The trust levels of Omani public school principals and their distributive leadership as perceived by their teachers

Aieman Ahmad Al-Omari [a,b,1*] , Yara Yaser Hilal [a,2]

[a] Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

[b] Faculty of Educational Sciences, The Hashemite University, Jordan.

[1] aieman66@hu.edu.jo*; [2] y.hilal@squ.edu.om

* corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

Evaluating the relationship between the different components of distributive leadership help researchers and practitioners understand strength of relationships and potentially insight into how they are related with trust levels. The research aims at studying the trust levels of public-school principals in Oman and their distributive leadership as perceived by their teachers in Sultanate of Oman. The study adopts a quantitative research methodology were data was collected using the teacher trust in administration survey with 10 items, and the IB world school distributed leadership survey. A total of 201 teachers participated in the study. The study results indicated that the level of trust level was in moderate level that reported by teachers. All of the dimensions of distributed leadership were in moderate level. The correlation test showed that there was significant positive correlation trust level and all dimensions of distributed leadership. High level of correlation was between "school organization" and trust level (r=.891). Future research may also be explored, focusing on building trust between school leaders and teachers.

1. Introduction

Trust has been shown to be a key component in efforts to improve education [1], [2]. Higher levels of trust form the basis for improvement in all areas of life, including education [3]. When communication is open and effective, the level of trust between supervisor and employee increases, when individuals feel that relevant information is not shared with them, it creates an environment where employees do not share information with their supervisors [4], when teachers do not receive information they feel is important, their perception of fairness will affect trust levels [5]. Cohesion is important for building trust within the school context [6]. Teachers need to feel psychological safe to voice their concerns and be receptive to feedback [7]. When individuals experience their supervisor as having integrity, trust in that person increases [4]. Lashway defined leadership as influence and concluded that everyone in an organization has at least some influence, suggesting that principals as leaders rely to some extent on others in an organization to actually lead [8]. Furthermore, Lashway [8] assumes that a school leader's main influence in the organization is to distribute leadership to the traditionally hierarchical levels within the school. Distributive leadership does not mean that the school leader loses influence, but that he or she makes a conscious effort to relinquish sole authority at the top of a hierarchy and distribute real power throughout the organization. Leadership is exercised by different people in any organization, whether they hold an individual title or position. Sergiovanni [9] pointed out that as teachers become more professional, different leadership is required of the principal as everyone in the school takes more responsibility for change and improvement. More and

more leaders in schools and businesses are changing their view from employees as mere subordinates to empowered leaders who are part of a community working towards a common goal [10].

Distributed leadership theory is a specific type of participative leadership commonly described as creating an environment where responsibility for decisions and accountability is distributed among all members of the organization [11]. Increasing employee participation in organizational decision-making is a leadership application that has recently gained popularity. Shedd and Bacharach [12] reported positive outcomes of distributive leadership including: improved job satisfaction, increased morale, stronger commitment to goals, and shared strength of mind within the organization. Sergiovanni [9] recommends that the hierarchical leadership view of principals in schools as the primary formal authority constrains the school environment and suggests that schools should be viewed as organizations in which professional associations and common ideals form the basis for school improvement. According to his description, teacher leaders join together in school communities bound by a set of collective ideals. By becoming purposeful and collective environments, schools provide the organizational framework for developing a climate of leadership and professionalism. Furthermore, the principal leadership described by Sergiovanni [9] relies less on the individual decision-making power of the principal and focuses more on the diffusion of decision-making by others as a leadership approach to accomplishing the school's mission. According to Leithwood and colleagues [11], key leadership tasks in school systems that are often 'distributed' by principals using distributive leadership include setting the school mission, professional development programmes, redesigning the organization, and managing instruction. Distributive leadership primarily implies social distribution, where the leader's decision-making authority is shared among all members of the school, who are then viewed as a collaboration of leaders [13]. Distributive leadership implies interdependence rather than dependence on a single leader, as leaders share responsibility with their subordinates and a greater number of members of the organization share in the school's successes [14]. Gronn's [15] views leadership as a stream of influence rather than an explicit connection with a single leader.

