

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL  
AND CARING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND ENABLING SCHOOL STRUCTURE

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher attrition is a continuing issue facing schools in the United States. A lack of administrative support and working conditions are often cited as causes of job dissatisfaction and lack of career commitment, which in turn lead to burnout and intent to leave. Psychological capital (PsyCap) has been extensively studied and found to have a positive correlation to the outcomes of job satisfaction and commitment and a negative correlation to stress and burnout. Some leadership models have been found to be an antecedent to PsyCap. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of teachers' PsyCap with the predictor variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure. This study used a correlational design utilizing the self-report measures of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) and Enabling School Structure (ESS) survey. There were 109 K-12 state-certified teachers of a cyber charter school in Pennsylvania who participated in the study. Results of a multiple regression analysis suggested there was a significant predictive relationship of the combination of caring school leadership and enabling school structure on teachers' PsyCap. Additionally, bivariate linear regression analyses also demonstrated a significant predictive relationship of each predictive variable on the criterion variable of PsyCap. Future research recommended include replication studies in different educational settings, such as in district schools and religious/faith-based schools, as well as qualitative studies on the specific phenomena teachers identify with caring school leadership.

*Keywords:* psychological capital, caring school leadership, enabling school structure, teacher attrition, teacher retention

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### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Cindi. She has been so supportive throughout all my academic pursuits. Over my career, I have been in several different roles that all required a learning curve and additional education, and through it all, she encouraged me along the way as I needed to dedicate a lot of time to studying, research, and writing. I further dedicate this work to my children, Natalee and Stephen. I am so grateful for how you both have matured into young adults and to see how your talents and abilities have blossomed. Most importantly, I would like to dedicate this work to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who modeled relational leadership which was centered on expressing sincere care and a genuine regard for the interests, needs, and well-being of his followers (Philippians 2:3-4).

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

Research shows that eight percent or more of all teachers leave the profession every year citing the reasons of lack of administrative support and working conditions, such as the bureaucratic structure of the school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kurland, 2019). The construct of psychological capital (PsyCap) is notable in the study of teacher attrition since PsyCap has been found to have significant positive relationships with career commitment and job satisfaction as well as significant negative relationships with stress, burnout, and intent to leave (Demir, 2018; Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015). The purpose of this study was to examine the perception K-12 online educators have of the relationship between caring school leadership and enabling school structure with teachers' psychological capital. Chapter one provides the background related to the attrition issue and the variables of psychological capital, caring school leadership, and enabling school structure. This chapter also presents the problem statement as well as the purpose and significance of the study. In conclusion, the chapter presents the research question and the definitions associated with this study.

### **Background**

Studies indicate that teachers early in their career are most at risk for leaving (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Castro, Quinn, Fuller, & Barnes, 2018; Chambers Mack, Johnson, Jones-Rincon, Tsatenawa, & Howard, 2019). Some studies have indicated that 30% or more of teachers leave within their first five years (Castro et al., 2018; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). However, it is not only new teachers who are leaving, as some studies indicate that eight percent, and some indicate as high as 16%, of pre-retirement educators leave the profession in any given year (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Castro et al., 2018; Newberry & Allsop,

2017). This equates to an annual attrition rate of about 250,000 to 500,000 public school teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). This high level of attrition is the leading cause for teacher shortages (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Fuller, Pendola, & Young, 2018; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). In fact, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) claimed that up to 90% of new teacher demand is related to pre-retirement turnover.

Teacher attrition is costly and needs to be addressed. The cost associated with teacher attrition extends beyond just the financial, which can exceed \$20,000 in the process of replacing a teacher (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Research suggests high teacher turnover rates also negatively affects student outcomes (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Fuller et al., 2018; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Vekeman, Devos, Valcke, & Rosseel, 2017). Additionally, higher levels of teacher turnover negatively impact the culture of the school community (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Studies show that low levels of job satisfaction and career commitment, along with high levels of stress and anxiety, are triggers that eventually lead to teacher attrition, with job satisfaction being the most pronounced predictor (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Vekeman et al., 2017). However, lack of organizational commitment and teachers' perceptions of feeling they do not have control in their work are also identified causes (Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Jeon & Wells, 2018). Teaching is a stressful occupation which can also lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, which are other causes of teacher attrition (Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Perrone, Player, & Youngs, 2019). Root causes for educators' dissatisfaction have been found to be associated with a lack of administrative support and poor working conditions, which include teacher perception of school

structures that hinder their work (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Fuller et al., 2018; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016; Kurland, 2019).

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the factors that can improve teacher job satisfaction as well as reduce stress and burnout. School leadership is a significant factor associated with teacher retention (Burkhauser, 2017; Cansoy & Polatcan, 2019; Fuller et al., 2018; Perrone et al., 2019). School leaders are able to shape the working conditions and organizational structure that can either hinder or enable teachers in their work (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Additionally, school leaders can be instrumental in the emotional and psychological well-being of teachers in the support and care they provide (Cansoy & Polatcan, 2019; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2017; Newberry & Allsop, 2017).

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a well-researched theoretical framework that investigates the psychological resources and strengths of an individual and how individuals employ these resources and strengths to improve work outcomes and overall quality of life (Demir, 2018; Tosten & Toprak, 2017). PsyCap is defined as a state-like, higher-order construct which emphasizes the synergistic strength of the four psychological resources of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Leon-Perez, Antino, & Leon-Rubio, 2016; Luthans et al., 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

PsyCap is relevant to the issue of teacher attrition because teachers with high levels of PsyCap have been shown to have higher work performance (Tüzün, Çetin, & Basim, 2018), work engagement (Alessandri, Consiglio, Luthans, & Borgogni, 2018; Mazzetti, Guglielmi, Chiesa, & Mariani, 2016), psychological well-being (Manzano-Garcia & Ayala, 2017; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018), and job satisfaction (Demir, 2018; Luthans et al., 2015). Likewise, teachers with

higher levels of PsyCap also tend to have lower levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout, which are triggers for intention to leave (Demir, 2018; Luthans, Luthans, & Palmer, 2016; Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, & Hirst, 2014; Rehman, Qingren, Latif, & Iqbal, 2017).

One of the antecedents that can increase PsyCap levels in teachers is leadership behavior (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Hu et al., 2018; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Caring school leadership is a theoretical framework that is still in its early development (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016). The concept is growing in interest among researchers as it has been associated with positive psychology and the well-being of employees (Murphy & Louis, 2018; van der Vyver, van der Westhuizen, & Meyer, 2014a). Since this construct is still in its infancy, there is no widely accepted definition (Kurland, 2019; Louis, Murphy, & Smylie, 2016). For the purpose of this study, caring school leadership is defined as the positive relational connection of the school leader with the faculty and staff, whereby the leader's intent is to express sincere care through cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations that demonstrate a genuine regard for the interests, needs, and overall well-being of each faculty member.

Caring school leadership draws from several leadership theories, especially from relational leadership theory, spiritual leadership theory, and servant leadership theory. Relational leadership theory emphasizes the need for connectedness and the quality of social interactions (Murphy & Louis, 2018; Smit & Scherman, 2016). Spiritual leadership also emphasizes relationships, specifically through the perspective of values and vocational calling, and embraces as essential the practices of altruism, selfless love, and concern for others (Meng, 2016). Servant leadership is about serving others with the intent to promote the greatest good in those one serves (Northouse, 2019). Drawing from these theories, caring school leadership is expressed through interactions with individual faculty members, manifested in actions such as openness,

authenticity, building trust and belonging, showing respect and appreciation, compassion, altruistic love, attentiveness to needs of others, kindness, fairness, empowering of teachers, and self-sacrificing service (Kurland, 2019; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Louis et al., 2016; Smit & Scherman, 2016; Smylie, Murphy, & Louis, 2016). Caring school leadership is worthy of study in relation to teacher retention because research suggests caring school leadership is correlated with satisfaction and commitment (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Kurland, 2019) and a supportive working environment (Louis & Murphy, 2017).

The organizational structure of a school shapes and define the school culture and climate and school leaders are influential in shaping the school's organizational structure (Kilinç, Koşar, Er, & Öğdem, 2016; Mitchell, 2018; Sinden, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2004a). Hoy and Sweetland (2001) developed the Enabling School Structure (ESS) construct which includes the major components of formalization and centralization; formalization is the system of rules, and centralization is the decision-making authority (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Mitchell, 2018, Sinden, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2004b). Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) proposed that “attrition is grounded in organizational theory... because of school level-factors” (p. 607). Enabling school structure is an organizational construct that incorporates the school level factors of formalization and centralization. For this reason, since research suggests ESS is related to variables that are linked to job satisfaction, such as trust and a positive professional learning community (Gray, 2016; Gray, Krause, & Tarter, 2016; Kalkan, 2016; Mitchell, 2018), ESS is another variable that needs to be examined in relation to improving teachers' PsyCap and thereby reducing teacher attrition.

Research has identified working conditions as a reason why educators leave the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Kraft et al., 2016; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). According to Burkhauser (2017), working conditions

included supportive administration and collaborative structure for teacher empowerment in decision-making (See also Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kraft et al., 2016). Therefore, to better understand how to address the teacher attrition crisis, it is important to examine the leadership behaviors associated with caring school leadership and enabling school structure and its relationship with teachers' psychological capital.

Virtual K-12 schools, also referred to as cyber or online schools, are one of the most significant changes to occur in the field of education over the past two decades (Martenev & Bernadowski, 2016; Morgan, 2015; Toppin & Toppin, 2016). Cyber schools can be defined as educational agencies that provide all instructional services by means of electronic and web-based platforms (Lin, Zheng, & Zhang, 2017; Martenev & Bernadowski, 2016; Morgan, 2015). In the past decade, enrollment in public virtual charter schools have grown exponentially with enrollment surpassing 250,000 students nationwide (Scheltens & Brangan, 2018; Waddell, 2017).

Even though this model has been expanding, existing research has primarily focused on student engagement and academic performance (Beck, Maranto, & Tuchman, 2017; Lin et al., 2017; Waddell, 2017). There is limited research on teacher satisfaction and retention of cyber school educators (Borup & Stevens 2016; Larkin, Brantley-Dias & Lokey-Vega, 2016; Larkin, Lokey-Vega, & Brantley-Dias, 2018;). Likewise, the research is scarce on virtual school leadership (Garcia, 2015; Richardson, LaFrance & Beck, 2015). Similarly, when one examines the wider body of literature on e-leadership and leading virtual teams, which is applicable to cyber schools since most teachers work remotely, the research is still scant (Chua & Chua, 2017; Kuscu & Arslan, 2016). Consequently, this study examined the relationship of virtual school leadership practices on the psychological resources of online teachers.



### **Problem Statement**

Vekeman et al. (2017) stressed the importance of school administrators in teacher retention. A relatively new leadership model that has been gaining attention is referred to as caring school leadership (Smylie et al., 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014a). However, much of the literature is theoretical in nature and there is a need for more empirical studies (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014a). Likewise, organizational bureaucracy and the concept of enabling school structure, which principals are key in shaping, have been associated with positive outcomes such as satisfaction and trust (Gray et al., 2016; Mitchell, 2018).

Current research on PsyCap, conducted both domestically and internationally, is extensive and replete with studies that show outcomes associated with employee retention (Luthans et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2014). Consistently, the research has revealed that a higher level of PsyCap is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, career commitment, and well-being, as well as significant correlations to lower levels of stress, anxiety, burnout and intention to leave (Luthans et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2014). However, there is a gap in the literature when looking at the antecedent of leadership since only transformational, authentic, and leader-member exchange (LMX) have been examined (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Newman et al., 2014; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018). Accordingly, the problem is a need for further research in examining the relationship between leadership behavior, such as caring school leadership and enabling school structure, and their relationship with teachers' psychological capital.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative, predictive, correlational study was to examine the relationship and degree of prediction of caring school leadership and enabling school structure with teachers' psychological capital. The objective of this study was to determine the extent to

which teachers' psychological capital can be attributed to the leadership approaches associated with caring school leadership model and enabling school structure. The criterion variable was teachers' PsyCap. Psychological capital is defined as the higher-order, state-like construct of psychological resources comprised of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, commonly referred to as the "HERO within" (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015). The predictor variables were teachers' perception of caring school leadership and enabling school structure. Caring school leadership includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations that demonstrate a genuine regard for the interests and needs of each faculty member. These manifestations can be categorized by psychological and management determinants, whereas psychological attributes are associated with emotional literacy and management attributes with leadership style (van der Vyver et al., 2014a). Enabling school structure is defined as the bureaucratic structure that encompasses formalization (rules) and centralization (decision-making authority) that enables, not hinders, teachers in doing their job effectively (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). The population sample for this study was comprised of full-time online educators in a K-12 virtual charter school in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### **Significance of the Study**

Psychological capital is well researched in the field of education (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Demir, 2018; Feng, 2016; Ganotice, Yeung, Beguina, & Villarosa, 2016; Kurt & Demirbolat, 2019). There are a few studies that have examined the relationship of authentic, transformational, and leader-member exchange on employee PsyCap, but there remains a need to examine other leadership theories and their potential relationship to PsyCap (Newman et al., 2014; Park, Kim, Yoon, & Joo, 2017). For this reason, this study adds to the body of literature on PsyCap by specifically examining the leadership constructs of caring school leadership and

enabling school structure as antecedents with the potential of increasing teachers' psychological capital.

Van der Vyver et al. (2014a) stressed that teachers tend to experience a lack in psychological care from principals due to leaders not addressing, or showing interest in, the overall well-being of their staff. This draws attention to the need to emphasize caring since it "lies at the heart of effective schooling and good school leadership" (Smylie et al., 2016, p. 1). Caring leadership is found to be related to effective functioning of an organization, which leads to lower levels of stress and job dissatisfaction (Hur, Moon, & Rhee, 2016). However, even though there is interest in establishing the link between caring leadership and positive organizational behavior (POB), the concept of caring school leadership is still early in its development and has received little attention in empirical studies (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Kurland, 2019; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; van der Vyver et al., 2014a). Louis and colleagues (2016) underscored the need for more research in caring leadership because its meaning remains vague in the literature. Part of the reason for the ambiguity is because there has not been a universally accepted definition of the caring school leadership model (Kroth & Keeler, 2009). Overall, the assessment is that there is an insufficient number of studies on caring school leadership (Houghton, Pearce, Manz, Courtright, & Stewart, 2015; Kurland, 2019). In fact, van der Vyver, van der Westhuizen, and Meyer (2014b) stated that "very little to no literature in education management, administration and leadership was available on the execution of educational leader's caring role with regard to teachers was a problem in itself" (p. 1). Therefore, this study is significant because it adds to the body of literature and provides empirical insight on the relationship between caring school leadership and teachers' psychological capital.

Additionally, this study adds to the body of research on enabling school structure. Even though research shows there is a link between school climate and teachers' perception of a positive work atmosphere, there is a gap in the literature that links climate with teachers' job satisfaction (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Likewise, research demonstrates that there is an association between the organizational structure and the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Cerit, 2017). Research has revealed there is a relationship between leadership, school structure and teacher career commitment (Sinden et al., 2004b). However, in an extensive review of the literature, no studies were identified that showed the relation between enabling school structure and the psychological well-being of teachers. On these grounds, this study augments the body of research on enabling school structure by examining the relationship with teachers' psychological capital, a key variable associated with teachers' job satisfaction and career commitment.

Research reinforces and supports the belief that a principal's leadership style impacts the perceptions teachers have of the school and their level of job satisfaction (Burkhauser, 2017; Cansoy & Polatcan, 2019). Ford and Ware (2018) highlighted a few studies that link school leadership behaviors and the overall structure of the school with the well-being and development of teachers. For these reasons, the overall significance of this study is that it adds to the literature on psychological capital, caring school leadership, and enabling school structure, thereby providing school leadership with a better understanding of how leadership behaviors can influence the psychological resources of teachers, which ultimately can influence their perception of job satisfaction, working conditions, and career commitment.

### Research Question

This study addressed the following question:

**RQ:** Do caring school leadership and enabling school structure predict online teachers' psychological capital?

### Definitions

1. *Caring School Leadership (CSL)* – Since it is a relatively new construct, caring school leadership does not have an accepted definition. For the purpose of this study, it is defined as the relational connection of the school leader with the faculty and staff whereby the intent is to express sincere care which is expressed through cognitive, affective and behavioral manifestations that demonstrate a genuine regard for the interests, needs, and overall well-being of each faculty member (Smylie et al., 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014a).
2. *Centralization* – Centralization is defined as the foci point of authority in the decision making in the organization. High centralization is characterized as very hierarchical whereas low centralization is more shared decision making (How & Sweetland, 2001).
3. *Cyber/Virtual/Online Charter School* – Virtual school may also be referred to as cyber school or online school. A full-time virtual school is defined as a local education agency (LEA) that provides the entire, or the majority of the school program, services, and supports through online platforms (Lin et al., 2017; Marteney & Bernadowski, 2016; Morgan, 2015).
4. *Efficacy* – The theory of efficacy is based on social cognitive theory and is defined as one's belief that they have the abilities and competencies to be successful in achieving a goal (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015).

5. *Enabling School Structure (ESS)* – Enabling school structure is defined as the bureaucratic structure that encompasses formalization and centralization that enables, not hinders, teachers in doing their job effectively (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).
6. *Formalization* – Formalization is defined as the system of rules, regulations, policies and procedures within an organization. Coercive formalization is characterized by restrictive rules and rigidity whereas enabling formalization is characterized by rules as guidelines for best practices and flexibility (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).
7. *Hope* – The theory of hope is associated with goal setting and is defined as the combination of goal pathways and goal energy. Goal pathway is characterized as the strategy one creates to achieve a goal and goal energy is the internal motivation toward achievement of the goal (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015).
8. *Optimism* – The theory of optimism is associated with attributional style and is defined as one's expectation in reaching goal attainment. It is characterized by interpreting positive developments toward goal achievement from internal perspective, that is, by what is in his or her control, whereas negative developments are interpreted from external perspective as something outside their control (Luthans et al., 2015).
9. *Psychological Capital (PsyCap)*– Psychological capital is defined as positive psychological resources and capacities. It is a higher-order, state-like construct comprised of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2015).
10. *Resilience* – The theory of resilience is defined as the psychological capacity to persevere in working toward goal achievement amid setbacks or challenges (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015).

