throughout the year. I just didn’t see where it had been happening.” However, Tammy felt T-TESS did not address the needs of her master teachers:

T-TESS did not have any impact on successful teachers that did well year after year. I do not want to say any. However, it had been important to them to be respected and to get a good evaluation. They did not necessarily consider that as something important, it had been just another task to them. They took the feedback and they definitely tried to apply the conversations or reflect on it, but then in February, when the district had their in-service day, I did not think they had been picking their in-service based on the mid-year conference we had.

Allison, an experienced assistant principal with three years of T-TESS experience, commented on the application of T-TESS and the inconsistency related to the evaluation instrument. She cited that T-TESS implementation

varied from teacher to teacher, administrator to administrator, classroom to classroom, school to school, but I thought that trying to stay true to the tool probably had the bigger impact and the bigger benefit in regard to growing teachers and helping kids learn what they had to learn in a classroom.

Cindy also reflected how T-TESS training had been needed by calling out the initial development she received as part of her certification process:

I had not been thrilled with the T-TESS training. It did not differentiate for our educators and administrators. We loved using that word with children, but we did not really do it. I felt that the training needed to be done in a different way. Not all of us sitting and listening and being read to. That had just not been my style.

All five of these principals believed that the connection between T-TESS and everyday practice had been a component that had been lacking and which revealed itself at various times throughout the school year.

Ongoing Journey

Through the qualitative analysis, many principals shared that T-TESS was seen as an ongoing journey for improving the teaching craft. Principals held mixed viewpoints on the formative and summative milestones of this journey; however, all six participants agreed that the T-TESS journey had been crucial for the improvement of teachers.

Allison and Cindy felt the T-TESS journey had been noticeable as a tool for growth and development, while Tammy supported T-TESS as a tool that fostered collaborative relationships. However, Gail and Beth viewed T-TESS as a tool that supported self-reflection. The comments shared in this section show T-TESS as a tool best utilized

when part of a process and not as a single event. Beth summarized the collective views of all participants by stating:

The teacher did not have to feel threatened. Teachers did not have to feel like their performance equated to costing them their job because everything, all the conversation had been centered around growth. In addition, a good portion of the conversation had been happening before you even [observed] the lesson. That had been what you wanted as a principal because with students, there had been conversations taking place and there had been learning that had been taking place before they even took a test. Therefore, it should have been the same way for teachers because it had been a good practice and it had been fair.

From the input of all participants, three subthemes emerged from the data within this area. These subthemes are as follows: supports teacher growth and development, fosters collaborative relationships, and supports self-reflection.

Supports teacher growth and development. Four principals felt T-TESS had been an effective evaluation tool to support teacher growth and development throughout their T-TESS journey. For example, Beth commented on the collaborative conversations that were vital components to T-TESS. She explained:

[T-TESS had a] huge impact on teacher development and growth because they had been with somebody who had actually seen what they had been doing and they had been having conversations with that person. Moreover, they had been having authentic goal-centered, goal-driven conversations with their evaluator. I think you cannot put a price on something like that because it had been ongoing throughout the year. I was having you look at the expectations. I was having him or her identify the “look fors” and pick everything apart and really getting them to see the entire process for themselves.

Allison agreed, stating that T-TESS was a helpful tool designed to support teachers throughout the process. She stated:

[T-TESS] it had been a growth model, and it had been designed to help grow and develop teachers by having them set goals, and then having those periodic checks along the year. To revisit their goals and determine how they had been progressing with those goals. I think that had been another piece of T-TESS that set teachers at ease. It had not been seen as a “Gothca”. It had not been viewed as an instrument in which the principal went in at one time and completed the observation then scored the result and then left. It was truly investing in teachers.

Cindy offered a vivid description of how T-TESS benefited the teacher and ultimately influenced students. She explained, “when you're doing conferences and allowing for self-reflection, anything guiding the teachers to their goals had been productive.” When pushed further she expanded her thoughts and stated:

PDAS was more about doing what you needed to be doing or put you on a growth plan. Whereas I saw T-TESS as more about supporting and coaching teachers and for the benefit of children. I mean it was really about everything we do that is impacting the kids.

Gail concurred with the previous participants and offered her own perspective as to how T-TESS grew and developed teachers as compared with the previous teacher evaluation system by sharing that “T-TESS was more of a coaching methodology, and [I] thought that this would grow teachers, develop teachers, much better than PDAS ever would.”

Fosters collaborative relationships. Five of the teachers interviewed felt T-TESS allowed administrators to communicate with teachers more often and through the process fostered a collaborative spirit between teacher and evaluator. For example, Gail declared her exuberance for T-TESS by elaborating that “T-TESS allowed me to get to

know my teachers as teachers, more in depth than PDAS did. We were having those conversations as opposed to a checklist. It was a deeper knowledge of those teachers.” When asked to expand, she shared that T-TESS also solidified the relationships within her building. She explained:

it helped me facilitate health and mentorship amongst teachers and the staff. If someone came up and they said they had a student who had been having a certain issue and I knew someone had a favorite method that might be helpful for that. [I said] why don't you talk with Ms. X because I think she is good at dealing with that type of student or situation. I think T-TESS was helpful.

Allison agreed that T-TESS helped foster relationship and led to a more collaborative community in which teachers had been supporting each other. She explained:

It was very teacher centered, focusing on doing what was best for kids. Just the fact that they had been given the opportunity to have conversations and to pair with somebody else to help them improve had been powerful. Whether it was with an instructional coach or someone outside of their school, these people helped them grow in specific areas. T-TESS helped to create a positive community in which if teachers need to be able to communicate with others to grow then they had been able to build capacity through others and accomplish their goals. Therefore, the growing and developing process was not only confined to the teachers’ building. It was about the teacher and ultimately the kids in their classroom.

For others, such as Stacy, they found the T-TESS process fostered a collaborative relationship by allowing the evaluator to take the reins as the instructional leader of the campus. Stacy supported her view in this statement:

When I wrote reinforcements and refinements, often I would circle back to the teacher. Even if I had not done a good job debriefing, I would circle back to them and they would say, hey, I tried that and that worked really well, or they would show me something that they did based on a comment. I think that was probably the best part because it forced [principals] to be instructional leaders specifically and give a specific strategy or something for [teachers] to do.

When asked about this topic, Beth found herself reminiscing on a collaborative situation in which evaluator and teacher worked together to clarify terminology. She recounted:

We had been talking about the “look fors” and then we were talking about what proficient looked like and what distinguished looked like. What had been some similarities between proficient and distinguished and then what had been some differences? And what had been something that you had to do differently to move from proficient to distinguished? So a lot of our process was really just taking the time and the opportunity, as administrators, to really get down and dig through the information found in the rubric with our teachers. It was just really helping our teachers to grow.

On the other hand, Cindy found that T-TESS required administrators to meet with teachers and provided an avenue to learn more information about their beliefs. Cindy stated:

we took a lot of time on the end-of-the year conferences where we didn't do as much of that at the middle of the year. We were making sure we made the time for the teachers because we learned so much more about them and their belief system when we gave them that time and when I say time, 30 minutes or more. I know some principals might say that had been hard, but I would say we averaged about 45 minutes on the end of the year conferences.

