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DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE THE ATTITUDES OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LEADERS TOWARDS FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THEIR DECISIONS TO IMPLEMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by

Julia Elliott

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop and field-test the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale and to determine its validity and reliability for use with Christian school leaders. This 11-item scale, derived from the literature, measures the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards decisions to implement a special education program based on four factors: shared vision, parental considerations, teacher input, and religious concerns. This study was exploratory in nature and sought to extend a previous qualitative study by determining a way to quantify six intangible factors identified in that study. Three panels of experts in the fields of education and research examined the survey and provided feedback during its development. The instrument was distributed online to administrators in the central and southeastern parts of the United States, whose schools were members of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Dimensions were assessed using a principal component factor analysis and internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha.

Keywords: Christian, school, leadership, ACSI, survey, instrument, principal

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Kevin. Your unwavering faith in my abilities has been a constant source of encouragement. Your patience, encouragement, and hours of babysitting provided the support I needed to achieve this milestone. This project has been as much work for you as it has been for me. I am so grateful and appreciative of your sacrifices. Twenty-five years of marriage and a multitude of challenges along the way have strengthened my love and appreciation of who you are – an amazing man. You are my heart. I look forward to the many days ahead of sharing in God's grace together.

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A great debt of gratitude goes to my parents, James and Jerlene Darnell. They provided us, their children, with a God-centered home and expected us to pursue higher education. My dad ignited the dream of pursuing a doctoral degree in my heart when I was only a teenager. Although my dad was only able to see me start the process, I sure am thankful my mom is able to see me complete the degree.

I am thankful to my husband, Kevin for his enduring support. Kevin and our son, Chris, are the best gifts that I could ever be given in this world. Thank you, Christopher Elliott, for being a top reason why I finished this dissertation. You are an amazing three-year-old.

I would like to recognize my in-laws, Larry and Ellen Elliott, and my siblings and their wonderful families, for providing me with a lot of love, encouragement, and moral support during this long journey. I thank them, love them, and appreciate them so much.

I give thanks to my Heavenly Father for this time in my life that He has provided for me to be able to spend quality time with my son, Chris, and to complete this dissertation. I am also so grateful that He provided the financial means necessary to complete this degree. I look forward with excitement and expectation at the next stage of my life and to the paths where God will take me. Lord, may you be honored in the way I live my life and serve you.

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List of Abbreviations

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Local Education Agencies (LEA)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Response to Intervention (RTI)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many Christian schools either do not admit students with disabilities or do not offer adequate services for the students with disabilities in their schools (Bello, 2006; Braley, Layman, & White, 2003; Eigenbrood, 2005; Hale, 2009; Hudson, 2002). School leaders are faced with making the decision of whether to expand their education programs to address these students' needs.

The purpose of this study was to develop and field-test the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale, and to determine its validity and reliability for use with Christian school leaders. The School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale is designed to measure attitudes of Christian school leaders towards six factors that have influence on their decisions relating to the implementation of a special education program. Having an effective tool to measure factors that influence Christian school leaders' decision-making relative to implementing a special education program can assist educational researchers in better understanding potential challenges school leaders may face. In turn, understanding these factors can assist school leaders, who are considering the implementation of a special education program, in analyzing the difficulties in a situation and in developing an action plan. This first chapter provides a background of the study, specifies the problem of the study, discusses the study's significance, presents an overview of the methodology, and defines terms important to the study.

Background

There are a number of Christian parents in the United States today who believe that providing a quality Christian education for their children is one of the most important decisions they will ever make. Many Christian parents seek schools that will teach the same values and

love for the Lord that they promote in their homes (Blue, 2004; Frierson, 2011; Nichols, 2010; Prichard, 2012). Sometimes, parents of children with disabilities find it difficult to locate Christian schools that can also meet their children's academic needs (Easom & Irwin, 2007; Fisher, 2010; Hale, 2009). Most Christian schools were developed to meet the needs of average to above-average students within a traditional classroom setting. Often, students with special needs were excluded due to a lack of professional and financial resources. As Christian schools are maturing, many are interested in expanding their programs to meet the needs of special education students (Braley et al., 2003; Eigenbrood, 2005).

Although religious schools may not have formal special education programs in place, many students with disabilities are enrolled in religious schools in the U.S. In various studies, the majority of schools reported educating students with high incidence disabilities such as learning disabilities (LD) and speech and language impairments (SLI). There was evidence that students with disabilities that required more financial resources were enrolled only in a small minority of the schools (Bello, 2006; Easom & Irwin, 2007; Hale, 2009; Hudson, 2002). Bello (2006) and Eigenbrood (2005) found a significant difference between the services provided by faith-based and public schools.

The prevalence of students with disabilities varies widely among Christian schools, including schools that are members of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) due to demographics, school purpose, and admissions requirements. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) is the largest Protestant Christian K-12 educational association in the U. S. today with 11% of private school students attending schools that are members of ACSI. It is the second largest religious association with the National Catholic Educational Association being the largest (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Although

ACSI does not specifically address the needs of students with learning differences, it does state that one of the indicators of effective schools is to help students achieve their full potential in Christ. It further describes for schools how to accomplish this by having learning activities that focus on "providing programs and services appropriate for the student" (Association of Christian Schools International, 2010). ACSI and other Christian educational organizations can assist Christian schools in educating all God's children by helping administrators through the decision-making process and development of special education services and programs.

Decision making is often the principal function of leaders in schools (English, 2006). The decision-making process, when considering the addition of a special education program, is complex. School leaders must make the decision that promotes the ideals of the school, is feasible due to resource constraints, and is best for all stakeholders involved, while also thinking innovatively. The addition of a special education program designed to provide instruction "to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a) can cause a fundamental shift in the way teachers, administrators, students, and other stakeholders think and act. Programs may include but are not limited to programs such as Response to Intervention (RTI), inclusion, and tutoring services that provide instruction that is based on peer-reviewed research to the extent that it is feasible. Often related services and supplementary aids and services are provided based on students' needs.

Previous research has been done in the area of understanding the factors that school principals considered in establishing special education programs within Christian schools. Understanding these factors can assist school leaders, who are considering the implementation of a special education program, in analyzing the difficulties in a situation and in developing an action plan. Cookson and Smith (2011) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study in the

area of Christian school principals' experiences as they established special education programs within their schools. Several categorical themes emerged from principal interviews including shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and religious considerations. This study built on the results of Cookson and Smith's (2011) study by creating an instrument that examines the attitudes of Christian school leaders' consideration to implement special education programs within six dimensions.

Problem Statement

The problem is there is no instrument to measure the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards decisions to implement a special education program based on shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure Christian school leaders' attitudes in six dimensions that have influence on their consideration to implement special education programs. These six dimensions included shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns. This study attempted to help fill this gap in education research.

Significance of the Study

This study will continue the work of Cookson and Smith, (2011) who conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study in the area of Christian school principals' experiences as they established special education programs within their schools. Several categorical themes emerged from principal interviews including shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and religious considerations. Currently, there are

no instruments specific to special education and Christian schools to quantitatively measure shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns. The outcome of this study is to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure school leaders' attitudes and perceptions towards six dimensions that have influence on their consideration to implement special education programs. The publication of this instrument can provide researchers with a tool they can use to inform Christian school leaders, who are considering the implementation of a special education program, of various aspects they should consider when engaging in the decision-making process (Drucker, 1974; English, 2006; Etzioni, 1967; Fullan, 2001; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Findings may also provide university preparation programs and professional Christian school organizations with information to better equip school administrators as they engage in the decision-making process relative to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Research Questions

RQ1: How valid is the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

RQ2: How reliable is the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

RQ3: Is there a single dimension or multiple dimensions underlying the items that make up the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Many Christian parents desire to provide their children with a quality academic and Christian education. Parents of students who are average to above average achievers are usually able to find Christian schools that meet their children's needs. Students with disabilities often do not have access to a Christian education as many Christian schools have traditionally sought to maintain a college preparatory atmosphere (Bello, 2006; Eigenbrood, 2005). Schools with formally structured special education programs that meet the needs of students with special needs can be difficult to locate and are usually quite expensive.

Although religious schools may not have formal special education programs in place, many students with disabilities are enrolled in religious schools in the U.S. In various studies, the majority of schools reported educating students with high incidence disabilities. There was evidence that students with disabilities that required more financial resources were enrolled only in a small minority of the schools (Bello, 2006; Hale, 2009; Hudson, 2002). Bello (2006) and Eigenbrood (2005) found a significant difference between the services provided by faith-based and public schools. Bello (2006) attributed this difference to insufficient personnel for specialized services.

Previous research is limited in the area of understanding the factors that school principals considered in establishing special education programs within Christian schools. Cookson and Smith (2011) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study in the area of Christian school principals' experiences as they established special education programs within their schools. Several categorical themes emerged from principal interviews including shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and religious considerations. This study seeks to build on this previous research.

This chapter is organized into the following sections: Historical Background of Legislation that has Shaped Special Education, Six Dimensions of Decision Making, and Conclusion. The literature is reviewed and scrutinized as the components of the Six Dimension of Decision Making are involved in both the development of the instrument and the statistical analysis.

Historical Background of Legislation that has Shaped Special Education

Although people with disabilities have been identified and treated for over 200 years, special education in the United States grew rapidly only in the 20th century. As special education has evolved, it has been shaped by the civil rights movement and related court cases, parent and professional advocacy, federal law, and professional research (Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Smith & Tyler, 2010). Although private schools are not bound by all of the special education legislation, it nevertheless impacts the expectations of parents and the perceptions of best practices in the field.

The civil rights movement and the 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, although initially motivated by the desire to provide equal rights for African Americans, began to influence the way people thought about disabilities. The court ruled in this landmark civil rights case that "separate but equal is not equal," which became the foundation for Congress to pass a law to guarantee students the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This set in motion the legal precedents and purpose for establishing the field of special education (Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Salend & Duhaney, 2011; Smith & Tyler, 2010). Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prevents discrimination in programs that receive federal funds for all individuals with disabilities, including children in schools and adults in the workforce. This law also provides for accommodations for students

who require some special attention but not special education (Friend & Bursuck, 2012, Smith & Tyler, 2010).

Following *Brown v. Board of Education,* the court systems have been used to uphold and expand the civil and educational rights of students with exceptionalities. Court cases have also been used to help shape special education concepts and services (Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Salend & Duhaney, 2011).

Advocacy groups succeeded in lobbying for laws that provided for special education services. Noteworthy among these is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that Congress passed in 1975. It has been reauthorized many times in order to provide students with disabilities access to public schools. IDEA requires schools to educate students with exceptionalities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and to only place students in separate classes or schools when an appropriate education cannot be given in the general classroom with additional aids and services. Procedural safeguards were also put into place including the provision of an individualized educational program (IEP) to guide the delivery of special education services (Heward, 2013; Salend & Duhaney, 2011).

In addition to legislation, the special education field has been shaped by research. It has produced a significant and reliable knowledge base about effective teaching practices. There are continuing efforts to develop and disseminate empirically based interventions, and to create and use evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes in a meaningful way, thereby providing better educational opportunities for all students (Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Heward, 2013; Salend & Duhaney, 2011).

Laws Related to Private School Admissions

There are three major federal laws that prohibit the discrimination of students with

disabilities. They include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 (Ohio Legal Services, n.d.; Southwest ADA Center, n.d.). ADA exempts religious institutions and, therefore, will not be addressed in this manuscript. In most cases, federal laws pertaining to discrimination apply to public schools and to private schools that receive federal funding (LaMance, 2011; Lawyers.com, 2013). Private schools usually base their admissions policies upon a theme, such as a Christian preparatory academy (LaMance, 2011). If the private school does not receive federal funding, it is able to deny admissions to students who do not meet the demographic sought, including students with mental or physical disabilities (LaMance, 2011; Lawyers.com, 2013). This allows private Christian schools who do not receive federal funds to "pick-and-choose" which students they will admit except for reasons of race and gender (Lawyers.com, 2013).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 is civil rights legislation designed to protect people with disabilities from discrimination due to their disabilities and it applies to schools that receive federal funding (Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Smith & Tyler, 2010; Smith, 2001; Wright & Wright, 2008). Private Christian schools may choose to receive federal funds such as Title I funds or free and reduced lunches for their students, which in turn would require them to adhere to the provisions of this law (Russo, Osborne, Massucci, & Cattaro, 2011). Section 504 requires schools to provide accommodations and modifications as well as access to buildings. It does not require the school to provide an individual education program (Wright & Wright, 2008). Nor does it require schools to lower their academic standards to admit students with disabilities (Russo et al., 2011).

IDEA as it Relates to Private Schools

As stated above, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that requires states to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all eligible children with disabilities that live in that state (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Local Education Agencies (LEA) meet their obligation under IDEA to provide a FAPE by offering special education services within the public school setting. If parents seek a private education for their child(ren), including a Christian school, they may be giving up access to the special education services that public schools would provide as they have no individual entitlement to public school services (Boyle, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

As a replacement for these services, the LEA must spend a proportionate amount of IDEA funds to provide services to these parentally placed private school students. The proportionate amount is based on a formula that reflects the ration of parentally placed students with disabilities and the total number of students with disabilities in a given school district (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The arrival of proportionate share plans has altered the quantity and types of services available to private schools (Boyle, 2010). LEAs must consult with private school representatives and parent representatives of parentally placed students with disabilities during the services planning phase for these children (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The process inherently requires private schools to defer to the public schools on what types of services these school systems can provide (Boyle, 2010). Although legislation has helped shape special education programs, other factors also have influence over private schools' decisions pertaining to special education programming.

Six Dimensions of Decision Making

Cookson and Smith (2011) conducted a phenomenological study detailing the experiences of Christian school principals as they implemented special education programs

within their schools. Qualitative research methodology was used to enable "the researcher to gather data based on the lived experiences of principals who have established special education in Christian schools" (p. 70). The study included seven Christian school principals in Michigan who implemented special education programs. Cookson reviewed artifacts and conducted personal interviews. The study resulted in the identification of six themes that indicated the considerations of these Christian school principals as they deliberated over decisions related to the implementation of special education programs. This study seeks to build on the results of his study. Below, a research review of the six themes, or dimensions, has been conducted.

Shared Vision

The first dimension that affects principals' consideration to implement a special education program is shared vision (Cookson & Smith, 2011). Researchers have identified the ability to inspire a shared vision as a common process that exemplifies successful school leadership (Cookson, 2010; Cookson & Smith, 2011; Furney, Aiden, Hasazi, & Clark/Keefe, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Leithwood, 2008; Riehl, 2008; Sashkin, 1996; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). Kouzes and Posner (2012) indicated that shared vision is a research-based leadership practice in which leaders demonstrate future possibilities through enthusiasm and optimism, providing a clear and compelling vision, and enlisting others as enthusiastic supporters. In order for school change to be successful, it must be transformative in nature (Leithwood, 2008; Riehl, 2008). Through inspiring a shared vision, the leader is able to motivate people to want to change and improve (Northouse, 2007). When considering the expansion of the school's academic program to include special education, it is important for the principal to consider how to build a shared vision. This section will discuss the characteristics of visionary leaders, what the process looks like, and the principal's role in inspiring a shared vision in special education reform

initiatives.

Leaders who are skilled in inspiring a shared vision are able to create and effectively communicate a powerful, compelling vision of what their organizations or schools can and should be (Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). These leaders are certain that they can assist their organizations in achieving that vision. They have a well-defined picture of what they want to accomplish prior to executing their plans (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). They also lead the faculty to agree on challenging but achievable goals that the faculty find motivational. Visionary leaders express confidence in their faculty's ability to accomplish these goals. They oversee the process and review results. They consistently keep these goals in front of the faculty (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Yukl & Lepsinger (2004) described this process as follows:

- Develop a clear picture of what the organization can accomplish or become
- Link proposed changes to ideals, values, and aspirations
- Articulate the vision with enthusiasm and vivid language
- Express optimism and confidence that the vision can be achieved (p.107).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) found that inspiring a shared vision was the least frequently applied leadership practice in their study. Only 10% of the leaders they surveyed felt they inspired their stakeholders. DeLucia (2011) found that inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process were implemented to a much lower degree than the leadership practices of encouraging the heart, enabling others to act, and modeling the way. The study found that the primary supports to inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process were primarily internal and within the principal's power to influence. The results of the study suggested that principals needed to strengthen their capacities to utilize these key leadership competencies in their daily practices. At the same time, barriers needed to be dealt with as they reduced the principals'

efficacy when they implemented these leadership practices.

A key finding in Cookson and Smith's (2011) study was the importance of establishing a shared vision. The principals viewed their own roles in the process as critical to the programs' successes. One of the first tasks they undertook was to develop a philosophy statement for special education. Principals reported that without it, their programs might have wavered or faltered. They emphasized the need for the principal to have "passion and ownership" for the program. Cookson (2010) reported that the principal's "passion must be deep and personal in order to provide the 'missionary zeal' required for such an undertaking. The direct enunciation of vision without apologies" (pp.89-90). Sergiovanni (1992) expressed this same philosophy stating that there were times when leaders needed to lead through "moral outrage" as they engaged the school's stakeholders in tough conversations.

Several studies addressed the principal's role in inspiring a shared vision in special education school reforms initiatives such as inclusion and Response to Intervention (RTI) (Audette, Polly, & White, 2012; Dulaney, 2013; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Mellard, Prewett, & Deshler, 2012; Waldron, McLeskey, & Redd, 2011). The factors that led to the schools' successes in these studies are remarkably similar. Studies emphasized the importance of establishing a strong vision (Dulaney, 2013; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Mellard et al., 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). Furney et al. (2005) and Waldron et al. (2011) found that principals engaged stakeholders in creating a vision for an inclusive educational system. Furney et al. (2005) reported that school members appreciated the opportunities they had to participate in discussions. A shared vision and plans for improving the education of all students often ensued. As decisions about curriculum and school culture were considered, the principal led the stakeholders through the process of viewing these decisions in

light of the school's vision. The principals in this study were also able to persuade stakeholders to take part in verbalizing the shared vision. As principals remained steadfast in their support of the schools' visions for meeting the needs of students with disabilities, teachers who did not share these leaders' visions frequently left the schools (Cookson, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012). Principals often had strong levels of internal accountability (Hehir & Katzman, 2012).

The leaders of these successful schools were value-driven and led from a moral basis (Audette et al., 2012; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011). Furney et al. (2005) found that effective principals demonstrated a genuine concern about the worth and achievement of all their students, and that this played a positive role in attaining the shared vision. The interviews revealed that the kind of leadership that produced concern for all students was the same type of leadership that produced internal change in the thoughts and beliefs of stakeholders as well as changes in programmatic processes.