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

This study examined the relationship of caring school leadership and enabling school structure on the psychological resources and strengths of teachers. This chapter provides an overview of the current literature associated with the three core concepts of the study including: (a) teachers' psychological resources, which is commonly referred to as psychological capital (PsyCap); (b) caring school leadership; and (c) enabling school structure (ESS). Specifically, the definitions and core theories supporting the concepts of psychological capital, caring school leadership, and enabling school structure are presented. Finally, the literature will be summarized to identify the positive outcomes associated with each of the concepts as they relate to teacher retention and thereby reducing teacher attrition.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study centers on the three main constructs of psychological capital (PsyCap), caring school leadership, and enabling school structure. Psychological capital emerged from positive organizational behavior (POB) and includes the four resources grounded in the theories of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Caring school leadership is an emerging construct supported by the theories of relational leadership, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership. Enabling school structure is grounded in organizational theory and the rational-legal theory of bureaucracy.

### **Psychological Capital**

In 2000, Dr. Seligman, who was president of the American Psychological Association at the time, stressed the need to have research in psychology move beyond a focus on dysfunctional behaviors and to focus upon optimal functioning which leads to fulfillment and happiness in life

(Luthans, Luthans, & Chaffin, 2019; Shrestha, 2016). From this, the field of study called positive psychology was birthed with a focus on positive organizational behavior (POB), which in turn led to the emergence of the construct of psychological capital (Lorenz, Beer, Pütz, & Heinritz, 2016; Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018; Tosten & Toprak, 2017; Yalcin, 2016).

Positive psychology is quite expansive; covering varied topics of how positivity can influence and impact people individually as well as affect organizations as holistic entities (Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Murphy & Louis, 2018; Shrestha, 2016). Positive psychology is a discipline that emphasizes people's strengths rather than their dysfunctions; it stresses those operations that are a catalyst for individuals to thrive and experience well-being (Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Shrestha, 2016; Yalcin, 2016). It is not surprising to see research studies in positive psychology make connections to altruism, self-efficacy, happiness, and satisfaction (Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Shrestha, 2016).

Some researchers in the field of positive psychology began to specialize their research, incorporating organizational theory, to examine ways to maximize organizational potential and performance (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Newman et al., 2014). This research led to the emergence of positive organizational behavior (POB) theory (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Luthans et al., 2019; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Mazzetti et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2014). Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) is “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace” (Luthans, 2002, p. 59). In other words, POB seeks to



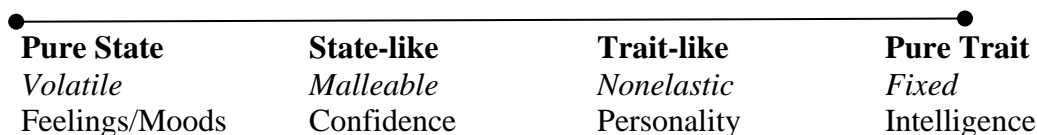
identify those internal resources that leads individuals to thrive and grow in their work environment.

As POB studies began to emphasize how psychological strengths can shape attitudes and behaviors, researchers began to investigate the relationship of psychological strengths in creating working environments conducive for peak functionality (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Park et al., 2017; Shrestha, 2016; Tosten & Toprak, 2017). Prior to this, most research examined employees' (a) human capital, defined as their skills and knowledge, (b) social capital of the networks of individuals they know or influence, or (c) economic capital which refers to the assets they possess (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Luthans et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2014). The fourth type of capital that surfaced is psychological capital (PsyCap) and is described as who one is or the potential of who one can become (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Luthans et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2014; Park et al., 2017). As a result, PsyCap is a development of POB and focuses on building capacity in people to improve their overall personal well-being and organizational performance (LaRocco & Sopko, 2017; Pitichat, Reichard, Kea-Edwards, Middleton, & Norman, 2018; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018).

**Definition of psychological capital (PsyCap).** There are three main criteria used to develop the theoretical framework of PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2015; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018). The criteria include the need for the construct to (a) be state-like, (b) be a higher-order construct, and (c) include psychological resources or strengths based on theory and be evidence-based with reliable measurement tools (Hsing-Ming, Mei-Ju, Chia-Hui, & Ho-Tang, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018).

On a continuum (see Figure 1), at one end are pure traits, which are attributes that are unchangeable, fixed qualities of a person (Luthans et al. 2015). On the other end are pure states,

which are often characterized by being prone to change and temporary in nature (Luthans et al., 2015). PsyCap is identified as being state-like, which means it leans toward the quality of being malleable (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Luthans et al., 2016; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Pitichat et al., 2018; Rehman et al., 2017).



*Figure 1.* State vs. Trait Continuum adapted from *Psychological Capital and Beyond* (p. 25) by F. Luthans, C. M. Youssef-Morgan, and B. J. Avolio, 2015, New York, NY: Oxford University. Copyright 2015 by Oxford University Press. Adapted with permission.

In other words, to assert that PsyCap is state-like is to accentuate its ability to change, fluctuate, and develop over time (Alessandri et al., 2018; Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Pitichat et al., 2018; Yalcin & Isgor, 2017). This is why PsyCap is referred to as a “developable resource” (Probst, Gailey, Jiang, & Bohle, 2017, p. 80). One aspect that can change the trajectory of one’s PsyCap level is context; that is, one’s situation and/or environment (Alessandri et al., 2018). Knowing that school environment can impact the level of a teachers’ PsyCap is significant for school leaders to understand (Luthans & Yossef-Morgan, 2017).

The second criteria of PsyCap is that it is a higher-order construct (Luthans et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2014). The notion of being higher-order means that the overall measure of PsyCap is found to be of greater significance than the individual psychological resources included within it (Alessandri et al., 2018; Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Luthans et al., 2015; Paterson, Luthans, & Jeung, 2014). Another way to see the value of PsyCap as a higher-order construct is to see the four psychological resources working synergistically so that the overall strength

outweighs the strength of any one resource (Viseu, de Jesus, Rus, & Canavarro, 2016). It is noteworthy that research has indicated that discriminant validity was demonstrated among the four resources (Luthans et al., 2015).

**Theories associated with PsyCap psychological resources.** The final criterion for psychological capital emphasizes the need for the psychological strengths or resources included to be founded on theory, evidence-based, and measurable (Demir, 2018; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans et al., 2015). Luthans and colleagues (2015) describe the psychological resources of PsyCap as:

An individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when best by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success (p. 2).

These four resources of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism are sometimes referred to as “the HERO within” (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017, p. 339; see also Ganotice et al., 2016; Luthans et al., 2015; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018). The following section examines the degree to which hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism meet the criteria of being grounded in theory.

**Hope.** The researcher most associated with the development of the theory of hope is Snyder (Hsing-Ming et al., 2017; Luthans et al., 2015; Snyder, 2002). Hope is not wishful thinking, but rather carries a technical meaning associated with the cognitive process involving goal setting. There are two components in the theory of hope: goal pathway and goal energy

(Bozgeyikli, 2018; Kong, Tsai, Tsai, Huang, & de la Cruz, 2018; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Pitichat et al., 2018; Snyder, 2002). Goal pathway is the strategy one maps out to achieve one's goal; also identified as "way power" (Luthans et al., 2015, p. 83; see also LaRocco & Sopko, 2017) in the sense that it lays out the way to achieve the desired outcome. Goal energy is agency, or the motivation needed to persevere until the goal is successfully accomplished which is also referred to as "will power" (Luthans et al., 2015, p. 83) in pressing on in attaining one's goals (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; LaRocco & Sopko, 2017; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

***Efficacy.*** Bandura has done extensive research on the concept of self-efficacy, which is based on his social cognitive theory (Hsing-Ming et al., 2017; Luthans et al., 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Newman et al., 2014). There are four main dimensions associated with efficacy including (a) persuasion, which is the degree of positive feedback or encouragement received; (b) vicarious experiences, which are models one observes of success; (c) mastery experiences, which are reflections on one's own success; and (d) arousal, which are physical and psychological responses to situations (Bandura, 1977; Luthans et al., 2015). Self-efficacy, therefore, speaks to the confidence or conviction one has in his or her abilities and competencies to achieve a desired outcome (LaRocco & Sopko, 2017; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). In other words, it is a belief in oneself that he or she will be successful, which is the motivation needed to successfully achieve the goal (Demir, 2018; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Newman et al., 2014; Pitichat et al., 2018).

***Resilience.*** Masten is the theory-builder for resiliency. Resiliency deals with how one addresses setbacks to goal attainment (LaRocco & Sopko, 2017; Luthans et al., 2016). Specifically, resiliency is the cognitive capacity within one to persevere even when doing so

involves overcoming significant barriers (Demir, 2018; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Masten, 2007; Pitichat et al., 2018). It is worth noting that resiliency is developed over time and is not the result of an isolated event; as a result, as adversity happens, the individual develops coping mechanisms to sustain focus to withstand the challenging situation or change (Clarà, 2017; Masten, 2007).

***Optimism.*** Seligman, Carver, and Scheier are attributed with research associated with the theory of attributional style and optimism (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Hsing-Ming et al., 2017; Luthans et al., 2015). Attributional style theory is defined as a cognitive activity where one exhibits a high expectation they will achieve a positive outcome and therefore influences the way he or she explain or responds to events in goal attainment (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Demir, 2018; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015; Pitichat et al., 2018). Namely, if a positive event occurs that leads to goal attainment, the individual will explain or interpret it from an internal perspective and what he or she was able to control to meet the goal (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans et al., 2015). On the other hand, if a negative event occurs that hinders or creates barriers to goal attainment, the individual will tend to explain or interpret it from an external perspective as a situation or elements outside of their control in meeting the goal (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Lorenz et al., 2016; Luthans et al., 2015).

These four psychological resources and strengths have been found to be associated with positive outcomes such as well-being, commitment, engagement, and job satisfaction (Clarà, 2017; Luthans et al., 2015). The potential found in examining teachers' PsyCap is that hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism work in tandem which lead to positive outcomes (Tüzün et al., 2018; Viseu et al., 2016).

## **Caring School Leadership**

The concept of caring has been well established in helping professions such as education; however, much of the educational literature is centered on the role of the teacher caring for students (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Kurland, 2019; Nilsson, Ejlertsson, Andersson, & Blomqvist, 2015). The concept of caring school leadership, where the emphasis is on the behaviors of the school leader nurturing an ethic of care, is still relatively early in its development and therefore research is limited (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Houghton et al., 2015). However, there is a growing interest among researchers in the importance of caring leadership, especially as it is linked with positive organizational scholarship and its importance in the well-being of employees (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015; van der Vyver, van der Westhuizen, & Meyer, 2014a).

In general, the concept of caring leadership has a rich history rooted in Greek philosophy (Faldetta, 2016; Gössling & van Lidekerke, 2014). The idea of caring leadership was further promoted and expanded by Christian theologians who stressed the concept of agapao love, which is a selfless and self-giving moral love (Faldetta, 2016; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). During the early years of the twentieth-century, French philosopher Levinas and German philosopher Heidegger incorporated the concept of an ethic of care in their ontological theories (Faldetta, 2016; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015).

The ethic of care re-emerged in modern literature as a feminist perspective in moral leadership theory, as evidenced in the writings of Gilligan and Noddings (Atwijuka & Caldwell, 2017; Houghton et al., 2015; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Smit & Scherman, 2016; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015; Warin, 2017). For this reason, the ethic of care is associated with ethical leadership, and though it may have association with the feminist perspective, caring leadership

should be viewed as gender-neutral and important for both men and women in educational leadership (Atwijuka & Caldwell, 2017; Gössling & van Liedekerke, 2014). Furthermore, caring leadership is being viewed as a compelling construct as awareness in organizational studies indicate there is value and benefit to caring for subordinates; that is, seeing the intrinsic value of the individual and not just viewing him or her from a professional work or performance perspective (Atwijuka & Caldwell, 2017; Faldetta, 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014a; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

From the specific perspective of education, Smylie and colleagues (2016) stated that caring is at the core of effective school leadership because both the one who is demonstrating the care as well as the one who is receiving care benefits. For example, caring leadership has been linked to creativity, trust building, enhanced performance, and a healthy school environment (Blossing & Liljenberg, 2019; Kurland, 2019; Smylie et al., 2016). Some researchers have also linked caring leadership to physical and mental health benefits as well as subjective well-being (Nilsson et al., 2015).

**Definition of caring school leadership.** One limitation of caring school leadership is that there is not a recognized or widely accepted definition of the model or theory (Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Kurland, 2019; Louis et al., 2016). Some refer to caring leadership as caritative; in that, “caritas” stems from the Christian concept of mercy and love (Foss, Nåden, & Eriksson, 2014; Näsman, 2018). From this perspective, caring leadership is seen as a selfless service focused on the act of mitigating hardship and suffering while simultaneously serving to improve the overall quality of life (Foss et al., 2014; Hur et al., 2016; Näsman, 2018).

Smylie and associates (2016) defined caring leadership phenomenologically, emphasizing the inter-subjective experience whereby, caring leadership is demonstrated through

actions and interactions with those one leads. From this perspective, caring school leadership stresses the concept of reciprocity, interdependence, and recursivity (Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Louis et al., 2016; Nilsson et al., 2015; Smit & Scherman, 2016; Warin, 2017). In this sense, care is not an isolated act or an abstract idea, rather care is based on the repeated experiences and phenomena between two or more parties through multiple expressions of genuine regard for the other person (Houghton et al., 2015; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Louis et al., 2016).

Caring leadership has also been defined along moral and ethical lines (Näsman, 2018; Smylie et al., 2016; Zou, Snell, Chan, & Wong, 2018). Kurland (2019) defined it as a moral responsibility to others, whereas van der Vyver and associates (2014b) identified caring leadership as the act of expressing interest in the needs and value of others. In this sense, the concept of selfless love is again portrayed as central to caring school leadership (Näsman, 2018; van der Vyver et al., 2014a). Viewed through this perspective, caring leadership can be seen as the “structure of values and organizing principles centered on fulfilling employees’ need, promoting employees’ best interests and valuing employees’ contributions” (Faldetta, 2016, p. 64). This perspective hints at the importance of the leader establishing the organizational structure that supports staff and provides for a positive work environment and climate.

In an effort to encompass many of the notions previous researchers have developed about caring leadership, for the purpose of this study, caring school leadership was defined as the positive relational connection of the school leader with the faculty and staff, whereby the leader’s intent is to express sincere care through cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations that demonstrate a genuine regard for the interests, needs, and overall well-being of each faculty member.



**Manifestations of caring leadership.** Caring school leadership is a multifaceted model that includes varied approaches to demonstrating a genuine regard for the interests and needs of faculty and staff (Louis et al. 2016). The precise manifestation of caring is often influenced by the situation and context (Smylie et al., 2016).

Research studies have identified several expressions of caring, such as empathy, which is the conscious act of committing to a fuller understanding of those whom you serve (Faldetta, 2016; Smit & Scherman, 2016). Empathy is significant because it expresses a desire to truly understand the needs of others (Carmeli, Jones, & Binyamin, 2016; Faldetta, 2016; Houghton et al., 2015; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Smylie et al., 2016; Zou et al., 2018). Honesty and sincerity are additional attributes whereby people come to believe in and trust the leader. Related to honesty and sincerity are the characteristics of openness, authenticity, and transparency which are also found exhibited within caring school leadership (Louis & Murphy, 2017; Louis et al., 2016; Smylie et al., 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014b).

Kurland (2019) also emphasized that caring school leadership incorporates actions which nurture the human need for belonging. Ensuring staff perception of belonging is an important component of caring school leadership since it takes intentionality in action and thought for the leader to demonstrate people matter (Kurland, 2019; Louis et al., 2016; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015; van der Vyver et al., 2014a). On account of this, caring school leadership features showing respect and appreciation for others (Kurland, 2019; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Staff need to know that they are valued, so the leader needs to be intentional in expressing emotions that show true respect and appreciation which demonstrate they are valued and belong (Kurland, 2019; Smylie et al., 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014b; Zou et al., 2018).

Many researchers have associated compassion, concern, and altruistic love as essential behavioral patterns of caring school leadership (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Faldetta, 2016; Houghton et al., 2015; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Smylie et al., 2016; Zou et al., 2018). Specifically, people sense their leader cares when the leader exhibits an attentiveness and interest in them as individuals not just in how they are doing professionally; which requires taking time to get to know what is happening in their life outside of work (Carmeli et al., 2016; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Smit & Scherman, 2016; Smylie et al., 2016).

Caring school leadership is also evidenced in proactive actions such as demonstrating kindness as well as showing fairness and equity in the treatment of all faculty (Smylie et al., 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014a; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Caring school leadership is expressed in actions that empower others and demonstrate trust through shared decision-making (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Foss et al., 2014; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Louis et al., 2016; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015; van der Vyver et al., 2014b). Caring school leadership is also illustrated in self-sacrificing service, which requires putting the needs of others above one's own personal goals or agenda, whereby service to others includes being accessible as well as showing interest for their well-being (Faldetta, 2016; Foss et al., 2014; Houghton et al., 2015; Smylie et al., 2016; van der Vyver et al., 2014a; Zou et al., 2018).