These five principals found value in T-TESS and agreed that the impact it had in fostering collaborative relationships was a positive factor in the evaluation process. Allowing principals to know and understand their teachers, creating opportunities for teachers within a building to rely on peers, and elevating the principal as the instructional leader of the campus were just a few examples these principals cited as to how T-TESS helped build collaborative bridges between principals and teachers.

Supports self-reflection. Another aspect of T-TESS being seen as an ongoing journey was found in the way this instrument caused teachers to think about their teaching and how to improve their instruction. Three of the teachers involved in this study cite T-TESS as being effective in supporting teacher self-reflection. Beth, Tammy, and Gail specifically highlighted the GSPD dimension, walkthroughs, and coaching to prove their point. For example, when asked if self-reflection was viewed as part of the T-TESS process, Beth stated she saw self-reflection most often used in the goal-setting process. She stated, “because it had been causing teachers to be reflective and not always having the expectation that the principal tells them what they need to do in order to grow.” However, Tammy found the reflection process most pronounced in the walkthrough process. She explained, “I saw that reflect [component] most on the walkthroughs. Teachers wanted to do a good job; they wanted that positive reinforcement from the evaluator or from the administrator.” Gail also shared her views on how T-TESS supported teacher self-reflection. She pointed to teacher competitiveness as a mechanism that motivated teachers to disaggregate their teaching. Gail stated,

I thought the coaching and the allowance for self-reflection allowed for deeper growth. I had several teachers who really thought about it, and they wanted to be more impactful. They wanted to be more effective, so they dissected lessons and they dissected interactions with students.

All six elementary campus principals believed the T-TESS process had been a journey that principals and teachers took in unison. Gail summed it up nicely when she said, “T-TESS heightened the focus and it made teachers really think about what they had been doing. To think about their craft ... and that's a good thing.”

Forces Fidelity

Through the qualitative analysis, the theme that T-TESS forced administrator and teacher fidelity had been discussed. Four elementary campus principals felt T-TESS provided stringent guidelines that benefited teachers and set parameters on how to complete the evaluation process. Two subthemes had been uncovered: supportive fidelity and defensible fidelity. Stacy, Cindy, and Beth felt T-TESS provided the fidelity necessary to support principals during implementation. This support included offering guidance and parameters throughout the evaluation cycle. Equally important, Tammy and Allison felt T-TESS provided the necessary defensible fidelity required to support their positions and comments during the appraisal process.

Supportive fidelity. Three of the principals interviewed felt T-TESS forced participants to utilize this evaluation with fidelity. Moreover, these administrators felt the fidelity provided by this evaluation supported the principals during implementation. For instance, Stacy observed fidelity most when completing walkthroughs. She stated, “T-TESS forced you to write a refinement or reinforcement. You cannot really skip that part on every walkthrough. You had to take it to completion, because you had been forced to give an example of what to do. This helps.” Beth, on the other hand, felt the fidelity built into T-TESS supported her during the summative conference. She stated, “I really liked T-TESS because there were times when teachers waived the summative and I also didn't really want to take time to sit down with them. Now, I had to. It was a part of the

summative process.” Cindy also found value in the supportive fidelity, especially as it related to the goal-setting process. Regarding the parameters observed, she recounted:

That was the piece I really liked about T-TESS. In the past, teachers attended any professional learning they wanted to [attend]. Now the administrator and the teacher looked at offerings together in their goal-setting conference and made suggestions on which ones would best fit. T-TESS changed principal practices.

These three principals found value in the structure of T-TESS; moreover, their comments suggested the fidelity of this evaluation instrument had been supportive towards teacher improvement.

Defensible fidelity. Three principals commented on the fidelity of T-TESS as it related to assisting them in being able to justify their evaluative position to teachers. In summary, these principals felt T-TESS provided the necessary defensible fidelity required in supporting their comments during the evaluation process. For example, Allison recognized the T-TESS parameters surrounding feedback. She explained,

It helped take the guesswork out of the process and it kept you true to what feedback you had been giving to teachers. You had to have that preponderance of evidence and if you didn’t then we slid back the other way. This had been okay because there had been growth in these situations. If a preponderance of evidence had been there then we moved forward and work from there and I like that it is very structured. It gave the principal the tools to be able to complete tasks effectively.

Similar to Allison, Cindy found the parameters set by T-TESS provided her with language that encouraged her to be strategic during the professional development phase.

She stated:

it gave me a parameter to know where to start in supporting teachers. I was able to make suggestions. Whereas before, I do not think I had been as strategic. I would just tell them, go get your 12 hours, whatever you think works. I don't know if I had been strategic enough with the former evaluation. T-TESS made me really look at each teacher more closely in order to figure out what would be the best training for them to attend.

Equivalently, Beth commented on the expectations provided by the rubric and explained how this supported her conversations with teachers. She recounted:

I saw teachers being strengthened by it from walkthroughs this year. In addition, if they had not been happy about the rating they received, when you go through the rubric it had been very cut and dry. I had been able to walk them through the steps and had been able to say, I thought it looked proficient. So let's review the rubric. As we looked at the rubric, we saw that it had been proficient or maybe the majority of it had been proficient. In addition, we were able to see distinguished areas. This process clearly opened up the opportunity for conversation.

In sum, these principals felt T-TESS provided guidance and parameters as to how to proceed through the teacher evaluation process.

Ownership Outcomes

The idea of the owner determining their evaluation outcome developed as principals discussed their T-TESS evaluation journeys. Four principals singled out this unique trend, which involved both principals and teachers. Cindy, Allison and Beth focused on T-TESS ownership by the campus principal, while Tammy and two other survey participants discussed how teachers could utilize T-TESS to their advantage.

From this theme, two subthemes emerged from these discussions: administrator and teacher.

Administrator. From the principals' standpoint Cindy explained, "I thought, whether any of us really wanted to admit to this, it had to come from the appraiser. The administrator really [had to] follow through and coach teachers. As an administrator, you had to own it." Allison expressed similar views when she stated,

It also depended on each campus administrator and how supportive they had been throughout the evaluation process. This means understanding how the principal communicates and how helpful their conversations were to their teachers during phases such as the pre-conference and post-conference. I thought it was a good tool if implemented correctly and as prescribed.

Similar to Cindy and Allison, Beth focused on the goal-setting component of T-TESS to explain her perspective. She declared:

T-TESS gave us the opportunity to have face-to-face discussions not only in the post conference and in the summative conference, but also throughout the year when we were doing goal-setting. The avenue for improvement had been there, and that was what I like about T-TESS. Because if we had truly been improvement driven in terms of student achievement then we had to be improvement driven in terms of our teachers.

Cindy and Allison discussed the need for principals to own their portion of the T-TESS process by being supportive and following through. Beth furthered this exchange by declaring the importance of having face-to-face discussions throughout the evaluation process.

Teacher. Three principals discussed having teachers accept ownership of their evaluation throughout the T-TESS process. For example, when discussing mindset, Allison shared her experiences with teachers willing to grow through T-TESS as compared with those having a different agenda. She stated:

T-TESS was very specific to each individual and their willingness to grow and how much effort they wanted to put into their professional development and growth mindset. Some teachers took it well and realized that they needed to grow and learn more. While for others, it wasn't taken as well. Especially for experienced teachers who thought they had been solid with their content knowledge. I think it was about the individual and how each teacher received their feedback.