Many schools and school systems have great visions on paper. What differentiated schools that achieved visions and those that did not relate to having systematic strategies for achieving those visions (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). The visionary principals who were effective developed plans that frequently engaged their schools in practices of utilizing distributed leadership, providing adequate resources, establishing strong relationships with stakeholders, setting high expectations for all students, and utilizing data to inform instruction. Instrumental in the process of developing special education reform initiatives was creating collaborative structures and processes (Audette et al., 2012; Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2007; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011). Principals often created leadership teams, addressed professional development needs, developed a sense of empowerment among teachers and other stakeholders, and provided time

for teachers to work collaboratively to address instructional concerns.

A key factor in the success of these special education initiatives was the focus of improving instruction for all students in all settings (Audette et al., 2012; Dulaney, 2013; Farrell et al., 2007; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Mellard et al., 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). Principals set the standard that teachers have the same expectations for every single child, although the path to attaining this goal may differ depending on the student (Hehir & Katzman, 2012). All students were challenged with difficult material, but also received instruction that met individual skill development needs (Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). Hehir & Katzman (2012) also found that effective schools extended time during the day and the school year for many students with disabilities.

Studies found that effective principals collected, analyzed, and reported student and program data. Then, they shared assessment data with stakeholders and used it to help them outline goals, make decisions, and formulate or revise plans to accomplish their shared vision. These leaders created data management systems that enhanced their abilities to provide comprehensive services (Audette et al., 2012; Dulaney, 2013; Duncan, 2010; Furney et al., 2005; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Mellard et al., 2012; Waldron et al., 2011).

School principals must carefully consider the establishment of a shared vision in order to develop a special education program (Cookson & Smith, 2011). It is the principal's responsibility to make certain that that the school's vision is cohesive, helps reduce the achievement gap, and is shared by all stakeholders.

Financial Considerations

A second dimension that affects principals' consideration to implement a special education program is funding (Cookson & Smith, 2011). Acquiring funding means "obtaining

resources for a specified or clearly articulated purpose" (Collins III & O'Brien, 2011, p. 193). In this case, funding would be used to implement a special education program. In private schools, funding comes primarily from tuition, fees, and fundraising. It is well-documented that special education programs are expensive to implement. Studies have found that it costs about twice as much to educate a student with special needs as it does a student in the general education program (Chaikind & Danielson, 1993; Chambers, Parrish, & Harr, 2002; Jordan, Weiner, & Jordan, 1997; Parrish, 2000). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), the number of students in the United States receiving special education services is about 13% of total public school enrollment. The costs of educating students with special needs varies based upon the students' educational needs (Snell, 2009). Since special education programs are costly, funding is an important consideration for the Christian school principal considering the implementation of a special education program.

Many students with disabilities have enrolled in religious schools in the U.S. In various studies, the majority of schools reported educating students with high incidence disabilities. There was evidence that students with disabilities that required more financial resources were enrolled only in a small minority of the schools. Schools often limited their enrollment to high incidence disabilities (Bello, 2006; Hale, 2009; Hudson, 2002).

As Christian schools develop and fund their own special education programs, tuition will likely be raised to meet the financial needs of the program. Cookson (2011) found that Christian school principals subscribed to one of two primary philosophies of funding their special education programs. Some principals placed the increased fiscal responsibility on the parents of students with special needs while others charged the same tuition for all students. Maintaining the same tuition for all students was based on the philosophy that as special education students

are wholly a part of the school, the tuition policy should reflect the covenantal responsibility that all aspects of the tuition should be shouldered by all of the Christian families. In some schools where the parents of the special education students assumed the financial responsibility, schools provided tuition assistance for families who were unable to pay the cost. Parents were often encouraged to find additional sources for tuition support. Parents who were motivated to enroll their students with special needs were often resourceful in finding supplementary funds. Bello (2006) reported that a slight majority of Catholic high schools used regular tuition to fund their special education programs. The remainder of the schools reported using private donations, grants, or charging additional fees in addition to the tuition.

Bello (2006) indicated that a strong majority (96.2 %) of Catholic schools in her study reported that a lack of financial and professional resources was of foremost concern to implementing special education services. This same sentiment was expressed in Cookson's (2010) study by a principal who stated that the largest barriers to the development of a special education program were funding and staffing.

Although enrolling students with special needs can be an increased financial burden to a school, it can also provide financial blessings. Cookson (2010) found that this occurred in some schools through increased tuition dollars, not only from the newly enrolled students with special needs, but also from their siblings who were enrolled in the general education program. This increased enrollment contributed to an increased cash flow.

Private Christian schools and students with disabilities may benefit from implementing cost-saving strategies as special education services are often very costly. Private schools may choose to adopt some of the cost saving strategies public schools use. From 1980-2005, the number of students receiving special education services increased steadily in the public school

system. Because of the added expense associated with providing special education services in public school systems, many politicians demanded a less costly system for identifying students with learning disabilities. Response to intervention (RTI) became the forerunner to replace the conventional discrepancy model for identifying students with special needs (Mitchem & Richards, 2003; Strax, Strax, & Cooper, 2012; Wong, Graham, & Hoskyn, 2008). Identification rates are projected to decrease as some students will likely be served through general classroom interventions rather than through special education programs (Strax et al., 2012). From 2006-2010, there was a gradual decrease in the number of students receiving special education services. In addition, a larger proportion of students in special education are being educated primarily in the general education classroom. In 2009-2010, 59% of special education students spent at least 80% of their day in general education as compared to 33% in 1990-1991 and 47% in 2000-2001 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Inclusion, in many instances, has helped reduce cost. Unfortunately, for some schools, this has been done by providing inadequate resources to handle the various needs of disabled students (Bello, 2006; McLaughlin & Warren, 1994).

There is accumulating evidence that the financial burden on schools can be alleviated by training paraprofessionals to work with difficult-to-remediate children under the supervision of expert reading teachers (Gelheizer, Scanlon, & D'Angelo, 2001; Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996; Simmons, Kame'enui, Stoolmiller, Coyne, & Harn, 2003). There is also some evidence that suggests that highly trained speech-language pathology assistants, using manuals prepared by speech-language pathologists to guide intervention, can provide effective services for some children with language problems (Adamczyk et al., 2010).

Christian schools may also want to take advantage of services and funds provided by

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through their local school districts (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Local Education Agencies (LEA) meet their obligation under IDEA to provide a free and appropriate education by providing special education services within the public school setting. If parents seek a private education for their child(ren), including a Christian school, they may be giving up access to the special education services that public schools would provide as they have no individual entitlement to public school services (Boyle, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). As a replacement for these services, the LEA must spend a proportionate amount of IDEA funds to provide services to these parentally placed private school students. The proportionate amount is based on a formula that reflects the ration of parentally placed students with disabilities and the total number of students with disabilities in a given school district (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The quantity and types of services available to private schools vary widely but may include opportunities for professional development, materials, and services (Bello, 2006). LEAs must consult with private school representatives and parent representatives of parentally placed students with disabilities during the services planning phase for these children (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In some states, students may receive state scholarship monies to assist parents of students with special needs with private school tuition. Currently, there are nine states, with a total of 11 special needs scholarship programs available (Alliance for School Choice, 2013). Some argue that it has resulted in religious schools admitting students with special needs more rapidly than secular private schools, and in some states, they educate the majority of students receiving special needs scholarships (Hensel, 2010). These special needs scholarship programs infuse $233 million into private schools, proving an average scholarship amount of $7,423 per student. This additional funding provides Christian schools with an opportunity for increased

enrollment and with a great opportunity to fulfill their calling to educate all children.

Fiscally speaking, Christian schools must carefully consider the stewardship of their monies and time for developing special education programs. It is the principal's responsibility to make certain that monies are used in a manner that honors the Lord (Cookson, 2010).

Parental Concerns

As Christian schools seek to fulfill their missions, parental involvement can make a significant contribution to the schools' success. Parents are often concerned about school decisions since, as parents, they engage in "the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development . . ." of their children (Davies, 2000, p. 245). Parents help provide Christian schools with necessary financial resources, volunteers, support for student achievement, a supportive environment, and spiritual support (Carden, 2005). The importance of positive parent-school relations was identified as one of ten factors apparent in successful school leaders (Kythreotis & Pashiardis, 1998). Effective principals understand that difficult decisions affect people and they allow people to appropriately influence them (Nolte, 2001). The importance of parental involvement in school success has been well established in the literature (Cotton, 2003). Principals who reach out to parents are more successful than principals who do not (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Cotton, 2003; Fullan, Bertani, & Quinn, 2004). This section will discuss how the Christian principal's value of parents is grounded in scripture as well as the need to satisfy their paying customers, what level of parental involvement should be allowed, common parental concerns of children without disabilities, and strategies for gaining parental support.

The Christian school principal's value of parents is grounded in scripture (Edlin, 2003; Schultz, 2003). The Bible places the primary responsibility of nurturing and educating children

with the parents (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21; Ephesians 6:4; Malachi 2:13-16; Proverbs 22:6; Psalm 78:1-7; Psalm 127:3). The purpose of the Christian school is to partner with parents as they carry out this responsibility. Edlin (2003) and Schultz (2003) contended that Christian parents should not hand their authority or responsibility for their children over to the Christian school. Instead, they should follow scripture by ensuring that the policies and procedures of the school are in line with biblical patterns and by involving themselves appropriately in school life (Edlin, 2003; Schultz, 2003).

In addition to a biblically-based philosophical value of parents, Christian school leaders value parents' approval and satisfaction for a much more practical reason as well. Freer (2008) found that administrators listened to parents because, as paying customers, parents needed to be satisfied from a business perspective. His study revealed that parents believed that the financial decision they made in choosing a private school entitled them to evaluate the product they had purchased and to influence decisions regarding that educational product. This belief existed in Christian schools as well. He found that at times Christian schools were at a disadvantage over other private schools as many of them were not financially independent, which increased the pressure that administrators felt to satisfy all parents. Enrollment is critical for the financial viability of private schools (Bowles & Bosworth, 2002; Zimmer, DeBoer, & Hirth, 2009).

Keeping parents satisfied in the Christian school environment can be problematic as parents choose Christian schools for a variety of reasons (Freer, 2008). Blue (2004) and Carden (2005) found that although most parents chose Christian schools because they desired spiritual guidance for their children, other factors affected their decisions as well. Safety was often cited as an extremely important reason for choosing a Christian education. Parents wanted a school environment where their children were not exposed to unsavory influences. They wanted their

children to be loved and appreciated and they wanted their children to be academically prepared for college. They wanted the faculty and staff to make a difference in the lives of their children. In Blue's (2004) study, some parents indicated that they knew the principal personally and that the principals and teachers worked together with them to meet their children's needs. This personal touch was important to parents. The research suggested that some parents are committed to Christian education, while others may be more committed to private education. Due to the variety of reasons parents choose Christian schools, school leaders may find it more difficult to keep parents happy, as it is difficult for schools to be all things to all people.

Cookson and Smith (2011) identified parental concerns as an important consideration for principals in the establishment of special education programs. The study revealed that there were parents who advocated for the establishment of a special education program within their school, yet there were also parents of regular education students who expressed some concerns.

The concerns of regular education parents toward inclusion may give the Christian principal pause. At first, parents might have misgivings about having students with special needs in the regular classroom (Cookson & Smith, 2011; Garrick-Duhaney & Salend, 2000). They may fear that this change may affect the quality of education their child will receive, their child's behavior, and the amount of time the teacher has for non-disabled students. They may also be concerned about whether the school has enough qualified teachers who are skilled in inclusion (Garrick-Duhaney & Salend, 2000). Parents' level of concern may also vary based upon the severity of the disabilities the school intends to admit (Green & Stoneman, 1989).

Christian school parents often want to be involved in the decision making process which necessitates that the Christian school principal determine at what level parents should be involved in the decision making process. Carden (2005) discovered that parents desired to be

involved with some aspect of the school's governance. Parents rated decision-making of curriculum as a high governance expectation. Colley (2005) noted that parents often had divergent agendas as they sought to exert influence and direction over decision making. Freer (2008) found that parents contributed to the curriculum of all three schools in his study. The degree to which the school leaders accepted and incorporated parents' ideas into the curriculum varied. On most occasions, school leaders did not ask parents for their input regarding curricular changes, but they did take notice and listen to what parents had to say. Parents often served as the catalyst for change.

Freer (2008) also found that school leaders were more open to parental input regarding the informal curriculum or co-curricular program than the formal curriculum. Administrators asserted that curricular decisions should be made by the school. They indicated that parents do not have the knowledge base to make those decisions and that the faculty and staff were the professionals in the field. At the same time, they did not ignore parents' comments but listened and considered their requests. Parents were more likely to be successful in bringing about changes in the schools' co-curricular programs than in the formal school.

Building a positive relationship between the school and parents can help support important school initiatives (Cotton, 2003; Freer, 2008; Fullan et al., 2004). Leaders should invest in developing relationships with parents over time, which in turn builds trust. Open and clear communication contributes to building positive relationships (Kowalski, 2010). Parents are more likely to trust school leaders and personnel when they receive frequent and open communication (Freer, 2008). The basis for a school's successful change effort is trust and openness (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In Freer's (2008) study, Christian school leaders indicated that communication with parents is vital to success when dealing with high profile issues. They

advocated addressing these issues head-on. Open communication allowed school leaders not only to inform parents of upcoming changes, it established trust between stakeholders, and it allowed leaders to establish boundaries for parental involvement. Proactive communication helped leaders prevent conflicts and limit misunderstandings. School leaders indicated that communication with parents should delineate boundaries clearly so that parents understand their roles in the educational process. Parents were welcome to ask questions, but they did not have the right to make changes in the area of curriculum development (Freer, 2008).

Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves (2012) found that effective leaders engaged in personal, direct conversations in order to build support for desired changes. Freer (2008) discovered that some parents were more influential than other parents. They served on governing boards, were successful alumni, in a financial position to donate, or were employed at the school. These parents had an increased level of influence. When a change was considered, school leaders often spoke to key people.

Freer (2008) found that when conflict did occur, the investment school leaders made in developing good relationships with parents made the negotiation process easier. He also found that, although school leaders did not embrace the idea of receiving feedback from parents regarding the schools' formal curriculum, they listened to the parents' ideas. Listening attentively builds trust (Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008). As principals gained experience in dealing with parent relationships, they became better at negotiating parental relationships. The longevity of the principal and the institution was another factor that established trust (Freer, 2008)

Change within schools can be ineffective and may even hurt the school climate if the stakeholders do not buy into the new initiative (Kowalski, 2010). By communicating an

inspiring vision, and by establishing the ethical and moral reasons behind their decisions, school leaders can frequently create parental buy-in (Fullan et al., 2004; Stronge et al., 2008).

School principals must carefully consider parental support and concerns in the development of special education programs (Cookson & Smith, 2011). Building a positive relationship between the school and parents can help support this important school initiative (Cotton, 2003; Freer, 2008; Fullan et al., 2004).

Teacher Input

Teachers can play important roles within the school to broaden and strengthen school change. Teachers can provide advice or opinions to help school leaders make decisions. To aid in this process, teachers often provide administrators with important input by selecting curriculum, monitoring change efforts, and by participating in organizational meetings (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005). This section stresses the importance of positive teacher attitudes in relation to students with special needs, outlines concerns teachers may have relative to the development of a special education program, and how teacher leaders may be used by school administration to create school-wide approval of proposed changes related to the implementation of special education programs.

Cookson and Smith (2011) identified teacher input as an important consideration of principals in the establishment of special education programs. All of the principals stated that involving and updating teachers continually was important to the success of the process. Hammond and Ingalls (2003) indicated that if a special education program utilizing inclusion was going to succeed, a well thought-out, systematic plan was required and coordination from all involved personnel was essential.

Studies showed that the willingness of the general education staff to work with students

in special education varied in both public and religious schools (Cookson & Smith, 2011; Hale, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Zigmond & Baker, 1997). Principals in Cookson and Smith's (2011) study indicated that, initially, Christian general education teachers expressed hesitancy to teach students with special needs. Hale (2009) found that teachers in the Seventh-day Adventist schools voiced a fervent conviction that Christian education was beneficial for both students with special needs as well as general education students. In spite of this conviction, teachers questioned whether or not students with special needs should be included in the Christian school's general classroom. They postulated that perhaps public schools had programs specifically designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities and employ teachers with better training, thus providing the students with special needs a better education.

When implementing inclusionary programs, the success of the programs hinged on teachers' attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cook, 2004; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Ross-Hill, 2009; Sze, 2009). Effective teachers of students with disabilities are "warm demanders" (Waldron et al., 2011). Teachers who are warm demanders demonstrate warmth to their students yet insist and demand that students achieve at a high level (Kleinfeld, 1975; Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2008; Waldron et al., 2011; Ware, 2006). Although the majority of literature regarding warm demanders deals with minority at-risk students, some research has found that it is successful with students with special needs as well. Effective inclusionary teachers have high expectations of all students. They have the same expectations for every single child, although the path to attaining this goal may differ depending on the student (Hehir & Katzman, 2012).

Cookson and Smith (2011) found that in some Christian schools that initiated special education programs, younger teachers were more willing to teach students with disabilities than

teachers who had been at the school longer. Some teachers felt that students in special education did not belong in the general classroom. In the end, some teachers who refused to accept the new programs were asked to leave the schools.

Literature on teaming and collaboration suggests that when schools are implementing new programs, it is imperative that the people involved in implementing those new programs have positive attitudes. When the educators involved had negative experiences with the new program, it was probable that the school would return to its previous mode of operation (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). Based on their research, Waldron, McLeskey, & Pacchiano (1999) warned against making drastic changes through the implementation of an inclusionary program in the general education classroom without making certain that general education teachers were indeed supportive of these changes.

Research indicated that a teacher's attitude towards teaching in an inclusive classroom was linked to how much special education training and experience the teacher had in instructing students with disabilities (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000). Many general education teachers did not feel adequately prepared to teach students with disabilities, both in public and religious schools (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Czeladnicki, 2011; Hale, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Catholic principals in Kansas reported that although they enrolled students with disabilities in their schools, their teachers were not adequately trained to deal with students with disabilities (Huppe, 2010). Cookson (2010) found that principals attributed teachers' hesitancy to teach students with special needs to the teachers' lack of knowledge about inclusion and students with special needs, as well as a fear of change.

In addition, the severity and type of disability impacted teachers' attitudes toward

inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000; Cook, 2002; Cook, Cook, Landrum, & Tankersley, 2000; Praisner, 2003). Teachers were generally less positive as the severity of the disability increased. Teachers were less concerned about having students with physical disabilities and more concerned about having students with behavioral disorders, emotional disorders, mental retardation, or multiple disabilities. Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion were generally more positive in the younger grades and were less positive in the older grades (Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001).