Ultimately, caring school leadership goes beyond performance of tasks; it is about relationships with people (Blossing & Liljenberg, 2019; Kurland, 2019; Louis et al., 2016; Smylie et al., 2016). Therefore, caring school leadership manifests itself in providing support for staff and demonstrating a sincere desire to see others grow in their personal and professional lives (Faldetta, 2016; Houghton et al., 2015; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Näsman, 2018; van der Vyver et al., 2014b; Zou et al., 2018).

When van der Vyver and his colleagues (2014b) developed the framework for the Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) instrument, they grouped the phenomena of caring school leadership around three determinants of psychological, workplace, and management factors. Of significance for this study are the psychological and management determinants (See Figure 2). It is apparent that caring school leadership theory provides a holistic approach in caring for those in the school community (Louis et al., 2016; Smit & Scherman, 2016).

Psychological Determinant	Management Determinant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sympathy</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Concern</li> <li>• Attention</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Morality</li> <li>• Love for others</li> <li>• Acceptance of other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Service</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Altruism</li> </ul>

*Figure 2.* Summary of manifestations of caring leadership adapted from “The caring school leadership questionnaire (CSLQ),” by C. P. van der Vyver, P. C. van der Westhuizen, and L. W. Meyer, 2014, *South African Journal of Education*, 34(3), p. 4. Adapted with permission.

**Foundational theories associated with caring school leadership.** There are several theories which inform the construct of caring school leadership, and a common denominator which unites them is the focus on developing positive relationships with those whom one supervises (Houghton et al., 2015; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Murphy & Louis, 2018; Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016). Smylie et al. (2016) stated that “caring is not only what one does but also how and why one does it” (p. 6). Therefore, the context of “how” caring leadership is demonstrated is found in relational leadership theory. The rationale of “why” a leader

demonstrates care and concern for staff is explained through the theory of spiritual leadership. The resulting behavior of “what” caring leadership includes is influenced by servant leadership theory.

***Relational leadership theory.*** Relationships are central to caring school leadership (Smylie et al., 2016; Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016). Several foundational studies, stemming from a behavioral approach, have identified two major components of effective leadership. Northouse (2019) summarized these research studies which include the leadership studies of the Ohio State University, the University of Michigan, and the work of Blake and Mouton. Though each study looked at the topic through a different lens, each concluded that leadership is a combination of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors (Northouse, 2019). At its essence, caring leadership is a people-oriented approach and thus is closely associated with relational leadership theory (Cardiff, McCormack, & McCance, 2018; Carmeli et al., 2016; Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Relational leadership theory centers upon the types of and the quality of social interactions that exist within an organization (Cardiff et al., 2018; Carmeli et al., 2016; Juras, 2018; Smit & Scherman, 2016; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Giles (2019) further defined the theory by stressing the concept of relational connectedness as the bond of relationships. Caring school leadership has been proposed to be situated within a social constructionist ontology, whereby reality is constructed as individuals interact and share common experiences and assumptions as they engage in fluid interactions of ongoing change and development (Smit & Scherman, 2016; Uhl-Bien, 2006). The social constructionist ontology supports the idea of connectedness in relational leadership theory, such that “interpersonal exchanges create human and connected

inter-relationships” which in turn form the context for reality experienced by the parties involved (Giles, 2019, p. 54; see also Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Consequentially, the idea of social constructionist ontology and relational connectedness support the notion that caring school leadership is defined by the qualities of reciprocity and recursivity (Houghton et al., 2015; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Smit & Sherman, 2016). In this respect it can be deduced that at its root “caring is relational” (Nilsson et al., 2015, p. 57; see also Carmeli et al., 2016; Smylie et al., 2016). Giles (2019) is even more straightforward when he suggested that “when a relationship does not appear to matter, there is a lack of care” (p. 48). In this sense, relational-oriented behaviors demonstrate care by making evident a sensitivity to and concern for the needs, benefit, and welfare of others (Cardiff et al., 2018; Carmeli et al., 2016; Murphy & Louis, 2018).

A more nuanced concept within relational leadership theory is leader-member exchange (LMX) which specifically focuses on the relationship between a leader and each member of his or her team (Cerit, 2017; Juras, 2018; Uhl-Bien, 2006). In other words, LMX looks at dyadic relationships between leader and follower (Juras, 2018; Northouse, 2019; Uhl-Bien, 2006). LMX states that the higher the quality of relationship and positive social exchanges a leader expresses with each individual member of the team, the greater the outcomes such as commitment, work attitude, and performance satisfaction (Cerit, 2017; Juras, 2018; Northouse, 2019). LMX also embodies the concepts of recursivity and reciprocity between the one giving and the one receiving the positive interactions (Faldetta, 2016; Murphy & Louis, 2018). Therefore, the nature and context of caring school leadership is expressed through LMX which builds the overall social capital within the school community (Juras 2018; Murphy & Louis, 2018).

*Spiritual leadership theory.* Spiritual leadership theory is an emerging construct that is closely associated with but distinct from relational leadership theory (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017; Meng, 2016). Spiritual leadership theory is not the endorsement or outworking of any religion, even though the concepts of spiritual leadership theory are embedded in many religious teachings. Spiritual leadership centers upon the idea of vocational calling and finding meaning and purpose in work and life (Baykal & Zehir, 2018; Contreras, 2016; Meng, 2016). Spiritual leadership theory sees vocational calling initiating from intrinsically motivated reasons which transcend self and pragmatic or utilitarian purposes (Baykal & Zehir, 2018; Contreras, 2016; Meng, 2016; Wang, Guo, Ni, Shang, & Tang, 2019). Not surprisingly, the heart of spiritual leadership therefore emphasizes interconnectedness and relationships, shaped by one's values and beliefs, which direct behaviors, affections and motivations (Baykal & Zehir, 2018; Gibson, 2014; Gotsis & Grimani, 2017; Smylie et al., 2016).

Gotsis and Grimani (2017) stated that spiritual leadership theory focuses on “a culture founded on the values of altruistic love that shape a sense of membership through which one feels appreciated and understood” (p. 914). The values of altruistic, selfless love, concern for others, compassion, and trust found in spiritual leadership explain leadership behaviors that emerge, such as respect for others, treating others with fairness and equity, and showing care and appreciation (Baykal & Zehir, 2018; Gibson, 2014; Gotsis & Grimani, 2017; Meng, 2016; Wang et al., 2019). In this sense, spiritual leadership theory, which concentrates on calling and values, reinforces the concepts of ethical leadership in school administration (Wang et al., 2019).

In this context, the greatest value of spiritual leadership theory in relation to caring school leadership is providing the rationale for why one cares. Spiritual leadership theory, with its emphasis on calling and values, exhibits a moral purpose which provides the foundation for, and

informs the behaviors of caring school leadership (Gibson, 2014; Smylie et al., 2016). In fact, Smylie et al. (2016) affirmed that “at its core, leader caring is the competent expression of a moral orientation, the enactment of positive virtues formed and integrated in the service of others” (p. 17). As a result, spiritual leadership theory informs and shapes caring school leadership by stressing the importance of a moral compass centered on the connectedness with others evidenced in compassion, concern and care (Baykal & Zehir, 2018; Contreras, 2016; Meng, 2016).

***Servant leadership theory.*** Servant leadership theory was first developed by Greenleaf (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). It has been defined as a multi-dimensional or holistic approach to leadership (Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017; Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Linden, 2019). Servant leadership theory has many common qualities with relational leadership theory, especially leader-member exchange, and spiritual leadership theory in that the focal point is on building positive relationships from within ethical parameters (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018; Coetzer et al., 2017; Contreras, 2016). In fact, Coetzer et al. (2017) presented evidence of how both spiritual and servant leadership nurture an ethic of care within an organization. However, researchers also distinguish servant leadership as a distinct theory with unique qualities which separate it from other leadership theories (Contreras, 2016; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Newman, Schwarz, Cooper, & Sendjaya, 2017). For example, van der Vyver et al. (2014b) stated that servant leadership theory “differs from other leadership theories in that it holds that through caring by the servant leader, the needs of the followers can be addressed” (p. 2) whereas other theories are focusing on the needs of the leader or the organization (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Heyler & Martin, 2018).

Servant leadership, like spiritual leadership, is grounded in moral principles and ethics that stress promotion of the greatest good for those being served (Contreras, 2016; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Northouse, 2019; Zou et al., 2018). From this perspective, servant leadership theory stresses internal motivation and a moral sense of calling which is others-centered and driven toward growth of followers (Coetzer et al., 2017; Eva et al., 2019; Turkmen & Gul, 2017).

Servant leadership theory contributes to caring school leadership by explaining what the caring school leader does in promoting the greatest good in others, addressing their needs, and promoting their well-being (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Eva et al., 2019; Newman, Schwarz, Cooper, & Sendjaya, 2017; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). There have been different theorists who have posited varying number of dimensions or characteristics associated with servant leadership theory (Coetzer et al., 2017; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Newman et al., 2017; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Most of these variations include value of people, empowerment, service, stewardship, awareness, and empathy (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018; Coetzer et al., 2017; Contreras, 2016; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Turkmen & Gul, 2017).

One dimension that is often identified with servant leadership theory is emotional healing. Emotional healing is defined as “showing care” and demonstrating a genuine concern for the well-being of followers (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018, p. 335; see also Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Many other studies on servant leadership theory identify common behaviors including attentiveness to the needs of others, sensitivity to the well-being of colleagues, expressing empathy, showing appreciation for others, and demonstrating care and concern for the betterment of others (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Eva et al., 2019; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Northouse, 2019; van der Vyver et al., 2014b; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). In this regard, servant leadership informs and shapes caring school leadership by defining what



caring school leadership involves in demonstrating a genuine regard for the interests, needs, and overall well-being of each faculty member.

### **Enabling School Structure**

A concept important to school climate is the relationship and interaction between staff and the principal (Ozen, 2018; Price, 2015). Social interactions demonstrate the relational component which is central to organizational life (Juras, 2018; Rudasill, Snyder, Levinson, & Adelson, 2018; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Price (2015), used the term “strong” to indicate a positive school climate, whereas “weak” refers to a negative climate, thereby concluding “administrative-minded principals are not found in... schools with strong climates, whereas teacher- and student-minded principals are not found in schools with weak climates” (p. 120). In this sense, administrative-minded school leaders are those who are task-oriented whereas teacher-minded principals are those who are relationship-oriented. It can be inferred from Price (2015) that the type of organizational structure formed by a principal will create either a strong or weak school climate. In other words, school climate is tied to the organizational structure of the school (Mitchell, 2018; Price, 2015).

Organizational theories examine the “how and why organizations are effective and efficient” (Haveman & Wetts, 2019, p. 2). In particular, the classical management era used scientific research studies to examine the way organizations are efficient. Weber’s (1969) theory of bureaucracy is one of the main ideologies that emerged from this era (Chukwuemeka & Onuoha, 2018; Kitana, 2016). The underlying premise of the theory of bureaucracy was a rational-legal structure that stressed the significance of authority, hierarchy, and rules as the foundation for an efficient organization (Chukwuemeka & Onuoha, 2018; Haveman & Wetts, 2019; Kitana, 2016; Spector, 2018).

Bureaucracy is often construed as negative and many have stressed the dehumanizing impact of the rigid authoritative lines of control nested in strict hierarchical structures with extensive written rules (Haveman & Wetts, 2018; Kitana, 2016; Spector, 2018). However, others have correctly pointed out that bureaucracy can be either positive or negative depending on whether the administrator has shaped the structure to be either hindering or enabling (Kiliñç et al., 2016; Mitchell, Mendiola, Schumacker, & Lowery, 2016; Sinden et al., 2004a). From this perspective, the behavior and leadership style of the school leader is important because of how closely affiliated administration is to shaping school structure (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Kiliñç et al., 2016; Sinden et al., 2004b).

As such, schools are also bureaucracies in the sense that they have a structure which includes hierarchy and rules (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Kalkan, 2016; Kiliñç et al., 2016; Sinden et al., 2004a; Spector, 2018). Extending the work of Weber's theory, Adler & Borys (1996) focused on the concept of formalization in organizational structure. They stressed that formalization is not in itself negative, but rather it becomes negative when the structure of the rules is coercive (Adler & Borys, 1996). Hoy and Sweetland (2001) later built upon this theory and concluded that school structure includes both formalization as well as centralization, which incorporate the core tenets of bureaucratic structure found in school systems.

***Formalization.*** Formalization refers to the system of rules, regulations and procedures within an organization (Kiliñç et al., 2016; Sinden et al., 2004a). When analyzing the formalization in a school, the more restrictive the rules, the more hindering the school structure (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). In fact, coercive formalization is defined as a system where the rules, regulations, and procedures are very rigid and used to punish (Anderson, Kochan, Kenseler, & Reames, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2016; Sinden et al., 2004a). Coercive formalization can create an

atmosphere of mistrust and lead to a deterioration of a healthy school climate (Anderson et al., 2018; Sinden et al., 2004b). On the other hand, an enabling formalization sees rules as guidelines; as such, the regulations or procedures established are viewed as best practices and teachers are given autonomy (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Sinden et al., 2004a). This can nurture an environment in which trust and cooperation are evident (Anderson et al., 2018).

**Centralization.** Centralization is associated with the organizational chart of who has authority in the decision-making process within an organization (Kiliç et al., 2016; Sinden et al., 2004a). Schools that have high centralization are those in which all decisions come from the top; that is, from the principal or school leader (Anderson et al., 2018; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Sinden et al., 2004b). Schools with low centralization of authority have more individuals involved in the decision-making process and creates a climate where dialogue and interaction are encouraged (Anderson et al., 2018; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Sinden et al., 2004a).

		Formalization	
		Enabling	Coercive
Centralization	Enabling	Enabling Bureaucracy	Rule-bound Bureaucracy
	Hindering	Hierarchical Bureaucracy	Hindering Bureaucracy

*Figure 3.* Typology of School Bureaucracy from “Designing better schools: The meaning and measure of Enabling School Structure,” by W. K. Hoy and S. R. Sweetland, 2001, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(3), p. 302. Reprinted with permission.

*Types of school structures.* Hoy and Sweetland (2001) developed a quadrant matrix model with one axis being formalization and the other axis centralization (See Figure 3). This creates four types of school structure. The high centralization of authority and coercive formalization of rules creates a hindering bureaucracy that is characterized by strong dominant control from the leader and rules used to punish and demand compliance (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). A high centralization of authority and enabling formalization of rules generates a hierarchical bureaucracy where all decision-making rests with the school leader and there is little room for rules; it is the leader's way only (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). A low centralization of authority and coercive formalization of rules produces a rule-bound bureaucracy with an unrelenting reliance to rules and regulations (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). The final form of school structure, enabling bureaucracy, involves low centralization of authority and enabling formalization to form an enabling bureaucracy where decision-making is distributed and diffused among the team and rules are viewed as best practices to achieve desired outcomes (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Mitchell et al., 2016). The theory of enabling school structure reveals how enabling bureaucracy is the ideal structure that will maximize organizational trust and effectiveness (Gray 2016; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Kalkan, 2016).

### **Related Literature**

#### **Psychological Capital**

Psychological capital (PsyCap) has been extensively researched (Luthans et al., 2015; Newman, et al., 2014). Several studies have examined antecedents that are positively related to employee PsyCap (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Kong et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2014). One antecedent researched, that is significant to this study, is leadership style (Luthans et al., 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Newman et al., 2014; Paterson et al., 2014). Additionally,

there are many positive outcomes associated with employees with high levels of PsyCap, including work performance, creativity, engagement, job satisfaction, commitment to organization, and overall well-being (Alessandri et al., 2018; Demir, 2018; Mazzetti et al., 2016). There have been several studies which have shown high levels of PsyCap have a significant and negative impact on stress, anxiety, burnout and the intent to leave (Agarwal, 2018; Alessandri et al., 2018; Demir, 2018; Karimi & Adam, 2018; Leon-Perez et al., 2016; Rehman et al., 2017).

**Significance of leadership antecedent.** Çimen & Özgan (2018) conducted a case study of 14 teachers in Turkey. Their focus was on the factors that influence the psychological capital of teachers and a central finding was the emergence of supportive principals – who demonstrate behaviors of positive feedback, trust, understanding and empathy, and general friendliness – as an antecedent to high levels of teacher psychological capital (Çimen & Özgan, 2018).

Interestingly, it was noted that hindering bureaucratic organizational structure, disrespect or disregard for teachers, and negligence in recognizing teacher contributions were identified as damaging factors of teacher PsyCap (Çimen & Özgan, 2018). Park and colleagues (2017) found that empowerment of staff positively relates to employee PsyCap, which supports earlier research (Lorenz et al. 2016). Leadership also affects the proactive behavior of employees through the mediating factor of PsyCap (Hu et al., 2018). Therefore, research supports the understanding of the role of leadership as a positive factor that influences the level of psychological capital of staff.

Several studies have analyzed specific types of leadership style such as the leader-member exchange (Kong et al., 2018), transformational (Gooty, Gavin, Johnson, Frazier, & Snow, 2009; McMurray, Pirola-Merlo, Sarros, & Islam, 2010; Shuckert, Kim, Paek, & Lee, 2018), and authentic leadership models (Hu et al., 2018; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011). In a

meta-analysis of 77 quantitative studies related to psychological capital, findings suggest that both authentic leadership and leader-member exchange (LMX) have a significant and positive relationship with psychological capital (Kong et al., 2018). Likewise, a study from two large midwestern organizations in the United States reinforced these findings of strong, positive relationships between authentic leadership and employee PsyCap levels (Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018). More specific to education, Feng's (2016) quantitative study conducted with Taiwanese K-12 teachers revealed a positive, significant relationship between authentic leadership and teachers' psychological capital. Several studies concluded that a gap in the literature is the limited number of leadership styles which have been examined in relationship to PsyCap as existent studies largely focused on authentic or transformational leadership (Feng, 2016; Hu et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2014; Park et al., 2017).