Cindy also discussed the need for teachers to take ownership, especially when collecting evidence. She stated:

In order to get to the next step in the rubric, teachers had to do some extra things and provide evidence. It was their responsibility to provide administrators the evidence. I mean we were constantly looking for it, but especially in some of those other areas, it was the teacher's responsibility to be able to provide that evidence.

Tammy reflected upon the positive and negative aspects of owning the evaluation and highlighted how some teachers expected themselves to be scored highly. For example, she stated teachers:

Took what they did not do and obsessed over it instead of just saying, I did really good on this and yes, I got 'proficient' in this domain. They wanted to be the top of the top. Therefore, they do not always feel like they were receiving positive information.

Cindy, Allison, Beth and Tammy acknowledged the importance of owning the T-TESS evaluation system for both administrator and teacher. They shared that the mindset possessed by the individual directly correlated with the growth to be expected. Cindy summed up the thoughts of this conversation by declaring:

I think you are going to hear both sides. You can hear some principals say, nope did not have any growth at all and then you are going to hear principals tell you that it did. That again goes back to that ownership piece. If we were using T-TESS how [it was] intended and the principal truly used that rubric then the impact would be noticeable. Moreover, if a teacher took that ownership and really went through the highlighted areas they would have also seen it for themselves how the feedback and instrument had been aligned.

Time Consuming

Time consuming referred to any task that required principals to spend additional time with teachers; this was in the form of feedback, observations, conferences, and/or coaching. Five principals cited excessive time commitments as an area of concern for evaluators. Collectively, Gail, Cindy, Beth, Stacy, and Tammy felt the requirements imposed by T-TESS had been time consuming and demoralizing to the principalship. Their comments communicate that principals were frustrated with ongoing tasks such as meetings, paperwork, and mandatory conferences. For example, Gail stated, “that was really the worst part of it, the time commitment. All of the paperwork. To do the interviews and the exits, we didn’t have that kind of time.” Cindy acknowledges this factor and showed frustration with the parameters of T-TESS in regard to classroom observations. She exclaimed,

I did not like the fact that now we had to go into the room for 45 minutes, which it's good to see them go through a whole process cycle. I get that, but was it

necessary? I did not like that we had to do the 45-minute observation with each teacher. Thirty minutes was plenty, but they (central office) wanted that 45. Meeting with each teacher after their observation also proved disheartening for some administrators. Beth explained:

Those [post] conferences took a lot of time. That meant I had to be diligent about scheduling observations. I had to say, hey, during this November, December timeframe; here had been the people that I had to have done by this time. Then by the January, February timeframe, here had been the people that I had to be finished with. And my calendar didn't have more availability.

Stacy, too, experienced similar frustration with the expectations of T-TESS. She claimed to be drawn to teachers in need of her assistance; however, T-TESS requirements impeded her personal agenda. She stated:

There were teachers who I felt like I should be spending more time coaching. Yet since I had to get two walkthroughs on everyone, I had to make sure I was getting in every classroom an equitable amount of time. Then if I had time, I did the extras. It was just I felt like when I really wanted to be with other teachers, I had to cross everybody off the list.

In agreement with these campus principals, Tammy's frustration with T-TESS's time-consuming requirements forced her to seek comfort knowing that she would be able to defend her evaluative position. She stated, "It was very time-consuming on my part. I just wanted to check some boxes and give it back to them. However, T-TESS really made me go through a process so that I can justify the feedback that I gave to my teachers."

It is interesting to note that all principals found the topic of time management as an area of concern except for Allison. She had just received word of a promotion and was looking forward to making a transition into central office in her immediate future.

Summary of Findings

This chapter has laid out the findings of data regarding elementary campus principals perceptions of the standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas. The statistical analysis of data within this section included an analysis based on percentages and frequencies with respect to each research question that included perception, goal setting and professional development, system structure, and implementation fidelity. The percentages and frequencies provided detailed information for research questions 1-5 derived from the TEPT-TESS. Analysis of RQ1 found various discrepancies in data, but, both new and experienced principals agreed that T-TESS was an effective instrument to evaluate teacher performance. Contradicting these findings, the data also indicated that administrators had not been using T-TESS as intended and would not choose to utilize this instrument if given opportunity, due to time constraints and other various requirements.

To specifically answer research questions 2–5, independent samples *t*-tests were administered and analyzed for each corresponding research question. Findings for all questions indicated no significant differences between new and experienced principals with regard to value, goal setting and professional development, system structure, and implementation fidelity. Finally, six qualitative interviews clarified the findings for RQ6. Findings from this data indicated that principals viewed T-TESS as a pretentious instrument that required more training for administrators and teachers. It was also noted that T-TESS did an effective job of focusing on the T-TESS journey and that it forced fidelity upon the administrator and teacher. Equally important, it was established that the

owner determined the outcome and that this instrument required time-intensive dedication that overwhelmed even the most seasoned principal.

Conclusion

The principals participating in this study provided detailed responses regarding the implementation perceptions of T-TESS which led to a deeper understanding of this topic. The results of this mixed-methods research study found a positive correlation towards T-TESS in growing and developing teachers. However, other themes emerged from the participants during this study. These six themes were pretentious, more training, ongoing journey, forces fidelity, owners determine the outcome, and time consuming. The conclusions of these findings highlight the discussion in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of school principal is a challenging, demanding, and complex position that requires multiple leaders focused on student success (Foster & St. Hillaire, 2004). Consequently, across the United States some educators and educational proponents seek ways to improve student performance by growing and developing teachers through the teacher evaluation process (Anderson et al., 2016; Range et al., 2011; Stiefel et al., 2005; TEA 2016c; Weisberg et al., 2009). Texas created the T-TESS as one standards-based teacher evaluation instrument that supports and encourages teacher growth and development. However, since this instrument is in the early stages of implementation, limited research exists to uncover whether this instrument is meeting the expectations set forth by the creators.

This chapter will present a summary of findings for each research question that guides this study. In addition, a discussion of the implications and recommendations for future research will be examined. Chapter 5 will conclude with a summary of all findings related to elementary campus principal perceptions regarding the standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas.

Summary

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first purpose was to examine possible differences in the perceptions of new and experienced elementary principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system used in Texas to measure teacher performance and growth. The second purpose was to identify factors that may have possibly contributed to the differences in the perceptions of new and experienced elementary principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas. Literature pertaining to standards-based teacher evaluation in Texas indicated that

the state education agency desired all educators to hold themselves accountable for continuous growth and achievement (TEA, 2016c). Since the implementation of T-TESS by 64 pilot districts in 2014-15, T-TESS had been promoted as an evaluation instrument to support teacher growth and development (TEA, 2016a). To offer support in growing and developing teachers, a robust GSPD dimension focused teachers on at least one personalized self-development journey throughout the year (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b). This dimension worked in conjunction with an evaluation rubric tied to updated teaching standards (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b). The intended result of T-TESS was for principals and other evaluators to grow teachers in their craft by guiding, coaching, and offering self-reflective opportunities to all teachers with the intent of improving their practice, thus leading to student performance gains (Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2018b; TEA, 2016a). Two groups highlighted in this study to implement this new teacher evaluation system were new and experienced principals. The literature pertaining to the different needs of new principals versus those of experienced principals had been diverse. Although both groups felt a sense of accountability towards increasing student performance, new principals focused on campus assimilation practices, while experienced principals were able to focus more attention on instructional leadership (Hvidston et al., 2015; Sodoma & Else, 2009). This research study examined the perceptions of new and experienced principals regarding the new standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas.