In a study of 71 elementary education teachers, Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad (2003) found that general education teachers teaching in inclusive classrooms felt that they needed more information and administrative support. Teachers wanted to know more about the classification of disabilities so that they could better identify students with disabilities, and they wanted training specific to each student's diagnosis. Teachers also wanted to know the information in the students' Individual Education Plans (IEP) and comprehensive evaluation reports as they had not reviewed students' cumulative records. Whether it was because teachers did not feel they had time to review the reports or whether it was because they did not think they had access to the reports is unclear. Teachers also did not think that they knew what constituted realistic expectations for students with disabilities in their classrooms. They desired more training on appropriate adaptations and accommodations for their included students. Many teachers were not aware of current research to aid their instruction including how to use flexible grouping and differentiated instruction. Teachers did not appear to either know how or want to change their teaching styles to meet the students' needs. Cookson (2010) found that some Christian teachers appeared hostile toward changing their teaching styles and making appropriate accommodations.

Teachers were also concerned about meeting the needs of all students in the classroom

(Kamens et al., 2003). They were apprehensive about teaching both disabled and non-disabled students in the same classroom, so that both groups were progressing. They questioned whether they could balance the additional attention that the students with disabilities needed while at the same time meeting the needs of the rest of the class. They also wanted help with adapting curriculum, instruction, and assessment not only for the students with special needs in the classes, but for all students.

Teachers also mentioned that they wanted help with meeting the emotional needs of students with disabilities. They wanted to know how to help students with special needs gain self-esteem, experience success in the classroom, while at the same time keeping the momentum of the curriculum and instruction moving forward.

Kamens et al. (2003) found that teachers wanted additional support from the administration. They felt that administrators could provide additional support by reducing class sizes, scheduling time for planning and collaboration among professionals, providing paraprofessionals, and providing time to access IEPs. Teachers thought that administrators needed to be more knowledgeable about disabilities and inclusive practices. In Hammond and Ingalls' (2003) study, teachers expressed a desire for greater commitment from administrators. Praisner (2003) found that in order for inclusionary programs to be successful, positive principal support for teachers was required.

Studies have suggested that in order to accomplish effective instruction in inclusionary settings, professional development programs should focus on meeting the needs of teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching in an inclusionary classroom (Cookson, 2010; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Hale, 2009; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Kamens et al., 2003). After participating in one three-credit-hour class, Coombs-Richardson and Mead (2001)

found that teachers had a positive increase in their attitudes towards inclusion and expressed a new desire to collaborate with other professionals.

In studies on Response to Intervention (RTI) in several public school districts across the United States, teachers expressed having positive attitudes towards RTI. Overall, teachers felt they were qualified, but there was still a need for professional development for those who did not feel qualified. Teachers felt that the RTI framework could be strengthened by requiring less paperwork, accelerating the process, and providing in-service for intervention strategies (Bailey, 2010; Hernandez, 2012).

In a study on establishing special education programs in Christian schools, principals indicated that in order for a school's new special education program to gain the approval that was needed to ensure the program's success, a core group of teachers had to accept the program. In time, teachers' attitudes changed. In the end, some of the teachers who most passionately opposed the development of special education programs became the programs' biggest advocates (Cookson & Smith, 2011).

Whitaker (1995) stated that one of the best methods for affecting lasting change in a school is to use the informal teacher leadership structure. In their study, Whitaker and Valentine (1993) found that more effective principals were able to identify their informal teacher leaders and gathered ideas and solicited input from them. Many times the teacher leaders were the best teachers in the school. They found that if the teacher leaders did not support the proposed changes or if they were not familiar with the new methodologies the school was attempting to implement, then it was worth investing time and energy to gain their support before discussing it with other staff members. Whitaker (1995) contended that if key leaders in a school did not support the proposed changes, most likely other people would not endorse them either. When

teacher leaders were optimistic about proposed changes, they could help create school-wide approval by expressing their views in both formal and informal settings.

School principals must carefully consider teacher input, support, and concerns in the development of special education programs (Cookson, 2010). Building positive teacher attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cook, 2004; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Ross-Hill, 2009; Sze, 2009; Waldron et al., 2011), providing appropriate professional development (Cookson & Smith, 2011; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Hale, 2009; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Kamens et al., 2003), and providing needed support to teachers (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Kamens et al., 2003; Praisner, 2003) are vital for effecting the change needed to build a strong special education program.

Student Considerations

In the implementation of a special education program, student considerations may also play an important role in principals' decision making. Student considerations are issues that are carefully deliberated in an effort to reach decisions that are in the best interest of students. As principals consider the implementation of a special education program within the Christian school, principals will want to think through the implications on the students with special needs both academically and socially, on the students without special needs both academically and socially, which programs the school can put in place to meet the needs of students with special needs, and whether those programs will effectively meet students' needs.

The placement of a student with disabilities can significantly impact his/her learning. According to Smith and Tyler (2010), most students with disabilities attend general education classes for a significant part of their school day, but they also receive at least some of their special education services outside the general education setting. Data on placement trends for

students with learning disabilities indicated that students are being placed in less restrictive settings across the U.S. The most recent data available suggested that this trend toward general education placement continues with 95% of students with disabilities being served in general education settings at least part of the school day (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Research on students with disabilities has suggested that what occurs within a placement setting has a much more significant effect on student outcomes than the placement itself (Edmonds et al., 2009; Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000; Gersten, 1998; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997; Swanson, 1999; Swanson & Hoskyn, 1998). Madden & Slavin (1983) concluded that inclusion with support can be the best placement for students with disabilities in regards to the students' academic achievement and social-emotional outcomes rather than full-time placement in special education classes. They do caution, however, that until schools have sufficient resources to meet the needs of all students with special needs in the general education classroom, special education programs will continue to be needed.

The effectiveness of inclusion as a placement model on the outcomes for students with disabilities has been well established (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994; Black, 2010; National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Robbins, 2010; Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Giasson, Royer, & et al., 1998; SRI International, 1993; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998). Robbins (2010) and Black (2010) found that as students' level of inclusion increased, outcomes on state tests increased as well. Some variables that contributed to the effectiveness of inclusion programs included the quality of the inclusion programs and the extent to which the general education programs accommodated the needs of students with disabilities (Waldron & McLeskey, 1998).

Although the results of some studies indicated that inclusion frequently produced positive results for students with disabilities, other studies suggested that some students with disabilities were better served academically when enrolled in traditional special education programs. In a study of 396,828 students in North Carolina, Ewing (2009) found that students with special needs enrolled in special education programs made larger gains on the state's standardized test than students enrolled in general education programs. The effectiveness of the education placement varied based on the students' types of disabilities. Students with speech language impairments benefited the least. Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (1998, 2002) also found that students with disabilities benefited academically when they received their educational programs through a traditional special education service delivery model. In a study of 68 middle school students in two schools, Herriott (2010) found that there were no significant differences between students' scores of students enrolled in inclusive teaching models versus pull-out teaching models.

Many students in special education need assistance beyond what special education and general education teachers can provide. These are services that a student may need in order to benefit from special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). Bello (2006) found a significant difference between the services provided by Catholic and public schools, particularly in speech and language services. She attributed this difference to insufficient personnel for specialized services in the Catholic schools. Eigenbrood (2005) found that faith-based schools used services such as occupational therapy and physical therapy much less than public schools. One possible explanation is that faith-based schools may enroll students with less severe disabilities.

Students who did not make adequate progress when a scientifically based curriculum was

being used required more intensive instruction. This was accomplished by either decreasing the instructional group size, or increasing the amount of time students spent receiving instruction, or both (Vaughn, Wanzek, Woodruff, & Linan-Thompson, 2007). Both Swanson's (1999) and Chard, Gersten, and Vaughn's (2000) meta-analysis of reading research indicated that providing much repetition through practice opportunities reduced the struggles that many students with disabilities experienced. This practice was most effective when it occurred in small, interactive groups where teachers engaged students in direct questioning and kept tasks at the students' instructional level.

Vaughn et al. (2003), found that when student interventions occurred in groups of three or one-to-one, students were able to make significantly more gains on comprehension measurements than those students who received their instruction in groups of 10. There was, however, little difference between the students who received their instruction in groups of three as opposed to the students who received one-to-one instruction. A meta-analysis of one-to-one tutoring clearly indicated that, typically speaking, instructional groups of three students to one teacher yield no different outcomes than one-to-one instruction (Elbaum et al., 2000).

Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes (2007) published general principles for designing instruction for students with disabilities based upon a review of the literature. They recommended increasing time-on-task through interventions. The interventions should supplement the instructional opportunities rather than supplant them. The instruction provided should be explicit, systematic, organized, and should provide for cumulative review of content learned. Interventions should be specific to the academic domain in which the student is struggling. Progress should be frequently assessed and used to inform instruction. They also recommended that interventions be integrated with general education practices.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a promising instructional practice, with interventions built-in, which may help schools close performance gaps. It is viewed by many as both a method of disability identification as well as early intervention (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). In his book, *Response to Intervention: A Blueprint for Catholic Schools,* Dr. Michael Boyle (2010) argued that RTI could provide a framework by which Catholic schools could offer a chance at success for all students. Perhaps, RTI can provide Christian schools with a framework for prevention of learning disabilities and intervention for students with disabilities more quickly and efficiently than the past, as expensive psychologists will not be necessary for intervention to begin.

RTI provides a framework for accomplishing several important objectives: (a) identifying at-risk students early through the use of universal screening; (b) providing interventions early; (c) providing a framework for monitoring student progress; (d) providing research-based instruction to meet students' needs; (e) and more accurate referrals for special education (Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004).

In a systematic literature review of empirical research on the effect of inclusion on students without disabilities, Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan (2007) explored the impact that placement of students in special education within inclusive settings had on the academic and social outcomes of non-disabled students. The findings suggested that it is unlikely that non-disabled students would be negatively impacted either academically or socially by being placed in an inclusive classroom. Some studies indicated that general education students could be positively impacted in the inclusive classroom if the support offered to the students with special needs was well managed (Howes, 2003; Idol, 2006; Saint-Laurent et al., 1998). The approaches that the special education and general education teachers implemented for students with special

needs also benefited the general education students (Idol, 2006). Managing inclusion successfully in secondary schools appeared to be more problematic than in elementary schools (Kalambouka et al., 2007). Students with behavioral problems were more difficult to include successfully than other disability types (Brown, 1982).

Although most of the research on the impact of inclusion on non-disabled students showed a neutral or positive effect, some studies showed mixed effects. Gandhi (2007) attributed the mixed nature of the results of inclusive research to contextual variables in the classroom. In her study of 8,000 third graders in the U.S., she found that although inclusion did not negatively affect the reading achievement of most students, classes that enrolled students with autism or emotional disturbance did not achieve as well in reading as their peers in non-inclusive classrooms, if the classroom did not have a paid paraprofessional. Practices that contributed to non-disabled students in inclusive classrooms who out-performed their peers who were not in inclusive classrooms included paid paraprofessionals and frequent meetings between the general and special education teachers. She concluded that contextual classroom characteristics could make major differences in how inclusion could impact both students with and without special needs in the general classroom.

Huber, Rosenfeld, and Fiorello (2001) found that inclusion varied in the way it impacted general education students' academic achievement in both math and reading when an inclusive program was first implemented. Lower achieving general education students benefited academically from inclusion while higher achieving students lost ground academically. These effects were less evident in the second year of inclusion implementation.

Overall, research showed that students with disabilities who were placed in inclusive settings had more positive exchanges with their peers and better attitudes towards school and

learning (National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995). Their self-esteem improved and their behavior more closely emulated the behavior of their peers without disabilities (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). In spite of these improvements, non-disabled students were less accepting of students with disabilities (Roberts & Zubrick, 1992; Sale & Carey, 1995; Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996).

Cookson (2010) reported that school principals believed the reaction of general education students to newly enrolled students in special education to be an important consideration in the implementation of special education programs within the Christian school. Principals described positive social aspects of enrolling students with special needs. They indicated that implementation of special education programs caused a change in the schools' cultures. General education students became more considerate and thoughtful of others. Principals found that middle school students were more likely to avoid students with special needs but that growing up with students with special needs contributed to acceptance. Principals cited a need to prepare general education students for the inclusion of students in special education, especially when enrolling extreme special needs cases. The Christian schools found that the implementation of social intervention programs had positive effects on students' behavior.

The body of literature on the social and emotional impact of inclusion supported the use of social interventions, especially when admitting students with more severe disabilities. There is a general agreement that students respond negatively to those who are different from themselves both academically and socially. Research has shown that physical inclusion, in some cases, fostered positive attitudes among general education students, but not always. In many cases, physical inclusion, by itself, could not be counted on to foster positive attitudes. Social interventions have been shown to be effective at varying levels. Interventions may include

strategies such as direct instruction on disabilities, video presentations, role playing, cooperative groupings, buddy systems, and peer tutoring (Siperstein, Norins, & Mohler, 2007).

School principals must carefully consider how the development of special education programs impact students with and without disabilities both academically and socially (Cookson, 2010). Maintaining an academically demanding environment for the non-disabled student while helping students with disabilities close the gap between their achievement and that of their peers can be extremely challenging. Developing a well-thought-out plan can contribute to the students' success in the school.

Religious Considerations

Most Christian schools were developed to meet the needs of average to above-average students within a traditional classroom setting. Often, students with special needs were excluded for practical reasons, such as a lack of professional and financial resources. As Christian schools are maturing, many are interested in expanding their programs to meet the needs of students in special education (Braley et al., 2003; Eigenbrood, 2005). Spiritual considerations may play an important role in Christian leaders' decision-making process to implement a special education program. Christian leaders demonstrate their consideration of spiritual matters by carefully considering issues in accordance with the doctrines of truth elicited from scripture. This section discusses the biblical basis for developing special education programs and the spiritual impact special education programs may have on both students with and without disabilities and their families.

The rationale for Christian schools' desire to meet the needs of students in special education comes from scripture. Christians believe that every student is created in God's image (Genesis 1:27), and is therefore unique and created for a specific purpose (Horton, 1992; Van

Brummelen, 2009). Christians are admonished to uphold the cause of the poor (Psalm 82:3-4), including the intellectually poor. Jesus made a point of ministering to people from many walks of life with diverse gifts and needs (Van Brummelen, 2009). Barnes (2012) postulated that Jesus wanted everyone to be a part of the church. Both the disabled and non-disabled should join together to become one in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:28b) through God's grace and mercy. Many argue that Christ's example and biblical mandates make it clear that Christian educators should invite exceptional students to their schools (Braley et al., 2003).

Some people contend that Christians should fully embrace inclusion, as it treats all students as "worthy human beings created in the image of God" (Van Brummelen, 2009, Chapter 7, Section 3, para. 2). Pudlas (2004) asserted that it demonstrates the degree to which Christians are fulfilling the biblical mandates of love and acceptance. Responding to this moral call to action, Michael Boyle published, *Response to Intervention: A Blueprint for Catholic Schools* in 2010 as a framework for inclusion in order to assist parishes or dioceses in establishing effective, inclusive practices and programs for students with disabilities.

Cookson and Smith (2011) conducted a phenomenological study on the experiences of Christian school principals as they established special education programs within their schools. He found that religious considerations were paramount in the consideration process as principals reevaluated their core beliefs and biblical mandates in relation to their schools' responsibilities towards students with special needs. Most of the principals had a personal experience that ignited their passion to develop a special education program within their schools. For some, it was a desire to meet the needs of all of the students they already had enrolled in their schools. For others, they were challenged by parents to reconsider their Christian school philosophy of education that neglected students with special needs. One principal spoke of the struggles of his

siblings with special needs and their experiences with the Christian school. Due to the principals' biblical desire to do God's will, they re-evaluated their educational philosophies and their responsibilities to educate all of God's children. In the end, they found that their admissions' policies did not conform to their Christian educational philosophies. Biblical principles helped guide their decision-making processes. Principals reported the dedication that ensued from this process helped propel them to implement special education programs, a sometimes arduous task. Cookson (2010) reported that the testimonies of the spiritual satisfaction and blessings these programs produced should encourage and energize principals who may also be considering implementing special education programs.

As principals consider the implementation of special education programs within their schools, they may also want to reflect on the hospitality their teachers and students should reflect. Anderson (2011) recommended that schools implement the biblical concept of hospitality in order to successfully include all students into the class. Block (2002) argued that without hospitality, those with disabilities only have access and that accessibility and hospitality have different meanings. Hospitality should be seen in the way the teacher interacts with students. Through hospitality, the teacher creates a welcoming classroom environment, providing a culture of acceptance and belonging (Anderson, 2011).

Anderson (2011) further asserted that hospitality extends to each teacher's responsibility for educating students. Mittler (2000) stated that schools must change the way they operate in order to successfully meet the needs of all students. In part, this may be accomplished by "helping all teachers to accept the responsibility for the learning of all children in their school and preparing them to teach children who are currently being excluded from their school" (p. vii). This view of teacher hospitality and responsibility is reflected in Crystal's statement to Hale

(2009). Crystal, a general education classroom teacher stated, in a personal communication with Hale, that in order for schools to improve services to students with disabilities, teachers needed to have positive attitudes towards the students with disabilities in their classrooms and that they should demonstrate a willingness to stretch their own abilities. She reported that teachers needed to be willing to accept responsibility for the student with disabilities. The teacher's attitude should be, "God has placed me here, and I will figure out what it takes to teach this child" (p. 145). Anderson (2011) affirmed the importance for the general education teacher to research the specific disabilities found in the classroom. He also recommended that the general education teacher develop collaborative relationships with the special education teacher, related service providers, and the students' families (2011). All children have gifts, and the teacher should nourish each student's gifts (Kunc, 1992). Anderson (2011) asserted that a teacher's hospitality should be extended by not grumbling, even when a student is a difficult guest in the classroom (1 Peter 4:9).

Although Christian educators may agree that students with special needs should be able to obtain a Christian education, they often struggle with how to offer the best academic programs while still meeting the needs of struggling students; however, some may cite a lack of resources (financial, time, professional staff, etc.) as well as the need to maintain a quality education and a college preparatory atmosphere and reputation as reasons for not meeting this need. Some argue that full-inclusion works better at the elementary level than high school level (Bello, 2006; Van Brummelen, 2009). Bello (2006) found that the above average expectation for private high schools, as well as its departmental structure and strong emphasis on curricular standards, provided challenges for the inclusion model. Van Brummelen (2009) contended that the number of students each teacher has in high school can also present a challenge for teachers to know and

provide for their individual students' needs.