Distributed leadership theory promotes the decentralization of the leader as a collective event in the organization. This type of leadership does not imply that everyone in a group is a leader, but opens the possibility for a more collective approach to leadership [14]. Leadership in this context is fluid rather than an individual phenomenon fixed to a particular role within an organization; distributive leadership is a collective trend where leadership is a stream of activity in which organizational members become involved [15]. Any individual can be part of a distributive organization and display leadership qualities there [16]. Educational organizations benefit from a deeper understanding of how trust can impact schools [17]. Higher levels of trust between school staff from the basis for improvement [3]. When a trusting environment exists, collaboration provides schools with the opportunity to improve as an organization [1]. Collaboration is also seen by principals as an important part of the process of building trust [18]. When trust is present, educational outcomes improve for students and teachers. A study conducted by Gregory and Ripski [19] found that students' behavior improved when teachers built relationships with students through openness and honesty. Students showed higher levels of commitment to classroom expectations and norms and were more willing to trust teachers in conversations when they were unsure about the message the teacher was conveying.

School principal behavior is an important factor in a principal's attempt to build trust with teachers [2]. Trust has been found to be one of the starting points for building capacity in schools [20]. Principals also took time to interact with teachers during staff meetings, in-service training and departmental meetings. When teachers and principals work together and share control over school-related decisions, trust between both parties is strengthened [21]. In the study conducted by Erdogan [22], 379 teachers at primary schools in Ankara, Turkey, provided information about the culture of trust in their schools. Prejudice in school relationships was associated with the school's culture of trust, with males engaging in prejudiced activities than females. Van Maele and Van Houtte's [2] study on teacher trust found that males were less likely to trust people they were not in a group with, such as the principal, while they were more likely to trust colleagues, students and parents. The male participants in the study were more likely to trust a principal because of their social exchanges and interactions, regardless of the gender of the principal. The level of trust between male teachers and their principal is also based on the current level of organizational trust. School leaders can increase teachers' trust by demonstrating reliability, which is one of the prerequisites for trust [23]. Trust and risk are closely linked. Without trust, teachers are less likely to take risks in their teaching practice

[21]. When trust is present, teachers are more likely to take risks in their practice [24], [25]. Trust between the principal and teachers is an essential prerequisite for teachers to take risks and try new pedagogical practices [21], [25], [26]. The level of trust teachers has in their leaders is related to the level of risk the teacher is willing to take in trying new teaching practices that may be unfamiliar to them [27]. By creating a professional environment in which teachers can work together to meet common expectations, principals directly develop the conditions that strengthen trust between teachers and principals [21] and increase organizational effectiveness [2]. The results of the study conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis [17] show that teachers' trust in school leadership and the creation of a professional environment are related. The effectiveness of the professional environment that principals create for teachers is one of the ways in which principals influence trust in schools and student achievement. A professional environment enables teachers to build quality relationships with other teachers and with school principals, to collaborate with other teachers in curriculum design, and to share responsibility for decisions.