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach that encompassed two phases of data collection and analysis. The first phase consisted of quantitative data collection processes and analysis. The following research questions guided the first phase of this study:

1. What are the item level statistics for the Texas Evaluator Perceptions of T-TESS Survey?
2. Was there a difference in perceived value of T-TESS between new and experienced elementary school principals?
3. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the T-TESS GSPD dimension?
4. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding system structure of the T-TESS system?
5. Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the implementation fidelity of the T-TESS system?

In the first phase of this study, survey data had been solicited from elementary campus principals representing the 64 T-TESS pilot districts. The data was inputted into an Excel spreadsheet and a descriptive statistical analysis was calculated for each quantitative research question to fully address RQ1. Furthermore, to address RQ2 an independent samples *t* test has been performed for research questions 2, 3, 4, and 5. The four sections below present a summary of the quantitative findings as related to each research question from this study.

Research Question 1 and 2

Quantitative data revealed that elementary principals tend to disagree with the positive Perceived Value of T-TESS as a teacher evaluation system ($M = 2.8$, $n = 154$). Statistical findings indicated both experienced and new principals agreed that T-TESS provided teachers with the information they needed to improve their instruction ($M = 3.1$, $n = 119$). This finding had been in agreement with research indicating the new Texas teacher evaluation system encouraged and promoted teaching and learning practices (TEA, 2014; 2016a; 2016c). Eighty point four percent (80.4%) of new principals also

agreed that T-TESS had shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers ($n = 37$). This finding was also congruent with research that asserted the purpose of T-TESS was to provide teachers with specific job-related feedback to improve instructional practices (TEA, 2016a; 2016b). However, negative findings were also uncovered. Data found elementary principals disagreed with the statement, T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete ($M = 2.6$; $n = 75$ and both principal groups disagreed with the statement, I would choose to participate in T-TESS if it was not required ($M = 2.6$, $n = 84$). Lastly, an independent samples t test directly answered RQ2, Was there a difference in perceived value of T-TESS between new and experienced elementary school principals? Findings indicated there were no significant differences between new and experienced principals with regard to the perceived value of T-TESS, $t(143) = 1.2$, $p = .21$.

Limited research studies existed on T-TESS due to recent official implementation in 2017-2018. Moreover, limited research existed regarding the perceived value of T-TESS. Perception was valued because seeking the perceived reality of professionals was deemed important given the ramifications often related with evaluations (Paufler, 2018). However, the results identified above were generally supportive of research in that T-TESS had been expected to provide teachers with an avenue for principals to provide feedback to teachers to improve instructional practices (TEA, 2014, 2016a). Templeton et al. (2016) also supported this position, for he found ongoing collaborative dialogue to benefit teaching practices. Although there were no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the perceived value of T-TESS, the findings within this study indicated that T-TESS had been a useful evaluation instrument to improve instruction and provide feedback to teachers. However, the time involved with

implementing this system had been disheartening and led some elementary principals to opt out when given the opportunity.

Research Question 1 and 3

Quantifiable statistical data indicated that elementary principals disagreed that the activities related to the GSPD dimension of T-TESS added value to this teacher evaluation system ($M = 2.9$, $n = 154$). Frequency distributions and percentage statistics from this section revealed elementary principals ($M = 3.1$, $n = 111$), and specifically new principals (88%, $n = 95$) were generally supportive of the T-TESS GSPD dimension. New principals also agreed that the feedback teachers received regarding the GSPD dimension had led to personal growth in teachers (81.5%, $n = 88$). This statement was in direct agreement with the literature. Weisberg et al., (2009), firmly advocated for using quality feedback to improve teacher practice. Experienced principals also indicated that through the T-TESS process, teachers self-reflected on teaching practices to improve their instructional effectiveness (78.8%, $n = 85$).

However, these results emerged on the low end of the findings: All principals ($M = 2.8$; $n = 113$) and especially experienced principals (28.7%, $n = 31$) did not believe that through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflected on teaching practices to engage in continuous professional learning. Further, all principals ($M = 2.6$; $n = 106$), and specifically new principals (21.8%, $n = 10$), did not believe that through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers used self-reflection to develop action plans for improvement. Also noteworthy, is the fact that only 63.6% of all principals would have chosen for their teachers to participate in the T-TESS GSPD dimension even if it had not been required ($N = 154$). Lastly, a statistical analysis was utilized to uncover the differences between new and experienced principals. Findings from an independent samples t test concluded there

were no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the GSPD dimension of T-TESS $t(143) = 1.3, p = .21$.

In summary, the data regarding this portion of study was supportive of the literature indicating that the goal setting and professional development dimension had been developed to support teacher growth throughout the evaluation process (TEA, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c). Quantitative findings indicated T-TESS was meeting expectations in supporting educators by providing a comprehensive goal setting and professional development system for teachers. Drago-Severson (2011), stressed the importance of this process by declaring educators should have focused on teacher learning systems that supported teacher growth and development, and that developing such systems was an obligation we owed to school leaders and teachers. Equally important, feedback opportunities provided by the T-TESS GSPD dimension adequately met educator needs. This proved to support the research that advocated for utilizing feedback to grow teachers. Effective feedback had been essential to building highly efficacious teachers (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012). As a result, T-TESS seemed to provide an effective framework for administrators to grow and develop teachers by utilizing the GSPD dimension. Although these findings were uplifting, outcomes indicated that administrators were not as hopeful in the teacher self-reflection processes that were part of the T-TESS experience. However, this area had been one of importance and one that was promoted by TEA, for self-reflection was offered to allow a teacher to improve his or her own performance (TEA, 2016a; 2016b), thereby empowering the teacher to take ownership of personal growth and development.

Research Question 1 and 4

A descriptive statistical analysis of survey data revealed elementary school principals agreed that the activities related to the System Structure of T-TESS added

value to this teacher evaluation system ($M = 3.1$, $n = 154$). Further insight into these results found most principals agreed that T-TESS evaluators allowed the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension ($M = 3.3$, $n = 101$), and most felt the goal of the post-conference was to support the teacher in his/her professional growth ($M = 3.3$, $n = 101$). This finding was congruent with the research from TEA (2016b), which advocated a main purpose of T-TESS had been to support teachers throughout the evaluation process. Finnegan (2013) also advocated for supporting teachers to encourage and build teacher efficacy. On the opposite end of the spectrum, many principals identified one statement that sparked disagreement. Statistical findings indicated principals disagreed that the T-TESS goal setting and professional development conference provided an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices ($M = 2.8$; $n = 114$).

Further scrutiny of statistical data identified specific needs of experienced and new principals. Findings uncovered 77.8% of all experienced principals agreed the T-TESS system structure provided an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices ($n = 84$). This finding supported the language issued by TEA, which advocated that educators utilize T-TESS to improve teacher and learning practices (TEA, 2014; 2016a; 2016c). This opinion supported the literature pertaining to standards-based teacher evaluation indicating effective teacher evaluation systems should have sought to improve the teaching and learning practices of all teachers (Weisberg et al., 2009). On the other hand, 82.6% of new principals agreed that T-TESS evaluators supported teachers through the goal setting and professional development process ($n = 38$). This finding was also been in agreement with literature maintaining a position that T-TESS evaluators should have sought ways to support teachers through the GSPD dimension (TEA, 2016a; 2016b). On the differing end of the survey, only 56.4% of experienced principals agreed that the T-TESS rubric effectively measured teacher performance ($n = 61$) and only

54.3% of new principals agreed that T-TESS evaluators allowed the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension ($n = 25$). These findings represented the least-selected responses by both experienced and new principals. To determine the quantitative findings between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the system structure of the T-TESS system, an independent samples t test compared the perceived value of T-TESS between new principals and experienced principals. Findings indicated there was no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the perceived value of T-TESS $t(143) = 1.5, p = .14$.