As principals consider the implementation of special education within their schools, they may also want to consider the spiritual impact that these programs may have on the students with disabilities and their families. Individuals with disabilities and their families can benefit from having spiritual or religious beliefs as these beliefs can provide a method of managing and creating meaning for the disability (Tarakeshwar & Pargament, 2001; Treloar, 2002). Treloar (2002) interviewed evangelical Christians with disabilities and their family members. She interviewed parents of 13 children with developmental disabilities, nine adults with physical disabilities, and eight family members. She found that the persons' with disabilities relationship with Jesus Christ helped the individuals adjust more positively to the disability. The trials the persons with disabilities went through fostered spiritual growth and reliance on God which resulted in increased faith in God. Their spiritual beliefs helped create meaning for the disability. The participants reported a belief that God had a greater purpose and plan for their lives and chose to think on things that would fill them with joy. The participants reported a need for further teaching on establishing a theological understanding of disability. Vogel, Polloway, and Smith (2006) found that inclusion in a faith community often led individuals with disabilities to have a sense of belonging to a community and to develop friendships. Strength gained from their faith and support from religious communities often promoted an increased quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families (Poston & Turnbull, 2004).

Leaders of schools with effective special education programs in secular schools were value-driven and led from a moral basis (Audette et al., 2012; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011). Christian schools have an added value-driven incentive. They have the opportunity to honor God by educating all of God's

children.

Summary

Improved understanding of the factors that school principals take into account when considering the establishment of special education programs within Christian schools can assist school leaders, who are considering the implementation of a special education program, in analyzing the difficulties in a situation and in developing an action plan. The research on factors that Christian school leaders consider when deciding whether to implement a special education program is limited. This study will examine the differences among six dimensions influencing Christian school leaders' consideration to implement special education programs. This study attempts to help fill the gap in education by developing a valid and reliable instrument to measure school leaders' attitudes and perceptions towards six dimensions that have influence on their consideration to implement special education programs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to develop and field-test a survey instrument designed to measure the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards factors influencing the leaders' consideration to implement a special education program in their schools. This study grew from the desire to extend a previous qualitative study by determining a way to quantify six intangible factors identified in that survey: shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns (Cookson & Smith, 2011). Further, the study was designed to determine the instrument's validity and reliability. Having an effective tool to measure the attitudes and perceptions of Christian school administrators relative to special education programs in the Christian school environment will provide educational researchers and practitioners with another means to examine specific factors that affect school leaders' decisions relative to implementing or enhancing a special education program. The focus of this chapter includes the research design, research questions, participants, setting, instrumentation, procedures and data analysis.

Design

Survey research is prevalent throughout the social sciences (Trochim, 2006). Development of an instrument is a complex process requiring item analysis and validity and reliability analysis (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This study used a quantitative research design to determine the dimensionality of the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale using a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Further development of the instrument and the procedures for each analysis are described in greater detail below.

Andres (2012) recommended the researcher adhere to the following research design

process:

- Identifying the research problem and related questions
- Locating yourself in the research design and process
- Anticipating the audience
- Using triangulation to determine what is already known
- Specifying the preliminary sampling frame
- Completing behavioral ethics applications
- Specifying the type(s) of instruments to be employed
- Determining what skills you will need
- Designing the survey instrument
- Specifying the sample and its size
- Devising a doable schedule and budget
- Piloting the instrument and training assistants
- Administering the survey
- Anticipating data coding and clean-up
- Preparing for analysis (Chapter 2).

Fowler (2014) argued that survey development and validation require three primary methodologies: sampling, question design, and data collection. He contended that these three activities are essential to good survey design. Sampling should involve utilizing procedures to ensure a random and representative sample. Instrument items should be clear and consistently understood. Data collection needs to protect against interviewer bias. It should also provide for a sufficient response rate in order for the data set to be representative of the sample. These methodologies are also asserted by Alreck and Settle (2004) and Groves et al. (2013).

Andres (2012) recommended that throughout the survey development process, the researcher should pre-test or pilot individual items, and eventually, the entire instrument. Items can be piloted with experts on the topic. Pilot testing helps ensure accuracy of the survey as well as ensure that the important topics and items have been included. Utilizing experts and pilot studies can help establish face validity, content validity, construct validity, and predictive validity.

The reliability of a scale shows how free it is from random error. Two commonly used methods of assessing a scale's reliability are test-retest reliability and internal consistency. Measuring consistency with Cronbach's alpha is one of the most common ways of measuring internal consistency (Pallant, 2013). This statistic gives an average correlation among all of the items that make up the scale. Values range from 0 to 1, with higher values demonstrating greater reliability.

Researchers use factor analytic techniques extensively to develop and evaluate surveys and scales. The researcher begins with a large number of items and by using factor analysis or principal component analysis, reduces these items to form a smaller number of coherent subscales. Essentially, it takes a large set of variables and examines the inter-correlations among items. Items that are associated with the same construct should show a high correlation with each other in the survey responses (Pallant, 2013).

Research Questions

Research Questions

RQ1: How valid is the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

RQ2: How reliable is the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for

Christian School Leaders?

RQ3: Is there a single dimension or multiple dimensions underlying the items that make up the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

Participants and Setting

The sample population of this study was one of convenience as it was taken directly from ACSI's membership directory. As a directory of all Christian schools does not exist, it was impractical to select Christian schools randomly. As a result, according to Alreck & Settle (2004), it is appropriate to use a convenience sample when "it's exceedingly difficult or even impossible to choose a sample randomly" (p. 43). The sample population of administrators came from the ACSI member schools located in the southeast, Florida, and south-central regions. The southeast region includes approximately 350 schools in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The south-central region includes approximately 321 schools in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Additionally, this research solicited participation from administrators in ACSI member schools in Florida which is part of the Florida Caribbean region. There are approximately 195 member schools in Florida. The first round of surveys was sent to 545 ACSI school leaders in the southeast region and Florida. Warner (2013) recommended N be no less than 100 and stated that it is desirable to have $N > 10p$ where p equals the number of domains. A second round of surveys was sent to 321 schools leaders in the south-central region.

The first round of surveys had 64 respondents with a response rate of 12%. The majority of the respondents (58%) were female while 42% were male. Most of the respondents (58%) were school heads, 2% were pastors, 20% were principals, 5% were school presidents/vice-presidents, 3% were superintendents, and 12% served in other capacities of school leadership. A

majority of those responding (52%) reported that their highest degree earned was a master's degree, while 18% had doctorates, 5% had specialist degrees, and 21% had bachelors' degrees. Only one respondent reported having some college. A majority had a degree in educational leadership (70%) or in another educational field (13%). However, 10% had religious degrees and 16% had degrees in fields unrelated to education or religion. Most (90%) had some teaching experience while 10% had never taught in the classroom. The average years in administration were 15 years. Only 7% reported having degrees in special education and 41% reported having some experience in special education.

The second round of surveys had 56 respondents with a response rate of 17%. The majority of the respondents (54%) were female while 46% were male. Most of the respondents (57%) were school heads, 32% were principals, 33% were superintendents, and 2% served in other capacities of school leadership. A majority of those responding (57%) reported that their highest degree earned was a master's degree, while 19% had doctorates, 2% had specialist degrees, and 17% had bachelors' degrees. Only two respondents reported having some college. A majority had a degree in educational leadership (79%) or in another educational field (18%). However, 14% had religious degrees and 2% had degrees in fields unrelated to education or religion. Most (96%) had some teaching experience while 4% had never taught in the classroom. The average years in administration were 15 years. Only 11% reported having degrees in special education and 46% reported having some experience working with individuals with special needs.

Of the 120 schools represented in this study, 3% of the schools were preschool early childhood centers, 11% were pre-k through elementary schools, 18% were pre-k through 8th grade schools, and 68% were pre-k through 12th grade schools. The majority (54%) of the

schools were church sponsored while the minority (46%) were independent schools. Most schools (57%) were ACSI member schools while 43% were accredited by ACSI. The average enrollment was 302 students with member schools having an average enrollment of 264 students and accredited schools having an average enrollment of 353 students. Only 48% of schools reported to have a formal special education program in place. Most of the schools (56%) reported to have 10 or more students enrolled with identified disabilities. Of the schools who reported to have students with disabilities enrolled, 50% reported to have a formal special education program in place and 15% reported that their school was considering developing a formal special education program. Most (56%) of the schools with special education programs served students with high incidence disabilities.

Instrumentation

Because there were no instruments available to measure the specific factors identified in the previous qualitative study, it was necessary for a survey instrument to be developed. This survey instrument was designed to extend the previous study by measuring attitudes and perceptions of Christian school leaders towards shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns influencing a school leader's decision to implement a special education program. These six dimensions were identified in a qualitative study conducted by Cookson and Smith (2011) by ascertaining the changes that occurred in the lives of principals as they considered special education programs (Cookson & Smith, 2011). The final survey was divided into four sections: (a) the purpose and instructions for completing the survey, (b) informed consent, (c) demographic questions, and (d) 30-item survey. The 30-item survey contained five items in each of six categories designed to assess the six dimensions of decision-making. This survey sought to determine the extent to

which a participant agreed or disagreed with each statement regarding his or her attitude using a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, and 5=Strongly Disagree. A five-point Likert scale was chosen because the format is powerful and easy to use. One of the main advantages of using a Likert is that it can produce a summated value (Alreck & Settle, 2004). This aided in establishing the reliability and validity of the instrument.

Development of the Instrument

The development of the survey began with the focus of the study. Once this was defined, a review of the literature was conducted related to each of the six dimensions or constructs identified in the previous qualitative study: shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and spiritual considerations (Cookson & Smith, 2011). A construct is an abstract concept that is not able to directly be measured or observed (Agarwal, 2011). This researcher used information from the literature to generate 15-30 potential survey items for each dimension for a total of 158 potential items. See Appendix D for all items. A panel of experts, consisting of three university professors, was convened to assist in evaluating the initial pool of items. Two of the professors have doctorates in education with 41 years of combined experience in the field of education and the third has a doctorate in a research discipline from a tier 1 American research university and 17 years of experience as a professional researcher and professor. The panel reviewed the items for face validity, providing feedback regarding item focus, brevity, and clarity. As 158 items was excessively large, the initial pool of items was given to this panel to evaluate. From this feedback, the researcher narrowed the questions to 50 items, allowing approximately eight questions per dimension. This pool of 50 items was later given to another panel of judges to narrow even further for the purpose

of rating items for construct validity.

It is important that surveys measure the constructs they are intended to measure (Alreck & Settle, 2004). In this case, the survey attempted to quantify qualitative constructs in order to examine relationships and trends. The researcher needed to determine that the items generated did indeed measure what they were expected to measure relative to the various dimensions. The process for final item selection, adapted from Trochim's (2006) steps in rating and selecting items, utilized a panel of judges for the purpose of construct validity. Members of the panel consisted of 13 individuals who have all had significant experience in providing leadership for Christian K-12 schools. For the initial review, each member was given a list of 50 statements and asked to identify the construct to which the statement was most closely related. Items were grouped by construct according to the number of responses per category each item received. See Appendix E for list of statements.

In the second review, a second panel of judges, who have all had significant experience in providing leadership for Christian K-12 schools, was given the list of items grouped according to construct. See Appendix F for grouped items. Nine judges rated the items with respect to the construct of interest using the following scale:

1) Strongly related to the concept
2) Somewhat unrelated to the concept
3) Somewhat favorable related to the concept
4) Strongly related to the concept

From this information, the mean score for each item was calculated. Five items per dimension with the highest mean score were retained and the initial instrument was developed. See Appendix C for the instrument. The instrument was returned to the original panel of

professors to review the final list of items once again for face validity. The panel provided feedback regarding item focus, brevity, and clarity.

Procedure

After receiving IRB approval, a pilot study was conducted. The instrument was sent to ACSI administrators in the southeastern portion of the United States. The primary method for collecting data was an online survey that was created in SurveyMonkey. The researcher sent an email to ACSI school leaders in Florida and the southeast region requesting their participation. See Appendix A for the email. The email list was provided by ACSI and consisted of 545 addresses. Included in the email was a link to the survey. When participants accessed the page, an introduction to the study appeared. See Appendix B for the introduction and consent form. Participants were asked to give their informed consent. If they agreed, they selected the button that stated, "I agree to participate in the study" and selected the 'next' button to continue. Individuals that selected the button, "I choose not to participate in the study" and then selected the next button were notified that informed consent is required to continue. Individuals were thanked for their time and consideration. The researcher's contact information was provided for further questions. When participants gave consent, they were taken to the survey. Instructions were provided and individuals were asked a series of personal demographic questions, demographic questions about the school, and then asked to complete the 30-item instrument. See Appendix C for the survey. After one week, the researcher again sent a reminder and a final reminder after week two.

The researcher utilized SPSS version 22 to conduct a principal component analysis with varimax rotation and Cronbach's alpha (S. B. Green & Salkind, 2011). SurveyMonkey collected the data on a secure webserver. The researcher accessed the data via a secure website.

SurveyMonkey provided SPSS integration, and data was exported to SPSS to facilitate data analysis. The instrument was re-administered to administrators in the south-central region to confirm that the instrument loaded on all the dimensions.

Data Analysis

The process for analyzing the data followed the logic established in the textbook, *Fundamental Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* by Howell (2010). The data was quantitative in nature. Data used in this study was coded, data screened, and all assumption tests applied. Using SPSS and Excel, the following statistical procedures were conducted as recommended by Green and Salkind (2011): Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Matrix, Principal Component Analysis (PCA), and Cronbach's Alpha.

A correlation matrix of the survey items was generated. Fleming (n.d.) indicated that a correlation matrix is an important item to review when looking at survey data. It is the place from which a principal component analysis is initiated. The advantage of the correlation matrix is that it is straightforward and it reveals how variables correlate with one another. The correlation matrix was used to help determine whether the test items were correlated with one another.

The purpose of a principal component analysis (PCA) is to reduce the number of variables through the identification of patterns – similarities and differences – in the data. In this study, principal component analysis was used to reduce the number of survey questions by identifying and removing redundant questions. The PCA process allowed the researcher to reduce the number of questions or variables down to their principal components. It also established the dimensionality of the instrument. The process was completed in a series of six steps as recommended by Hatcher (1994).

The first step was to extract or create components. The number of components extracted was equal to the number of variables, or questions in the survey. Although 30 components were extracted, not all of the components were important enough to be retained for interpretation. An eigenvalue table was generated. An eigenvalue "represents the amount of variance that is accounted for by a given component" (Hatcher, 1994, p. 22). Each variable was changed so that its mean was zero and its variance was one. The total variance in the data set is the sum of the variances, i.e. the number of variables being analyzed. The variables were weighted and they showed the greatest amount of variance in the data set for the resulting components. Typically, the patterns suggest that there may be redundancy among some of the items.

Because of the redundancy that exists among the variables, the observed variables were reduced into a smaller number of principal components (artificial variables) that accounted for most of the variance among the variables. Therefore, the second step was to determine which components were significant and valuable to be kept for the purpose of rotation and interpretation (Hatcher, 1994). It is generally suggested that multiple criteria be considered when determining the number of components to be retained. One of the most commonly used criteria for determining the number of components to include is the eigenvalue-one criterion, also known as the Kaiser criterion. With this approach, an eigenvalue greater than 1.00 would be retained. The rationale for this criterion is straightforward. An eigenvalue greater than 1.00 consists of a larger amount of variance than was supplied by one variable. As a result, that component accounts for a significant amount of variance and should be retained. Research indicates that this criterion identifies the correct number of components when the number of variables in the analysis is small (10 to 15) or moderate (20 to 30) and the communalities are high (greater than 0.70) (Schwab, n. d.).

A second criterion that was considered when determining the number of components to be retained is the scree test. The eigenvalues associated with each component were plotted and the researcher looked for a "break" between the components with somewhat large eigenvalues and those with small eigenvalues. Research indicates that the scree is accurate in identifying the correct number of components with a sample size larger than 250 and communalities greater than 0.60 (Schwab, n. d.).

The final criterion considered was the solution interpretability criterion. This calls for the researcher to understand the significance of the retained components and to confirm that this understanding makes sense in light of what knowledge already exists about the constructs being studied. Hatcher (1994) recommended that four rules be followed when this criterion is used:

1. Are there at least three variables (items) with significant loading on each retained component?
2. Do the variables that load on a given component share the same conceptual meaning?
3. Do the variables that load on different components seem to be measuring different constructs?
4. Does the rotated factor pattern demonstrate "simple structure?" (pp. 26-27)

The third step consists of performing a factor rotation for a final solution. Prior to rotation, a factor pattern matrix was generated. The matrix represented the variables being analyzed and the retained components. When more than one component is retained for analysis, the interpretation of a factor pattern is usually quite difficult, so a rotation is performed. A rotation "is a linear transformation that is performed on the factor solution for the purpose of making the solution easier to interpret" (Hatcher, 1994, p. 28). This study used a varimax rotation. Varimax refers to an orthogonal rotation. A varimax rotation makes the correlations 0.

A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were also applied. These tests give a minimum benchmark that should be attained before a principal component analysis is performed (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, n.d.-a). KMO statistic varies between 0 and 1. A value close to 1 denotes patterns of correlations that are relatively compact, which means that the factor analysis should produce distinct and reliable factors (Singh, 2013). It is recommended that the value of .6 be used as a minimum standard (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, n.d.-a). Bartlett's test measures the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. A significance value less than 0.05 indicates that the R-matrix is not an identity matrix and that there are relationships among the variables that should be included in the principal component analysis (Singh, 2013).

In the fourth step, the rotated solution was interpreted. The purpose of this step was to ascertain what is measured by each of the retained components. This consisted of finding the variables that have high loadings for a component and identifying what these variables had in common. Hatcher (1994) recommended that an item should be considered to load on a given component if the factor loading is .40 or greater for that component factor. The components were then named.

The last step involved creating factor scores or factor-based scores. The goal of this step was to assign scores to each individual to see how that individual viewed the retained components. The results of the rotated factor pattern were then placed in a table for easy viewing.

After the dimensionality of the instrument was established through PCA, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of variables to determine if the scale was reliable. Sets of questions were analyzed to see how well they measured each construct and to

identify questions that were problematic. Item analysis helped the researcher assess the correlation of related survey questions with only a few statistics. Cronbach's alpha is a single number that informs the researcher of how well a set of questions measures a single construct. This number ranges from 0 to 1. Values above .7 are generally deemed adequate (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, n.d.-b).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Research Questions

RQ1: How valid is the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

RQ2: How reliable is the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

RQ3: Is there a single dimension or multiple dimensions underlying the items that make up the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale for Christian School Leaders?