To create the expectation of high academic standards for all students, school leaders need the trust of teachers [17], [20]. In a study of 64 schools conducted by Tschannen-Moran & Gareis [17], trust levels in principals was found to be associated with a school-wide focus on academic concerns and a strong focus on the conditions that increase academic achievement, such as developing standards for classroom behavior and communicating classroom expectations. Principals were open to teacher feedback on academic issues and were strongly committed to student academic engagement. These principals also set standards for students and teachers to follow and demonstrated professional behavior, which increased trust between teachers and principals. By increasing teachers' trust in school principals, a significant improvement in the quality of teaching can be expected [28]. Ripley, Mitchell, and Richman [29] conducted a qualitative study with superintendents to find out what strategies superintendents used in a new district to build trust. Similar to principals, superintendents were able to build trust by exhibiting open, caring and honest behavior, maintaining an open line of communication, continually sharing information with school staff and strengthening existing relationships. When school administrators show interest in the work of teachers, there is a possibility that trust between administrators and teachers will grow. It is difficult to imagine high performing schools maintaining their level of performance without a high level of trust between teachers and district administrators [20]. As with principals, the level of trust teachers has in their district leadership correlates with the amount of risk teachers take in their teaching practice [20], [27]. In a study conducted by Adams and Miskell [20], 849 teachers completed the teacher trust in district administration rating scale to determine if there was a relationship between teacher trust in district administration and teacher commitment in an urban setting. The results of the study showed that trust in district administration had an almost equal effect on teacher commitment compared to trust in the principal. The present contributes to the knowledge base in Oman by studying teachers perception of their school principals distributed leadership and trust levels.

2. Statement of the problem

Leaders significantly impact overall organizational performance [11]. Leadership, organizational performance, and trust have tangential connections. In spite of a plethora of research on the need for principal's distributing leadership to teachers is scant, and the topic needs further investigation. There is limited empirical research examining distributive leadership and trust levels. Additionally, there is limited empirical research that explores the relationship between principal with the use of distributive leadership and trust levels of teachers. Little is known about how the different components of distributive leadership are related to trust levels. Evaluating the relationship between the different components of distributive leadership help researchers and practitioners understand strength of relationships and potentially insight into how they are related with trust levels. This study investigated the trust levels among Omani public school principals and their distributed leadership as perceived by their teachers. This study proposed to answer the following questions; (1) How teachers at Muscat Governorate do perceived the school's leader trust level?; (2) How do teachers perceive their principals distributed leadership?; (3) Do trust level differ based on teachers' sex, specialization, and school level?; (4) Does the perceived principals' distributed leadership differ based on teachers' sex, specialization, and school level?;(5) Are there significant relationships among principals distributed leadership and trust levels as perceived by their teachers?

3. Definition of Terms

Distributed Leadership: defined as decision-making and influential practices performed by personnel at multiple levels in an organization instead of individual leaders at the top of an organizational hierarchy [11]. Furthermore, distributive leadership is a perspective that involves the activities of multiple individuals and/or groups in schools who work at guiding other staff. Distributive leadership also implies inter-dependency among leaders and teachers, rather than dependency of teachers on leaders [13]. Trust level: Developing a trusting environment that enables teachers and principals to magnify the positive characteristics of the school and develop a physiologically safe environment for students and teachers to learn in [17], [20].

4. Method

4.1. Population and Sample of study

The population for the study consisted of schools in Muscat governorate in Oman: 7647: Male = 1808; Female = 5839. The schools were all public schools. The sample populations of this study included teachers who currently worked in the participating schools in Muscat governorate. The study started in Spring 2022. 201 teachers randomly selected, 101, 50.2% were male, and 100, 49.8% were female. According to school level, 96 teachers, 47.8% in basic schools, and 105 teachers, and 52.2% in secondary schools. Regarding to teachers' specialization, 111, 55.2% Humanities, and 90, 44.8% scientific.

4.2. Instrumentation

The Teacher Trust in Administration Survey created by Adams and Miskell [20] used in this study. The instrument is comprised of 10 items. Scores are coded on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 6 representing strongly agree. The IB World School Distributed Leadership Survey (IBDLS) developed by Phillips, with a 40-item instrument. The IBDLS was designed to measure seven dimensions of distributed leadership (specifically School Organization, School Vision, School Culture, Instructional Program Artifacts, Teacher Leadership, and Principal Leadership) and three patterns of distributed leadership (specifically Institutionalized Practice, Intuitive Working Relations, and Spontaneous Collaboration). Responses to each item were anchored using a 6-point scale, specifically 1, Strongly Disagree; 2, Moderately Disagree; 3, Mildly Disagree; 4, Mildly Agree, 5, Moderately Agree, and 6, Strongly Agree.

4.3. Instruments Validity

For the purpose of examining the validity of the instruments in this study (face validity evidence) it was presented to seven experts in educational administration, research and evaluation and educational measurement. They were asked to check whether the statements in the instrument are clear and linked appropriately with the problem of study. Based on the experts' comments, some revisions regarding to the language were done to the instrument.

4.4. Instruments Reliability

Regarding the reliability of the instruments in this study, an internal consistency procedure (to estimate the consistency across the items) was used. A pilot study of 23 participants had been conducted. Those participants did not participate in the final study. The instructions were clear and all of the items of instrument functioning in appropriate manner. The values of alpha (the internal consistency coefficient) for the distributed leadership dimensions were in order " School Organization" Cronbach alpha: 0.77, " School Vision" Cronbach alpha: 0.79, "School Culture" Cronbach alpha: 0.78, "Instructional Program" Cronbach alpha= 0.75, "Artifacts" Cronbach alpha= 0.75, "Teacher leadership" Cronbach alpha= 0.75, and "Principal leadership" Cronbach alpha= 0.75. The values of alpha (the internal consistency coefficient) for the "*organizational trust*" instrument as =0.78. The previous values can be considered reasonably satisfactory to achieve the objectives of the current study.

4.5. Collection and Analysis of Data

Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze the data. Means, standard deviations, and ANOVA analysis were calculated for the research questions. Regarding to the cut points, the

response scale of each item that ranged from 1 to 6 will be determine as follows: 1-2.67 = low, 2.68 to 4.33 = moderate, and 4.34 to 6.00 = high.

5. Findings

The research questions that guide as follows: First, how do school leaders build trust between their teachers and other school leaders? What structures or strategies do school leaders use to build trust between their teachers and school leaders? How do school leaders build trust with union leaders?

5.1. How teachers in Muscat Governorate perceive the school's leader trust level?

The mean of trust level (M=3.42, SD=.892). The level of trust level was in moderate level that reported by teachers. In Table 1 is the data on the means and standard deviation of the level of trust in school leaders perceived by teachers.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of the school's leader trust level as perceived by their teachers

Items	M	SD	Level
1. My school leaders value the expertise of teachers.	3.59	1.202	Moderate
2. My school leaders show concern for the needs of my school.	3.35	1.311	Moderate
3. My school leaders are open to teacher ideas about school improvement.	3.31	1.060	Moderate
4. My school leaders demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning.	3.89	1.212	Moderate
5. My school leaders have established a coherent strategic plan for the school.	3.57	1.199	Moderate
6. My school leaders are transparent in making strategic decisions about school performance.	3.17	1.239	Moderate
7. My school leaders often say one thing and do another.	3.00	1.082	Moderate
8. My school leaders take personal responsibility for their actions and decisions.	3.14	1.102	Moderate
9. My school leaders follow through on commitments.	3.52	.965	Moderate
10. My school leaders are committed to the stated goals of the school.	3.62	.973	Moderate
Total	3.42	.892	Moderate

5.2. How do teachers perceive their principals distributed leadership?

The means and standard deviations for the principals distributed leadership as perceived by their teachers were calculated. Table 2 is the presentation of data regarding the means and standard deviation of school leaders. The distributed leadership dimensions were in order " School Organization" (M=3.48, SD=.935), then "School Vision" (M=3.82, SD=1.178), "School Culture" (M=3.65, SD=.682), "Instructional Program" (M=3.76, SD=.910), "Artifacts" (M=3.82, SD=.780), "Teacher leadership" (M=3.70, SD=.655), and "Principal leadership" (M=4.14, SD=.673). All of these dimensions were in moderate level.

Table 2. Means and standard deviation of school leaders distribute leadership as perceived by teachers

Items	M	SD	Level
1.1 There is a formal structure in place in the school that provides teachers with opportunities to participate in school level instructional decision-making.	3.51	1.188	Moderate
1.2 The school's daily and weekly schedules provide time for teachers to collaborate on instructional planning.	3.26	1.045	Moderate
1.3 The school's weekly or monthly schedule provides time for grade level teams to meet with principals to discuss instructional issues.	3.40	1.082	Moderate
1.4 The school administration encourages formal and informal cross program interactions between teachers.	3.66	1.120	Moderate
1.5 Teachers who assume leadership roles in the school have sufficient school time and resources to make meaningful contributions to the school.	3.63	1.124	Moderate
1.6 Teachers who assume leadership positions in the school have sufficient resources to enable them to fulfill their roles effectively.	3.40	1.132	Moderate
School Organization	3.48	.935	Moderate
2.1 The school's has a clearly written vision and mission statements.	3.84	1.152	Moderate
2.2 Teachers understand the school's vision and mission statements and can describe them clearly.	3.77	1.015	Moderate
2.3 Teachers and administrators collectively establish school goals.	3.67	.945	Moderate
2.4 The school's goals are aligned with its vision and mission statements.	4.13	1.355	Moderate
2.5 The school provides teachers with professional development aligned with its vision, mission and goals.	4.07	1.089	Moderate
2.6 Teachers have the responsibility to make decisions that affect meeting school goals.	3.44	1.178	Moderate
School Vision	3.82	.883	Moderate
3.1 The school has a set of shared values that guide school improvement efforts.	3.40	1.123	Moderate
3.2 The school promotes open communication based on mutual understanding and respect.	3.48	.900	Moderate

Items	M	SD	Level
3.3 There is a high level of mutual respect and trust between school administration and teachers.	3.78	.644	Moderate
3.4 There is a high level of mutual respect among teachers.	3.85	.819	Moderate
3.5 Teachers and administrators share accountability for students' academic performance.	3.96	1.043	Moderate
3.6 Teachers have high learning expectations for students	3.42	.903	Moderate
School Culture	3.65	.682	Moderate
4.1 The school administrator(s) welcome teachers input on issues related to curriculum, instruction, and improving student performance.	3.53	1.183	Moderate
4.2 Teachers actively participate in instructional decision-making.	3.77	1.123	Moderate
4.3 The school supports using new instructional ideas and innovations.	3.96	.969	Moderate
4.4 The school analyses assessment data to inform teaching and learning.	3.70	1.082	Moderate
4.5 Teachers meet on a regular basis to discuss students learning needs.	3.86	1.115	Moderate
4.6 Collaborative planning and reflection addresses vertical and horizontal articulation.	3.78	1.006	Moderate
Instructional Program	3.76	.910	Moderate
5.1 The school makes available a variety of data for teachers to use to improve student achievement.	3.73	.842	Moderate
5.2 The school uses student's performance results from external assessments to evaluate instructional strategies.	4.36	.980	Moderate
5.3 Administrators and teachers use results from internally generated formative and summative assessments to evaluate its instructional program.	4.05	1.103	Moderate
5.4 Teachers use evaluation feedback of lesson observations from their principals to improve	3.59	1.078	Moderate
5.5 Students work samples are used as a basis for improving instruction and student performance.	3.36	1.218	Moderate
Artifacts	3.82	.780	Moderate
6.1 The school has expanded its capacity by providing teachers formal opportunities to take on leadership roles.	3.48	.878	Moderate
6.2 Teachers at my school are interested in participating in school leadership roles.	3.71	.727	Moderate
6.3 Teachers in informal leadership positions play an important role in improving students' academic achievements.	3.82	.817	Moderate
6.4 Teachers in informal leadership positions play an important role in improving the performance of their colleagues.	3.94	1.091	Moderate
6.5 Teachers at my school discuss teaching strategies and share materials.	3.56	.805	Moderate
Teacher Leadership	3.70	.655	Moderate
7.1 Principals actively participate alongside teachers in professional developments for improving instruction.	3.70	1.118	Moderate
7.2 Principals are knowledgeable about school instructional issues.	4.00	.834	Moderate
7.3 Principals provide leadership for improving academic achievement.	4.11	.805	Moderate
7.4 Principal provide structures that encourage all teachers to participate in improving students' academic achievements.	3.66	1.098	Moderate
7.5 Principal's goals are aligned with the school's goals	5.23	.632	Moderate
Principal Leadership	4.14	.673	Moderate