**Enhances work performance.** Work performance is one outcome of PsyCap that has been extensively studied (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011; Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Ganotice et al., 2016; Gooty et al., 2009; Kong et al., 2018; Rabenu, Yaniv, & Elizur, 2017; Rehman et al., 2017). Tüzün and colleagues (2018) conducted a correlational study of educators in Turkey and found a significant and positive relationship between psychological capital and work performance which aligns to other studies examining the relationship between work performance and PsyCap. For example, in a study of middle school and high school physical education teachers, it was found that PsyCap affects the level teachers use innovative teaching methodology (Huang, Liu, Hsieh, & Chang, 2015).

Work performance is related to the concepts of thriving and emotional labor. Thriving is associated with learning, energy, and agency of employees. A study of 198 participants of management students at an American midwestern university, resulted in a significant and

positive relationship between PsyCap and thriving as well as PsyCap and supportive leadership (Paterson et al., 2014). Emotional labor is the ability to manage one's emotions in the workplace, which can influence one's work performance and Tosten and Toprak's (2017) study of 266 teachers in Turkey revealed a very significant and positive relationship with PsyCap. In fact, based on other research, PsyCap is found to be a predictor of emotional labor which means that it can mitigate negative emotional situations and subsequently impact employee attitudes (Fu, 2015; Tosten & Toprak, 2017).

**Reduces stress, anxiety, and burnout.** Stress, anxiety, burnout, and intention to leave are negative influences that impact work performance. Studies have found that the higher the level of psychological capital the less likely one will experience anxiety, stress, and burnout (Avey et al., 2011; Demir, 2018; Leon-Perez et al., 2016; Karimi & Adams; 2018; Luthans et al., 2016; Manzano-Garcia & Ayala, 2017; Probst et al., 2017; Rabenu et al., 2017; Rehman et al., 2017). Demir (2018) conducted a study among 335 instructors in Turkey which reinforced other research findings of a positive relationship between PsyCap and job performance as well as a significant negative relationship with stress, anxiety, and burnout. One kind of stressor that would be relevant to online educators is technostress; which is the stress of learning new computer programs. Technostress has been found to have a negative correlation with teachers' PsyCap (Efilti & Çoklar, 2019).

**Improves engagement.** Work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior are beneficial in teacher retention, greater instructional quality, and preventing burnout (Jeon & Wells, 2018; Perrone et al., 2019). Engagement in work has been defined as a fulfilling mindset that include vigor and energy, dedication, and absorption, which is an immersion and concentration in one's work (Alessandri et al., 2018; Gupta, Shaheen, & Reddy, 2017). Prior

research revealed a significant and positive relationship between engagement and employee PsyCap (Alessandri et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2017; Mazzetti et al., 2016; Xu, Liu, & Chung, 2017). For example, Park and associates (2017) found that PsyCap mediates between empowering leadership and employees' engagement. In a similar study, employee PsyCap was determined to be the mediator between the PsyCap level of leadership and work engagement (Xu et al., 2017). Likewise, it was found that organizational citizenship behavior, which is the willingness of an employee to volunteer to take on additional tasks, is associated with the level of PsyCap and work engagement (Gupta et al., 2017).

**Improves overall well-being.** Employee well-being and happiness have been linked together (Mazzetti et al., 2016; Singh, 2015). The concept of well-being is the emotional state of an individual where he or she experiences positive emotions and a general sense of satisfaction (Manzano-Garcia & Ayala, 2017; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018; Williams, Kern, & Waters, 2015). Well-being is also associated with concepts such as self-awareness, self-evaluation, self-actualization, and self-acceptance (Manzano-Garcia & Ayala, 2017; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018). Research findings show that PsyCap correlates with and is a predictor of employee well-being (Avey et al., 2011; Ganotice et al., 2016; Kurt & Demirbolat, 2019; McMurray et al., 2009; Singh, 2015; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018; Tüzün et al., 2018). For example, Manzano-Garcia and Ayala (2017) researched the relationship of PsyCap and subjective well-being of staff who work with autistic children, and the analysis revealed there is a significant and positive relationship. A longitudinal study of 400 employees of a large school in Australia revealed a strong correlation between the level of teachers' PsyCap and work happiness (Williams et al., 2015). Consequently, research findings support the concept of PsyCap having a direct and positive influence on teachers' sense of well-being.



**Increases job satisfaction and commitment.** Several studies examined the relationship between PsyCap and job satisfaction and found there is a significant and positive relationship between the two (Avey et al., 2011; Demir, 2018; Karakus, Ersozlu, Demir, Usak, & Wildy, 2019; Kong et al., 2018; Kurt & Demirbolat, 2019; Luthans et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2015). One study narrowed the focus of job satisfaction to center on the quality of life by examining participants' social networking and integration, their perceptions of fairness, and working in a safe and healthy environment, and results suggested a moderate positive relationship between PsyCap and teachers' perception of their quality of life (Yalcin & Isgor, 2017). Viseu and associates (2016) concluded in their literature review on teacher motivation, satisfaction, and psychological capital that there was need for more research but the research they found supports a significant positive relationship between them.

Research also revealed a strong and positive relationship of PsyCap with organizational commitment (Avey et al., 2011; Hsing-Ming et al., 2017; Karakus et al., 2019; Luthans et al., 2015; McMurray et al., 2009; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018; Yalcin, 2016). Furthermore, Chambers Mack and colleagues (2019) reported a significant relationship between commitment and teacher retention and conversely, reported that a lack of commitment is characteristic of those who intend to leave the education profession. In addition, Agarwal (2018) found abusive supervision – which includes behaviors such as public criticism, assigning blame to others, and outbursts of anger – has a strong correlation with employees' stress and intention to leave. This is significant to the proposed study, as the focus is on examining the relationship of PsyCap with caring leadership, which is the antithesis of abusive supervision.

All of these studies highlight the many positive organizational benefits associated with teachers having high levels of PsyCap. Many of the studies directly or indirectly emphasize the

importance of the antecedent of leadership in affecting the level of PsyCap. These are significant findings that relate to the proposed study because it is beneficial to examine other leadership forms, such as caring school leadership, to determine if other leadership approaches have a significant and positive association to teachers' psychological capital.

### **Caring School Leadership**

Most of the literature on caring school leadership is theoretical in scope. The amount of empirical research to date is limited (Houghton et al., 2018; Kurland, 2019; van der Vyver et al., 2014b). However, in the limited research related to caring leadership, studies tend to show the positive impact caring leadership has on organizational climate, emotional well-being of employees, and their work performance (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Louis et al., 2016; Näsman, 2018; van der Vyver et al., 2014a).

**Improves climate of school community.** Leadership behavior has been closely associated with perceptions the teachers develop about the school community. In a case study conducted by Kurland (2019), a school identified as having high satisfaction among students and staff, as well as demonstrating high academic performance, illustrated that leaders used specific behaviors which created an ethos of care within the school community. Similarly, a narrative study examining empirical evidence over a ten-year period, highlighted the association with relationship-oriented behaviors, including leadership behaviors such as support, care and compassion, as well as negatively expressed forms of leadership behavior, such as mistreatment (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015). This study concluded that supportive behaviors, which are associated with caring school leadership, are positively associated with affecting the emotions which correlate to teachers' passion in teaching (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015). In research conducted among educators in South Africa, the leadership behaviors which were most recognized by

participants include trust, empowerment, approachability, and altruism (van der Vyver et al., 2014a). It was found that the greatest deficiency teachers identified of leadership behaviors exhibited by their principals were those related to psychological care (van der Vyver et al., 2014a). In other words, the leadership behaviors teachers perceived to be most lacking included showing empathy, demonstrating respect, and giving personal attention to faculty members (van der Vyver et al., 2014a). Louis and Murphy (2017) conducted an extensive study involving nearly 4000 teachers in over 100 schools in nine states. The results found there is a correlation with trust-building and creating a supportive environment for organizational learning (Louis & Murphy, 2017). Therefore, these studies suggest that intentional behaviors of caring exhibited by school leaders have a significant impact on how teachers perceive the school.

Louis and colleagues (2016) also found a positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of caring behaviors of the school leader and of school climate, which revealed there is a significant indirect relationship of caring school leadership with student achievement. This is to be expected since school organizational structure has been shown to be linked to student achievement (Louis & Murphy, 2017). A case study conducted by Tichnor-Wagner and Allen (2016) added to this understanding by stressing there are different levels of care. In other words, if there are only isolated pockets of caring that exist in the school, there is no significant impact on student achievement. However, if the caring is embedded in and woven throughout the entire community, caring leadership behaviors can have a significant impact (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016). In this sense, research shows that leadership committed to genuine care, support, love, and compassion for students and staff alike shapes the demeanor of the culture and climate of a school and can impact the ethic of care in the classroom and student achievement (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016).

**Improves emotional state and well-being of teachers.** Salutogenic, or eudaimonic qualities, relate to overall well-being (Nilsson et al., 2015; Shrestha, 2016). Nilsson et al. (2015) conducted an interpretive and hermeneutic case study of 19 teachers in a secondary school in Sweden. This study concluded that caring school leadership can impact both the practical and psychological state of teachers as demonstrated by teachers expressing greater job satisfaction, a sense of belonging, having meaning and purpose in their work, and feeling appreciated and content in their job (Nilsson et al., 2015). Corroborating this study, in a correlational study conducted with over 200 teachers from five high schools in Israel, the concept of caring was examined to see if there was a correlation to work outcomes, especially when teachers reported experiencing a greater level of stress in their job (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016). The results demonstrated very strong positive relationship of caring leadership with outcomes such as commitment and job satisfaction and a significant negative relationship of caring school leadership and burnout (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016). Interestingly, this study also disaggregated the data into the two components of colleague-to-colleague and principal-to-teacher caring. The results showed stronger correlations when the caring is demonstrated from the principal toward the teacher rather than among colleagues (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016). This suggests the importance and need for the school principal to intentionally express care and compassion in their behavior and attitudes with staff.

**Increases work performance.** As seen in the Nilsson et al. study (2015), caring school leadership contributed to teachers experiencing well-being and a healthy emotional state, which can result in practical outcomes such as job performance and satisfaction. The study of Eldor and Shoshani (2016) emphasized the correlation of caring school leadership upon the level of teachers' engagement in their work. Additionally, Hur and colleagues (2016) found a strong

correlation between compassion and work performance. A related study from the business community examined the relationship between authentic leadership and the level of employees' psychological capital which also demonstrated, when compassion was entered as a moderating variable, the relationship was stronger (Hu et al., 2018). This is significant to the current proposed study because compassion, a core component of caring school leadership, was shown to improve the overall organizational citizenship behaviors and psychological capital of staff and leads to higher performance (Hu et al., 2018).

### **Enabling School Structure**

The main causes of teacher attrition are lack of administrative support and working environment (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). One aspect associated with working environment is the structure which can either empower or hinder teachers from doing their work (Burkhauser, 2017). Perrone and colleagues (2019) found that when teachers are involved in the decision-making process and perceive their school leader is collegial and supportive, the likelihood of burnout is significantly reduced. From this perspective, the bureaucratic structure of the school can have a significant impact on teacher retention and enabling school structure (ESS) has been found to have several benefits including improved academic performance of students and positive school climate (Anderson et al., 2018; Mitchell, 2018).

**Academic performance.** There have been several studies that show some of the positive outcomes associated with enabling school structure. The essential function of a school is student academic achievement, and ESS has been shown to be associated with stronger student performance (Gray et al., 2016; Mitchell, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2016). Anderson and associates (2018) surveyed teachers in 65 schools in Alabama to see if there was a correlation of ESS and

academic achievement of fourth grade students. They found there was a very strong correlation with student performance on norm-referenced assessments in reading and math; however, the relationship was not significant for criterion-referenced assessments (Anderson et al., 2018). Another study researched the relationship between academic optimism and school structure (Mitchell et al., 2016). Academic optimism includes trust, teacher efficacy and academic emphasis. The results of this study showed ESS and academic optimism were positively and significantly associated and that academic optimism and ESS had a significant indirect effect on student achievement (Mitchell et al., 2016).

**School climate.** When principals are viewed as approachable and supportive (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016) and teachers believe the rules set by the school leaders are intended to benefit and help them (Gray et al., 2016), research has found a positive working environment results (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). ESS also relates to the willingness of teachers to take on additional tasks, which is referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (Mitchell, 2018). Cerit (2017) studied the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, ESS, and the proactive behavior of organizational citizenship and found ESS is positively and significantly related to proactive behavior and to LMX (Cerit, 2017). Another study examined the relationship of ESS and professional learning communities (Gray et al., 2016; Gray & Summers, 2016; Kalkan, 2016). Gray and associates (2016) surveyed teachers from a large southeastern school district in the United States and results suggest that professional learning communities and ESS are positively correlated (Gray et al., 2016). The researchers found that ESS is related to the teachers' perceptions of their trust in their colleagues and their principal (Gray et al., 2016).

Research also shows school climate impacts school improvement efforts and teachers' overall effectiveness (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Anderson et al., 2018; Gray et al., 2016; Kiliç et al., 2016). This speaks to the importance of the school leader in nurturing a positive school climate. One reason for this is that the administrator is the one who sets the tone with the rigidity or flexibility of the rules and the degree to which decision making is shared (Mitchell, 2018). McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2016) researched the style of transformational leadership and school climate and found positive correlations among most of the factors associated among both of the constructs; however, other researchers have stated that there is a need to better understand the relationship between leadership behaviors and how school climate can improve (Ford & Ware, 2018).

### **Virtual Schools and e-Leadership**

Cyber schools are part of the field of distance education, which typically have staff dispersed over a wide geographic area (Richardson et al., 2016). In this sense, it is imperative to understand the ways leadership, in particular e-leadership, can have a significant impact upon K-12 virtual schools. However, it is important to remember that leadership is ultimately about influencing people. In this sense, leadership is centered on engaging and interacting with staff regardless if the context is face-to-face or virtual (Avolio & Kahai, 2003; Savolainen, 2014). Avolio and Kahai (2003) stated that "leadership mediated by information technology can exhibit exactly the same content and style as traditional face-to-face leadership" (p. 327). This reiterates the concept that even though the context may change, the competencies and essential functions of leadership remain the same (Lilian, 2014; Purvanova & Kenda, 2018). However, due to the geographical distance between faculty and staff, it must be recognized that exercising these

leadership capacities within a virtual setting may be more challenging or require different methods to be effective (Liao, 2017; Richardson et al., 2015).

Leadership of virtual teams, often referred to as e-leadership, is still relatively new concept and thereby the research is limited (Liao, 2017; Lilian, 2014; Savolainen, 2014). E-leadership focuses working with a team that is geographically dispersed to execute a common task, accomplish a common goal, and execute a shared vision when the main means of communication and interaction is through electronic and digital mediums (Charlier, Stewart, Greco, & Reeves, 2016; Ford, Piccolo, & Ford, 2017; Kusco & Arslan, 2016; Liao, 2017; Lilian, 2014). Virtual leaders, just as their counterparts in face-to-face settings, are interested in exhibiting relational and human behaviors, traits, and cognitive and affective qualities to support their team members (Avolio, Sosik, Kahai, & Baker, 2014; Savolainen, 2014). Like the essence of leadership in a face-to-face context, e-leadership is explained as “virtual relationships of influence” (Chua & Chua, 2017; p. 110). What distinguishes e-leadership from leadership in face-to-face settings is the means by which communication happens, where virtual leaders fulfill their functions dependent upon technology and computer-mediated means (Charlier et al., 2016; Chua & Chua, 2017; Liao, 2017; Purvanova & Kenda, 2018). This can lead to additional challenges, such as meeting the social and emotional needs and psychological well-being of staff (Ford et al., 2017).

There is limited research on leadership of online K-12 schools (Richardson et al., 2015). Garcia (2015) conducted a review of literature on e-leadership with a focus on the relationship to virtual education. Several strategies were identified from the research, including trust-building, communication skills, nurturing culture, motivation, and decision-making (Garcia, 2015). Kuscu and Arslan (2016) affirmed many of these strategies in a qualitative study of a distance education



program of a university. Richardson et al. (2015) conducted a case study of virtual school leaders and one of the areas identified in their research was challenges associated with staffing; in particular, related to engagement and keeping staff “connected even when they are geographically dispersed” (p. 24).

The research on teacher satisfaction and retention of cyber school educators is also sparse (Borup & Stevens 2016; Larkin, Lokey-Vega, & Brantley-Dias, 2018; Larkin, Brantley-Dias & Lokey-Vega, 2016). Some studies have indicated mixed results on teacher satisfaction (Borup & Stevens, 2016), however, one aspect of leadership, relevant to this study, is the role of providing support to teachers (Borup & Stevens, 2016). In a case study conducted by Larkin and associates (2016), the reasons for online teacher satisfaction were examined and support was identified as a key factor associated with satisfaction.

Research in e-leadership highlights several core competencies for effective teams which also would be applicable in the virtual school model (Charlier et al., 2016; Garcia, 2015; Kusco & Arslan, 2016; Liao, 2017; Purvanova & Kenda, 2018; Van Wart, Roman, Wang & Liu, 2019). As it relates to the concepts of this study, including caring leadership and enabling school structure, the research demonstrated that several of the qualities of effectiveness in e-leadership include communication skills (Garcia, 2015; Kusco & Arslan, 2016; Purvanova & Kenda, 2018; Van Wart et al., 2019), human resource skills which include demonstrating care, support, a sense of belonging and value of staff members (Chua & Chua, 2017; Kusco & Arslan, 2016; Lilian, 2014; Purvanova & Kenda, 2018; Savolainen, 2014; Van Wart et al., 2019), and trust-building skills (Ford et al., 2017; Garcia, 2015; Liao, 2017; Lilian, 2014; Van Wart et al., 2019).