Survey Analysis

This research study began with validating the researcher-developed School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale. Additional analysis was then conducted after the validation of the survey. The analysis was extended by targeting school and school leader demographics to assess the attitudes school leaders may have towards the enhancement or implementation of special education programs in their schools within the next two years. This chapter is divided into the validation of the survey instrument followed by additional data analysis.

Validity Analysis

An examination of the instrument's items reveals that on face value they appeared to measure attitudes of Christian school leaders towards factors that have influence on their decisions relating to the implementation of a special education program. Additionally, the procedures used to develop the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale provide high confidence that the test instrument also possesses high content and construct validities. Considerable effort was expended to ensure that items were based in professional

literature. Additionally, the items were reviewed for face validity by three university professors and a panel of judges. Two of the professors have doctorates in education with 41 years of combined experience in the field of education, and the third has a doctorate in a research discipline from a tier 1 American research university and 17 years of experience as a professional researcher and professor. All members of the judge panel had significant experience in providing leadership for Christian K-12 schools.

Factor Structure

First round of surveys. The 30 items of the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 22. Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .579, which falls short of the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Initially, principal components analysis suggested the presence of nine components with eigenvalues exceeding one, explaining 70.99% of the total variance. An inspection of the scree plot revealed a break after the sixth component. Using Catell's (1966) scree test, it was decided to retain six components, which was also consistent with Cookson and Smith's (2011) research.

The six-component solution explained a total of 59.05% of the variance. To aid in the interpretation of these six components, a six-component solution was forced and a varimax rotation was performed. The rotated solution revealed the presence of simple structure (Thurstone, 1947), with five of the components showing strong loadings. The criterion for item inclusion was a loading of an item >.3; thus, 11 items were discarded (28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 36, 42,

44, 45, 46, and 48). Since the goal was to maintain three items per component, items 51 and 54 were also discarded for a total of 13 discarded items.

The principal components analysis was conducted again with the retained 17 items. Results of the PCA showed a six-component solution with six eigenvalues exceeding one, explaining 18.59% of the variance for component one; 16.38% of the variance for component two; 11.55% of the variance for component three; 9.30% of the variance for component four; 8.13% of the variance for component five; and 6.46% of the variance for component six. The total variance for the six components was 70.04%. The scree plot results aligned with prior conceptual beliefs based on the literature and Cookson and Smith's (2011) previous research; however, the student considerations component had only one question to load. Items 47 and 49 were discarded as they did not meet the >.3 criterion for inclusion.

The principal components analysis was conducted again with the retained 15 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .606, which meets the minimum recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix (see Table 1). Results of the PCA showed a five-component solution with five eigenvalues exceeding one, explaining 21.09% of the variance for component one; 15.57% of the variance for component two; 13.78% of the variance for component three; 10.56% of the variance for component four; and 9.01% of the variance for component five. The total variance for the five components was 70.02%. Examination of Catell's (1966) scree plot shows a bend after the fifth component (see Figure 1).

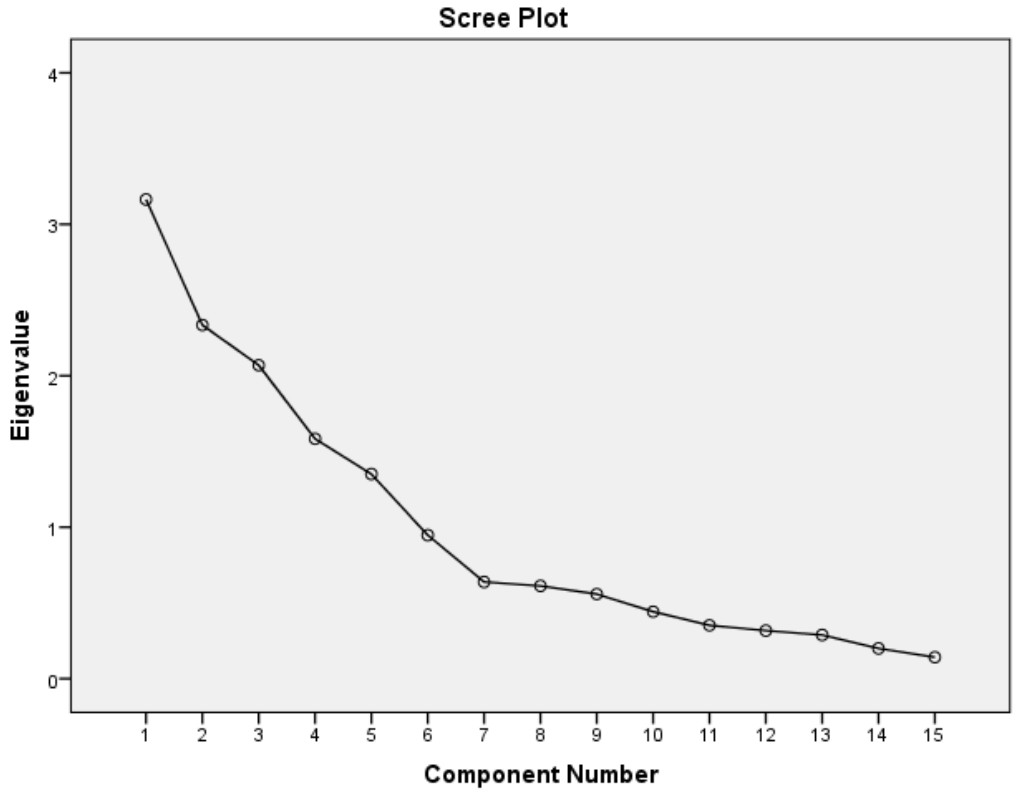

Figure 1. Scree plot for first round of surveys.

The scree plot results aligned with prior conceptual beliefs based on the literature Cookson and Smith's (2011) previous research; however, the sixth component (student considerations) fell below the eigenvalue one criterion and only one question loaded for this component. The five-component solution included three items on each component (see Table 1).

Table 1

Rotated Factor Matrix for First Round of Surveys

	Factor				
Item	1	2	3	4	5
25	.096	-.110	.215	.695	.140
26	.069	.150	-.064	.587	-.174
27	.051	-.151	.199	.664	.118
31	-.165	.213	.037	.054	-.503
32	.198	.048	.302	-.027	.515
34	-.018	.148	-.195	.223	.436
37	.211	.125	.717	.085	-.113
38	-.465	.405	.486	-.045	.176
39	-.004	-.006	.705	.225	.058
40	.193	.557	.078	.096	-.044
41	-.002	.886	-.074	-.039	-.208
43	.042	.627	.167	-.206	.242
50	.734	.077	.058	.080	.126
52	.862	.108	.015	.147	.174
53	.896	.077	.143	.005	.079

Note. The five components that loaded were shared vision, financial considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, and religious considerations (see Table 2).

Table 2

Five Component Solution with Loadings

Item	Factor Loadings
Shared Visions: Component 4	
25. Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.	.695
26. Inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.	.587
27. Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task	.664
Financial Considerations: Component 5	
31. The cost of funding a special education program in my school is cost-prohibitive.	-.503
32. Enrolling special education students can be a financial blessing to the school due to increased enrollment.	.515
34. The additional cost of educating special needs students should be passed on to the parents of students with special needs.	.436
Parental Concerns: Component 3	
37. Parents of currently enrolled students should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program.	.717
38. I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents of non-disabled students satisfied.	.486
39. It is vital to have parental support of currently enrolled students prior to initiating a special education program.	.705
Teacher Input: Component 2	
40. My teachers are concerned that they do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with disabilities.	.557
41. My teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classrooms.	.886
43. I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.	.627
Religious Considerations: Component 1	
50. There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.	.734
52. The concept of the body of Christ would be exemplified through our enrollment if we served special education students through a special education program.	.862
53. Implementing a special education program is an indication that a Christian school is concerned with all of God's creation.	.896

Only one item loaded on student considerations. The researcher decided to retain a five-

component solution based on Kaiser's (1974) criterion, an inspection of Catell's (1966) scree plot, item loadings, and a conceptual understanding of the literature. Although Cookson and Smith (2011) identified six themes, it can be argued that perhaps the reason student considerations did not have enough items load is because student considerations is an overarching theme in the field of education. After all, a primary core value of all stakeholder decision making is often determined by what is in the best interest of the student.

Second round of surveys. The revised 15-item instrument was examined to determine if the instrument maintained construct validity. After careful examination by the researcher and one university professor, it was determined that the items do measure the intended construct. The survey was then emailed to school administrators in ACSI's south-central region.

Results of the PCA showed a five-component solution with five eigenvalues exceeding one, explaining 20.97% of the variance for component one; 17.35% of the variance for component two; 13.26% of the variance for component three; 10.07% of the variance for component four; and 8.36% of the variance for component five. The total variance for the five components was 70.00%. Examination of Catell's (1966) scree plot shows a bend after the fifth component (see Figure 2) and meets the eigenvalue one criterion. A five-component solution was forced and a varimax rotation was performed. The rotated solution revealed the presence of simple structure (Thurstone, 1947), with four of the components showing strong loadings (see Table 3). The criterion for item inclusion was a loading of an item >.3; thus, four items were discarded (28, 29, 30, 34).

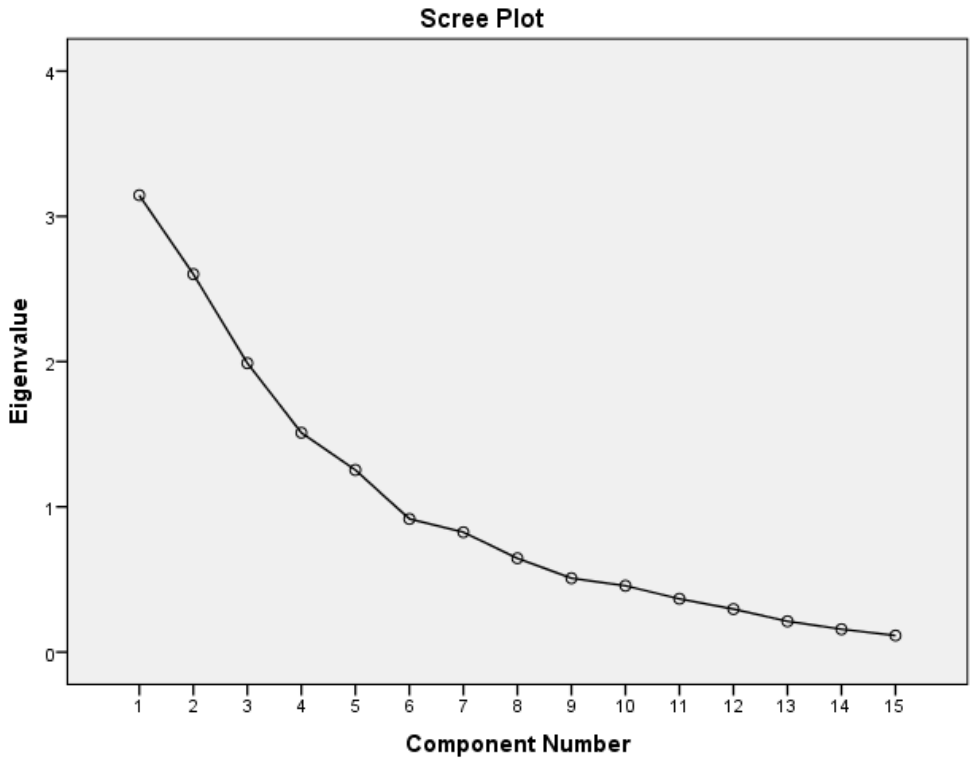

Figure 2. Scree plot for second round of surveys.

Table 3

Rotated Factor Matrix for Second Round of Surveys

	Factor				
Item	1	2	3	4	5
25	.073	.007	.055	.368	.066
26	-.070	.127	.202	.727	-.032
27	-.106	.062	-.214	.420	-.309
28	.523	.106	.055	.479	.373
29	.193	.269	.014	-.030	-.268
30	.350	-.155	.055	-.017	.197
31	.673	-.057	.127	-.258	-.035
32	.762	.109	-.266	.214	-.015
33	.901	.119	-.045	.050	.102
34	.289	.150	-.298	.043	.731
35	-.039	-.075	.621	.157	-.193
36	.012	-.089	.953	.053	.054
37	-.062	.856	-.159	.054	-.059
38	-.054	.959	-.071	.193	-..088
39	.070	.628	-.004	.022	.166

A four component solution was forced and a varimax solution was performed (see Table 4). The rotated solution showed strong loadings for each item.

Table 4

Rotated Factor Matrix for Four Component Solution

	Factor			
Item	1	2	3	4
25	.020	.078	.074	.345
26	.106	-.053	.230	.852
27	.078	-.123	-.199	.416
31	-.087	.638	.118	-.213
32	.111	.698	-.235	.143
33	.098	.993	-.028	.053
35	-.063	-.078	.591	.123
36	-.085	.000	.996	-.002
37	.885	-.046	-.152	.073
38	.930	-.035	-.070	.200
39	.637	.140	.006	.001

The four components that loaded were shared vision, parental concerns, teacher input, and religious considerations (see Table 5).

Table 5

Four Component Solution with Loadings

Item	Factor Loadings
Shared Visions: Component 4	
25. Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.	.345
26. Inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.	.852
27. Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task	.416
Parental Concerns: Component 2	
31. Parents of currently enrolled students should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program.	.638
32. I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents of non-disabled students satisfied.	.698
33. It is vital to have parental support of currently enrolled students prior to initiating a special education program.	.993
Teacher Input: Component 3	
35. My teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classrooms.	.591
36. I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.	.996
Religious Considerations: Component 1	
37. There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.	.885
38. The concept of the body of Christ would be exemplified through our enrollment if we served special education students through a special education program.	.930
39. Implementing a special education program is an indication that a Christian school is concerned with all of God's creation.	.637

First and second surveys combined. Since the questions were identical on both the first and second round, the results from the first round of surveys and second round of surveys were combined to conduct a PCA, making for a total sample size of 120. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .599, which just falls short of the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the

factorability of the correlation matrix. Results of the PCA showed a four-component solution with four eigenvalues exceeding one, explaining 24.03% of the variance for component one; 19.96% of the variance for component two; 16.27% of the variance for component three; and 12.69% of the variance for component four. The total variance for the four components was 72.95%. Examination of Catell's (1966) scree plot shows a bend after the fourth component (see Figure 3) and meets the eigenvalue-one criterion.

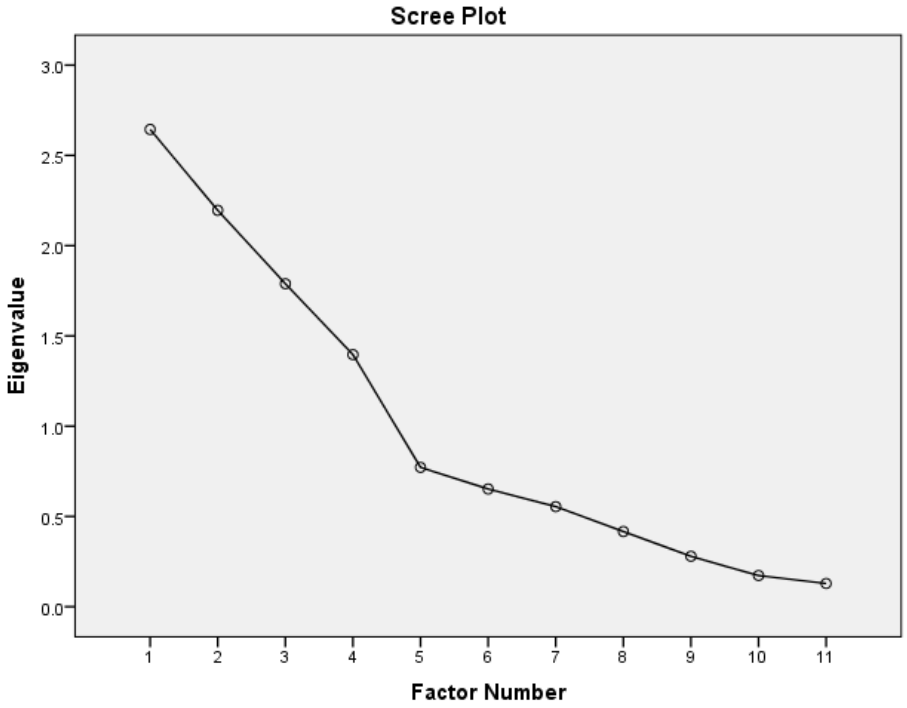

Figure 3. Scree plot for combined surveys.

A four-component solution was forced and a varimax rotation was performed (see Table 6). The rotated solution showed strong loadings for each item. The researcher decided to retain a four-component solution based on Kaiser's (1974) criterion, an inspection of Catell's (1966) scree plot, item loadings, and a conceptual understanding of the literature.

Table 6

Rotated Factor Matrix for Combined Surveys

	Factor			
Item	1	2	3	4
25	.047	-.080	.106	.632
26	.096	.176	-.034	.621
27	.064	-.167	.083	.608
31	.084	.069	.747	.010
32	-.142	.130	.423	.032
33	.106	-.093	.726	.125
35	-.017	.998	-.034	.038
36	.023	.551	.122	-.088
37	.801	-.018	-.020	.078
38	.918	-.002	-.027	.169
39	.778	.032	.066	.023

Reliability Analysis

Using a combined sample size of 120, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated at .583, using a four-component solution from the combined results from both the first and second round of surveys. The Cronbach alpha for each subscale was .637 (vision), .637 (parental concerns), .682 (teacher concerns), and .873 (religious considerations). George and Mallery provided a commonly accepted rule of thumb for Cronbach's alpha that classifies reliability estimates above .70 as generally quite reasonable for most audiences.

Additional Analysis

The primary purpose of this study was to test the validity and reliability of the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale. This section extends the analysis by targeting school and school leader demographics to assess the attitudes school leaders may have towards the enhancement or implementation of special education programs in their schools within the next two years. However, caution should be used when interpretation of the results do

the low reliability of the instrument.