Although research studies on this topic had been scarce, the quantitative findings indicated evaluators were utilizing evidence to drive the ratings ($M = 3.3, n = 101$). This finding supported the TEA position of utilizing T-TESS as an instrument to grow and develop teachers through the evaluation process (TEA, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c). Moreover, positive attributes in this section aligned to the purpose of standard-based processes in providing an avenue to improve student performance and usefulness in identifying teacher growth and development opportunities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012).

Research Question 1 and 5

Statistical frequency distributions and percentages affirmed elementary principals disagreed that the activities related to the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS added value to this teacher evaluation system ($M = 2.9, n = 154$). Statistical outcomes revealed elementary principals believed that through the T-TESS process, teachers received accurate information regarding individual instructional performance ($M = 3.1, n = 124$) and T-TESS encouraged continuous professional growth ($M = 3.1, n = 104$). These findings were in agreement with the declarations of Weisberg et al., (2009) who stated that teacher evaluation systems should have encouraged professional growth and development of teachers and should ensure that teachers received specific performance

feedback. Unique to the findings had been 92.6% of experienced principals ($n = 100$) and 93.5% of new principals ($n = 43$) agreed that through participation in T-TESS, teachers received valuable information regarding individual instructional performance and through the T-TESS process, teachers received accurate information regarding individual instructional performance. However, the highest question in which all principals selected “Agree” was the question asking, Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance (82.5%). On the negative end of the survey continuum, all principals collectively selected their least favorite answer as, Teachers involved in T-TESS identified methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school ($M = 2.4$; $n = 62$). This question had also been the least-selected response by all experienced principals (56.5%; $n = 61$) and all new principals (58.7%; $n = 27$). Lastly, to answer RQ5, Was there a difference between new and experienced elementary school principals regarding the implementation fidelity of the T-TESS system?, an independent samples t test was administered to compare the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS between new principals and experienced principals. Findings indicated there were no significant differences between new and experienced principals regarding the Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS $t(143) = .39$, $p = .70$.

A review of the findings indicated elementary principals agreed that the T-TESS process allowed teachers to receive accurate and valuable information regarding their individual instructional performance and T-TESS encouraged continuous professional growth. These outcomes offered true promise for the future of T-TESS, since previous research identified these statements as essential components of effective teacher evaluation instruments or systems (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Range et al., 2011; Stiefel et al., 2005; TEA, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; Weisberg et al., 2009). Equally important was the

unified agreement by all experienced and new principals that teachers involved in T-TESS do not consistently identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school. This proved to be an area of deficiency for T-TESS since TEA recommended teachers collaborate and lead learning with other educators beyond their campus (TEA, 2016b; 2016c). Although significant differences emerged from this area, T-TESS seemed to be in position to offer Texas educators many opportunities for progress and some opportunities for improvement.

Research Question 6

Qualitative data collected through principal interviews provided a deeper perspective into RQ6, What are the implementation perceptions of campus elementary school principals utilizing T-TESS? In this phase of the study, six themes materialized regarding elementary principals' perceptions: pretentious, more training, ongoing journey, forces fidelity, ownership outcomes, and time consuming. A summary of each theme provides a deeper understanding of the perceptions of elementary principals regarding T-TESS.

Pretentious. Pretentious referred to how T-TESS announced many new claims aimed to create an environment in which teacher growth and development were central to the evaluation process. Overall, most elementary principals held a negative perception of T-TESS in regard to what it intended to accomplish for educators. Too many necessary steps such as goal-setting meetings, tracking of goal progress, pre-conferences, and post-conferences, along with written classroom observations and summative conferences, had been identified as overwhelming obstacles for principals. This seemed most concerning for new principals, because novice principals seemed to spend the majority of their time in a state of being overwhelmed and just trying to survive (Kersten, 2010). Most elementary principals coached teachers through the post-evaluation process; however,

utilizing the coaching questions provided by T-TESS also created an obstacle. A few principals stated that the coaching questions had not been conducive for effective communication and had been great in theory, but not practical for everyday use. With regard to coaching, communicating quality feedback had been essential for endorsing teacher support (Drago-Severson, 2011). Principals also referenced standardized tests scores being in conflict with the T-TESS instrument. Principals indicated the competing state assessment created conflict for some teachers, for test scores had been viewed as more important than adopting and accepting T-TESS methodologies. Ultimately, these competing forces could have proven to be detrimental to education, for if left unaddressed, this could have created a test-driven environment leading to impaired ramifications (Schaeffer, 2012).

More training. This referred to principal insight indicating the need for further teacher and administrator training in order to adequately transition into the new evaluation paradigm. Two subthemes constituting this theme had been a need for understanding the mechanics of T-TESS and linking T-TESS to everyday application. Understanding the mechanics of T-TESS referred to the provision of training to gain better knowledge into the basic processes, practices, techniques, and specifics of T-TESS. Principals reported that teachers had difficulty accepting terms and processes as adequate measures of teaching. Some teachers expected a higher grade other than “Rock Solid,” although this had been a proficient rating in T-TESS terminology. The misunderstanding of T-TESS terms and processes had been important to curtail a “Widget Effect,” which had occurred with previous standards-based teacher evaluation systems (Weisberg et al., 2009). Evaluators should have rated teachers according to their performance and administrators should have resisted the pressure to rate teachers higher than what had been observed (Weisberg et al., 2009). To detour an adoption of faulty evaluation habits, more training

could have helped to remedy this thinking by teachers and offer principals added support. A change in this practice could also have made T-TESS more relevant to teachers and principals, thus offering these educators a more robust teacher evaluation instrument.

Relevance referred to linking T-TESS processes and procedures to everyday application. Principal interview data revealed teachers viewed T-TESS as an independent process doing little to improve everyday growth and development. This conflicted with research that indicated standards-based teacher evaluation offered educators an opportunity to improve instruction and increased student performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Heneman et al., 2006). Although T-TESS held promise, findings indicated some educators had not thoroughly prepared or accepted all areas of the T-TESS process.

Ongoing journey. This pertained to educators viewing T-TESS as an on-going experience and not a one-time event. Three subthemes developed from this topic: supporting teacher growth and development, fostering collaborative relationships, and supporting self-reflection. Some principals reported that the T-TESS process encouraged teacher growth and development through goal-driven conversations and feedback. Research indicated that participation in feedback conversations related to instructional practices helped educators become aware of patterns and tendencies regarding personal teaching practices (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). This finding was in alignment with the purpose of T-TESS, which was to grow and develop teachers through on-going feedback (TEA, 2016b; 2016c). Research also indicated that building relationships in which teachers and principals collaborated for school improvement proved beneficial (Cosner, 2009). Research indicates principals and teachers should have established a cooperative relationship to foster positive school outcomes (Arneson, 2015). Qualitative findings also found T-TESS helped foster collaborative relationships between principals and

teachers. Due to on-going interactions and conversations, some principals reported to know their teachers on a deeper level, leading to conversations that were more meaningful. Divoll (2010), found that fostering instructor and pupil relationships improved learner outcomes and helped build stronger learning communities. Moreover, ongoing interactions have proved beneficial for principals' reputations as well, for principals established trusting relationships through consistent interactions and engagement (Cosner, 2009). Supporting this theory, T-TESS provided principals an opportunity to help build positive relationships with their staff. Essentially, positive relationships have helped to create improved learning environments (Divoll, 2010).