5.3. Do trust level differ based on teachers' sex, specialization, and school level?

To understand if there are differences in the mean of trust level with regard to participant characteristics, t-test was conducted. Table 3 is the result of a comparison of the confidence level scores and selected demographics (n=201). The t-test showed that there was significant difference with regard to sex in trust level in favor of male. Trust level have significantly higher means of trust level among males than females. The t-test showed that there was no significant difference with regard to specialization and school level.

Table 3. Comparisons of trust level score and selected demographics (n=201)

Characteristics	Mean (SD)	Test	Results (df)	P value
Sex				
Male (101)	3.64(.858)	t-test	3..611(199)	.001*
Female (100)	3.19(.875)			
Specialization				
Humanities (111)	3.43(.920)	t-test	.241(199)	.810
Scientific (90)	3.40(.862)			
School level				
Basic (96)	3.42(.908)	t-test	.122(199)	.903
Secondary (105)	3.40(.882)			

[a.] * Significant at the 0.01 level

5.4. Do principals distributed leadership differ based on teachers' sex, specialization, and school level?

To understand if there are differences in the mean of distributed leadership with regard to participant characteristics, t-test was conducted. Table 4 is the result of the comparison of distributed leadership scores and selected demographics (n=128). The t-test showed that there was significant difference with regard to sex in dimensions of distributed leadership (school organization, teacher leadership, and principal leadership) in favor of male. The t-test showed that there was no significant difference with regard to specialization and school level.

Table 4. Comparisons of distributed leadership score and selected demographics (n=128)

	Characteristics	Mean (SD)	Test	Results (df)	P value
		Sex			
School Organization	Male	3.66(.985)		2.757(199)	.006*
	Female	3.30(.850)			
School Vision	Male	3.89(.892)		1.085(199)	.279
	Female	3.75(.873)			
School Culture	Male	3.73(.685)		1.806(199)	.072
	Female	3.56(.671)			
Instructional Program	Male	3.88(.896)	t-test	1.827(199)	.069
	Female	3.65(.913)			
Artifacts	Male	3.88(.800)		1.120(199)	.264
	Female	3.76(.759)			
Teacher Leadership	Male	3.80(.649)		2.097(199)	.037*
	Female	3.60(.649)			
Principal Leadership	Male	4.25(.674)		2.316(199)	.022*
	Female	4.03(.657)			
		Specialization			
School Organization	Humanities	3.42(1.025)		-.958(199)	.339
	Scientific	3.55(.811)			
School Vision	Humanities	3.82(.880)		.060(199)	.952
	Scientific	3.82(.892)			
School Culture	Humanities	3.65(.678)		.184(199)	.854
	Scientific	3.64(.690)			
Instructional Program	Humanities	3.78(.887)	t-test	.243(199)	.88
	Scientific	3.75(.941)			
Artifacts	Humanities	3.82(.760)		.075(199)	.941
	Scientific	3.81(.809)			
Teacher Leadership	Humanities	3.70(.640)		-.034(199)	.973
	Scientific	3.70(.676)			
Principal Leadership	Humanities	4.13(.664)		-.312(199)	.755
	Scientific	4.16(.687)			
		School Level			
School Organization	Basic	3.41(1.007)		-.927(199)	.355
	Secondary	3.54(.865)			
School Vision	Basic	3.79(.900)		-.508(199)	.612
	Secondary	3.85(871)			
School Culture	Basic	3.63(.675)		-.326(199)	.745
	Secondary	3.66(.691)			
Instructional Program	Basic	3.76(.889)		-.072(199)	.943
	Secondary	3.77(.932)			
Artifacts	Basic	3.78(.765)		-.672(199)	.502
	Secondary	3.85(.796)			
Teacher Leadership	Basic	3.68(.639)		-.484(199)	.629
	Secondary	3.72(.671)			
Principal Leadership	Basic	4.11(.659)		-.537(199)	.592
	Secondary	4.17(.688)			

b. * Significant at the 0.01 level

5.5. Are there significant relationships among principals distributed leadership and trust levels as perceived by their teachers?

The Correlation between trust level and distributed leadership; to understand if there are significant correlations between principals distributed leadership and trust levels as perceived by their teachers, Pearson correlation test was conducted. Table 5 is the result of Pearson correlation analysis between

the leadership framework and job satisfaction perceived by faculty members for use by department heads. The correlation test showed that there was significant positive correlation between trust level and distributed leadership dimensions. High level of correlation was between trust level and school organization (r=.891), and the least correlation was between trust level and teacher leadership (r=.182).

Table 5. Pearson correlational analysis between leadership frame and job satisfaction that faculty members perceive department chairperson to use

	School Organization	School Vision	School Culture	Instructional Program	Artifacts	Teacher Leadership	Principal Leadership
Trust level	.891*	.250*	.184*	.223*	.203*	.182*	.206*

c. * Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

6. Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendation

Findings from this study confirm that building relationships between teachers and administrators influences trust levels between both parties. School leaders try to focus on specific areas to influence trust levels. By working on these specified areas, school leaders will be able to develop trusting relationships with teachers that will affect all portions of the school environment as well as the performance of the school leader. Building relationships with teachers is the backbone to developing trust between teachers and administrators. Without these relationships, it will be challenging for school leaders to implement school-based reform measures. Evidence shows that teachers who have meaningful relationships in the school setting with their school leaders are more likely to continue working in their current positions. Teachers are more likely to work harder and share more information with their school leaders if there is a meaningful relationship. By engaging in low-risk interactions such as greetings, exchanging pleasantries, talking about your day, or sharing stories about your family or previous life experiences, these interactions will create a backlog of previous interactions that are trusting in nature. By displaying openness and honesty in these low-risk interactions, teachers learn to predict that school leaders will be open and honest in their future interactions, especially interactions that are considered higher risk, such as evaluation meetings and discipline related matters. When school leaders are open and honest in their interactions with teachers, teachers are more likely to return a similar level of openness and honesty. School leaders can use daily interactions, classroom visits and faculty meetings to engage in low-risk interactions with teachers. School leaders can create opportunities to develop relationships with teachers as well as other school leaders and parents. Providing weekly email communication to teachers, families and students, visiting teachers in their classrooms, creating newsletters to send to families and holding open sessions for teachers and families to meet with school leaders would provide opportunities for school leaders to engage in more communication with school stakeholders. By providing teachers with the materials necessary for them to complete their job and showing teachers that you are there in a supportive role instead of a mercenary role, teachers will feel more comfortable to take risks with their instruction, become more likely to reach out to you and engage in conversations about their practice and other low-risk conversations as well as strengthen the relationships between the teacher and school leader. School leaders can also support teachers by engaging in active listening during interactions with teachers and demonstrate through words and actions that you are working with teachers towards your collective goals, not against them. Engaging in workshops about building professional relationships, developing trust and unity in a team environment, or creating effective teams would be beneficial for all school leaders who want to influence trust levels in their buildings. School leaders should learn about the importance of all the possible factors that can influence trust levels and develop a plan of action. For future research, further investigation could be completed looking at building trust between school leaders and teachers. It would be beneficial to investigate each group how they contribute or affect trust levels between themselves and teachers. With some of these positions having more direct interaction with teachers and students compared to a principal, this information would be critical when investigating trust levels as well as the areas that affect trust, such as honesty, openness, consistency, and supportiveness.

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