Subscale Analysis

The four subscales in this study were vision, parental concerns, teacher input, and religious considerations. The minimum total score possible for school administrators was eight out of a possible 75. Respondents rated the teacher input subscale and the parental concerns subscale the highest and the vision subscale the lowest. An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the mean scores of administrators who viewed implementing or enhancing a special education program within their schools in the next two years was of little to no importance compared with those who viewed it as moderately to very important. There was a statistically significant difference at a 95% confidence level between the mean attitude scores of administrators who thought that it was of little to no importance ($n = 23$, $M = 42.65$, $SD = 4.04$) and administrators who thought it was moderately to very important ($n = 95$, $M = 38.49$, $SD = .4.39$), $t(116) = 4.14$, $p < .05$. The effect size using eta square was large at .13. Descriptive statistics for each of the instrument's subscales is provided (see Table 7).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Subscales

Subscales	M	SD
Vision	4.97	1.55
Parental Concerns	9.60	2.24
Teacher Input	9.73	1.58
Religious Considerations	6.48	2.11

Independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference at a 95% confidence level between the mean subscale scores for school administrators who viewed implementing or enhancing special education programs in their schools within the next two years as important with those who viewed it as unimportant or of little importance. Results showed no significant difference in scores between the two groups of administrators for the vision, parental concerns, and teacher input subscales (see Table 8 for subscale differences between two categories of administrators). The effect size using eta square was very small for these three subscales. Conversely, there was significant difference at a 95% confidence in scores between the two groups of administrators for the religious considerations category (see Table 8). The effect size using eta square was large for this subscale.

Table 8

Subscale Differences Between Administrators Who Viewed Implementing or Enhancing Special Education Programs in Their Schools Within the Next Two Years as Either of Little to No Importance or Moderately to Very Important

Subscales	Little to no importance		Moderate to very important					
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p	eta squared
Vision	5.22	1.88	4.90	1.47	119	.89	.38	.01
Parental Concerns	9.79	2.45	9.54	2.20	114	4.81	.66	.00
Teacher Input	9.91	1.73	9.69	1.55	116	.59	.56	.00
Religious Considerations	8.09	1.98	6.03	1.91	113	4.58	.00	.16

Demographic Analysis

School leader demographics. Results from the survey were analyzed in regard to two aspects of school leader demographics: experience with special education and gender which are analyzed below. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the school administrators' backgrounds in special education and their desires to implement or enhance special education programs in their schools within the next two years. Participants were divided into three groups according to their background in special education (Group 1: degreed in special education; Group 2: some coursework or experience in special education; Group 3: no experience or degree in special education). There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups of administrators: $F (2, 119) = 14.46$, $p < .01$. The effect size was large at .20, calculated using eta square. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the means of all the groups were statistically significant from each other at the $p < .05$ level (Group 1: M = 4.20, SD = 1.03;

Group 2: M = 3.73, SD = 1.03; Group 3: M = 2.54, SD = 1.10). Participants with degrees in special education were more likely to have a more favorable attitude towards special education than participants with no degree in special education.

An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if a statistical difference existed between the mean scores at the $p < .05$ alpha level of administrators' gender and their desire to implement or enhance the special education program within their schools in the next two years. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean attitude scores of males (n = 52, M = 3.33, SD = .16) and females (n = 68, M = 3.68, SD = .13), t(118) = 1.66, p = .10. The effect size using eta square was small at .02.

School demographics. Results from the survey were analyzed in regard to three aspects of school demographics: school accreditation status, school area, and school size which are analyzed below. An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the mean scores of schools' ACSI accreditation status (accredited or member school) and their desire to implement or enhance a special education program within their schools in the next two years. There was no statistically significant difference at the .05 alpha level between the mean scores of member schools (n = 69, M = 3.49, SD = 1.22) and accredited schools (n = 52, M = 3.56, SD = 1.056), t(119) = -.307, p = .76. The effect size using eta square was small at <.01.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of school area on school administrators' attitudes towards implementing or enhancing special education programs in their schools within the next two years. Participants were divided into four groups according to the area where their schools were located (Group 1: urban; Group 2: inner city; Group 3: suburban; Group 4: rural). The assumption of equality of variance was

assessed with a Levene's test. The result of the Levene's test F (3,117) = 3.41, p = .02 was significant, violating the assumption. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, robust ANOVA tests, including Welch's ANOVA and Brown Forsythe, were also conducted to confirm the results. The results of the ANOVA suggested that there was not a significant statistical difference at the $p < .05$ level for the four groups of administrators: F (3,117) = .712, p = .55. The results of Welch's ANOVA F(3, 19.4) = .52, p = .67 and Brown-Forsythe's ANOVA F(3, 20.31) = .48, p = .70 confirm that there is not a significant statistical difference at the $p < .05$ level for the four groups of administrators.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of school size on school administrators' attitudes towards implementing or enhancing special education programs in their schools within the next two years. Participants were divided into three groups according to their schools' size (Group 1: enrollment of 249 or less; Group 2: enrollment of 250 - 499; Group 3: enrollment of 500 or greater). The assumption of equality of variance was assessed with a Levene's test. The result of Levene's test F (3,116) 4.46, p=.01 was significant, violating the assumption. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, robust ANOVA tests, Welch's ANOVA and Brown Forsythe, were also conducted to confirm the results. The results of the ANOVA suggested that there was a significant statistical difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups of administrators: F (2, 116) = 4.99, p = .01. The results of Welch's ANOVA F(2, 53.87) = 6.99, $p < .01$ and Brown-Forsythe's ANOVA F(2, 70.11) = 5.39, p = .01 confirm that there is a significant statistical difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups of administrators. Post-hoc comparisons were made using the Games-Howell test, which assumes no equality of variance. Results indicated that the difference between means for administrators in schools of 250-499 (n = 66, M = 3.32, SD = 1.19) was

statistically significant from schools with less than 250 students (n = 30, M = 4.07, SD = .83) at the $p < .01$ alpha level, and from schools with 500 or more students (n = 23, M = 3.35, SD = 1.19), $p = .05$. Administrators in schools with less than 250 students were not statistically significant from administrators in schools with more than 500 students ($p = .99$).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a valid and reliable instrument to be used by researchers and Christian school associations to conduct an evaluation of Christian school leaders' attitudes toward the implementation and enhancement of special education programs. The meaning, relevance, and utility of the inferences made from the instrument scores were also investigated through reliability and construct validity studies. Additional analysis was conducted utilizing data gathered from Florida, the southeast region, and the south-central region. The final instrument consists of 5 components, 18 survey items, and 23 demographic items (see Appendix G).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, discussion of the findings and the implications in light of relevant literature, limitations of the study, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to develop and field-test a survey instrument designed to measure the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards factors influencing the leaders' consideration to implement or enhance a special education program in their schools. The study was designed to determine the instrument's validity and reliability. Having an effective tool to measure the attitudes and perceptions of Christian school administrators relative to special education programs in the Christian school environment will provide educational researchers and practitioners with another means to examine specific factors that affect school leaders' decisions.

This study sought to extend a previous qualitative study by determining a way to quantify six intangible factors identified in that study: shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns (Cookson & Smith, 2011). The researcher-developed instrument is an attitudinal survey, using a five-point Likert scale. It focuses on school leaders' attitudes towards implementing or enhancing a special education program.

Discussion of the Findings and Results

This study presents a conceptual framework for understanding factors that Christian school leaders consider when enhancing or implementing special education programs within their schools. It also analyzes the validity and reliability of the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale. In this study, the School Leaders Special Education

Decision-Making Scale was developed, refined, and field-tested using 120 Christian school leaders. This instrument generates an overall score as well as four subscale scores: vision, parental concerns, teacher input, and religious considerations. The instrument was developed in three phases.

In the first phase, attributes representing the construct under investigation were identified through a thorough review of the literature. Six constructs emerged.

The second phase consisted of four steps: 1) selecting a response format, 2) constructing a pool of initial items, 3) using expert judges to establish face and construct validity, and 4) field testing the items on a large sample. Initially, 15-30 potential survey items for each construct for a total of 158 potential items were developed. A panel of experts, consisting of three university professors, was convened to assist in evaluating the initial pool of items. The panel reviewed the items for face validity, providing feedback regarding item focus, brevity, and clarity. As 158 items was excessively large, the initial pool of items was given to this panel to evaluate. From this feedback, the researcher narrowed the questions to 50 items, allowing approximately eight questions per dimension. This pool of 50 items was later given to another panel of judges to narrow even further with the purpose of rating items for construct validity. The survey was narrowed to consist of 30 items with 5 items per construct. The instrument was returned to the original panel of professors to review the final list of items once again for face validity. The revised instrument was sent via a hyperlink through email to 545 ACSI school leaders in the southeast region and Florida. The first round of surveys consisted of six components, 15 survey items, and 23 demographic items. The response rate was 11.74%, consisting of 64 usable surveys. The second round of surveys consisted of 5 components, 15 survey items, and 23 demographic items. The instrument was sent to ACSI administrators in the south-central region.

There were 56 completed and usable surveys; a 17.45% response rate. The final instrument consists of 4 components, 11 survey items, and 23 demographic items.

In the third phase of the instrument development, validity and reliability studies were conducted. Principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted with a varimax rotation. Of the originally defined six components, four were retained in the final survey. Student considerations and financial considerations were discarded because insufficient items loaded on these constructs. The researcher believed that the survey maintained its integrity as it can be argued that perhaps the reason student considerations did not have enough items load is because considering what is in the students' best interest is an overarching theme throughout many of the items. After all, a primary core value of all stakeholder decision making is often determined by what is in the best interest of the student. Seventeen items were discarded as they did not meet the criterion for inclusion. The instrument reliability was .583, which is considered poor (George & Mallery, 2003; Royal, 2011). George and Mallery (2003) provided a commonly accepted rule of thumb for Cronbach's alpha that classifies reliability estimates above .70 as commonly accepted and quite reasonable for most audiences (Royal, 2011). The purpose of this study was to extend a previous qualitative study by determining a way to quantify six intangible factors identified in that study: shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns (Cookson & Smith, 2011). Although this study has begun that process through the development of the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale, further development of the instrument will be necessary in order for the instrument to be efficient in assessing school leaders' attitudes towards the implementation or enhancement of special education programs within their schools.

In the present study, the minimum total score possible on the School Leader's Special

Education Decision-Making Scale was eight out of a possible 75. Respondents rated teacher input and parental concerns the highest; yet, the religious considerations subscale was the greatest predictor of Christian school administrators' attitudes towards enhancing or implementing a special education program within their schools in the next two years. The study confirms Cookson's (2010) findings regarding religious considerations. Cookson noted that principals who implemented special education programs held a "deeply-seated commitment to follow biblical teachings" (Cookson, 2010, p. 107). These principals believed that children with disabilities were God's children and because of this, in a Christian school, there is a responsibility to educate them. The School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale was found to be an efficient instrument to assess school leaders' attitudes towards the implementation or enhancement of special education programs within their schools.

Analysis was extended by targeting school and school leader demographics to assess the attitudes school leaders may have had towards the enhancement or implementation of special education programs in their schools within the next two years. In this study, 52.94% of the schools surveyed reported having 10 or more students enrolled in their schools who were formally identified as having disabilities. Only 76.19% of those schools reported having a special education program in place to meet the needs of their students with disabilities.

Results from the survey were analyzed in regard to two aspects of school leader demographics: experience with special education and gender. Significant differences in school administrator attitude scores were noted when administrators were grouped by experience with special education. School administrators who had degrees in special education had the most positive attitudes towards enhancing or implementing special education programs in their schools within the next two years. Administrators with some coursework or experience had a

more moderate interest whereas administrators with no experience or coursework had the least amount of interest in implementing or enhancing special education programs within their schools within the next two years. These results were not surprising as literature indicated that school principals' knowledge of special education is critical for a program's success (Cline, 1981; Jacobs, Tonnsen, & Baker, 2004; McFadden et al., 2006). "A lack of knowledge on the part of school principals may well contribute to the way in which students with disabilities are served" (Jacobs et al., 2004, p. 7).

A review of the literature found that female and male educational supervisors brought with them expectations, behaviors, and outcomes that were based on gender even when they received similar training (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Pitner, 1981; Shakeshaft, Nowell, & Perry, 2000). Pitner (1981) found that female administrators spent more of their unstructured time working on curriculum and instruction. Female administrators were more likely to be instructionally focused and more relational than male administrators (Shakeshaft, 1987). Females were more likely to emphasize the technical skills of teaching and involve the teacher in the decision making process (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). As the body of literature indicated that there were frequently gender differences in the way educational supervisors interacted with stakeholders and in the way they addressed curricular issues, the question arose as to whether there was a difference in the way Christian school administrators made decisions regarding special education services based on gender. The findings of the present study did not show any significant differences in attitudes towards enhancing or implementing special education programs based on gender.

Results from the survey were analyzed in regard to three aspects of school demographics: school area, school accreditation, and school size. The first aspect of school demographics that

this study investigated dealt with whether school area impacted school administrator attitudes towards special education. The U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2007) conducted a study to examine demographic and school characteristics of students receiving special education. They found that higher percentages of students in small town/rural schools than in central city schools received special education services (2007). The findings of the present study did not show any significant differences in attitudes towards enhancing or implementing special education programs based on school area.

The second aspect of school demographics that this study analyzed dealt with whether administrators of ACSI accredited schools were more likely to enhance or implement special education programs than member schools. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) offers Christian schools the opportunity to either become member schools or to achieve accreditation status. For membership status, schools pay ACSI a fee in return for services (Association of Christian Schools International, 2012). In order for a school to become accredited, minimum standards must be met to ensure school quality and effectiveness. Although ACSI member schools may not be accredited through ACSI, they may have attained accreditation status through other accrediting agencies. Studies on accreditation and school inspection have found some benefit to schools when they engage in the accreditation and inspection processes (Ehren & Visscher, 2008; Fryer, 2007; Merta, 1992; New England Association of Schools & Colleges, 2006; Serafin, 2014). The findings of the present study did not show any significant differences in attitudes towards enhancing or implementing special education programs based on school accreditation.

The final aspect of school demographics that this study analyzed dealt with how school size impacted ACSI school administrators' attitudes toward enhancing or implementing special

education programs in their schools. Significant differences in school administrator attitude scores were noted when administrators were grouped by their schools' size. School administrators who worked in schools of 250-499 students were most interested in implementing or enhancing special education programs within their schools. Schools with less than 250 students or with 500 or more students were less interested. It is possible that schools with 250-499 students are more keenly aware of the number of kids they have within their schools who need additional assistance in order to succeed. As a result, they may have reached an economy of scale that allows the school the resources needed to expand and meet this growing need within their schools. Christian schools have often cited insufficient finances as the main reason for not serving students with special needs (Eigenbrood, 2004; Hale, 2009; Hicks, 1990). Research has shown that total per pupil costs reduce with increased student enrollment to a point. Beyond this point, total per pupil cost rises with increased enrollment. Bowles and Bosworth (2002) found that an increase of 10% in school size decreases cost per student by approximately 2%. By the time the Christian school reaches 500 or more students, it is possible that they have established effective programs within their schools and the need to enhance their programs no longer exists. It is also possible that the Christian school becomes less efficient as student enrollment increases over 500 students. There is research that shows that both very small and very large schools are negatively related to school quality. Very large schools tend to suffer from bureaucratic inefficiency and school size is optimized between 300 and 500 students (Slate & Jones, 2005).

Limitations

Conclusions or recommendations based on the findings of this study can be made only in the context of the study's limitations. This study was exploratory in nature and sought to extend a previous qualitative study by determining a way to quantify six intangible factors identified in

that study: shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns (Cookson & Smith, 2011). Although this study has begun that process through the development of the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale, it is not yet reliable or valid and further development of the instrument will be necessary in order for the instrument to be efficient in assessing school leaders' attitudes towards the implementation or enhancement of special education programs within their schools.

A minimum of 100 surveys is needed to run a principal component analysis, and thus sample size is a limitation of the study. The survey return rate was 13.86% and leaves the possibility of an incomplete picture of special education practice, especially as it relates to the schools that did not return the surveys in this study. It may well be that the schools that did not respond were not interested in providing educational services for students with learning and behavioral difficulties.

The sample used in this study was limited to Christian school administrators whose schools were associated with the Association of Christian schools International and located in the central and southern areas of the United States and the instrument had low reliability; therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing scores to schools in other locales or members of other associations.

Implications of the Study

Any validated special education instrument is potentially valuable to researchers, school associations, universities, and K-12 schools. This study has begun the process of developing an instrument to assess school leaders' attitudes towards the implementation or enhancement of special education programs within their schools. Once the instrument is reliable and valid, it may be used by school associations to more fully understand factors and school leaders' attitudes

that promote the success of special education programs, and thus more effectively direct and equip Christian schools. Christian colleges and universities can more pointedly equip Christian school administrators to implement or enhance special education programs within their schools.

Future Research

Continued development of the instrument is necessary for a valid and reliable instrument. This study has begun the process of developing an instrument to assess school leaders' attitudes towards the implementation or enhancement of special education programs within their schools. Further development of the instrument is necessary and researchers may use this study as a basis to further develop an instrument to assess administrators' attitudes towards special education. In the future, other target populations, such as Christian schools who are members of other associations or are located in other parts of the country could be used for the purpose of norming the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale. Resultant scores could be standardized for ease of interpretation. However, researchers need to confirm scale reliability for all sampled populations. In addition, it is recommended that researchers continue to gather and analyze additional data regarding school administrators' attitudes towards special education.

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APPENDIX A: Email to School Leaders

Dear ACSI School Leader,

My name is Julia Elliott and I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Education from Liberty University. I would like to ask you for your participation in this study. The purpose of this study is to develop and field-test the School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale and to determine its validity and reliability for use with Christian school leaders. This 30-item scale measures the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards decisions to implement a special education program based on six factors: shared vision, financial considerations, parental considerations, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns.

I am asking for your help in completing an online survey consisting of some demographic questions and the 30-item scale mentioned above. The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete and it can be accessed at this link…Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and vital to the success of this study.

In His Service,
Julia Elliott, Ed.D. Candidate

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

Development of an instrument to measure the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards factors that may influence their decisions to implement special education programs.

Julia Elliott

Liberty University

Doctoral Education Department

You are invited to be in a research study to develop an instrument that will examine the concerns that influence school leaders' decisions to implement special education programs in private Christian schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a school administrator and your school is a member school of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Julia Elliott, Department of Education.

Background Information:

No instruments specific to special education and Christian schools to quantitatively measure currently exist. This study will result in the development of a valid and reliable instrument to measure school leaders' attitudes towards six dimensions that have influence on their consideration to implement special education programs. By completing this survey, you will help develop a valid instrument to measure the attitudes of Christian school leaders towards decisions to implement a special education program based on shared vision, financial

considerations, parental concerns, teacher input, student considerations, and religious concerns. The publication of this instrument can provide researchers with a tool they can use to inform Christian schools leaders, who are considering the implementation of a special education program, of various aspects they should consider when engaging in the decision-making process. Findings may also provide university preparation programs and professional Christian school organizations, such as ACSI, with information to better equip school administrators as they engage in the decision-making process relative to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Agree to the Informed Consent.
- Complete the Survey (approximately 30 minutes to complete).

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

There is minimal risk involved with this research, no greater than everyday activities. The information you provide will remain confidential and data will only be released in a summarized format of all schools surveyed.