## Summary

Research findings demonstrated that a higher level of PsyCap is correlated to positive outcomes such as work performance, engagement in work, job satisfaction, commitment, innovation and creativity, and staff overall well-being, as well as associated with lower levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and intention to quit (Alessandri et al., 2018; Demir, 2018; Luthans et al., 2015). Likewise, research had found the outcomes of job satisfaction and career commitment are predictors of teacher retention whereas stress, anxiety, and burnout are predictors of teachers' intention to leave (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Perrone et al., 2019).

To understand ways to effectively address the problem of teacher attrition, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between caring school leadership and enabling school structure, to examine if they are antecedents of teachers' psychological capital and to determine the extent in which teacher's psychological capital can be explained. This study includes the three main variables of psychological capital, caring school leadership, and enabling school structure. This chapter has defined each of these variables and provided the theoretical structure and research associated with them.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Overview

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' psychological capital and the predictor variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure. This chapter presents the research question and the hypotheses of this correlational study. The chapter also describes the participants, provides description of the three instruments, and explains the procedures and statistical analysis which was used in the study.

### Design

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify and measure the relationships between the predictor variables of teachers' perception of caring school leadership behaviors and enabling school structure with the criterion variable of teachers' psychological capital to examine the extent to which teachers' psychological capital is able to be predicted by the variables of school leadership behavior and school structure. This research study used a correlational design. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), self-report measures such as questionnaires are appropriate for data collection in prediction studies; accordingly, this study used a questionnaire that incorporates three instruments to gather data associated with the three variables in this study.

Gall et al. (2007) highlighted that correlational and predictive studies are used in studying practices in the field of education when the criterion variable is a "complex behavior pattern" (p. 342). Such is the case in this study, as the concept of psychological capital can be considered a "complex behavior pattern." In this sense, the intent of this study was to see if any change in the predictive variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure was accompanied by a predictable change in the criterion variable of teachers' psychological capital, as well as to examine the strength and direction of any observed change.

### Research Question

The research question for this study was:

**RQ:** Do caring school leadership and enabling school structure predict virtual teachers' psychological capital?

### Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant predictive correlation between a combination of caring school leadership and enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores on Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ), Enabling School Structure (ESS), and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12).

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant predictive correlation between caring school leadership and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores on Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12).

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant predictive correlation between enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores on Enabling School Structure questionnaire (ESS) and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12).

### Participants and Setting

The participants of this study were drawn from a convenience sample of elementary and secondary teachers who work in a state-authorized public cyber charter school in Pennsylvania during the 2019-2020 school year. The participants in this study were state-certified teachers in Pennsylvania who provide instructional delivery by means of online technology in a synchronous classroom setting.

For this study, the number of participants was 109. This study anticipates a medium effect size (0.15) with a statistical power of 0.80 at the 0.05 alpha level. Based on these parameters, it has been suggested that a minimum of 68 participants are needed (Gall et al., 2007). However, Warner (2013) suggested using the formula of  $N > 104 + k$ , where  $k$  is the number of individual predictors. Since this study has two predictor variables plus the combination of both variables, in order to meet the recommended minimum of cases, with  $k = 2$  (caring school leadership score and enabling school structure score), to meet this rule, a minimum number of 107 participants was required. This study exceeded both recommendations for minimum sample size.

This study utilized a survey conducted through Survey Monkey, which is an online survey tool that is secure and anonymous. The information collected included data from the three instruments as well as demographic data of the participants. The demographic data collected includes gender, age-band, teaching grade-level, and years of experience. 99 participants were female and 10 were male. The age-band were as follows: (a) 18-25 years, (b) 26-30 years, (c) 31-35 years, (d) 36-40 years, (e) 41-45 years, or (f) 46 years or older. There were no participants 18-25 years of age, three participants were 26-30 years of age, 17 participants were 31-35 years old, 19 participants were 36-40 years old, 21 participants were 41-45 years of age, and 49 participants were 46 years or older. The teaching grade levels identified were: (a) elementary school (Kindergarten through Grade 5), (b) middle school (Grade 6 through Grade 8), and (c) high school (Grade 9 through Grade 12). 24 participants were elementary teachers, 26 participants were middle school teachers, and 59 participants were high school teachers. There were three main groups for years of experience: (a) three years or less as an educator, (b) four to eight years as an educator, or (c) nine or more years as an educator. Four

participants had three years or less of experience, 18 participants had between four and eight years of experience, and 87 participants had nine or more years of experience as an educator.

### **Instrumentation**

This study employed an online survey that includes three Likert-type self-report measures. Likert scales are common in social science and educational research as a means of collecting data on participant attitudes, perceptions, or opinions (Subedi, 2016; Willits, Theodori, & Luloff, 2016). Likert scales assume that the perception of attitude is linear and falls along a continuum or level of agreement (Gall et al., 2007; Subedi, 2016). There is some controversy surrounding the topic and whether data from Likert scales should be viewed as ordinal or interval data and thereby if the data should be used in parametric tests (Subedi, 2016; Willits et al., 2016)). The case for the score on an individual Likert item being viewed as ordinal may still have some validity; however, it seems to be widely accepted today that the Likert scale, which is a composite score (an average) is interval and therefore acceptable to use in parametric analysis (Subedi, 2016; Willits et al., 2016). The three Likert-type instruments used in this study are the Psychological Capital Questionnaire – Short Version (PCQ-12), Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ), and the Enabling School Structure survey (ESS).

#### **Psychological Capital Questionnaire**

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) is an instrument created by Luthans, Avolio, and Avey (2014) to measure overall psychological capital (PsyCap). The original version consisted of 24 items, but for greater versatility in research, a shorter version (PCQ-12) with 12 items was also developed (Luthans et al., 2014). There are four criteria used in determining the components of PsyCap. The criteria for the components are that they (a) are based upon well-established theory, (b) demonstrate validity and reliability as a measure, (c)

demonstrate state-like quality, and (d) relate to positive organizational behavior and work performance (Luthans et al., 2014). The four components of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism have substantially met the criteria and have been well supported in the literature (Luthans et al., 2014). The PCQ and PCQ-12 have been used extensively in research with hundreds of peer-reviewed studies using this instrument since its development in 2007 (Luthans et al., 2014; Luthans et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2014). The value of PCQ is also seen in its extensive use globally and in a wide variety of settings including corporate, industrial, non-profit, and education (Luthans et al., 2014; Luthans et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2014).

The original version (PCQ) had six items for each subscale of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism for a total of 24 items. PCQ-12, the shorter version which will be used in this study, has a total of 12 items with four items for hope, three items for efficacy, three items for resilience, and two items for optimism (Luthans et al., 2014). An example of a question is “At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.” The scoring is based on a 6-point Likert-type scale. The responses are as follows: Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, somewhat disagree = 3, somewhat agree = 4, agree = 5, and strongly agree = 6. Scoring is based on the overall measure and is calculated by taking the average (mean) of all 12 items to generate an overall PsyCap score. Scores on the PCQ-12 can range from 12 to 72, with higher scores indicating a higher level of overall psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2014).

PCQ and PCQ-12 have been shown to be valid and reliable. Luthans et al. (2014) conducted content and face validity when creating the items. Since one of the central features of PsyCap is the concept that it is higher-order structure, meaning the sum is greater than the parts, the researchers also conducted confirmatory factor analysis (Luthans et al., 2014). Among the analyses Luthans and team (2014) conducted, the root mean square error of approximation

(RMSEA) and comparative fit index (CFI) were run and both demonstrated validity. Luthans et al. (2014) considered several variations of models. One model has each of the four factors (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) as separate factors. They also conducted several three-factor models where they merged two of the scales). Finally, they had a one-factor model with all items measured together. The analysis for the three- and four-factor models revealed RMSEA scores ranging from 0.48 to 0.65 and CFI ranging from 0.861 and 0.924. When the one-factor analysis, with all items included in one score, RMSEA was 0.83 and CFI was 0.768. These results affirm the idea of PsyCap being a higher-order model (Luthans et al., 2014).

In the validation study by Luthans and his team (2014), there were four samples and Cronbach's alpha analysis demonstrated strong reliability in each sample ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ,  $\alpha = 0.89$ ,  $\alpha = 0.89$ , and  $\alpha = 0.89$ ). Research studies that have used PCQ or PCQ-12 confirm the high level of reliability of this instrument (Luthans et al., 2014; Luthans et al., 2015). In order to use this instrument, permission must be obtained through Mind Garden, Inc. The author contacted Mind Garden and received written permission on March 16, 2019 (See Appendix A).

### **Caring School Leadership Questionnaire**

To measure caring school leadership, this study used the Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) created by van der Vyver et al. (2014b). The purpose of this instrument is to “measure the extent of care being experienced by teachers from their educational leader” (p. 1). There are three determinants within CSLQ which include psychological, workplace, and management. Since the sample for this study includes only online educators, the workplace determinant is not fully applicable since it relates to conditions within a physical school building. Therefore, the workplace determinant was not included in the study.



The psychological determinant addresses the “emotional literacy of the school principal” (van der Vyver, van der Westhuizen, & Meyer, 2014a, p. 64) and incorporates leadership actions of emotional intelligence, interest in others (i.e., sympathy, empathy, concern, attentiveness, and compassion), meeting psychological needs of staff, intrinsic motivation, respect, honesty, morality, love for others, acceptance of others, and cheerfulness (van der Vyver et al., 2014b). The management determinant is about leadership style and includes trust, empowerment, recognition, protection of rights, fairness, listening, subservience, accessibility, leadership effectiveness, consistency, commitment, participative leadership, support, staff development, altruism, and transformative leadership (van der Vyver, 2014a).

The overall CSLQ instrument has 59 items. The psychological determinant contains 25 items and the management determinant contains 20 items. Therefore, for this study, 45 of the items were used in the survey. An example of a psychological determinant item is “As far as my psychological welfare is concerned, my school principal... demonstrates sympathy with my circumstances” (van der Vyver et al., 2014b, p. 4). An example of a management determinant item is “As far as management aspects in our school are concerned, my school leader... empowers me through participative decision making” (van der Vyver et al., 2014b, p. 4). Each item was scored using the following 4-point Likert-type scale: Not at all = 1, To a small extent = 2, To some extent = 3, and To a large extent = 4 (van der Vyver et al., 2014b). The scores for these two determinants range from 45 to 180. Van der Vyver and colleagues (2014b) have developed norms to be able to interpret the raw data. For example, for the psychological determinant that contains 25 items, scores below 82 would be considered low care, 83-87 would be average care, 88-92 would be above average, and 93 or above would be considered high care (van der Vyver et al., 2014b).

Van der Vyver et al. (2014b) conducted a validation study in the development of this instrument. For content validity, the items were given to scholars in their respective subject disciplines for feedback and for face validity was determined by giving the items to professionals for additional feedback and criticism (van der Vyver et al., 2014). To look at the relationship of the three determinants, van der Vyver and team (2014b) conducted factor analysis to ensure construct validity. For the construct validity, the Kaizer-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, Bartlett's test, and factor correlation analyses were conducted which support the overall structure of the instrument (van der Vyver et al., 2014b). Cronbach's alpha was conducted to test for internal reliability. All determinants were found to be reliable. As it pertains to this study, psychological determinant ( $\alpha = 0.981$ ) and management determinant ( $\alpha = 0.978$ ) had a high level of reliability (van der Vyver et al., 2014b). The author contacted van der Vyver and received written permission to use the instrument on November 28, 2018 (See Appendix B).

### **Enabling School Structure (ESS)**

This study used the Enabling School Structure (ESS) instrument developed by Hoy and Sweetland (2001). The ESS instrument was designed to measure the degree in which the bureaucratic structure of a school either hinders or enables teachers in their work (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). There are two main factors that are included in the design which are formalization and centralization. Formalization considers the rules within the school system from either an enabling or coercive perspective. An example of formalization would be to see if the culture seeks to learn from mistakes (enabling) or punish them (coercive). Centralization examines the hierarchical authority structure in a school to determine if decision-making is enabling or hindering. An illustration of centralization is if innovation is encouraged (enabling) or change is discouraged (hindering) (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Sinden et al., 2004a).

The Enabling School Structure (ESS) survey contains 12 items, of which six relate to formalization and six relate to centralization. An example of a formalization item is “Administration rules help rather than hinder” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 303). For centralization, an example item states, “In this school, the authority of the principal is used to undermine teachers” (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 304). Scoring is based upon a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses as follows: Never = 1, Once in a while = 2, Sometimes = 3, Fairly Often = 4, and Always = 5 (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). There are six items that are worded from an enabling perspective and are therefore positively loaded. The other six items are worded from a hindering perspective (negatively loaded) and require reverse scoring. Scores can range from 12 to 60 with higher scores indicating more enabling school structure (Sinden et al., 2004a).

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) conducted a validation study on ESS in which they included an exploratory factor analysis. They tested the relationships of the negative loading of hierarchy ( $r = -0.62$ ) and reliance on rules ( $r = -0.25$ ) which demonstrated support for the model (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). They also conducted principal-axis factor analysis to see if items fell on either the enabling end of the sequence or the hindering/coercive end. The results ranged from 0.69 to 0.86 in their final sample study which strongly supports the idea that the items loaded appropriately along this continuum, demonstrating that the instrument shows acceptable factor validity (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). In reliability analysis, Hoy and Sweetland (2001) conducted three samples and the Cronbach’s alpha demonstrates strong internal reliability ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ,  $\alpha = 0.93$ , and  $\alpha = 0.95$ ). The author contacted Dr. Wayne Hoy and received written permission on February 2, 2019, to use the ESS in this study (See Appendix C).

## Procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the chief executive officer of the virtual public charter school to conduct the research among the faculty of the school (see Appendix D). The researcher then received permission from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix F), which demonstrated minimal risk to participants but benefit in discovering if relationships exist between caring school leadership style and enabling school structure with teachers' psychological capital.

An online survey was created using the Survey Monkey online program. The first page of the study included an informed consent that explained the intent of the study and how the data will remain confidential (See Appendix E). The survey included four demographic questions: (a) gender, (b) age, (c) grade-level, and (d) years of experience as an educator. The survey then included the 12 items of the PCQ-12, the 45 items of the CSLQ, and the 12 items of the ESS instruments in sequence.

The survey was designed so that IP address tracking was disabled, and the anonymous responses option was turned on to ensure anonymity. The researcher obtained email addresses from the school's human resource department and then used the Survey Monkey email invitation tool to communicate to participants. There was a two-week window for participants to complete the survey. After the first seven days, a reminder email was automatically generated and sent to those who had not yet completed the survey. The results were pulled from Survey Monkey and put into an Excel spreadsheet format. The data is stored on the researcher's computer and on a USB drive with the file password protected. The data was then entered into IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24, for statistical analysis.

## Data Analysis

The hypotheses of the study focus on the correlation, and more specifically, the degree to which the independent variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure predict the level of teachers' psychological capital. With a research design that is non-experimental, using cross-sectional, ex post facto data, with two independent variables and one criterion variable, multiple regression is the appropriate statistical analysis to use (Gall et al., 2007; Green & Salkind, 2017; Rovai et al., 2014).

Multiple regression is used when the intended result is to predict the degree of variability of the criterion variable from the predictor variables. Based on the hypotheses of this study, the focus is to regress teachers' psychological capital on the variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure (Keith, 2019). Keith (2019) prefers the definition of multiple regression as independent variables used to "explain variation in a dependent variable" (p. 18). In other words, this study sought to examine how well teachers' psychological capital is explained by the associations of caring school leadership and enabling school structure variables (Gall et al., 2007; Rovai et al., 2014; Warner, 2013).

Multiple regression is also appropriate because it can control for one independent variable when looking at the other independent variable relationship to the criterion variable (Keith, 2019; Warner, 2013). Subsequently, with multiple regression, a partition of variance can be calculated that shows the amount that each predictor variable explains the dependent variable as well as the amount that the combination of the predictor variables explains the dependent variable (Keith, 2019). Accordingly, as it relates to this study, the results of the multiple regression analysis can partition the dependent variable into four parts: (a) partition that is not impacted by the independent variables, (b) amount of variance explained by independent

variable  $X_1$  (caring school leadership), (c) amount of variance explained by  $X_2$  (ESS), and (d) the amount of variance explained by the combination of both independent variables. This is beneficial for determining the strength of relationship of caring school leadership, enabling school structure and the combination of both in accounting for variance in teachers' psychological capital (Green & Salkind, 2017; Rovai et al., 2014; Warner, 2013). To determine the proportion of variance of the two predictor variables on the dependent variable of online teachers' psychological capital, effect size was computed using  $R^2$  (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2013).

The multiple regression analysis was conducted at the 95% confidence level. An ANOVA test was used to examine the first null hypothesis and bivariate regression tests were used for the second and third null hypotheses. Since the design of this study was non-experimental, it aligned with the random-effects model. Multiple regression for random-effects model has several assumptions that must be met (Gall et al., 2007; Green & Salkind, 2017; Rovai et al., 2014; Warner, 2013). Using scatterplots, the assumption of bivariate outliers was examined by looking for extreme outliers. The assumption of multivariate normal distribution centers on inspection of a linear relationship. To determine if normal distribution was met, scatter plots and Q-Q plots were examined. The researcher tested the assumption of independence of errors using the Durbin-Watson statistic. Finally, the assumption of non-multicollinearity was assessed by the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance coefficient. Similar assumption tests were conducted for the bivariate regression analyses as well. The SPSS 24.0 package was used to conduct the statistical analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Overview

The literature suggests that leadership behavior and style is an antecedent to employee psychological capital (PsyCap). The study was designed to determine the degree of relationship between caring school leadership and enabling school structure on teachers' psychological capital. In particular, to examine the predictive relationships online teachers' PsyCap was regressed on their perceptions of caring school leadership and enabling structure. This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected during research. The chapter consists of the research question and null hypotheses, descriptive statistics, and the assumption tests and the results of the multiple regression analysis for each of the hypotheses.

### Research Question

**RQ:** Do caring school leadership and enabling school structure predict virtual teachers' psychological capital?

### Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant predictive correlation between a combination of caring school leadership and enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores on Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ), Enabling School Structure (ESS), and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12).

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** There is no significant predictive correlation between caring school leadership and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores on Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12).

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant predictive correlation between enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores on Enabling School Structure questionnaire (ESS) and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The data was collected from K-12 educators of an online school in Pennsylvania. The frequency data regarding the sample population in this study are found in Table 1. As Table 1 shows, most of the sample consisted of women ( $n = 99, 90.8\%$ ). The age of the educators was mostly over 40 years of age ( $n = 68, 62.4\%$ ). Within this sample population, the distribution of teachers among the three grade levels was close to the overall population within the school, with half of the teachers working at the high school level ( $n = 59, 54.1\%$ ). Most of the teachers in the sample had nine or more years of teaching experience ( $n = 87, 79.8\%$ ).



Table 1

*Demographics of Online Teachers*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	10	9.2
Female	99	90.8
Age		
18-25 years	0	0.0
26-30 years	3	2.8
31-35 years	17	15.6
36-40 years	21	19.3
41-45 years	19	17.4
46+ years	49	45.0
Grade Level		
Elementary school	24	22.0
Middle school	26	23.9
High school	59	54.1
Experience		
3 years or less	4	3.7
4-8 years	18	16.5
9+ years	87	79.8

The descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation for the three variables of online teachers' psychological capital level and their perceptions of caring school leadership and enabling school structure was conducted. The results of the analysis were as follows: teachers' psychological capital ( $M = 4.86$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), teachers' perception of caring school leadership ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), and teachers' perception of enabling school structure ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). Table 2 also contains the results of the statistical analysis of Cronbach's alpha for the three instruments used in this study. The results of the analysis for the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ), and Enabling School Structure survey (ESS) demonstrated strong internal reliability.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's alpha
Psychological Capital	109	4.86	0.68	0.889
Caring School Leadership	109	3.28	0.69	0.987
Enabling School Structure	109	3.76	0.75	0.904

**Results**

Before the statistical analysis was conducted, the data were screened, and no data errors or inconsistencies were identified. The data analyzed were from the criterion variable of teachers' psychological capital, and the predictor variables of teachers' perception of caring school leadership and enabling school structure. Data were analyzed using SPSS, version 24 statistical software. To test the null hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis and bivariate regression analyses were computed at the 95% confidence level. For a multiple regression

analysis to be conducted, there are several assumptions that must be met. These include the assumptions of bivariate outliers, multivariate normal distribution, independence of errors, and non-multicollinearity must be met.

### Null Hypothesis One

The first null hypothesis stated there was no statistically significant predictive correlation between a combination of caring school leadership and enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores measured by Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ), and Enabling School Structure survey (ESS). The histograms in Figures 4-6 show the frequency of scores for the three variables. All three variables showed a reasonable normal distribution of scores with caring school leadership being more platykurtic and enabling school structure being more leptokurtic in their distributions.

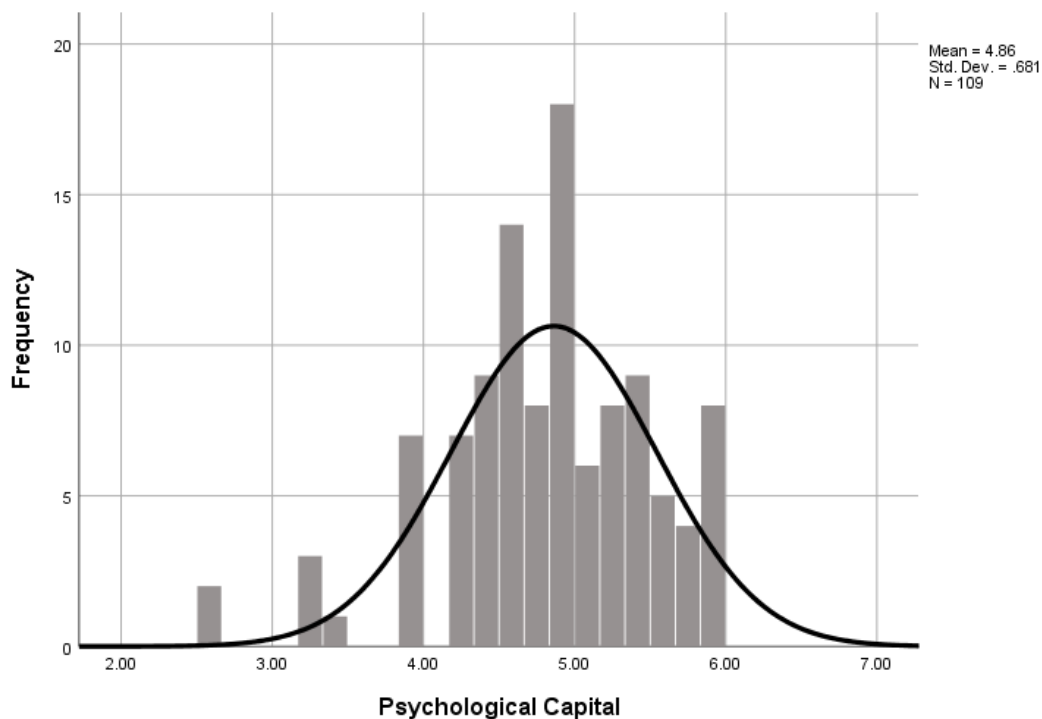


Figure 4. Histogram for teachers' psychological capital.

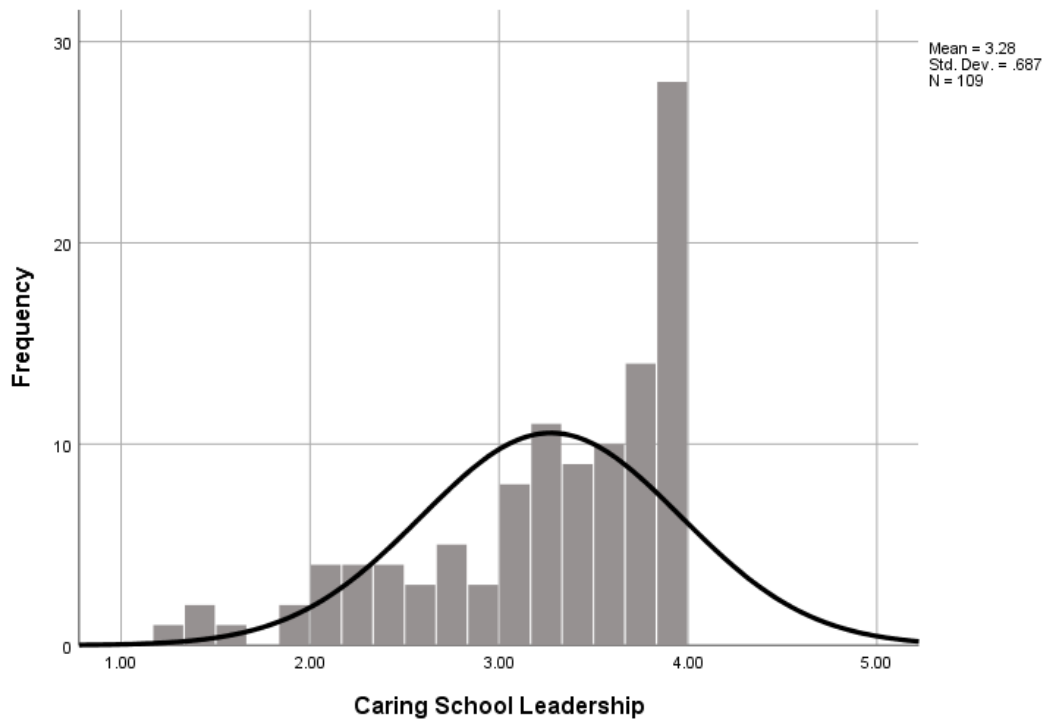


Figure 5. Histogram for teachers' perception of caring school leadership behaviors.

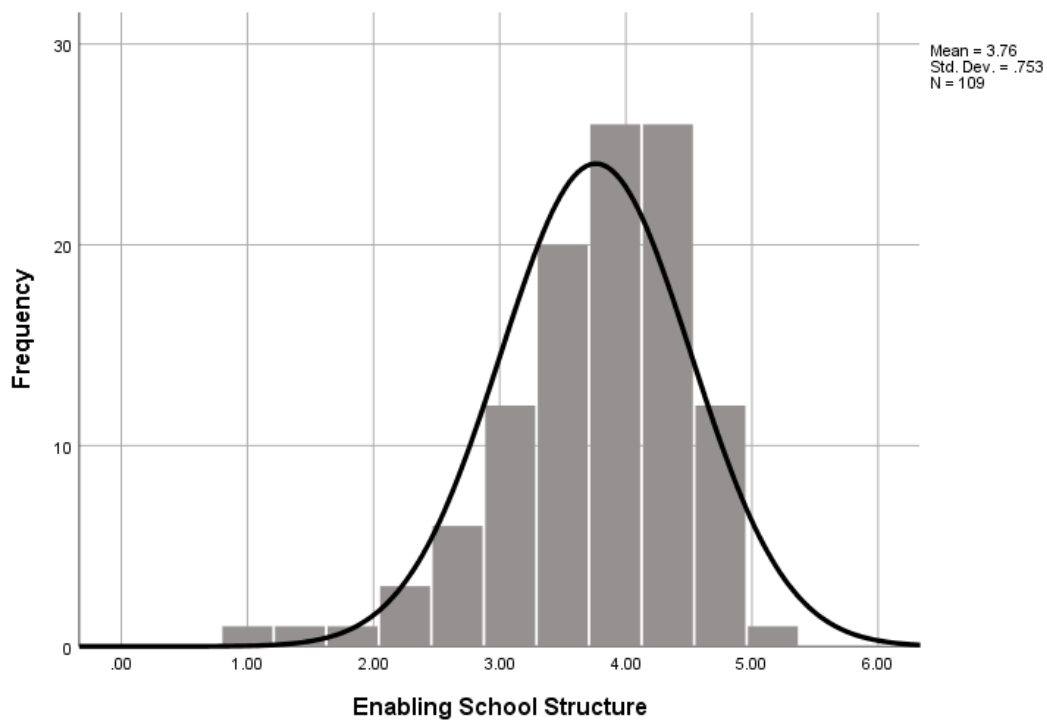


Figure 6. Histogram for teachers' perception of enabling school structure.

The assumption of bivariate outliers was analyzed using scatter plots between the predictor variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure (x, x), as well as each predictor variable (x) and the criterion variable of teachers' psychological capital (y).

Figures 7-9 demonstrate that the assumption of bivariate outliers was met.

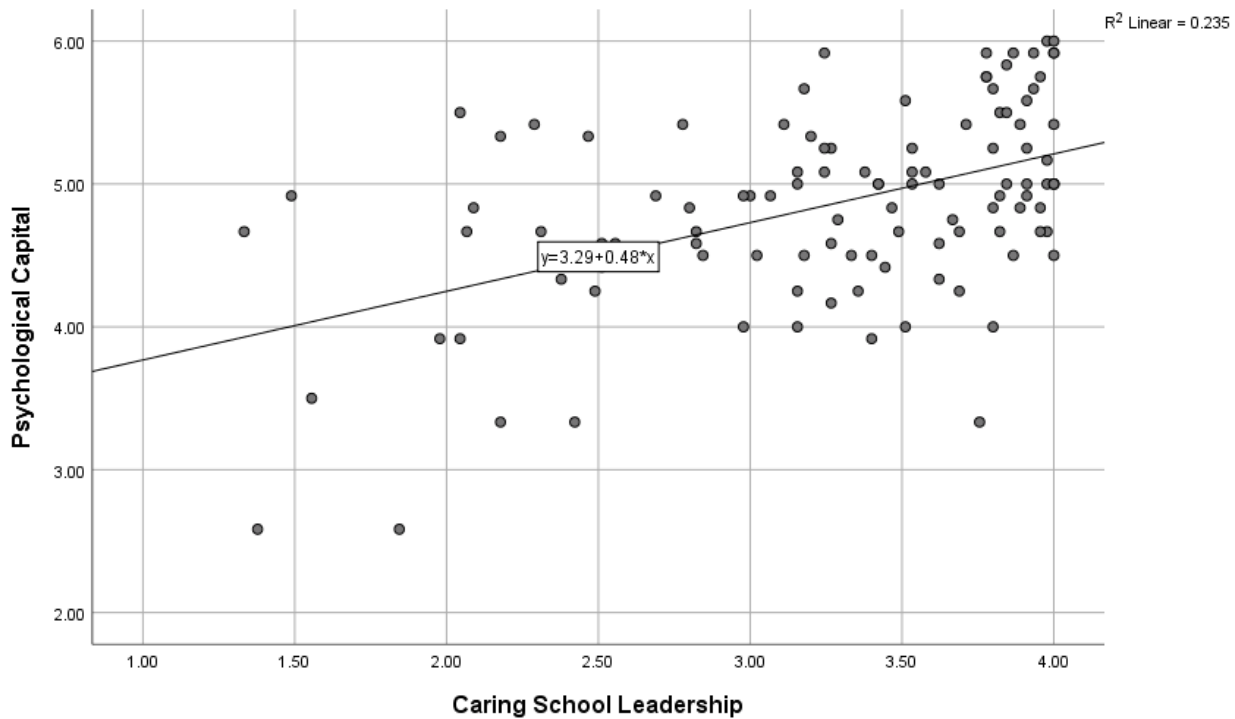


Figure 7. Caring school leadership (x) and teachers' psychological capital (y).

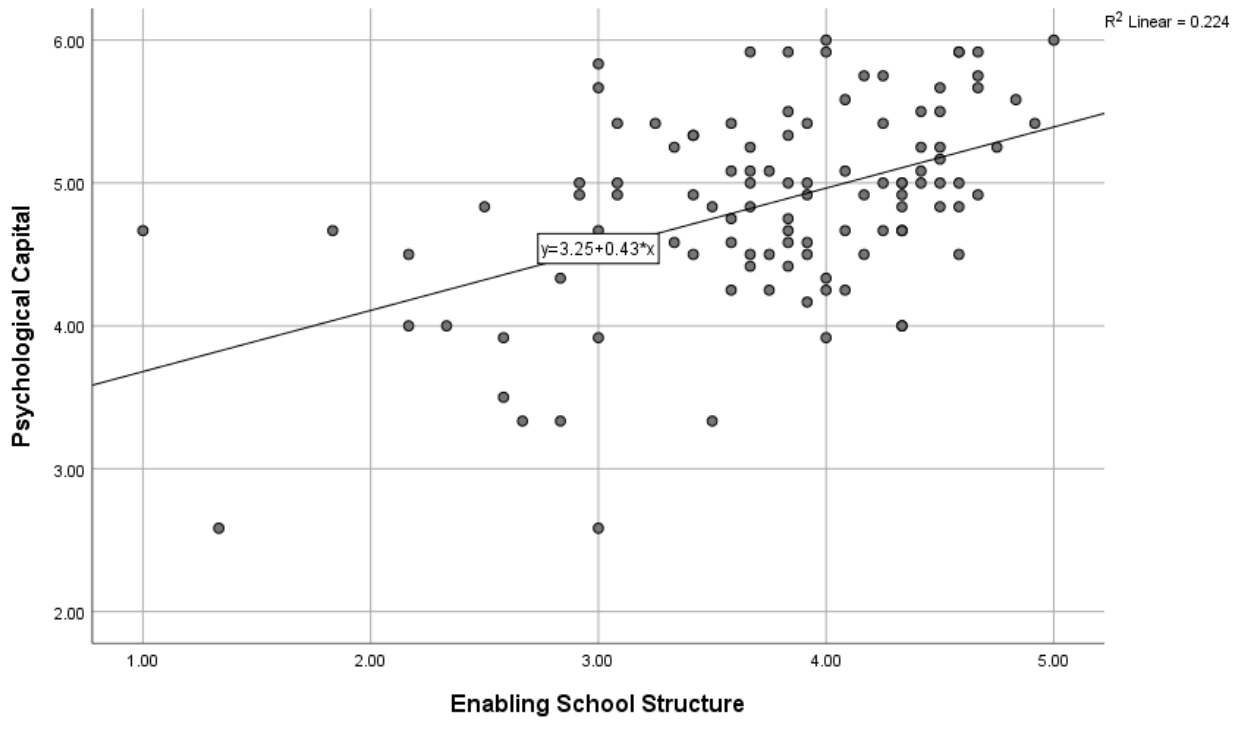


Figure 8. Enabling school structure (x) and teachers' psychological capital (y).

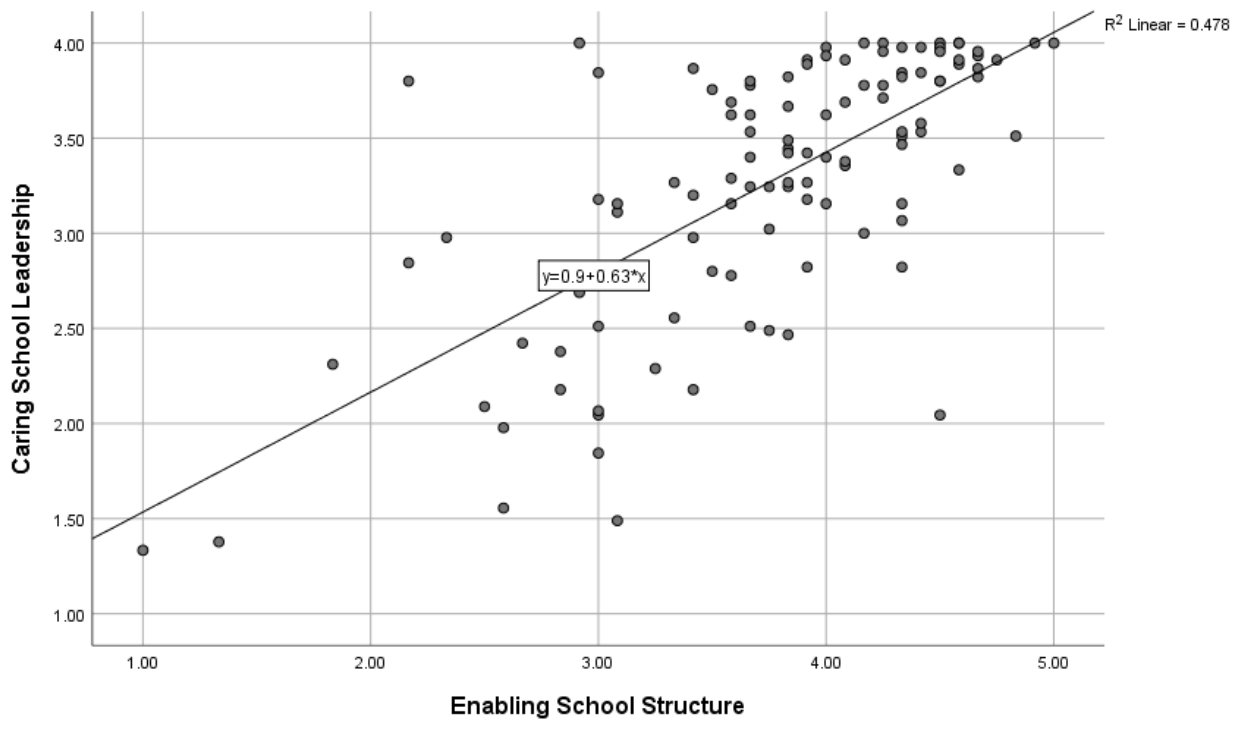
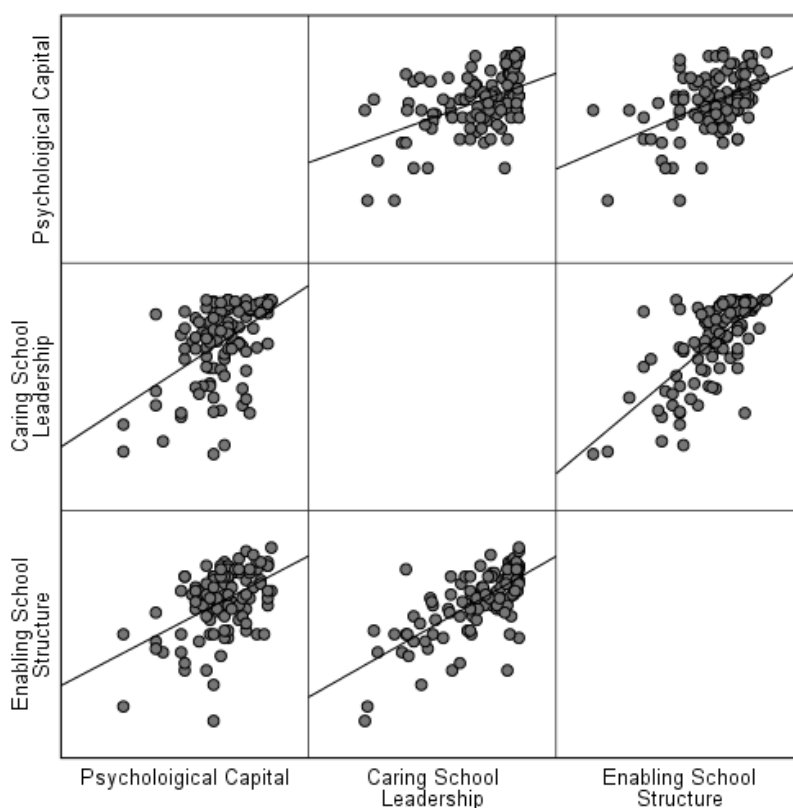


Figure 9. Enabling school structure (x) and caring school structure (x).

To test the assumption of independence of errors, the researcher conducted the Durbin-Watson statistic. The Durbin-Watson statistics ranges from 0.0 to 4.0, with values between 1.5 and 2.5 representing the range to show there is no autocorrelation (Rovai et al., 2014). The Durbin-Watson statistic for this multiple regression was 1.785, indicating that the assumption was met.

The assumption of multivariate normal distribution was examined using scatter plots and Q-Q plots. Using a visual examination of the shape of the scatter plots, Figure 10 demonstrates the classic “cigar shape” which indicates the assumption for linearity was tenable.



*Figure 10.* Matrix Scatter Plots for Psychological Capital, Caring School leadership, and Enabling school structure.

A Quintile-Quintile normal probability plot (Q-Q Plot) was used to examine the relationship of the distributed data against expected distribution (Keith, 2019; Kross, 2016). Figures 11-13 show the Q-Q plots for the three variables. Examination of these graphs show that the variable of psychological capital had the highest degree of normal distribution among the residuals, whereas caring school leadership and enabling school structure demonstrated a normal distribution of the residuals but with negative skewness.

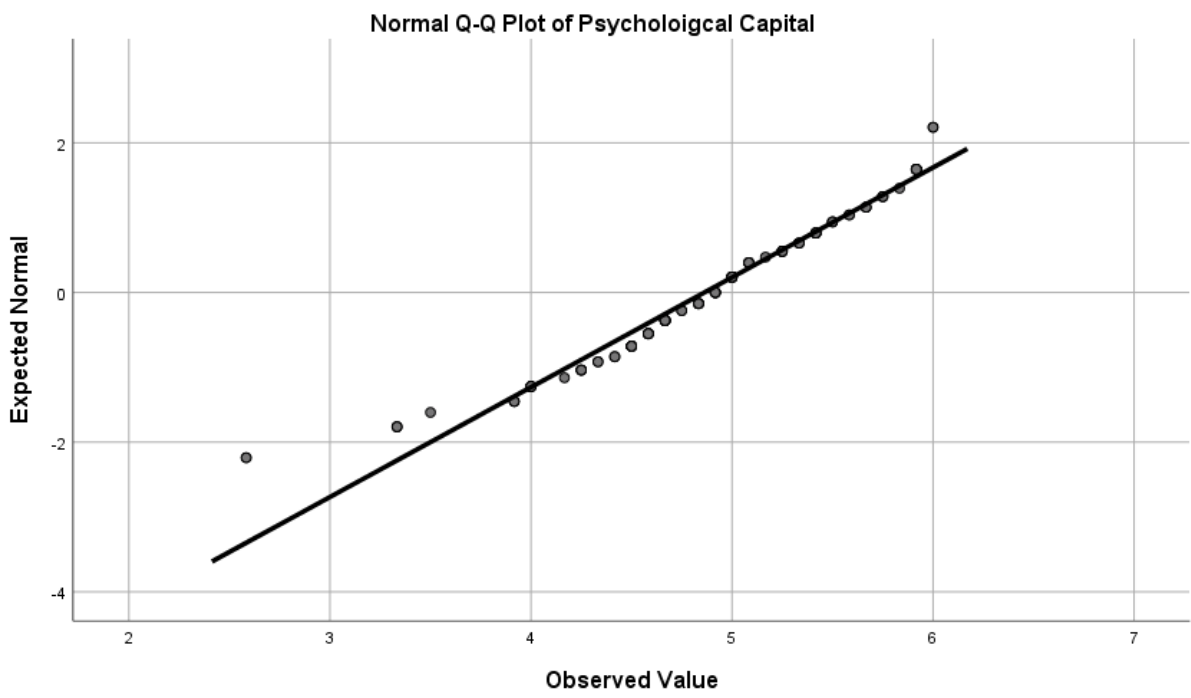


Figure 11. Q-Q Plot for Psychological Capital.



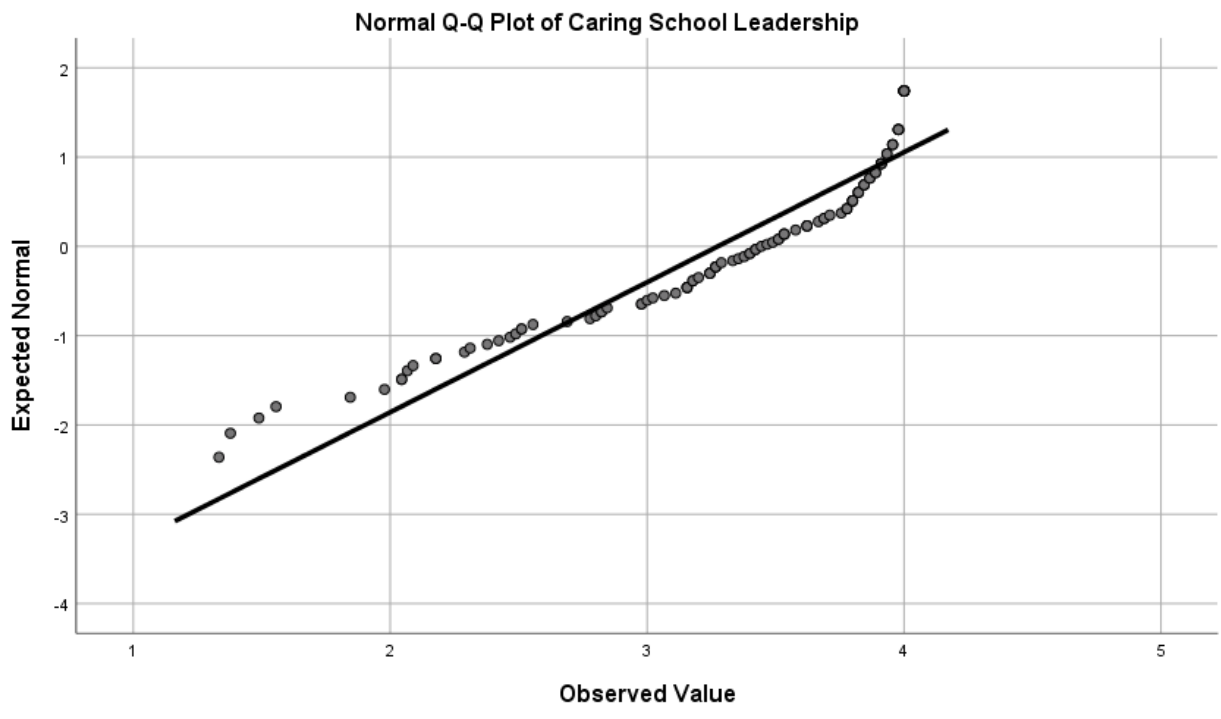


Figure 12. Q-Q Plot for Caring School Leadership.

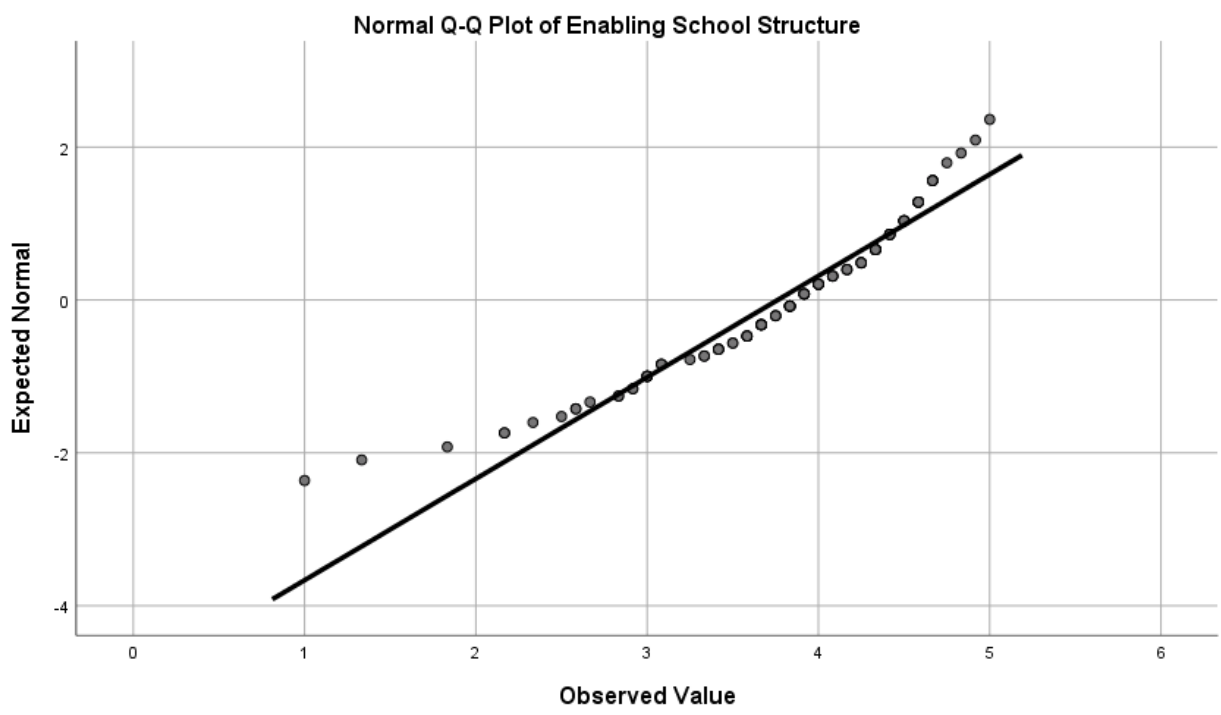


Figure 13. Q-Q Plot for Enabling School Structure.

The final assumption test focused on examination of the data for the absence of multicollinearity among the predictor variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure. The two statistics that measure this are Tolerance and Variation Inflation Factor (VIF). Tolerance is measured from 0.00 to 1.00 with non-multicollinearity being coefficients closer to 1.00 and the violation of the assumption being coefficients 0.10 or less (Rovai et al., 2014). Variation Inflation Factors (VIF) are considered stronger when the value is lower, whereas values over 10 are considered a violation of multicollinearity (Rovai et al., 2014). Table 3 shows the assumption of non-multicollinearity was met.

Table 3.

*Tolerance and VIF values for Predictor Variables*

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Caring School Leadership	0.522	1.916
Enabling School Structure	0.522	1.916

The results of the multiple regression model are found in Table 4 and the ANOVA statistical analysis results are found in Table 5. The results of the multiple regression was statistically significant,  $F(2,106) = 19.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.272$  at a 95% confidence level. Based on the ANOVA results, the researcher rejected the first null hypothesis. The  $R^2$  coefficient showed that the combination of caring school leadership and enabling school structure predicted 27.2% of the variance of teachers' psychological capital, which represented a large effect size (Rovai et al., 2014).

Table 4

*Multiple Regression Model Summary*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Standard Error of the estimate</i>
1	0.521	0.272	0.258	0.587

a. Predictors (Constant), caring school leadership, enabling school structure

Table 5

*ANOVA Analysis*

Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	13.61	2	6.81	19.76	.000
Residual	36.52	106	0.35		
Total	50.13	108			

**Null Hypothesis Two**

The researcher further investigated the relationship of each predictor variable on teachers' PsyCap. The second null hypothesis stated there was no statistically significant predictive correlation between caring school leadership and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores measured by Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12) and Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ). The assumption of bivariate outliers and the assumption of linearity were found to be tenable after examining a scatter plot

between the predicator variable of caring school leadership and the criterion variable of teachers' psychological capital (See Figure 7). The assumption of bivariate normal distribution was met after examining the “cigar shape” in Figure 10. The researcher then conducted a bivariate linear regression to test the hypothesis.

Table 6

*Linear Regression Model Summary for Caring School Leadership*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Standard Error of the estimate</i>
1	0.485	0.235	0.228	0.599

a. Predictors (Constant), caring school leadership

Table 7

*ANOVA Analysis*

Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	11.78	1	11.78	32.86	.000
Residual	38.35	107	0.36		
Total	50.13	108			

The results of the linear regression model are found in Table 6 and the ANOVA analysis in Table 7. Based on this analysis, the linear regression for this hypothesis was statistically significant,  $F(1, 107) = 32.86$ ,  $p < 0.001$  at the 95% confidence level and the researcher was able

to reject the second null hypothesis. The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.485$ ) and the  $R^2$  coefficient showed that caring school leadership had a positive and significant effect size and predicted 23.5% of the variance of teachers' psychological capital (Rovai et al., 2014).

### **Null Hypothesis Three**

The third null hypothesis stated there was no statistically significant predictive correlation between enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital as shown by scores measured by Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12) and Enabling School structure survey (ESS). The assumption of bivariate outliers and the assumption of linearity were met after examining a scatter plot between the predictor variable of enabling school structure and the criterion variable of teachers' psychological capital (See Figure 8). The assumption of bivariate normal distribution was met after examining the "cigar shape" in Figure 10. The researcher then conducted a bivariate linear regression to test the hypothesis.

Table 8

#### *Linear Regression Model Summary for Enabling School Structure*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Standard Error of the estimate</i>
1	0.473	0.224	0.217	0.603

- a. Predictors (Constant), enabling school structure

Table 9

*ANOVA Analysis*

Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	11.23	1	11.23	30.91	.000
Residual	38.90	107	0.36		
Total	50.13	108			

The results of the linear regression model for enabling school structure is found in Table 8 and the ANOVA analysis in Table 9. Based on this analysis, the linear regression for this hypothesis was statistically significant,  $F(1, 107) = 30.91$ ,  $p < 0.001$  at the 95% confidence level and the researcher was able to reject the second null hypothesis. The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.473$ ) and the  $R^2$  coefficient showed that enabling school structure had a positive and significant effect size and predicted 22.4% of the variance of teachers' psychological capital (Rovai et al., 2014).

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Overview**

This study was informed by prior research that indicated outcomes of psychological capital (PsyCap) are related to similar outcomes associated with teacher retention. These outcomes include higher levels of job satisfaction, career commitment, as well as lower levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and intent to leave (Demir, 2018; Luthans et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2014; Rehman et al., 2017). In this sense, the purpose of this predictive correlation study focused on a single research question that examined if caring school leadership and enabling school structure predict virtual teachers' psychological capital. In this study, the criterion variable was psychological capital and the predictive variables were caring school leadership and enabling school structure. Chapter five explores the results of the study and contains conclusions and how it relates to the literature pertaining to the theoretical constructs of this study. This chapter also includes implications of the findings, limitations, and suggestions of future research.

### **Discussion**

The study administered an online survey to the faculty of an online K-12 school in Pennsylvania. The researcher sent an email to 384 state-certified teachers with directions and link to the survey, however 154 teachers did not open the email. Overall, there were 109 state-certified teachers who participated in the research study for an overall 28% participation rate. In addition to the questions of the three instruments, participants of this study were also asked demographic questions related to their age, gender, grade-band they teach, and their years of experience as a professional educator.

The survey contained three validated and reliable instruments, including the short version of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), the Caring School Leadership

Questionnaire (CSLQ), and the Enabling School Structure survey (ESS). It is important that instruments used in research demonstrate internal reliability. Internal reliability demonstrates if the results obtained from an instrument will be similar across different contexts and in different times (Gall et al., 2007; Rovai et al., 2014) and Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to determine internal reliability (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2013). Rovai et al. (2014) stated that Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.90 or higher are viewed as being excellent and having very high reliability and coefficient scores of 0.80 to less than 0.90 as being good with high reliability. The results of the analysis for the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12) in the current study was  $\alpha = 0.889$ . This is consistent with the extensive prior research which has been conducted using this instrument (Luthans et al., 2014; Luthans et al., 2015). The analysis for Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) was  $\alpha = 0.987$ . Since CSLQ is still a relatively new instrument with very limited use in empirical research, this result is significant because it supported the validation study which had a similar reliability coefficient (van der Vyver et al., 2014b). The results for Enabling School Structure survey (ESS) was  $\alpha = 0.904$ , which also supported prior research that used this instrument (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). This analysis determined that the internal reliability for all three instruments was very strong.

### **Null Hypothesis One**

The first null hypothesis stated there is no significant predictive correlation between a combination of caring school leadership and enabling school structure and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital. To investigate the hypothesis, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS. The researcher was able to reject the null hypothesis,  $F(2, 106) = 19.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.272$  and the results suggest the model is statistically significant to support the hypothesis that caring school leadership in combination with enabling school structure has a



predictive relationship on teacher's psychological capital.

Overall, the model demonstrated there was a large effect size (Rovai et al., 2014), whereby 27.2% of the variance of teachers' psychological capital is explained by this combined leadership model. Murphy and Louis (2018) highlighted positive leadership's influence and relationship with positive school outcomes. This study supports this assertion by showing the combination of caring school leadership and the principal's role in creating an enabling school structure positively explains teachers' psychological capital. This also supports the research that demonstrated the school leader is central to influencing the perception teachers' have of the school environment (Burkhauser, 2017).

### **Null Hypothesis Two**

The second null hypothesis stated there is no significant predictive correlation between caring school leadership and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital. A Pearson's correlation was conducted, and a positive and noteworthy correlation was found ( $r = 0.485$ ). Prior research on the relationship between leadership models and PsyCap demonstrated similar correlations to what was found in this study for the construct of caring school leadership. To illustrate, studies on authentic leadership show correlations ranging from  $r = 0.43$  to  $0.49$  (Feng, 2016; Hu, 2018; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018; Shuckert et al., 2018; Woolley et al., 2011), correlations for transformational leadership being between  $r = 0.48$  to  $r = 0.53$  (McMurray et al., 2010; Shuckert et al., 2018), and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) with a correlation of  $r = 0.40$  (Kong et al., 2018). Additionally, the results of the bivariate regression indicate that there is a statistical relationship and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected,  $F(1, 107) = 32.86$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

This study demonstrated caring school leadership is an important construct to consider, in that it predicted 23.5% of the variance of virtual teachers' psychological capital, which is a significant effect size. From this perspective, this study supports caring school leadership as another leadership model that positively relates to and predicts teachers' PsyCap. Since prior research has demonstrated caring school leadership is a model associated with positive school climate and overall job satisfaction (Eldor & Shoshini, 2016; Kurland, 2019; Louis et al., 2016), and these outcomes are related to teacher retention (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Chambers Mack et al., 2019), caring school leadership is a model that may be instrumental in addressing the issue of teacher attrition.

### **Null Hypothesis Three**

The third null hypothesis stated there is no significant predictive correlation between enabling school structure (ESS) and virtual teachers' level of psychological capital. Pearson's correlation suggested there is a positive and significant correlation ( $r = 0.473$ ) between teachers' PsyCap and ESS. The results of the bivariate regression rejected the null hypothesis,  $F(1, 107) = 30.91$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , demonstrating enabling school structure was also a statistically significant predictor of teachers' psychological capital. Just as with caring school leadership, enabling school structure was found to be noteworthy in that it predicted 22.4 % of the variance of online teachers' psychological capital.

These results support prior research on ESS, which found a positive and significant relationship with the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) model (Cerit, 2017). Likewise, Gray and associates (2016) found a positive correlation between enabling school structure and professional learning communities. Therefore, the current research indicates that in addition to ESS having a positive relationship within a collective group of teachers, such as a professional

learning community (see also Gray and Summers, 2016; Kalkan, 2016), enabling school structure also correlates to and predicts the internal psychological capital of teachers. In this sense, the results of this study is significant in light of prior research that showed school organizational structure has an impact on a teacher's intent to leave, in particular when their perception includes a lack of control in their work (Chambers Mack et al., 2019; Jeon & Wells, 2018) and administrator action that hinders their work (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

### **Implications**

The landscape of public education in the United States continues to see teacher shortage issues stemming from high teacher turnover and attrition (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Chambers-Mack et al., 2019). Teachers' perception of lack of administrative support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kurland, 2019) and low job satisfaction (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Chambers et al., 2019) are areas where leadership behavior can serve as a linchpin in addressing this issue (Burkhauser, 2017; Cansoy & Polatcan, 2019; Perrone et al., 2019).

This study contributes to the literature base of psychological capital and caring school leadership by demonstrating a strong correlation exists between caring school leadership practice and teachers' psychological capital. Since this study suggests that caring school leadership predicts, that is, explains some of the variance in teachers' psychological capital, an important inference derived from this study is the role of the principal in influencing teachers' internal psychological resources by the school leader demonstrating a genuine regard for the interests, needs, and overall well-being of each faculty member. This supports the claim of Smylie and colleagues (2016) that caring school leadership is essential for effective schools. It has been

stated that a shift has occurred where the role of the principal is viewed as including caring and supporting elements (van der Vyver, 2014a) and this study provides empirical evidence for why this shift is beneficial for a positive school climate. Additionally, even though this study helped to address the gap in the literature by demonstrating another leadership model positively correlates with psychological capital and by providing empirical evidence to support the construct of caring school leadership, it needs to be stated that this current study should be more the genesis for further empirical research that examines the influence of caring school leadership in effective school leadership.

Hoy and Sweetland, (2001) succinctly stated that schools are bureaucracies, but rather what one must consider is whether the bureaucracy is enabling or hindering to teachers being able to effectively fulfill their responsibilities (Gray & Summers, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2016). With the inclusion of the variable of enabling school structure, this study adds to the knowledge base of the influence of organizational structure in schools. Most of the prior research on enabling school structure examined the impact on the school community. In this sense, the focus was on school climate and the working environment (Gray et al., 2016), or in the context of professional learning communities (Gray & Summers, 2016; Kalkan, 2016). The current study suggests there is also a strong correlation and predictive relationship between the type of organizational structure a principal establishes within his or her school and the overall psychological capital of the faculty. This supports the assertion of Ford and Ware (2018) of the importance of the school leader in creating healthy and effective school structures.

Leadership studies suggest the value of viewing decision-making through different lenses or frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017). One perspective which has been identified is the factory or machine image, which emerges from the bureaucratic or organizational theory perspective. This

lens corresponds to the enabling school structure variable in this study. Another perspective is that of the family image which emerges from the human resource perspective (Bolman & Deal, 2017) which aligns with the caring school leadership construct. Therefore, by analyzing the relationship of both caring school leadership and enabling school structure together, and thereby demonstrated a significant predictive relationship on teachers' perception of who they are (Bozgeyikli, 2017; Luthans et al., 2016), this study supports the idea that school leadership is not one-dimensional, but rather involves a multiple-faceted leadership behavior to nurture a positive school environment where teachers can succeed (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Murphy & Louis, 2018).

Finally, this study has implications for leadership in virtual schools and e-leadership in general. Those who serve in e-leadership roles have a similar interest as their counterparts in face-to-face settings, whereby they are interested in nurturing the human and relational component with their staff (Avolio et al., 2014; Savolainen, 2014). For example, one specific competency identified in effective e-leadership was human resource skills which includes demonstrating support and showing respect and value for staff members (Chua & Chua, 2017; van Wart et al., 2019), of which caring school leadership encompasses. This study suggests caring school leadership and enabling school structure are antecedents to online teachers' psychological capital, which supports the concept of the importance and value of human and relational influence within a virtual team context where staff are geographically dispersed.

### **Limitations**

This study adds to the research of psychological capital, caring school leadership, and enabling school structure. It provides empirical evidence to support the literature that leadership behavior is an antecedent to teachers' PsyCap. However, this study did have several limitations. The first limitation relates to the sample population. The researcher used a convenience sample

of online educators, from just one K-12 virtual school located in Pennsylvania. This limits the ability of the researcher to generalize the findings to the wider population of all K-12 educators.

A second limitation is the use of a cross-sectional design where the data came from a single point in time. In particular, the timing was around the end of a marking period which may have skewed the data due to the additional stress of grading. The timing of the survey may also explain why there was a higher than expected number of emails which were not opened.

A third limitation was the use of self-report measures which can lead to common method bias in the reporting. Common method bias may occur when multiple measures (including both dependent and independent variables) are contained on a single survey where self-reporting on one item may influence reporting on other items (Eichhorn, 2014; Tehseen, Ramayah, Sajilan, 2017). Harman's single-factor test can be used to test for common method bias, and the researcher found 48.8% variance is explained by single-factor analysis, which is still below the recommended threshold of 50% established for assessing common method bias (Eichhorn, 2014; Tehseen et al., 2017). This indicates common method bias was not present, however, since the variance is close to the limit, it is still noteworthy to identify as a possible limitation.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are several recommendations for future research related to this study. This study examined the perceptions of state-certified teachers from one K-12 cyber charter school in Pennsylvania. For this reason, in order to develop more generalized conclusions, it would be beneficial to replicate this study across multiple educational settings. This includes other virtual schools geographically dispersed across the United States, as well as conducting research in brick-and-mortar public school systems, including both traditional district schools and charter

schools, which would assist in seeing if the results of this study are similar across different settings.

Another recommendation would be to use the three variables in this study, with the same instruments, to conduct causal-comparative studies to see if there are differences based on educational context and setting. For example, it would be beneficial to the research literature to have empirical studies conducted that examine differences between cyber schools and brick-and-mortar schools, public schools compared to private and/or faith-based schools, as well as comparisons between teacher perceptions of those who work in urban, suburban, and rural school settings. Additionally, it would be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies to see if changes in leadership practice, where more intentional actions of caring school leadership are implemented, change the level of teachers' psychological capital.

Finally, this study used quantitative measures to investigate the degree of relationship between independent variables of caring school leadership and enabling school structure regressed on teachers' psychological capital, but it did not examine what teachers specifically identified as illustrations of caring school leadership best practice. For this reason, the researcher also recommends qualitative research, or a mixed-methods approach, be conducted to ascertain and describe those characteristics and phenomena that teachers perceive as being illustrations of caring school leadership.

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doi:10.1108/LODJ-01-2018-0048

**APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO USE PCQ-12**

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for Rich Jensen to use the following copyright material:

Instrument: *Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ)*

Authors: *Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio & James B. Avey.*

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for his/her thesis/dissertation research.

Three sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material.

Sincerely,



Mind Garden, Inc.  
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## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO USE CSLQ

>>> "Jensen, Rich" [REDACTED] 2018/11/26 08:36 PM >>>

Dr. C. P. van der Vyver,

I am in a doctoral program at Liberty University (Virginia, USA) in the field of educational leadership. I am nearing the end of the doctoral coursework, and for the capstone course in the program, the focus is on writing a proposal for a dissertation.

I have been very interested in studying positive leadership. Over the past several months, I have started to focus more of my reading on caring leadership theory. This is where I discovered the two articles about the Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ).

1. If additional validation studies have been conducted using this instrument, would you be willing and able to direct me to where they are located so I can read them and include them in my research?
2. Would you be willing to give me permission to use this instrument in a research study?

Rich Jensen

-----

CP Van Der Vyver [REDACTED]  
Tue 11/27/2018 3:30 AM

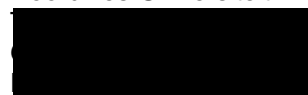
Hi Rich,

To answer your questions:

- 1) Quite a few people have requested the questionnaire, however I never got any feedback on additional validation.
- 2) Attached is the questionnaire, there are 2 questionnaires, one for school principals and one for educators.

Regards

Dr. CP van der Vyver  
Senior Lektor  
Skool vir Professionele Studies  
in Onderwys  
Programleier: Nagraadse  
Diploma  
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Noordwes-Universiteit



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Dr. CP van der Vyver  
Senior Lecturer  
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**APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO USE ESS SURVEY**

Jensen, Rich  
Sat 2/2/2019 8:38 PM

☒

Dr. Hoy,

I am in the doctoral program at Liberty University (Virginia, USA) in the field of educational leadership. I am nearing the end of the doctoral coursework, and preparing for the capstone course in the program which focuses on professional writing, including components of a dissertation proposal.

I have been very interested in studying positive leadership style with a focus on caring school leadership and its relationship with teachers' psychological capital and perception of enabling school structure. I would like to include as part of my research design the Enabling School Structure instrument which you and Sweetland designed. I am writing to see if you would be willing to give me permission to use the instrument in my research study.

Sincerely,

Rich Jensen

-----

Wayne Hoy  
Sat 2/2/2019 11:08 PM

☒

Dear Rich,

You have my permission to use the Enabling School Structure measure in your research.

Best wishes.

*Wayne*

Wayne K. Hoy  
Fawcett Professor Emeritus in  
Education Administration  
The Ohio State University  
[www.waynehoy.com](http://www.waynehoy.com)

## APPENDIX D: SITE PERMISSION

**From:** Jensen, Rich [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2019 4:46:55 PM  
**To:** Michael Conti [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Rich Jensen - Permission for Research at Agora

Dear Dr. Michael Conti:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Educational Doctorate (Ed.D.) degree. The title of my research project is *The Relationship Between Teachers' Psychological Capital and Caring School Leadership and Enabling School Structure*. The purpose of my research is to examine the relationship and degree of prediction of caring school leadership and enabling school structure upon virtual teachers' psychological capital.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Agora Cyber Charter School. After I have received IRB approval, participants will be asked to go to Survey Monkey and complete the online survey. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Rich Jensen  
 Doctoral Candidate

[External] Re: Rich Jensen - Permission for Research at Agora

Michael Conti [REDACTED]

Tue 10/1/2019 10:19 AM

To: Jensen, Rich [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Jensen,

Please accept this email as permission to conduct your research within Agora Cyber Charter School. I look forward to reading your completed study.

Best regards,  
 Michael Conti



Michael Conti | Chief Executive Officer  
 Agora Cyber Charter School

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT: The documents and communication included in this email transmission may contain confidential information, including information protected by state and federal law. All information is intended only for the use of the above named recipient(s). If you are not the named recipient, you are NOT authorized to read, disclose, copy, distribute, or take any action on the information and any action other than immediate delivery to the named recipient is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error, do NOT read the information and please immediately notify sender by telephone and email and immediately delete this email. If you are the named recipient, you are NOT authorized to reveal any of this information to any unauthorized person and are hereby instructed to delete this email when no longer needed in a manner consistent with, or as required by, Agora Cyber Charter School's Record Retention and Destruction Policy, if applicable.

**APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

## Relationship of Leadership Behaviors on Teachers' Well-being

Dear state-certified educators,

I am requesting your assistance with a survey I am conducting as part of the requirements for earning my doctorate at Liberty University in educational leadership.

As you very well may attest to, teaching can be a profession with a lot of stress and anxiety. There have been many reports and studies conducted on the topic of teacher retention. This study will examine if there is a correlation between leadership style and school structure on the internal, psychological resources of teachers which can lead to overall well-being.

Dr. Conti, Chief Executive Officer of Agora Cyber Charter School, has granted permission for the school to participate. The survey contains items asking for your opinion and perception based on a Likert-type scale. I anticipate that the survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, click on the link provided. A consent document is provided as the first page you will see after you click on the survey link. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please click the box at the end of the consent information to indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

I greatly appreciate your help and participation in this study. If you have any questions, please contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Mr. Rich Jensen  
Doctoral Candidate

[Begin Survey](#)

**APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL LETTER****LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 7, 2019

Richard S. Jensen Jr.

IRB Exemption 4047.110719: The Relationship Between Teachers' Psychological Capital and Caring School Leadership and Enabling School Structure

Dear Richard S. Jensen Jr.,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,



**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
Research Ethics Office

**LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY.

*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*