A final area uncovered by the data which indicated T-TESS was seen as an ongoing journey was found in the self-reflection component. Since the T-TESS process allowed teachers to contemplate personal teaching on an ongoing basis, self-reflection had been viewed as part of the evaluation journey. Self-reflection encouraged teachers to make necessary changes to their craft leading to positive outcomes (TEA, 2016a). The subthemes of supporting teacher growth and development, fostering collaborative relationships, and supporting self-reflection collectively provided insight into T-TESS as an ongoing experience and not a single event to be completed then forgotten.

Forces fidelity. Because of the specificity of T-TESS requirements, elementary principals believed T-TESS forced the evaluator to implement the evaluation process with fidelity. Two types of fidelity uncovered through this process were supportive fidelity and defensible fidelity. Supportive fidelity referred to the specific tasks and timelines that encouraged evaluators to implement T-TESS with a sense of obligation. Principals felt T-TESS encouraged discussions, walkthroughs, and new paradigm shifts, such as goal setting and summative meetings. This proved promising for principals since quality teacher evaluation systems that encouraged feedback have led to improved

student performance (Marshall, 2005). On the other hand, defensible fidelity was the support T-TESS offered to principals to justify or support their evaluative position. T-TESS provided many supportive resources that allowed the evaluator to focus on specific teacher criteria. Supportive items such as observation rubrics, walkthrough requirements, and coaching guides seemed to provide a sense of security for principals. These supportive resources helped principals in justifying specific teacher feedback by aligning standardized criterion to observed teaching practices. Research was supportive of this alignment for quality teacher evaluation systems consisted of standardized criterion aligned to specific grading scales linked to effective teaching practices (Heneman et al., 2006). Overall, some elementary principals viewed specific guidance and support offered by T-TESS as a benefit to both teachers and principals.

Ownership outcomes. This theme suggested both teachers and principals had been in control of their T-TESS experience. The ownership of the T-TESS experience derived from the amount of quality time, attention, and attitude placed on the instrument and feedback. To enhance the experience, principals should have committed to a new paradigm of growing and developing teachers through such methods as coaching and offering specific and regular teacher feedback. Equally important, teachers should have taken ownership of their evaluation journey to reap the potential benefits of T-TESS. This new teacher evaluation instrument encouraged teacher growth and development and many principals felt teachers should have found ways to incorporate the feedback process to make personal improvements. Focusing on solutions to improve instruction and enhancing professional teaching methods was essential to improving daily lesson delivery and, ultimately, student achievement (Heneman et al., 2006). In sum, the mindset adopted by teachers and principals towards T-TESS supported the positive or negative correlation between teaching attitude and professional growth.

Time consuming. This theme consisted of any T-TESS-related tasks that required the principal to implement the evaluation process with fidelity. Studies revealed time management to be a major issue influencing the principalship, one having the potential to negatively affect areas such as teacher evaluation (Horng et al., 2010; Leonard, 2010; Wells, 2013). Elementary principals cited tedious paperwork requirements, numerous observations and walkthroughs, and face-to-face feedback sessions as some of the burdens with this evaluation instrument. Some principals described the T-TESS time commitments as overwhelming, disheartening, and frustrating. Research agreed the principalship was an overwhelming arena that left little time to devote to instructional leadership (Horng et al., 2010) and that burnout among principals was a serious aspect due to many emotional and mental hardships accompanying the position (Wells, 2013). Essentially, the time required by evaluators to implement T-TESS undermined the intent of this new teacher evaluation instrument. Principals had to seek out effective strategies to implement T-TESS with fidelity, while balancing the ongoing requirements of their position. This summary distinctly highlighted the key findings of this study and offered a concise review of the issues. However, while discussing the summary of findings was essential to the outcome of this study, it is equally important to dissect the implications of this study.

Implications

Literature clearly states campus principals struggle with effectively implementing teacher evaluation systems (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2011; Danielson, 2012; DiPaola & Hoy, 2008; Nixon, 2013; Toch & Rothman, 2008). Findings from this research study indicated there were no significant differences between experienced principals and new principals regarding their perceptions of the value of T-TESS, specifically in reference to the value of the goal setting and professional development

component, system structure, implementation fidelity, and implementation issues.

However, there were significant barriers for campus principals to consider for implementing T-TESS effectively. Subsequently, specific implications for elementary school principals, central office personnel, and lawmakers and state educational agencies affiliated with teacher evaluation emerged.

Implications for Elementary School Principals

Results from this study yielded important implications for elementary school principals. First, elementary school principals should consider providing high-quality T-TESS refresher training and ongoing T-TESS professional development for teachers. Teacher training focused on common language, core processes, and methods to link T-TESS to everyday practice may help clarify teacher uncertainty and connect gaps of knowledge for both teachers and administrators. Second, given that T-TESS is an instrument to support teacher growth and development, elementary campus principals should continue to seek effective systems, and processes to provide quality feedback to teachers for providing specific teacher feedback is a key component to effective teacher evaluation (Weisberg et al., 2009). Third, in order to maintain or build trust and respect for the teaching profession, principals must seek ways to build quality relationships with teachers while balancing feedback processes. Research indicated that quality relationships support learner outcomes and aid in establishing positive learning environments (Divoll, 2010). Therefore, this seems essential for principals to consider when developing their T-TESS processes. Lastly, research findings revealed that elementary campus principals deal with varying levels of teacher T-TESS implementation. Teacher T-TESS implementation levels varied from early adopters to laggards, with varying levels in-between. Since true change occurs when all individuals of an organization adopt the change initiative (Hall & Hord, 2015), elementary campus

principals should consider seeking methods to differentiate T-TESS according to teacher implementation level. An individualized approach could meet teachers where they are and personalize the teacher evaluation experience to further solidify the T-TESS evaluation process within their campus.

Implications for Central Office Personnel

First, it is imperative that central office personnel evaluate district T-TESS implementation processes by conducting a current T-TESS needs assessment to determine if teachers and principals are appropriately adopting T-TESS changes and initiatives as intended. Since inception, T-TESS had been intended to be implemented at an acceptable pace for those involved. Research supports this position, claiming organizations adopt change while individuals are responsible for the implementation of change (Hall & Hord, 2015). Interview findings suggest most elementary campus principals had not followed a strategic change management process in regard to T-TESS. Therefore, central office personnel should provide guidance regarding systematic implementation of T-TESS within their respective districts. This seems essential to T-TESS success - TEA Director of Educator Evaluation, Tim Regal, advocated for a slow, steady, and deep implementation of T-TESS in which full implementation should occur five years after district adoption (T. Regal, personal communication, October 26, 2015). In keeping with this philosophy, central office personnel should evaluate principal experiences and then determine how best to proceed with T-TESS implementation. Secondly, to eliminate teacher evaluation confusion and solidify consistency, a common understanding of district teacher evaluation expectations is required. For example, one principal discussed just checking off evaluation tasks due to competing priorities, while another expressed a true desire to uphold the fidelity of the T-TESS process. Without common understanding of what principals are expected to accomplish, principals are left

to interpret T-TESS according to their preferences and schedule. Individual interpretation of T-TESS could result in undermining the integrity and reputation of this instrument if not fully unaddressed. Thirdly, it is imperative to indoctrinate new principals into T-TESS at a different level than experienced principals. Research indicated new principals focus more time on campus management and less time on instructional leadership (Hvidston et al., 2015); it is therefore recommended that more structured evaluation procedures and frequent follow-ups with new principals be provided. This structure should provide novice administrators opportunities to grow and develop their evaluation procedures and feedback techniques under the guidance of district officials. Lastly, T-TESS expects principals to grow and develop teachers; however, the reality is that time is keeping principals from meeting this expectation on a consistent basis. Therefore, time management obstacles need to be identified and addressed by central office personnel supervising principals or by those overseeing teacher evaluation processes. Research indicated that time management had been a central issue influencing the elementary principalship and may have adversely affected effectiveness in such areas as teacher evaluation (Hornig et al., 2010; Leonard, 2010; Wells, 2013). The introduction of T-TESS requires central office personnel to identify time-intensive obstacles affecting teacher evaluation, then work collaboratively with campus principals to seek solutions to mitigate their impact. Providing teachers and principals with opportunities to conduct joint or group walkthroughs and feedback opportunities should also be considered to support educators throughout the evaluation process.

Implications for Elected Officials and State Education Agencies

First, it is crucial that elected officials and state education agencies downplay the importance of standardized testing results and outcomes. Ranking or comparing districts,

schools, and students is counterproductive to the philosophy of growing and developing teachers through the T-TESS process. If principals are charged with growing educators, then the emphasis placed on standardized tests must cease to compete for teacher and principal attention. Although no case is being made that testing is neither good nor bad, the emphasis given to standardized testing over teacher evaluation must be minimized for teacher evaluators to firmly solidify T-TESS as the path towards teacher and school improvement. Secondly, lawmakers and agency representatives must create strategic assessment channels with principals and other appraisers to fully understand the needs and challenges of teacher evaluation. By gaining insight into current issues and challenges of T-TESS, law makers and agency representatives can act accordingly to support and protect principal experiences in their journey to solidify T-TESS as a fair, equitable, and effective teacher evaluation instrument. Last, funding must be allocated to provide T-TESS evaluators with quality training dedicated to instructing evaluators on how to grow and develop teachers. To accommodate for a lack of preparation and training in this area, topics such as time management, andragogy, goal setting, and coaching should all be considered mandatory training for campus principals adopting T-TESS as their teacher evaluation instrument.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has contributed to the current body of knowledge of standards-based teacher evaluation systems by examining experienced and new elementary campus principals' perceptions of T-TESS. The focus of this study was narrowed to include only elementary campus principals representing the 64 T-TESS pilot school districts in Texas. A future study could strengthen this area of research by including teacher perspectives. Examining the teacher perspective of T-TESS and aligning the perspectives, accomplishments, and concerns to those of campus principals will offer a more robust

perspective and further insight into campus attitudes regarding teacher evaluation. Moreover, the teacher perspective would add another level of strength to the overall findings and may uncover new opportunities unknown to principals and those supporting teacher evaluation. In addition, a future study could expand the targeted population to include Texas secondary principal perspectives. This could include a focus on the 64 pilot districts or be expanded to include Texas regions according to their demographics, proximity, or size.

The timing of this study occurred during the infancy of T-TESS, therefore only principal perspectives gathered from pilot districts were considered. However, as years progress, this study could be expanded to include the perspectives of all Texas principals regardless of their year of implementation. This vantage point expands the population and allows for a larger sample size, thereby increasing the depth and breadth of the findings. Other recommendations for future research include:

1. Increasing the sample interview size to include more principal and teacher perspectives.
2. Including the perspectives of legislators and district policy creators to gain a perspective and understanding of the positional objectives as related to T-TESS implementation and outcomes.
3. Replicating this study to include the perspectives of campus principals receiving ongoing training, as compared with those principals who receive no ongoing training.
4. A study that explores how administrator leadership style impacts teacher perceptions of teacher evaluation could also be considered.

The results from these types of studies could provide greater insight into teacher evaluation and may uncover fresh challenges and/or offer unique solutions that have yet to be considered.

Conclusion

The notion that new elementary campus principals and experienced elementary campus principals differ in regard to the new standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas in measuring teacher performance and growth is not supported by *t*-test data results. However, diverse tendencies contributing to the perceptions of these two principal groups have been uncovered. For instance, most experienced principals believe T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices (80.5%, *n* = 87); however, most new principals believe T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers (80.4%, *n* = 37). New and experienced principals also disagree on the GSPD dimension. Findings indicated that the majority of experienced principals “Agree” that through the T-TESS process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to improve their instructional effectiveness (78.8%, *n* = 85). Meanwhile, the majority of new principals were in agreement with two findings: 1) the feedback teachers receive regarding the GSPD dimension has led to personal growth (80.4%, *n* = 37); and 2) most new principals were generally supportive of the T-TESS GSPD dimension (80.4%, *n* = 37). Moreover, factors contributing to the T-TESS perceptions of new principals mirror the factors for experienced principals. However, one main inconsistency is the perception of T-TESS being a helpful and accepted teacher evaluation instrument. Both principal groups opposed and criticized T-TESS for its time involvement.

Futhermore, the T-TESS process for growing and developing teachers is heavily dependent upon the T-TESS rubric. This rubric allows principals to identify and

document observable teaching practices on a consistent basis and provides a justification for the observable practice. However, documenting observable teaching practices via the T-TESS rubric does not translate into, nor does it guarantee, teacher growth and development. Growing and developing teachers as required by T-TESS is a separate process that is dependent on each principal's training, trust, communication, and systematic processes, which were not included in T-TESS training. This presents a problem for all T-TESS principals, and especially teachers, across the state of Texas. TEA provided tools and processes for evaluating teaching practices, but has failed miserably to provide a consistent training process that addresses the steps necessary to grow and develop teachers. Topics such as time management, andragogy, goal setting, and coaching are essential for teacher growth and development to occur, but training in these critical areas has been lacking. This suggests that T-TESS implementation processes and requirements could create a barrier for all levels of Texas principals and may adversely impact the reputation of this evaluation instrument in the future.

If the Texas teacher evaluation system is intended to grow and develop teachers for the purpose of contributing to student growth, the educational community still has work to do to provide both teachers and principals with a compelling teacher evaluation experience. There is no data in this study, or others, that examines the process of changing the Texas teacher evaluation paradigm. However, if educational policy creators, central office leaders, and elected officials do not establish an environment where new and experienced principals are motivated to evaluate teachers, and if laws and policies continue to create barriers for effective instructional management, then there is still a need to mold the teacher evaluation paradigm. Only then may the Texas teacher evaluation system be allowed to contribute to the advancement of education, especially as related to teacher growth and development.

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APPENDIX A:
TEXAS EVALUATOR PERCEPTIONS OF T-TESS SURVEY

Instructions: Please answer the following questions by selecting the response with which you most identify.

Part I: Demographics. Please answer the following questions to provide a more detailed description of your background.

Position: Please identify your current position.

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Other

Experience: How many years of experience do you currently have as a principal?

- ☐ 1 - 3 years
- ☐ 4 or more years

T-TESS Experience: How many years have you utilized the T-TESS evaluation system?

- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 or more years

Evaluation Experience: How many years have you evaluated teacher performance using a state or district approved instrument such as T-TESS, PDAS, TTAS, etc.?

- ☐ 1 - 5 years
- ☐ 6 - 10 years
- ☐ 11 - 19 years
- ☐ 20 years or more

Follow-Up: In order to gain a better understanding of responses, the researcher may contact me with follow-up questions, if needed. My preferred email address is:_____.

Part II: The Value of T-TESS. The survey items in this section seek to answer the following question: **“What is the perceived value of campus elementary administrators regarding the T-TESS system?”**

6. The T-TESS has improved the reputation of the teacher observation process.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
7. The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering specific feedback to teachers.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
8. The T-TESS has shifted the mindset from compliance to offering teachers individualized support.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
9. The T-TESS provides teachers with the information they need to improve their own instructional practices.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
10. The T-TESS provides teachers with the means with which to improve teaching methods.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

11. The T-TESS is worth the amount of time it takes to complete.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

12. I would choose to participate in T-TESS if it was not required.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Part III: The Value of the T-TESS Goal Setting and Professional Development Dimension. The survey items in this section seek to answer the following question:
“What is the perceived value of campus elementary administrators regarding the T-TESS Goal Setting and Professional Development dimension?”

13. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to improve their instructional effectiveness.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

14. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers self-reflect on teaching practices to engage in continuous professional learning.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

15. Through the T-TESS goal setting and professional development process, teachers use self-reflection to develop action plans for improvement.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

16. The feedback teachers receive regarding the goal setting and professional development dimension has led to personal growth in teachers.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
17. The T-TESS goal setting and professional development process has a positive impact on teaching practice.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
18. I am generally supportive of the T-TESS goal setting and professional development dimension.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
19. I would choose for my teachers to participate in the T-TESS goal setting and professional development dimension even if it was not required.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

Part IV: The System Structure of T-TESS. The survey items in this section seek to answer the following question: **“What is the perceived value of campus elementary administrators regarding the system structure of the T-TESS system?”**

20. The T-TESS goal setting and professional development conference provides an adequate foundation to improve teaching practices.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

21. T-TESS evaluators support teachers through the goal setting and professional development process.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
22. The T-TESS rubric effectively measures teacher performance.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
23. T-TESS evaluators meet with the teacher prior to the formal observation to ask pertinent background questions about the lesson plan.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
24. T-TESS evaluators meet with the teacher prior to the formal observation to ask pertinent background questions about students in the class.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
25. T-TESS evaluators allow the evidence to drive the rating for each dimension.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
26. During the post-observation conference, T-TESS evaluators use coaching questions to guide the teacher through a discussion of the observation.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

27. The goal of the post conference is to support the teacher in his/her professional growth.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
28. The T-TESS post-conference process is an effective method to deliver observation results to teachers.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
29. The T-TESS instrument facilitates a collaborative approach for teachers and administrators towards improving teacher performance.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

Part V: The Implementation Fidelity of T-TESS. The survey items in this section seek to answer the following question: **“What is the perceived value of campus elementary administrators regarding the implementation fidelity of the T-TESS system?”**

30. The T-TESS establishes a system of support for teachers.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
31. Teachers evaluated with T-TESS consistently hold themselves to a high standard of performance.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

32. Teachers involved in T-TESS identify methods to collaborate with other educational professionals beyond their school.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
33. Teachers involved in T-TESS engage in targeted professional learning.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
34. Through participation in T-TESS, teachers receive valuable information regarding individual instructional performance.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
35. Through the T-TESS process, teachers receive accurate information regarding individual instructional performance.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
36. The T-TESS encourages continuous professional growth.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
37. The T-TESS provides the teacher with the means with which to identify effective instructional strategies.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

Thank you for completing this survey!

APPENDIX B:
THE NINE CORE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions will be used when conducting personal interviews with select T-TESS evaluators. The goal of these questions is to provide greater insight into the T-TESS process.

1. RQ5: What are your thoughts regarding the newly developed teacher evaluation system known as T-TESS?
2. RQ1: Based on your experience, what impact, if any, does T-TESS have on teacher practice?
3. RQ2: What impact does the T-TESS Goal Setting and Professional Development dimension have on growing and developing teachers?
4. RQ3: The T-TESS structure is made up of the GSPD dimension, the T-TESS rubric, the observation, and the EOY conference. What impact, if any, does this structure have on teacher growth and development?
5. RQ4: Does the T-TESS have an impact on teacher growth and development? If so, how. If not, why not?
6. RQ5: What do you like about T-TESS? What do you not like about T-TESS?
7. RQ3: In regards to growing and developing teachers, what are the differences between T-TESS and PDAS?
8. RQ1: As a new principal (or experienced principal) what value, or lack of value, do you derive from the T-TESS process?
9. In regards to the T-TESS process, what suggestion can you offer to improve teacher growth and development?

APPENDIX C:
SURVEY COVER LETTER - ADMINISTRATOR

Survey Permission Form

Fall Semester 2018

Dear Elementary School Administrator,

My name is Eddie Damian and I am a doctoral student at the University of Houston – Clear Lake. I am conducting a research study examining elementary principal perceptions of the standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas. The purpose of the survey is to assess principals' perceptions of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) as it relates to value, goal setting and professional development, system structure, and implementation fidelity. Basically, I want to know if T-TESS is living up to the expectations it was designed to accomplish.

Your expert assistance is required in completing a survey, scheduled to arrive in your email in approximately 5 days. Filling out the survey is completely voluntary, but answering each response will make the survey most useful. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and all responses will be kept completely anonymous. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you can stop your participation at any time. In addition, you will not benefit directly from your participation in this study. However, due to your participation, I will gladly share the final study with you as part of your participation. In addition, by participating, you will be entered into a drawing for free use of "My Campus Goal Board" for one full year (approx. \$1,200.00 value). It is my way of saying "thank you."

Your cooperation in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or via cell phone, [REDACTED].

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Eddie Damian.
Doctoral Candidate, University of Houston-Clear Lake

APPENDIX D:
INITIAL SURVEY CORRESPONDENCE - ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Elementary School Administrator,

My name is Eddie Damian and I am a doctoral student at the University of Houston – Clear Lake. I am conducting a research study examining elementary principal perceptions of the standards-based teacher evaluation system in Texas. The purpose of the survey is to assess principals' perceptions of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) as it relates to value, goal setting and professional development, system structure, and implementation fidelity. Basically, I want to know if T-TESS is living up to the expectations it was designed to accomplish.

Your expert assistance is required in completing a survey. Please click on this link to begin this survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and all responses will be kept completely anonymous. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you can stop your participation at any time. By participating in this survey, you will be entered into a drawing for free use of "My Campus Goal Board" for one full year (approx. \$1,200.00 value). It is my way of saying "thank you."

Your cooperation in completing this survey is greatly appreciated. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or via cell phone, [REDACTED].

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Eddie Damian.
Doctoral Candidate, University of Houston-Clear Lake