Future research from the use of this instrument may provide Christian school leaders, like you, with tools for use in analyzing the challenges schools face, and for developing action plans to meet needs of all students.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys

will not contain information that will personally identify you. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format and only the researcher will have access to the records. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and may be shared with Liberty University representatives.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. The survey questions will ask demographic questions about yourself, demographic questions about your school, and questions about factors that might influence your consideration to implement a special education program.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact the researcher, Julia Elliott at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx or the chair, Dr. Toni Stanton, at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx.

Statement of Consent:

By selecting below "I agree to participate in the study", I acknowledge the following: I have read and understand the description of the study and contents of this document. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this study and I am at least 18 years of age. I understand that should I have any questions about this research and its conduct, I should contact one of the researchers listed above. If I have any questions about rights or this form, I should contact the researcher Julia Elliott at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx or the dissertation chair Dr. Toni Stanton at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx or the Institutional Review Board at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx.

- I agree to participate in the study.
- I choose not to participate in the study.

IRB Code Numbers:

IRB Expiration Date:

≪ Next ≫

APPENDIX C: Instrument for Pilot Study

School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale

The purpose of this study is to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure school leaders' attitudes towards six dimensions that have influence on their consideration to implement special education programs. There is no right or wrong answer so please address the questions to the best of your knowledge and provide us with what you believe.

School Leader Demographics

2. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your race?

4. What is the job title for your current position?

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

6. What is your educational background? Select all that apply.

- Education Field - Educational Leadership
- Education Field - Other than Educational Leadership
- Religious Field - Seminary

Other (please specify)

7. How many years of experience do you have in school leadership?

Years of Leadership Experience

8. How many years did you teach in a school before becoming a school leader?

Years of Teaching Experience

9. Select the responses below that best describes your experience with special education

- I have a degree in special education.
- I DO NOT have a degree in special education but I have taken SOME professional development courses in the field.
- I have experience working with individuals with special needs.
- I do not have any experience with special education.

Next

School Demographics

10. What is your school's status with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)?

- Member School
- Accredited School

11. Which category best describes your school?

- Church Sponsored/Affiliated
- Independent

If church sponsored/affiliated, which denomination?

12. Describe your school area.

- Urban
- Inner-city
- Suburban
- Rural

13. What grade levels does your school serve?

14. What is your current enrollment?

15. How many students with identified disabilities does your school serve?

16. Does your school have a formal program for students with special needs?

- Yes
- No

17. Does your school have an inclusion program?

- Yes
- No

18. Does your school have a formal intervention program for struggling students?

- Yes
- No

19. Is your school considering developing a formal special needs program?

- Yes
- No
- We already have one

20. Which exceptionalities are included in your school? Select all that apply.

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability

- [ ] Speech or Language Impairment
- [ ] Traumatic Brain Injury
- [ ] Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Other (please specify)

21. Teachers in my school modify instruction in their classrooms to meet the individual needs of students identified with special needs.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

22. Please rank the level of influence the following factors had on the implementation of your school's special education program. (1 indicating the most impact and 6 the least).

Shared vision (The leadership practice leaders use to demonstrate future possibilities with enthusiasm and optimism, providing a clear and compelling vision, and enlisting others to be enthusiastic supporters.)

Financial considerations (Counting the financial cost of educational programs in order to ensure adequate resources for meeting the educational needs of all students.)

Parental concerns (Educational matters that are of importance to parents as they engage in the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and the intellectual development of their child(ren)).

Teacher input (Advice or opinions provided by teachers to help school leaders make decisions.)

Student considerations (Issues that school leaders should carefully deliberate over in an effort to reach decisions that are in their students' best interest.)

Religious considerations (Manifesting faithful devotion towards God by carefully considering issues in accordance with the doctrines of truth elicited in Scripture.)

23. In my school, approval from the following people must be garnered in order to add a special needs program. Select all that apply.

- [ ] School Superintendent/Head
- [ ] Senior Pastor/Church Administrator
- [ ] Deacon Body/Church Elders

- ☐ CFO/Budget Committee
- ☐ Pastoral Staff
- ☐ School Board
- ☐ Parent Body
- ☐ School Administration
- ☐ School Staff

Other (please specify)

24. How important is it for you to see special education programs implemented or enhanced at your school within the next two years?

Unimportant	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
○	○	○	○	○

Shared Vision

25. Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

26. Inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

27. Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

28. I have a passion for our school to have an effective special education program.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

29. Christian school administrators must share their vision of initiating a special education program with zeal.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

Financial Considerations

30. Adding a special education program will likely require the Christian school to raise tuition.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

31. The cost of funding a special education program in my school is cost-prohibitive.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

32. Enrolling special education students can be a financial blessing to the school due to increased enrollment.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

33. When developing a special education program, it is imperative that adequate resources be provided to ensure success.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

34. The additional cost of educating special needs students should be passed on to the parents of students with special needs.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Parental Concerns

35. Parents of non-disabled students are concerned about the behavior of special education students.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

36. Parents of non-disabled students are more likely to be supportive of a special education program if the school limits admission to students with minor disabilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

37. Parents of currently enrolled students should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

38. I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents of non-disabled students satisfied.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

39. It is vital to have parental support of currently enrolled students prior to initiating a special education program.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Teacher Input

40. My teachers are concerned that they do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

41. My teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classrooms.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

42. My teachers would be more welcoming of students with mild disabilities than students with more severe disabilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

43. I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

44. If teachers are allowed to give input prior to implementing a special education program, they will be more likely to accept a special education program at our school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Student Considerations

45. Special education students can benefit from contact with non-disabled students.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

46. Non-disabled students can benefit from contact with students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

47. I am concerned that the academic achievement of students without disabilities will be negatively impacted if we enroll students with special needs.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

48. I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

49. Many students at my school should be in special education but have not been identified as needing special education services.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Religious Considerations

50. There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

51. Being involved in a faith community can increase the quality of life for the special education student.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

52. The concept of the body of Christ would be exemplified through our enrollment if we served special education students through a special education program.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

53. Implementing a special education program is an indication that a Christian school is concerned with all of God's creation.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

54. Every human life has its limitations, so spiritually speaking, there is no such thing as a life without disability.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D: Initial Question Chart

Dimension	Question	Scale	Source
Parental Influence	It is vital to have parental support prior to initiating a special education program.	Likert	Carden 2005; Cookson, 2010; Cotton, 2003; Freer, 2008; Fullan et al., 2004; Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves, 2012; Smith, 2010
	Parents should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program.	Likert	Blue, 2004; Carden, 2005; Freer, 2008
	I allow parents to influence my decision regarding the implementation of a special education program.	Likert	Nolte, 2001; Cookson, 2010
	When implementing a special education program, I am likely to engage in personal, direct conversations with key parents in order to solicit their support.	Likert	Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves, 2012; Freer, 2008
	Should I decide to implement a special education program, I would organize a parent meeting where parents would have an opportunity to ask questions.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Freer, 2008
	Prior to implementing a special education program, I would solicit parental input because, as paying customers, I need them to be satisfied.	Likert	Freer, 2008
	I am concerned that parents would think that they are entitled to have more input into the development of a special education program than I feel is wise.	Likert	Freer 2008
	I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents satisfied.		Freer, 2008; Blue 2004; Carden, 2005
	In the early stages of planning	Likert	Freer 2008; Carden, 2005;

	for a special education program, I would decide what degree of parental input I would permit.		Colley, 2005
	As I begin communicating with parents about the school's development of a special education program, I would clearly frame for parents the level of input that would be appropriate for them.	Likert	Freer 2008; Carden, 2005; Colley, 2005
	Throughout the process of developing a special education program, I would provide parents with frequent communication.	Likert	Freer, 2008; Kouzes and Posner, 2002; Kowalski, 2010;
	Throughout the process of developing a special education program, I would provide parents with open communication.	Likert	Freer, 2008; Kouzes and Posner, 2002; Kowalski, 2010;
	Although I might not do what parents ask of me in regards to special education programming, I would listen attentively to them.	Likert	Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008
	I have enough experience as a school leader to be able to negotiate parental relationships while developing a special education program.	Likert	Freer 2008
	I have been at the school long enough to have established the parental trust necessary to deal with the high profile issue of establishing a special education program.	Likert	Freer 2008
	Parents fear that the inclusion of special education students affects the quality of the classroom instruction.	Reverse Likert	Cookson, 2010; Garrick Duhaney & Salend, 2000 Smith, 2010
	Parents are concerned about the behavior of special education students.	Reverse Likert	Cookson, 2010; Garrick Duhaney & Salend, 2000 Smith, 2010
	Parents are concerned that	Reverse	Garrick Duhaney &

	special education students will take too much of the teacher's time.	Likert	Salend, 2000
	Parents are concerned about whether the school has enough teachers who are skilled in inclusion.	Reverse Likert	Garrick Duhaney & Salend, 2000
	Parents are more likely to be supportive of a special education program if the school limits admission to students with minor disabilities.	Reverse Likert	Green & Stoneman, 1989
	Parents will overcome their initial doubts regarding the instructional effectiveness of an integrated setting for their children.	Likert	Garrick Duhaney & Salend, 2000
	Parents are more likely to be supportive of a self-contained special education program than an integrated special education program.	Likert	Garrick Duhaney & Salend, 2000
Shared Vision	Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Furney et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Leithwood, 2008; Riehl, 2008; Saskin, 1996; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009
	I have the leadership skills necessary to lead my school through a significant change process.	Likert	Kouzes & Posner, 2002
	I have adequate knowledge of special education to lead my school through the development of a special education program.	Likert	Kouzes & Posner, 2002
	As the school leader, I often serve as the stimulus for change.	Likert	Northouse, 2007
	I am adequately skilled to inspire a powerful, compelling shared vision of what our school can be with a special education program.	Likert	Furney et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Waldron et a., 2011

	I am confident that I can lead the faculty to agree on challenging but achievable goals that the faculty find motivational.	Likert	Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Furney et al., 2005
	The principal's role in establishing a special education program is critical to the program's success.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	I believe that inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.	Likert	DeLucia, 2011
	I have the skillset necessary to engage stakeholders in creating a vision for a special education program.	Likert	Furney et al., 2005; Waldron, 2011
	I have the skillset to be able to lead stakeholders through a decision-making process that is filtered through the school's vision.	Likert	Furney et al., 2005
	I have the skillset to persuade stakeholders to verbalize the school's shared vision.	Likert	Furney et al., 2005
	I am able to put in place strong levels of internal accountability in order to ensure the success of the special education program.	Likert	Hehir & Katzman, 2012
	I believe that God wants us to educate all children, including those with special needs.	Likert	Audette, 2012; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Cookson, 2010; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011
	I demonstrate a genuine concern about the worth and achievement of all students.	Likert	Furney et al. 2005
	I have the skillset to be able to develop systematic strategies for the development of a special education program.	Likert	Sharratt & Fullan, 2009
	When developing a new	Likert	Audette, 2012; Farrel et

	program, it is imperative that adequate resources be provided in order to ensure success.		al., 2007; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011
	Our school has someone on staff with the skillset necessary to lead our teachers through the process of utilizing data to inform instruction.	Likert	Audette, 2012; Dulaney, 2013; Duncan, 2010; Furney et al., 2005; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Mellard et al., 2012; Waldron et al., 2011
	I have the skillset necessary to lead our school through the development of a data management system	Likert	Audette, 2012; Dulaney, 2013; Duncan, 2010; Furney et al., 2005; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Mellard et al., 2012; Waldron et al., 2011
	When implementing a special education program within the school, it is important to provide faculty and staff with professional development.	Likert	Audette, 2012; Farrel et al., 2007; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011
	Key to the success of a special education program is setting high expectations for all students.	Likert	Audette, 2012; Farrel et al., 2007; Furney et al., 2005; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011
	Teachers should have the same expectations for all students, although the path for achieving these expectations may differ among students.	Likert	Hehir & Katman, 2012
Teacher Input	I am confident in my teachers' abilities to teach students with special needs.	Likert	Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000
	It is important for a school that begins a special education program to have personnel in place that are appropriately trained in special education.		

	Teachers feel comfortable teaching students with disabilities.	Likert	Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cook, 2004; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Ross-Hill, 2009; Sze, 2009)
	Our school has adequate personnel to meet the needs of special education students.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Special needs students are better served in public schools as public schools have teachers trained to meet the disabled students' needs.	Reverse Likert	Hale, 2009
	My teachers believe that special needs students should be admitted into the school.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Hale, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Zigmond & Baker, 1997
	Teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classrooms.	Reverse Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.	Reverse Likert	Cookson, 2010; Hale, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Zigmond & Baker, 1997
	Teachers are concerned that they do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with disabilities.	Reverse Likert	Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Czeladnicki, 2011; Hale, 2009; Huppe, 2010; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996
	Teachers are concerned that it will be difficult to give appropriate attention to all students in an inclusive classroom.	Reverse Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are skilled with providing accommodations.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are skilled with providing modifications.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are skilled at modifying their teaching styles to meet the learning	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003

	needs of students.		
	Teachers are skilled at using research based strategies to teach students with disabilities.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are concerned that their workloads will increase if they have students with disabilities in their classrooms.	Reverse Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Students with special needs take up too much of the teacher's time.	Reverse Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are concerned that there will be inadequate resources available to support inclusion.	Reverse Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Including students with special needs is unfair to regular teachers who already have a heavy work load.	Reverse Likert	Huppe, 2010; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are concerned that they will be more stressed if they have students with disabilities in their classrooms.	Reverse Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	My teachers have the ability to prioritize areas of the general curriculum for students with disabilities.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers have the skills to monitor the progress of special needs students.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers have the skills to collaborate with other personnel in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Regular teachers are adequately trained to handle students with disabilities.	Likert	Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Czeladnicki, 2011; Hale, 2009; Huppe, 2010; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996
	Including students with disabilities creates few additional problems for	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Huppe, 2010; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003

	teachers' classroom management.		
	I think my teachers would be more welcoming of students with mild disabilities than students with more severe disabilities.	Likert	Avramidis et al., 2000; Cook, 2002; Cook, Cook, Landrum, & Tankersley, 2000; Praisner, 2003
	Teachers are knowledgeable about Response to Intervention (RTI)	Likert	Bailey, 2010; Hernandez, 2012
	Teachers have a positive view of RTI.	Likert	Bailey, 2010; Hernandez, 2012
	Teachers feel that the RTI process is too cumbersome and should be left to professionals.	Reverse Likert	Bailey, 2010; Hernandez, 2012
	Teachers are skilled at assessing students' needs.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are skilled at providing appropriate interventions.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003; Bailey, 2010; Hernandez, 2012
	Teachers are skilled at utilizing assessments to inform instruction.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003; Bailey, 2010; Hernandez, 2012
	Before implementing a special education program in our school, I would make certain that the teachers are supportive of the new program.	Likert	Hammond & Ingalls, 2003: Waldron, McLeskey, & Pacchiano, 1999
	I do not feel that it is necessary to enlist the support from a core group of teachers prior to program implementation.	Reverse Likert	Cookson, 2010; Whitaker, 1995; Whitaker and Valentine 1993
	Before implementing a special education program in our school, our teachers need professional development.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Hale, 2009; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Kamens et al., 2003)
	I know who my informal teacher leaders are in the school.	Likert	Whitaker, 1995; Whitaker and Valentine 1993
	I do not feel that it is necessary to solicit input from	Reverse Likert	Whitaker, 1995; Whitaker and Valentine 1993

	the informal teacher leaders prior to implementing a special education program.		
	When teacher leaders are optimistic about the new special education program, they can help create school-wide approval by expressing their views in both formal and informal settings	Likert	Whitaker, 1995; Whitaker and Valentine 1993
	Teachers are able to meet the affective needs of disabled population	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
	Teachers are able to meet the needs of special education students while at the same time keeping the momentum of the curriculum moving forward.	Likert	Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003
Student Considerations	I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.	Reverse Likert	Cookson, 2010; Roberts & Zubrick, 1992; Sale & Carely, 1995; Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996, Siperstein, Norins, & Mohler, 2007
	I am concerned that the academic achievement of students without disabilities will be negatively impacted if we enroll students with special needs.	Reverse Likert	Gandhi (2007); Howes, 2003; Huber, Rosenfeld, and Fiorello (2001); Idol, 2006; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan (2007); Saint-Laurent et al., 1998;
	Special needs students with disruptive behaviors should be admitted with appropriate supports.	Likert	Brown, 1982; Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2007
	Students with severe disabilities should be admitted into the regular classroom with appropriate supports.	Likert	Gandhi, 2007; Siperstein, Norins, & Mohler, 2007;
	With appropriate support, all students with disabilities should be in the regular classroom.	Likert	Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994; Black, 2010; Madden & Slavin, 1983; National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995; Rea,

			McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Robbins, 2010; Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Giasson, Royer, & et al., 1998; SRI International, 1993; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998
	Students with mild disabilities should be included in the regular classroom.	Likert	Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994; Black, 2010; Madden & Slavin, 1983; National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Robbins, 2010; Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Giasson, Royer, & et al., 1998; SRI International, 1993; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998
	Special needs students are better served in public schools where more resources are available to meet their needs.	Reverse Likert	Bello, 2006; Hale, 2009; Madden & Slavin, 1983
	Inclusion in the Christian classroom, with appropriate supports, is probably the best placement for disabled students.	Likert	Madden & Slavin, 1983
	Nondisabled students will be disadvantaged by having disabled students in the classroom.	Reverse Likert	Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, Kaplan 2007; Howes, 2003; Idol, 2006; Saint-Laurent et al. 1998; Hale, 2009
	Students with severe disabilities should be included in the regular classroom.	Likert	Hale, 2009; Gandhi, 2007; Kalambouka, et al., 2007.
	Regular students can benefit from inclusion.	Likert	Cookson, 2010; Howes, 2003; Idol, 2006; Saint-Laurent et al., 1998
	Christian schools should attempt to place disabled students in the least restrictive environment (LRE).	Likert	US Dept. of Education National Center for Education Statistics, 2011

	Inclusion with support in the Christian classroom is probably the best placement for students with disabilities.	Likert	Hale, 2009; Madden & Slavin, 1983
	Until Christian schools have appropriate supports, they should not enroll disabled students.	Reverse Likert	Hale, 2009; Madden & Slavin, 1983
	Inclusion programs can positively impact the standardized test scores of disabled students.	Likert	Black, 2010; Robbins, 2010
	Some students are best served in traditional special education programs.	Likert	Ewing, 2009; Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin 1998, 2002
	Pull-out teaching models are sometimes appropriate.	Likert	Herriott, 2010
	Private Christian schools are generally unable to provide related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech, and psycho-educational evaluations.	Likert	Bello, 2006; Eigenbrood, 2005
	All students who do not make adequate progress when a scientifically based curriculum is being used require an intervention.	Likert	Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani et al., 2003
	Interventions should occur in groups of 3 or less.	Likert	Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani et al. 2003; Elbaum et al., 2000
	When students are not succeeding academically, students should receive more time on task through supplemental instructional opportunities.	Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007
	Interventions should be specific to the academic domain in which the student is struggling.	Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007
	Christian schools just do not have the resources to be able to provide appropriate educational interventions for	Reverse Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007; Hale, 2009

	struggling students.		
	Progress assessments should be used to inform instruction.	Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007;
	Progress assessments should occur frequently.	Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007
	Ideally, interventions should be integrated with regular educational practices.	Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007; Hale, 2009
	Response to Intervention (RTI) is a promising instructional practice for Christian schools.	Likert	Boyle, 2010
	A school's core instruction should be effective enough to result in 80% of the students achieving benchmarks.	Likert	Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani et al., 2003
	Students with high-incidence disabilities are capable of achieving grade-level benchmarks.	Likert	Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani et al., 2003
	My teachers are able to make instructional decisions based on assessment data.	Likert	Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani et al., 2003
	It is unlikely that nondisabled students will be negatively impacted academically by being placed in an inclusive classroom.	Reverse Likert	Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, Kaplan 2007; Howes, 2003; Idol, 2006; Saint-Laurent et al. 1998
	It is unlikely that nondisabled students will be negatively impacted emotionally by being placed in an inclusive classroom.	Reverse Likert	Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, Kaplan 2007; Howes, 2003; Idol, 2006; Saint-Laurent et al. 1998
	As many Christian high schools are college prep schools, inclusion at the high school level is problematic.	Reverse Likert	Bello, 2006; Kalambouka et al., 2007
	As disabled students are admitted into the Christian school, contextual classroom characteristics should be carefully monitored as they can make major differences in how inclusion can impact students in the general education classroom.	Likert	Gandhi, 2007

	Implementing an inclusion model can cause high achieving students to lose ground academically.	Reverse Likert	Huber, Rosenfeld, Fiorello, 2001
	Enrolling special needs students can teach nondisabled students to be more considerate of others.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	Physical inclusion alone does not always foster positive attitudes among non-disabled students.	Reverse Likert	Siperstein, Norins, & Mohler, 2007
	Social interventions may be used effectively to help foster positive attitudes among nondisabled students.	Likert	Siperstein, Norins, & Mohler, 2007
	Nondisabled students are generally less accepting of disabled students.	Likert	Roberts & Zubrick, 1992; sale & Carely, 1995; Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996; Cookson, 2010
Spiritual Considerations	Every student, including those with special needs, is created in the image of God.	Likert	Braley, Layman, White, 2003; Eigenbrood, 2005
	Christian schools should make every attempt possible to provide programs to meet the needs of special education students.	Likert	Braley, Layman, White, 2003; Eigenbrood, 2005
	Christian schools should invite special needs students into their schools.	Likert	Braley, Layman, White, 2003
	There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.	Likert	Horton, 1992; Van Brummelen, 2009; Barnes, 2012
	Christians should fully embrace inclusion.	Likert	Van Brummelen, 2009; Pudlas, 2004
	I have a passion for our school to have an effective special education program.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	Building special education programs can be spiritually gratifying.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	My teachers provide a welcoming classroom	Likert	Anderson, 2011

	environment for students for students with academic challenges.		
	My teachers provide a welcoming atmosphere for students with behavioral challenges.	Likert	Anderson, 2011
	My teachers foster a culture of acceptance for all students.	Likert	Anderson, 2011
	My teachers accept the responsibility of learning of all of the students in their classes.	Likert	Anderson, 2011
	My teachers research how to best meet the learning needs of their students.	Likert	Anderson, 2011
	Barriers often prohibit Christian schools from providing special education programs	Likert	Braley, Layman, White, 2003; Eigenbrood, 2005
	A person's relationship with Jesus Christ can help the individual adjust more positively to the disability.	Likert	Tarakeshwar & Pargament, 2001; Treloar, 2002
	Every human life has its limitations, so in truth, there is no such thing as a life without disability.	Likert	Moltmann, 1998
	My teachers do not grumble about students who are challenging.	Reverse Likert	Anderson, 2011
	The trials the disabled person goes through can foster a deeper faith in God.	Likert	Treloar, 2002
	A disabled person's spiritual beliefs can help create meaning for the disability.	Likert	Treloar, 2002
	God has a purpose for the disabled person's life.	Likert	Treloar 2002
	Inclusion in a faith community can lead to a sense of belonging.	Likert	Vogel, Polloway, Smith, 2006
	Being involved in a faith community can increase the quality of life for the special education student.	Likert	Poston & Turnbull, 2004

	Including disabled students can spiritually benefit nondisabled students.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
Financial Considerations	The cost of funding special education programs in the Christian school often makes the development of special education programs cost-prohibitive.	Likert	Chaikind & Danielson, 1993; Chambers, Parrish, & Harr, 2002; Jordan, Weiner, & Jordan, 1997; Parrish, 2000; Bello, 2006
	Students with high incidence disabilities are generally less expensive to educate than students with low incidence disabilities.	Likert	Bello, 2006; Hudson, 2002
	As Christian schools develop and fund their own special education programs, tuition will likely be raised to meet the financial needs of the program.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	I believe that Christian schools should pass the cost of educating the special needs student on to the parent of the special needs student.	Likert	Bello, 2006; Cookson, 2010
	I believe that the additional cost of educating the special needs student should be shared by all enrolled in the Christian school.	Likert	Bello, 2006; Cookson, 2010
	Schools should provide a tuition assistance program to assist parents who are unable to pay for the special needs program.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	Enrolling special education students can be a financial blessing to the school due to increased enrollment.	Likert	Cookson, 2010
	Response to Intervention (RTI) is a cost-saving strategy appropriate for Christian schools.	Likert	Strax, Strax, & Cooper, 2012
	Inclusion is an appropriate cost-saving strategy for Christian schools.	Likert	Bello, 2006; McLaughlin & Warren, 1994

	Utilizing trained paraprofessionals to work with difficult-to-remediate children under the supervision of expert reading teachers is an appropriate cost saving measure for Christian schools.	Likert	Gelheizer, Scanlon, & D'Angelo, 2001; Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996; Simmons, Kame'enui, Stoolmiller, Coyne, & Harn, 2003
	Highly trained speech-language pathology assistants, using manuals prepared by speech-language pathologists to guide intervention, can provide effective services for some children with language problems.	Likert	Adamczyk et al., 2010
	Christian schools should take advantage of utilizing public funds and services as much as possible to alleviate the financial burden of special education.	Likert	U.S. Department of Education, 2008; Alliance for School Choice, 2013

APPENDIX E: Judges Construct Questionnaire 1

Directions: Please identify with **X** the category most related to each item. If you see any items poorly worded or confusing, please also mark that in the last column. Feel free to add comments at the end of this document.

		Shared Vision	Financial Considerations	Parental Concerns	Teacher Input	Student Considerations	Religions Considerations	None	Problem with Item wording
1	It is important for a school that begins a special education program to have personnel in place that are appropriately trained in special education.								
2	Parents of special needs students should bear the cost of the special education program.								
3	Adding a special education program will likely require the Christian school to raise tuition.								
4	Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.								
5	My teachers are concerned that they do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with disabilities.								
6	Christian schools should make every attempt possible to provide programs to meet the needs of special education students.								
7	Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task.								
8	I have a passion for our school to have an effective special education program.								
9	Building special education programs can be spiritually gratifying.								
10	The additional cost of educating special needs students should be shared by all enrolled in the Christian school.								
11	Our school has adequate personnel to meet the needs of special education students.								

12	Parents should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program.								
13	Inclusion is an appropriate cost-saving strategy.								
14	The cost of funding a special education program in my school is cost-prohibitive.								
15	Inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.								
		Shared Vision	Financial Consideration	Parental Concerns	Teacher Input	Student Consideration	Religions Consideration	None	Problem with Item wording
16	I am confident in my teachers' abilities to teach students with special needs.								
17	My teachers believe that special needs students should be admitted into the school.								
18	Inclusion in the Christian classroom, with appropriate supports, is probably the best placement for disabled students.								
19	My teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classroom.								
20	Enrolling special education students can be a financial blessing to the school due to increased enrollment.								
21	When developing a new program, it is imperative that adequate resources be provided in order to ensure success.								
22	Special needs students are better served in public schools than in Christian schools.								
23	I believe that God wants us to educate all children, including those with special needs.								
24	Christian schools do not have the resources to provide appropriate educational interventions for struggling students.								

25	I am concerned that the academic achievement of students without disabilities will be negatively impacted if we enroll students with special needs.								
26	I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.								
27	Parents fear that the inclusion of special needs students affects the overall quality of the classroom instruction.								
28	Enrolling special education students can benefit from non-disabled students.								
29	Being involved in a faith community can increase the quality of life for the special education student.								
30	Parents are concerned about the behavior of special education students.								
31	Every student, including those with special needs, is created in the image of God.								
		Shared	Financial Considerati	Parental Concerns	Teacher	Student Considerati	Religions Considerati	None	Problem with Item
32	When implementing a special education program, I am likely to engage in personal, direct conversations with key parents in order to solicit their support.								
33	Parents have approached me about developing a special education program.								
34	Parents should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program.								
35	I have the skillset to be able to develop systematic strategies for the development of a special education program.								
36	When implementing a special education program, I am likely to engage in personal, direct conversations with key parents in order to solicit their support.								
37	Inclusion is an appropriate cost-saving strategy for Christian schools.								
38	My teachers would be more welcoming of students with mild disabilities than								

	students with more severe disabilities.								
39	There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.								
40	My teachers are skilled at providing appropriate interventions.								
41	Special needs students with disruptive behaviors should be admitted with appropriate supports.								
42	Special needs students with disruptive behaviors should be admitted with appropriate supports.								
43	Before implementing a special education program in our school, our teachers need professional development.								
44	I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents satisfied.								
45	Christian schools should take advantage of utilizing public funds and services as much as possible to alleviate the financial burden of special education.								

		Shared Vision	Financial Consideration	Parental Concerns	Teacher Input	Student Consideration	Religions Consideration	None	Problem with Item wording
46	I have adequate knowledge of special education to lead my school through the development of a special education program.								
47	I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.								
48	Before implementing a special education program in our school, I would make certain that the teachers are supportive of the new program.								
49	I have enough experience as a school leader to be able to negotiate parental relationships while developing a special education program.								
50	Parents are more likely to be supportive of a special education program if the school limits admission to students with minor disabilities.								

Comments:

APPENDIX F: Judges Construct Questionnaire 2

How closely does each statement relate to the concept of VISION?
1=strongly unrelated 2=somewhat unrelated 3=somewhat related 4=strongly related

	Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.
	Inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.
	Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task.
	I have a passion for our school to have an effective special education program.
	Administrators can effectuate major changes without involving parents and teachers.
	Christian school administrators must share their vision of initiating a special education program with zeal.
	When considering implementing a special education program at a Christian school, it is important for all stakeholders to embrace this vision.
	A shared vision for a special education program should include setting high expectations for all students.

How closely does each statement relate to the concept of FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS?
1=strongly unrelated 2=somewhat unrelated 3=somewhat related 4=strongly related

	Adding a special education program will likely require the Christian school to raise tuition.
	The cost of funding a special education program in my school is cost-prohibitive.
	Enrolling special education students can be a financial blessing to the school due to increased enrollment.
	Inclusion is an appropriate cost-saving strategy for Christian schools.
	Christian schools should take advantage of utilizing public funds and services as much as possible to alleviate the financial burden of special education.
	When developing a new program, it is imperative that adequate resources be provided in order to ensure success.
	The additional cost of educating special needs students should be shared by all enrolled in the Christian school.
	The additional cost of educating special needs students should be passed on to the parents of students with special needs.

How closely does each statement relate to the concept of PARENTAL CONCERNS? **1=strongly unrelated 2=somewhat unrelated 3=somewhat related 4=strongly related**	
	Parents are concerned about the behavior of special education students.
	Parents are more likely to be supportive of a special education program if the school limits admission to students with minor disabilities.
	Parents should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program.
	I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents satisfied.
	Parents' opinions shouldn't be the basis for deciding whether a special education program should be added.
	Parents are more likely to be supportive of a self-contained special education program than an integrated special education program.
	Parents will overcome their initial doubts regarding the instructional effectiveness of an integrated setting for their children.
	It is vital to have parental support prior to initiating a special education program.

How closely does each statement relate to the concept of TEACHER INPUT? **1=strongly unrelated 2=somewhat unrelated 3=somewhat related 4=strongly related**	
	My teachers are concerned that they do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with disabilities.
	My teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classroom.
	Before implementing a special education program in our school, our teachers need professional development.
	My teachers are skilled at providing appropriate interventions.
	My teachers would be more welcoming of students with mild disabilities than students with more severe disabilities.
	I am confident in my teachers' abilities to teach students with special needs.
	I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.
	If teachers are allowed to give input prior to implementing a special education program, they will be more likely to accept a special education program at our school.

How closely does each statement relate to the concept of STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS?

1=strongly unrelated 2=somewhat unrelated 3=somewhat related 4=strongly related

	Special education students can benefit from non-disabled students.
	I am concerned that the academic achievement of students without disabilities will be negatively impacted if we enroll students with special needs.
	I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.
	Many students at my school should be in special education but have not been identified.
	Prior to implementing a special education program at our school, students should be educated about the different exceptionalities.
	I am concerned that special needs students will not be served as well in our Christian school as in the public schools.
	Most of the time, it is in the best interest of students with disabilities to be placed in special classes or schools specifically designed for them.
	Students without disabilities can benefit from contact with students with disabilities.

How closely does each statement relate to the concept of RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS?

1=strongly unrelated 2=somewhat unrelated 3=somewhat related 4=strongly related

	There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.
	Being involved in a faith community can increase the quality of life for the special education student.
	Because we are a Christian school, we should consider admitting students with disabilities.
	The concept of the body of Christ would be exemplified through our enrollment if we served special education students through a special education program.
	Implementing a special education program is an indication that a Christian school is concerned with all of God's creation.
	Because we are a Christian school, we should make every attempt possible to provide programs to meet the needs of special education students.
	A person's relationship with Jesus Christ can help the individual adjust more positively to the disability.
	Every human life has its limitations, so spiritually speaking, there is no such thing as a life without disability.

APPENDIX G: Final Instrument

School Leader's Special Education Decision-Making Scale

The purpose of this study is to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure school leaders' attitudes towards six dimensions that have influence on their consideration to implement special education programs. There is no right or wrong answer, so please address the questions to the best of your knowledge and provide us with what you believe.

School Leader Demographics

2. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your race?

4. What is the job title for your current position?

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

6. What is your educational background? Select all that apply.

- Education Field - Educational Leadership
- Education Field - Other than Educational Leadership
- Religious Field - Seminary

Other (please specify)

7. How many years of experience do you have in school leadership?

Years of Leadership Experience

8. How many years did you teach in a school before becoming a school leader?

Years of Teaching Experience

9. Select the responses below that best describes your experience with special education

- ☐ I have a degree in special education.
- ☐ I DO NOT have a degree in special education but I have taken SOME professional development courses in the field.
- ☐ I have experience working with individuals with special needs.
- ☐ I do not have any experience with special education.

School Demographics

10. What is your school's status with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)?

- ○ Member School
- ○ Accredited School

11. Which category best describes your school?

- ○ Church Sponsored/Affiliated
- ○ Independent

If church sponsored/affiliated, which denomination?

12. Describe your school area.

- ○ Urban
- ○ Inner-city
- ○ Suburban
- ○ Rural

13. What grade levels does your school serve?

14. What is your current enrollment?

15. How many students with identified disabilities does your school serve?

16. Does your school have a formal program for students with special needs?

- Yes
- No

17. Does your school have an inclusion program?

- Yes
- No

18. Does your school have a formal intervention program for struggling students?

- Yes
- No

19. Is your school considering developing a formal special needs program?

- Yes
- No
- We already have one

20. Which exceptionalities are included in your school? Select all that apply.

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment

- [ ] Traumatic Brain Injury
- [ ] Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Other (please specify)

21. Teachers in my school modify instruction in their classrooms to meet the individual needs of students identified with special needs.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

22. Please rank the level of influence the following factors had on the implementation of your school's special education program. (1 indicating the most impact and 6 the least).

Shared vision (The leadership practice leaders use to demonstrate future possibilities with enthusiasm and optimism, providing a clear and compelling vision, and enlisting others to be enthusiastic supporters.)

Financial considerations (Counting the financial cost of educational programs in order to ensure adequate resources for meeting the educational needs of all students.)

Parental concerns (Educational matters that are of importance to parents as they engage in the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and the intellectual development of their child(ren)).

Teacher input (Advice or opinions provided by teachers to help school leaders make decisions.)

Student considerations (Issues that school leaders should carefully deliberate over in an effort to reach decisions that are in their students' best interest.)

Religious considerations (Manifesting faithful devotion towards God by carefully considering issues in accordance with the doctrines of truth elicited in Scripture.)

23. In my school, approval from the following people must be garnered in order to add a special needs program. Select all that apply.

- [ ] School Superintendent/Head
- [ ] Senior Pastor/Church Administrator
- [ ] Deacon Body/Church Elders
- [ ] CFO/Budget Committee

- ☐ Pastoral Staff
- ☐ School Board
- ☐ Parent Body
- ☐ School Administration
- ☐ School Staff

Other (please specify)

24. How important is it for you to see special education programs implemented or enhanced at your school within the next two years?

Unimportant	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
○	○	○	○	○

Shared Vision

25. Prior to implementing a special education program, it is important for school leaders to inspire a shared vision among all stakeholders.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

26. Inspiring a shared vision is internal and within my power to influence.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

27. Establishing a philosophy statement for special education is an important task.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

Parental Concerns

28. Parents of currently enrolled students should be involved in the decision making process of starting a special education program

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

29. I am concerned that should our school begin a special education program, it will be more difficult to keep parents of non-disabled students satisfied.

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

30. It is vital to have parental support of currently enrolled students prior to initiating a

special education program.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Teacher Input

31. My teachers are concerned that the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities will be negatively impacted by having students with disabilities included in the general classrooms.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

32. I am concerned that teachers will not be receptive to students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Religious Considerations

33. There is a basis in scripture for Christian schools to provide special education programs in their schools.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

34. The concept of the body of Christ would be exemplified through our enrollment if we served special education students through a special education program.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

35. Implementing a special education program is an indication that a Christian school is concerned with all of God's creation.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree