

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF PRINCIPAL  
WALKTHROUGHS AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY GRADE OF FLORIDA HIGH  
SCHOOLS

by

Robert Bennett

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

This quantitative correlational study sought to determine if the administrative time and financial investment in administrative walkthroughs is an effective practice that leads to improved student achievement. This study sought to determine if a predictive relationship existed between the predictor variable mean of principal school-wide walkthroughs, and the criterion variable school grade in Florida high schools. This study was designed to determine if the principal walkthrough is an effective tool to improve teaching practice to improve student achievement to meet accountability measures. The sample include 72 high school principals in Florida. Data was collected through a self-report survey in which the respondents answered three questions. Archival data from the Florida Department of Education was used to determine school grade by percent. A bivariate regression was used to determine the relationship between predictor variable mean of walkthroughs and criterion variable school achievement grade.

*Keywords:* accountability, evaluation, instructional practices, student achievement

### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and savior, my wife Amy, and our daughters Taylor, Brittany, Brooke, and Abigail. To my wife Amy, I have been blessed beyond measure to have made this doctoral journey with you. You always made me believe that this could be accomplished. One verse that always personified our journey together was Psalm 27:17 “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (New International Version). I have the deepest respect for you my darling. To my Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for my salvation, my beautiful wife, and daughters. Without the blessing of God, this study would not have been possible.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Excellence in Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education Act (EMSEA)

Georgia Teachers Keys Effectiveness System (TKES)

Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

International Business Machine (IBM)

Management by Wondering Around (MBWA).

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Principal Rapid Orientation and Preparation in Educational Leadership (PROPEL)

Race to The Top (RTTT)

School Walkthrough Survey (SWS)

School Management Program (SMP)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between the mean number of principal walkthroughs and high school's accountability grade, based on academic achievement and acceleration in 10 categories totaling 1000 points as determined by the Florida Department of Education. Chapter One provides background information, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the significance of the study, the research question, and definitions.

### **Background**

Accountability and school reform legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 and the implementation Race to The Top (RTTT) in 2009 has increased pressure on the high school principal. While the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 gave state departments of education and school districts independence from federal influence on teacher evaluation, ESSA also illuminated states and school districts often lacked the technical expertise to design an effective evaluation system (Steinberg & Craft, 2017). ESSA's focus on improvement in traditionally low-performing schools created principal turnover when these schools failed to improve (Jacob, 2017). District and school leadership is under public scrutiny based on school achievement score. This increased pressure on the principal to increase student achievement has led to the early departure of many school principals (Hamilton, Heilig, & Pazey, 2014). The accountability movement has fostered a culture of shared power or distributed power. While distributive leadership is often practiced by schools, and leads to democratic relationships between educators, the physical presence of the principal reinforces his or her influence with other educators and students within the school (Mifsud, 2015). This physical

presence can be implemented in informal classroom visits or observations called walkthroughs for short durations of time. Walkthroughs have potential to support both teaching and learning (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013).

### **Historical Background**

American school administrators during the post-World War II era used classroom visits to have a better understanding of the teacher (Coleman, 1945). The post-World War era walkthroughs also built readiness for supervision, and shared experiences with the teacher (Coleman, 1945). Historically, teacher observation has been under the umbrella of supervision. During the late 1960s, clinical supervision came to the forefront of teacher evaluation technique. Holland (1988) referenced clinical supervision as an instrument of improvement leading to improved instructional practices. Reflecting back to the 1960s, teacher observation was viewed as a method to gather data that would lead to improvement of teaching practices (Garman, 1990). However, historically teacher observations have proved to be ineffective at discerning the quality of education that a teacher is giving to his or her students (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Glanz (2007) supported the view that supervision and the teacher evaluation process lacked leadership abilities, emotional behaviors, and personal accountability of the administrator to effectively improve teacher practice (p. 120).

### **Social Background**

The inability of schools to improve teacher practices in a manner that increased learning for all students led to increased scrutiny and the advent of penalties for low performing schools and districts. Thus, there is debate whether punitive accountability measures improve student achievement (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2016; Murray & Howe, 2017). Conversely, while attempting to avoid punitive measures, many schools experienced brief improvements because

the schools manipulated testing situations rather than improving instructional practices (Chang, 2009). To improve teaching practices, it is incumbent upon the principal to properly evaluate and observe teacher practices. Specifically, failure to observe teacher practices places the principal at a disadvantage in terms of assessing the effectiveness of school and district level mandates as well as failure to determine the implementation of specified teaching strategies. Namely, unannounced walkthroughs give the principal keen insight as to authentic teaching in classrooms rather than staged lessons that are seen in a formal observation (Garza et al., 2016; Range, Scherz, Holt & Young, 2011).

### **Theoretical Background**

The theory behind this study is Cogan's (1973) clinical supervision. This theory reinforces the need to improve the evaluation process if the goal of the process is improving teacher instruction. Bulunz, Gursoy, Kesner, Baltaci Goktalay, and Salihoglu's (2014) three-year study found that teachers that were subjected to clinical supervision had higher scores than a control group that was not exposed to clinical supervision. In fact, clinical supervision has been studied extensively for over 30 years but continues to evolve and improve (Pajak, 2002). Clinical supervision is focused on teacher observation as a means to improve teaching practice via professional development (Acheson & Gall, 1997).

### **Problem Statement**

Walkthroughs are designed to generate a conversation between the administrator and the teacher and focus on improving instruction and professional growth (Danley & Theiss, 2015; Garza et al., 2016; Protheroe, 2009). Research has been conducted that evaluate the principals' perception of walkthroughs (Garza et al, 2016; Grissom et al., 2013). Also, there have been studies conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of the walkthrough (Dickenson, 2016;

Range, Finch, Young, & Hvidston, 2014). Information is readily available on walkthrough protocol and various forms that are used to collect data during walkthroughs (Goldhorn, Kearney, & Webb, 2013). Though walkthroughs loosely resemble the post-World War 2 classroom visits that fostered collegiality, threats exist to the effectiveness of walkthroughs to improve instruction. A significant threat is the differences in perspective of teachers and administrators threaten the effectiveness of walkthroughs to improve instruction. While it can be assumed that principal classroom walkthroughs are effective as a means to improve instruction, there is also ample evidence that indicates classroom walkthroughs are ineffective in improving instructional practices of teachers. Describing the impact of a teacher and the complexity of the observation process, Muñoz and Dossett (2016) state “Effective teaching does make a difference in student learning and that teaching is too complex for any single measure of performance to capture it accurately” (p. 126). Identifying great teachers requires multiple measures. Walkthroughs are a component of the teacher observation and evaluation process.

Barriers to effective walkthroughs have been identified as well as interventions to overcome these barriers (Garza et al, 2016; Grissom et al., 2013; Range et al., 2011). Two example of barriers includes time demands on the principal and resistance of veteran teachers to engage in feedback (Grissom et al., 2013, Range et al., 2011). One intervention that overcomes the two barriers previously mentioned is to develop a school culture that facilitates administrators and teachers viewing walkthroughs as professional development (Grissom et al., 2013).

An increase in student engagement which should lead to improved student achievement has been documented in studies of walkthroughs (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014; Cervantes, Hemmer, & Kouzekanani, 2015; Muñoz & Dossett, 2016). The literature indicates classroom

walkthroughs are effective in observing teaching and learning in a principal's school (Grissom et al., 2013; Protheroe, 2009). There is ample evidence that walkthroughs potentially improve teaching practices when post walkthrough conferences occur that include meaningful feedback (Marshall, 2003; Marzano, 2012; Range et al., 2014).

This study examined effective supervision techniques for improving teacher instructional practice in an effort to improve student achievement. Specifically, regular walkthroughs provide the principal information, such as teachers are implementing curriculum, students are engaged, and who the teachers are that need redirection (Marshall, 2003). Overall school climate is easily discernable when the principal visits classrooms regularly (Protheroe, 2009). Instructional practice is improved for non-tenured teachers or less experienced teachers by walkthroughs because issue of low-level teaching issues can be addressed, and a corrective conversation can take place (Range et al., 2014). The problem is there are insufficient studies that determine if there is a positive relationship between number of principal walkthroughs and student achievement, which leads to school grade (Boothe, 2013).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to determine if there is a predictive relationship between the predictor variable mean of principal school-wide walkthroughs, and the criterion variable school accountability grade in Florida high schools. A walkthrough is defined as a brief informal classroom visit lasting from three to 20 minutes (DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012; Grissom et al., 2013). Mean (Warner, 2013) per teacher of the school wide walkthrough will be the total number of principal or assistant principals divided by the number of teachers. For example, the mean walkthroughs based on 200 total walkthroughs divided by 50 teachers would equal a mean per teacher of four walkthroughs. School grade for



high schools in Florida is based on student achievement and schools earning points in 10 categories worth 100 points each for academic proficiency and acceleration for a total of 1000 points (FLDOE, 2107). The sample population is composed Florida high school principals from 477 high schools in 67 Florida school districts (FLDOE, 2018). The sample population of teachers in this southern state was 67,244 (FLDOE, Public Schools Data, 2018).

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study added to the body of knowledge of supervision in terms of the effectiveness of informal walkthroughs and the impact they have on school grades. This study was important due to two interconnected circumstances. First, principal and school administrator time is a finite commodity and walkthroughs demand time. Secondly, improved teacher instructional practice that leads to improved student achievement must be a product of walkthroughs to justify the time consumed conducting the walkthroughs. Principal walkthroughs designed to facilitate conversations centered on instructional practices have become a common practice in schools around the country. In Florida, walkthroughs are used for teacher evaluation and is referenced in school improvement plans as a method to improve instruction (Florida Department of Education [FLDOE], 2018). Walkthroughs are being implemented in an attempt to fill the void of identifying teacher quality that formal observation has failed to do (Hill, & Grossman, 2013). On average, principals spend almost 13% of their time in instructional related undertakings with almost half of that time being committed to walkthroughs (Grissom et al., 2013). Furthermore, DuFour, and Marzano (2009) indicate that formal observations and walkthroughs are time consuming, and ineffective tools for school improvement. By determining the effectiveness of walkthrough practice, the practice can be utilized to its highest capacity for the benefit of administrators, teachers, and ultimately students. This study seeks to

determine if walkthroughs make a discernable mark on student achievement as measured by school grade in a southern state's high schools.

### **Research Question**

**RQ1:** Is there a predictive relationship between the mean number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs and school accountability grade?

### **Definitions**

1. *Florida High School Grade* - Individual schools in the state of Florida are given letter grades A through F based on percentage of points earned of 1000 points from 10 categories (Florida Department of Education, [FLDOE], 2017).
2. *Formal observations* – Formal observations occur when teachers have prior knowledge principals will observe their lesson and might last 30 minutes to one hour (Range et al., 2014).
3. *Informal observations* – Informal observations are shorter than formal observations, usually 10 to 30 minutes, and are not precluded with a preobservation conference so teachers do not have prior knowledge they will be observed (Range et al, 2014).
4. *Walkthrough* – Walkthroughs are brief, informal classroom visits lasting 3 minutes to 20 minutes to facilitate the principal working directly with the teacher (DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012; Grissom et al., 2013).

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

This chapter provides the reader pertinent information on walkthroughs in the realm of teacher evaluation designed to improve instructional practices. The theoretical framework is identified and clarified. The reviewed literature emphasizes key components of the topic and is comprised of: (a) historical perspective of principals' role in supervision and evaluation, (b) educational accountability, (c) leadership, (d) leadership styles, (e) evaluations and professional development, (f) purpose of walkthroughs, (g) walkthrough models, (h) and perspective of walkthroughs. The examination of literature underpins both the concept behind and the importance of this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study sought to determine the impact of walkthroughs, which is part of the teacher observation cycle, on school accountability grade determined by student achievement factors in Florida. For teacher observation to be the impetus of improved instructional practice that leads to increased student achievement, it is of paramount importance that teacher observation be rooted in a sound framework. The theoretical framework that this study employed was Clinical Supervision.

Clinical Supervision is rooted in Cogan and Goldhammer's work at the Harvard School of Education during the mid-20th century. The impetus for clinical supervision was the need for a solution to poor supervisory practices with student teachers (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014; Reavis, 1978; Pajak, 1993). Goldhammer, a Harvard graduate student in the 1960s, died prior to the completion of a book authored on clinical supervision (Pajak, 1993). Nonetheless, Goldhammer is viewed as a pioneer of clinical supervision due to his refinement of

Cogan's clinical supervision (Glickman et al., 2014). Furthermore, Goldhammer's book, titled *Clinical Supervision*, was published four years prior to Cogan publishing his own book (Anderson, 1993). The foundation of clinical supervision is observing the teacher in the classroom and the supervisor using data gathered from the observation to provide feedback (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998).

There are three primary models of clinical supervision with Cogan's being the most detailed. Cogan's (1973) model is cyclical and is made up of eight phases: 1) establish teacher supervisor relationship, 2) plan with the teacher, 3) plan the strategy for the observation, 4) observe the teacher instructing students, 5) analyze the teaching-learning process, 6) plan the conference, 7) hold the conference, 8) and renew the planning. Cogan's student Goldhammer (1969) provided five compressed steps to the observation process: 1) pre-observation conference, 2) observation, 3) analysis and strategy, 4) supervision conference, 5) and post-observation conference analysis. Acheson and Gall (1987) further compressed clinical supervision into three stages: 1) plan the conference, 2) conduct the observation, 3) and conclude with feedback. Regardless of the model of clinical supervision that is followed, communication is an essential component (Acheson & Gall, 1987).

Since the inception of clinical supervision, many studies have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of clinical supervision. Ebmeir and Nicklaus (1999) found that clinical supervision elicited a greater level of commitment, were more receptive to collaboration, exhibited increased levels of trust, and displayed greater self-confidence than a control group that did not participate in clinical supervision. Nolan, Hawkes, and Francis (1993) examined six case studies to determine the effectiveness of clinical supervision on teacher performance. The case studies were of mixed results in effectiveness (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). However, it

was determined when the feedback process allowed the teacher to question and reflect upon their teaching practices improvement occurred (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). The McCombe study (as cited in Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993) found the veteran teacher in the case study felt that clinical supervision and the feedback cycle improved teaching because of the feedback cycle and reflection. The Potash study (as cited in Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993) focused on a 15-year veteran teacher and determined that while clinical supervision illuminated deficiencies that while difficult to transform did provide for teacher reflection to make changes. Conversely, Grimmet and Creehan (as cited in Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993) determined that clinical supervision failed to improve teaching practices due to the one-sided dialogue that favored the principal.

Clinical supervision is a structure that is governed by principles (Glickman et al., 2014). Glickman et al. (2014) identified twelve universally accepted principles as foundational to clinical supervision. According to Glickman et al., “clinical supervision (a) is classroom based, (b) has the dual purpose of improvement of instruction and teacher professional development, (d) is separate from the summative evaluation, (e) the principal must understand child development, pedagogy, and teacher development, (f) the principal must have interpersonal, observation, and problem-solving skills, (g) is non-judgmental, (h) is based on mutual trust, (i) requires a collegial relationship between principal and teacher, (j) is data-based, (k) gathers data on the teachers concerns about the lesson, (l) involves the principal and teacher in reflective dialogue, (m) and is cyclical and repeated on a regular basis” (pp. 246-247). There are many models of clinical supervision; therefore, there is variation in the implementation of the principles from model to model (Glickman et al., 2014).

This framework was an appropriate lens for this study that was designed to find the nature of the relationship of principal walkthroughs and school grade based on current accountability measures. Decidedly, clinical supervision illuminates that teacher observation or walkthroughs alone do not improve teaching practice which leads to improved student achievement. Subsequently, student achievement improvement is a factor of school accountability grade. Moreover, there is a need for a feedback component that initiates communication which leads to improved teacher practice. In addition, this framework supports that walkthroughs are a tool used to gather data to inform professional development. Furthermore, the framework supports walkthroughs have the ability to remove ineffective teachers who do not possess the ability to be effective. Specifically, this framework supports walkthrough effectiveness in the evaluation process.

### **Related Literature**

The emphasis on student achievement is a measuring stick of administrative and institutional effectiveness. Consequently, improved teaching practice leads to improved student achievement (Bright, 2011; Ehri & Flugman, 2018; Miri, 2012; Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). Thus, the correlation between improved instruction that leads to student achievement and student achievement is one of the primary components of school and administrative evaluation. This correlation has led to the principal and administrative team taking the role of instructional leader. Furthermore, it is imperative that teacher evaluation and the components of evaluation, such as walkthroughs, lead to improved instructional practices that positively affect student learning (Danielson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2014).

### **Historical Perspective of Principals' Role in Supervision and Evaluation**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the position of principal was typically held by a male that incorporated clerical and organizational duties with continued teaching duties (Pierce, 1935). The position was that of principal-teacher, and the duties were primarily hiring of personnel, physically ringing the school bell, and serving as a conduit of communication from the board of education to the teachers (Pierce, 1935). By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the principal was given relief from some teaching duties to provide time for classroom visitation in the school (Pierce, 1935). The principal position continued to increase on a fulltime basis to managerial and supervisory roles by the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pierce, 1935).

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century found the school principal as a position that was patterned after the business model of organization (Murphy, 1998). With the emphasis on sound management practices, school principals were reluctant to implement unproven new practices, thus leading to a continuation of the status quo for the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1980s saw the principal position assuming the duties of instructional leader and beginning to focus on improvement of instruction provided to students (Rossow & Warner, 2000). The increased accountability further supported the shift from manager to leader, specifically instructional leader. These shifts in principal job descriptions and responsibilities corresponded with changes in teacher evaluation. The evaluation of teachers in early American schools, including colonial schools, was often conducted by the superintendent and based on acceptable cultural behaviors, personality, and religion rather than standards-based instruction (Peterson, 1982). Due to the Industrial Revolution and the shift in American society from primarily agrarian to a society based on manufacturing, large cities emerged as well as the growth of city school systems. This increased the number of teachers and led to the principal as the evaluator (Clark, 1993). With

the modern emphasis on improving teacher practice, one would expect teacher evaluations to be an effective instrument to promote professional growth. That is simply not the case and in modern standards-based instruction, teacher evaluations often identify all teachers as effective and have little or no prescriptive value for improvement (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009).

### **Accountability Measures**

It is plausible to state that the modern educational accountability is rooted in Secretary of Education T.H. Bell's formation of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission was formed to address public concerns that the educational system in the United States was lax in preparing students to take their places in the world (Gardner, Larsen, Campbell, & Crosby, 1983). In *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, public sentiment was reinforced that secondary schools were not preparing America's students to keep up with other countries of the world (Gardner et al., 1983). The commission recommended more stringent graduation requirements, a school year of up to 220 days, more homework for high school students, recruitment of science and math teachers from private industry, and giving teachers 11-month contracts for additional preparation time (Gardner et al., 1983). While not specifically addressing accountability, *A Nation at Risk* increased the use of standardized testing in states and placed an emphasis on improved student learning for students from lower socio-economic homes (Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

The Excellence in Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education Act (EMSEA) of 1990 highlighted that American students compared poorly with their foreign counterparts in mathematics and science (Congress, 1990). These findings led Congress (1990) to establish the following goals (p.1):



- Ensure that American students are first in the world in the subjects of mathematics, science, and engineering by the year 2000
- Facilitate student entry into the math, science, and engineering career fields
- Improve teaching quality
- Increase graduate degrees in the fields of mathematics, science, and engineering
- Encourage minority and women to choose career pathways in mathematics, science, and engineering

The EMSEA also identified that American students were not only failing to keep pace with foreign students, but in fact, American students' scores in mathematics were unchanged in mathematics and were lower in science in the time period from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s (Congress, 1990).

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, emerged as the most prolific transfer of educational policy and decision making, from local governments to federal control (Heise, 1994). To support the expansion of federal government's role in education, Congress gave the following reasons: (a) shift from general employability skills to more technical skills dependent on critical thinking, (b) the need for a transformation of the educational system, (c) the need to eliminate redundant school improvement activities due to independent collection of data (Heise, 1994). Heise (1994) predicted the narrowing of curriculum by government regulation and centralized policy making. Another unintended consequence would be court involvement in the educational process (Heise, 1994).

The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994 reauthorized Title I for an additional five years to elevate educational achievement for disadvantaged students (Johnson, 1997). The IASA makes the parental involvement component a more robust feature of Title I

(Johnson, 1997). Billig (1997) indicated that Title I was addressed by IASA through five themes as follows: (a) all children high academic standards, (b) innovation encouraged flexible accountability, (c) funding greatest need, (d) school, family, and community partnerships facilitate student success, support systems into place provide educators assistance. Title I of IASA ensured disadvantaged students would have fair opportunity to receive an education. IASA addressed Title II to ensure all educators are provided outstanding professional development (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Herman, & Sun Yoon, 1999). Title III focused on America's students' and teacher's need to incorporate technology to improve learning with \$40,000,000 in funding allocated (Fox, 1995).

With the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, schools and districts were required to test and measure student achievement by all student sub-groups (Albrecht & Joles, 2003; Hodges; 2018; Jacob, 2017). Furthermore, to give teeth to the accountability movement, Title I funding was predicated on state compliance with NCLB mandates (Hodges, 2018). Earlier legislation such as The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 mandated inclusion for special education students in a regular education setting to the greatest degree possible for the student (Albrecht & Joles, 2003). However, prior to NCLB, accountability for academic achievement was lacking for students with disabilities (Albrecht & Joles, 2003). NCLB forced schools to hold all students, teachers, and administrators accountable for mastery of standards (Albrecht & Joles, 2003).

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB with a focus on historically under-performing schools (Jacob, 2017). This focus has further identified under performing schools and districts and increased pressure on the principal attempting to turn these schools around (Jacob, 2017). This pressure is felt from the principal down to the faculty and

has led to longer school days, tutoring for under-performing students, and changes in school organization such as number of periods in the day and professional development focus (Jacob, 2017; VanGronigen & Meyers, 2017). Increased accountability has led to the demand for principals that can change the culture and achievement of schools to turn them around.

Organization change leadership is needed to transform low-performing schools. Research indicates that school principals have a discernable impact on student learning and achievement, either positively or negatively (Hitt, Woodruff, Myers, & Guorong, 2018). With principal leadership being identified as a component of school success, there are certain attributes that the turnaround principal must possess to effect positive change.

### **Leadership**

When examining educational leadership through the lens of general leadership, one finds it a formidable task to find more appropriate attributes of a leader than those that Kouzes and Posner's (2012) propose in *The Leadership Challenge*. Kouzes and Posner present five practices of leadership that enable the leader to be successful due to the heart connection with others, the practices are as follows:

- Model the way
- Inspire a shared vision
- Challenge the process
- Enable others to act
- Encourage the heart

Leadership, whether in schools or the corporate world, makes a tremendous difference in the productivity and performance of the employees in the organization (Ahn, Lee, & Yun, 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). If one is a leader, he or she must have followers. If one claims to be a

leader, they must have the ability to make a positive difference in the work of others. To make a positive difference with employees, the leader must resonate as a person with his or her employees.

There is a significant correlation between the leader's positive self-concept and ethical leadership behaviors (Ahn, Lee, & Yun, 2018). In many instances, employee perception that the leader is fair and honest increases individual employee performance or production (Murphy & Myers, 2008; Ahn, Lee, & Yun, 2018). Leaders communicate their values to employees in a myriad of ways including verbal and non-verbal cues, and the fact that employees are watching the leader's actions (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Rebore, 2014). Rebore (2014) stated that the character is of higher importance than administrative acumen for a principal to have a successful tenure. Furthermore, Kouzes and Posner (2012) report that when employees identify the worst leader they have worked for, the leader only utilized an average of 31.2% of the employee's talents (p. 333). Conversely, leaders that were viewed as the best leader they ever worked for utilized 95% of their energy and production (Kouzes and Posner, 2012, p. 334). While it is readily accepted that leadership make a positive difference in schools and businesses, there must also be acceptance that leadership can lead to a decline in a school or business.

Leaders that lack the necessary skills, preparation, and the determination to improve are typical of failing schools (Murphy & Myers, 2008). While poor leadership leads to low morale among employees, successful leaders imprint a vision of what the future holds to employees and give hope (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Murphy & Myers, 2008). The leader of a failing school or business is unable to develop and improve connections, and the existing structure that hinders improvement efforts (Munro, 2014).

The success of the school or organization hinges on communication and getting optimal performance from a large percentage of the employees. The effective leader can adapt to changing situations and demands without sacrificing relationships (Munro, 2014). Rebore (2014) describes the leader's outward expressions aligning with their internal feelings as congruency (p. 306). Congruency essentially means the leader is genuine, they are who they appear to be, and is a person that means what they say (Rebore, 2014). Employees have no doubt of the successful leader's position on a topic and can respect the position even when there is disagreement.

### **Leadership Styles**

Research reveals that the principal's skills and leadership style influence teaching by increasing efficacy, promoting student engagement, job satisfaction, and academic direction for the school and faculty (Allen et al., 2015). The last quarter century has seen two leadership models emerge as the leading models of principal leadership: instructional leadership and transformational leadership (Vekeman, Devos, & Valcke, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

**Instructional leadership.** An adept description of instructional leadership is being of a three-dimensional composition (Vekeman et al., 2016). The three dimensions of instructional leadership are defining the school's mission, managing the school's instructional program, and promoting a positive school climate (Vekeman et al., 2016, p.5). Often, observers view instructional leadership as being transactional in nature. Transactional leaders are leaders who seek agreement to complete work or directives in such a manner as to receive remuneration or to avoid punishment (Hoover, 1991, pp. 2-3). Vekeman et al. (2016) describes the following as characteristics of instructional leadership: "(a) define the school mission, (b) frame clear school goals, (3) communicate clear school goals, (d) manage the instructional program, (e) supervise

and evaluate instruction, (f) coordinate curriculum, (h) monitor student academic progress, (i) create a positive school learning climate, (j) protect instructional time, (k) promote professional development, (l) be highly visible in the school, (j) incentivize teaching and learning” (p. 6). Instructional leadership is top down leadership based on coordination and control (Vekeman et al., 2016). The role of instructional leader supposes that the principal has a focused approach to academic and instructional issues that affect student achievement (Shaked, 2018).

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leadership can be defined as “a certain kind of leader who is capable of inspiring subordinates to heights they never intended to achieve” (Hoover, 1991, p. 1). For school improvement situations, transformational leadership from the principal is viewed as an effective leadership style (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015). Vekeman et al. (2016) explains the following are key attributes of transformational leaders: (a) individualized support, (b) vision, (c) shared goals, (d) intellectual stimulation, (e) culture building, (f) rewards, (g) high expectations, (h) and modeling” (p. 6).

Changing the school culture of low-performing schools is a predominant theme with school improvement experts. There are six ways identified to change the school culture: “strengthening the culture, modifying bureaucratic mechanisms, engaging in staff development, communicating frequently and directly with staff, sharing power and using symbols to express cultural value” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, p. 29). This type of leadership promotes a collaborative environment that increases instructional capacity and student development (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). The transformational principal can discern positive attributes as well as obstacles on campus by being active and visible in classrooms (Allen et al., 2015). Transformational leaders embrace a bottom up focus on school improvement rather than a top down approach (Vekeman et al., 2016).

**School turnaround leaders.** To be a turnaround school, the school must make substantial improvements in a short window of time (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Specifically, a turnaround is having a two-year time threshold (Hitt, Woodruff, Meyers & Guorong, 2018). This period is the measure considered when ascertaining the qualities of the turnaround leader (Hitt et al., 2018). School turnaround by a principal is similar to an executive turning around a business. There are common principles and themes that govern both turnaround situations. Slater (1999) studied the International Business Machine (IBM) turnaround and found that leadership focused on performance rather than activity, alignment, and accountability. Turnaround leadership in schools is similar in that the turnaround leader focuses classroom activity to bolster student achievement, correcting curriculum alignment issues, and ensuring accountability (Herrmann, Dragoset, James-Burdumy, & National Center, 2014). Conversely, poor student achievement, alignment issues, and a lack of accountability are all common in low-performing schools (Herrmann et al., 2014). Turnover of high school principals is frequent due to poor student achievement data (Hamilton, Heilig, & Pazey, 2014).

Much like teacher preparation programs, many principal preparation programs are lacking in equipping aspiring principals for the demands of modern educational leadership. Reyes-Guerra, Pisapia, and Mick (2016) conducted a study to determine whether the traditional master's degree programs or the Principal Rapid Orientation and Preparation in Educational Leadership (PROPEL) at Florida Atlantic University prepared principals to better navigate the turnaround process at low-performing schools. While stating more time was needed to measure the turnaround impact of the cognitive agility traits in principal candidates, Reyes-Guerra, Pisapia, and Mick (2016) found that PROPEL graduates: “(a) used strategic thinking skills, (b) engaged in systems thinking, reflection, and reframing, (c) reframed situations stronger than

traditional master's degree graduates, (d) listened to new ideas and interventions than their traditional peers, (e) saw situations from varying vantage points” (p. 413). The turnaround principal can be developed or at least given tools that facilitate improvement of low-achieving schools (Reyes-Guerra et al., 2016).

The principal that emphasizes improving student achievement will focus on improving instructional practices (VanGronigen & Meyers, 2017). Improving instructional practices often comes through data gleaned while conducting walkthroughs and observations. This focus on achievement cannot occur at the expense of ignoring other important duties and facets of the school, such as schedule structure and the school-wide discipline plan (VanGronigen & Meyers, 2017). The principal must also effectively use teacher evaluations to build instructional capacity at the school (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). For school leadership to develop a strategy that optimizes the transformation of classrooms to student centered, Fullan, Hill, and Crevola (2006) recommends:

- Powerful assessment tools aligned for each lesson objective for daily assessment of student learning
- Quick formative assessments that provide necessary information to inform instructional decisions
- Personalized instruction
- The ability to self-monitor in real time to manage learning and determining what works to improve classroom instruction to fit the learning needs of individual students (Fullan et al., 2006, p. 37)

The effective leader must have an observation protocol in place that encourages frequent classroom visits to ensure instruction is meets student-learning needs.



## Evaluations and Professional Development

While teacher evaluations determine future employment, the walkthrough, which is a component of many evaluation systems, can lead to improved teacher practice by providing feedback and support to the teacher. In turn, this feedback can lead to improve student learning. A major fault of some evaluation systems is effective teaching is identified by behaviors that are ambiguous at best (Clark, 1993). The purpose of evaluation is to identify areas of strength and weakness, as well as providing a platform for dialogue to provide the teacher an opportunity to improve teaching practice (Wagoner & O'Hanlon, 1968). In the evaluation process, teacher observations provide the opportunity to compile data needed to develop discourse designed to improve teaching and learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

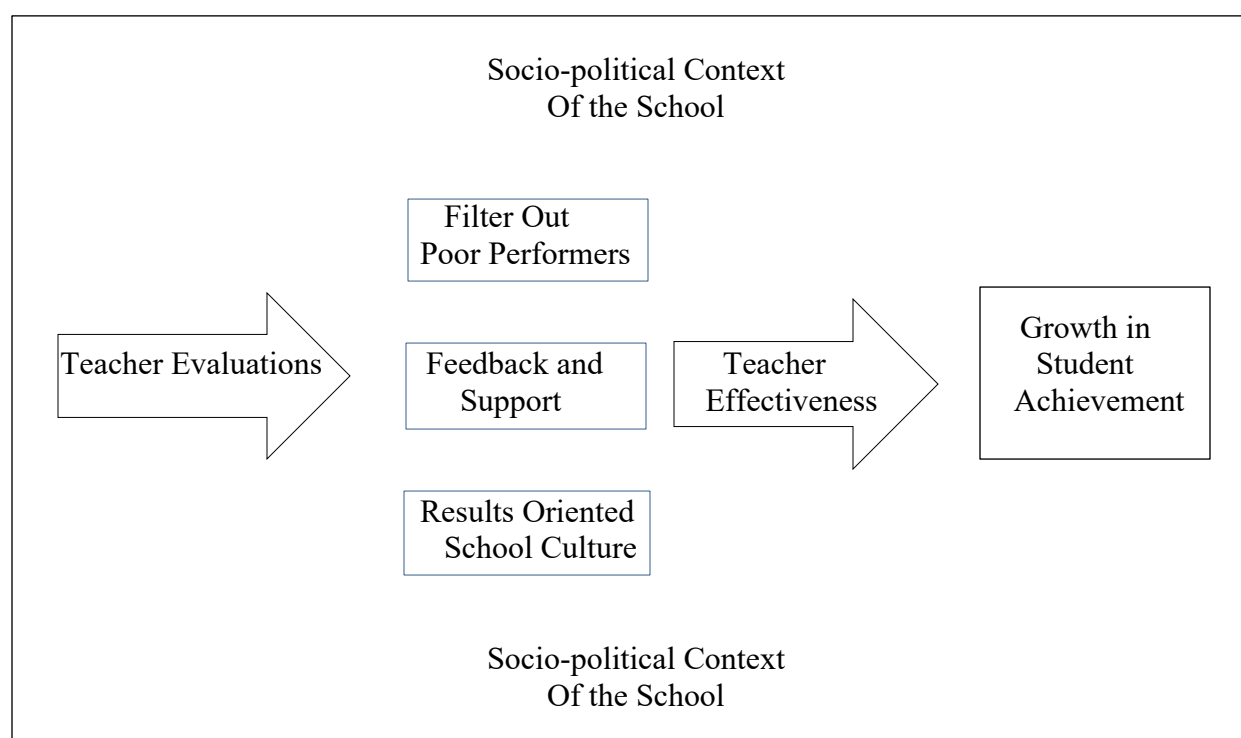
Effective leaders provide feedback that is essential to improve teaching practices.

Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) described the key components of the observation feedback cycle as:

The principal is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students. This presumes that the principal is capable of providing constructive feedback to improve teaching or is able to design a system in which others provide this support. (p. 459)

It is imperative that feedback and discussion is focused and regular to improve teacher instructional practices. The effectiveness of the evaluative and feedback cycle of the principal, which leads to increased teacher engagement, should build teacher trust (Bird et al, 2009). The walkthrough provides the principal the insight needed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school in order to change the culture. Furthermore, the walkthrough places the principal in classrooms and hallways where they are visible to teachers and students.

An effective evaluation protocol has multiple functions. First, the evaluation process must be capable of removing teachers that are incapable of positively affecting student achievement from the classroom (Hallinger et al., 2014). Secondly, for teachers that do have the potential to positively affect student achievement, the processes must have the capacity to create a dialogue that facilitates the improvement of individual teaching practices (Hallinger et al., 2014). Finally, the process of teacher evaluation with school improvement in mind should have a transformative effect on the school to foster the acceptance of a results-oriented culture (Hallinger et al., 2014).



*Figure 1.* Illustration of the theory of action underlying teacher evaluation and school improvement. Adapted from “Teacher Evaluation and School Improvement: An Analysis of the Evidence,” by P. Hallinger, R.H. Heck, and J. Murphy, 2014, *Education Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 26, p. 5. Copyright 2014 by Springer Nature. Adapted with permission.

Classroom observation is not limited to only evaluating teacher performance; the evaluation can also glean insights that lead to teacher professional growth (Goe, Biggers, &

Croft, 2012; Muñoz, & Dossett, 2016). However, evaluators often lack the preparation to determine the strengths and deficits of instructional practices, learning environment, and classroom management to use the results of the evaluation to make a meaningful difference in professional development (Goe et al., 2012). Evaluations must measure essential practices of effective teaching and coordinate with appropriate professional development tailored to address the needs of individual teachers (Muñoz & Dossett, 2016). For the evaluation process to be a meaningful experience, an instrument must be used to gather data that is reliable.

**Evaluation models.** An example of an observation model is Danielson's (2013) Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument, which is composed of four domains. Each of the domains provides benchmarks and examples to look for when appraising teacher performance on four domains designed. Danielson's (2013) four domains are as follows: (a) planning and preparation, (b) the classroom environment, (c) instruction, (d) and professional responsibilities. The classroom walkthrough gives the administrator the opportunity to observe and discern at least two of the domains, classroom environment and instruction. Instruction planning and preparation can be at the very least correlated by the subject matter being taught.

There are many choices and combinations of evaluation models in the United States. Hite (2014) proposes the following 5 models, which includes Danielson, as most prominent in the United States:

- Danielson's Framework for Teaching
- Marshall's Teacher Evaluation Rubrics
- Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model
- Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Teacher Evaluation System

- Stronge's Teacher Effectiveness Performance Evaluation System (Hite, 2014, pp. 1-2).

Each of the systems is made up of multiple domains (see Figure 1). While many states use a standard evaluation such as Georgia Teachers Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) other states allow districts to use the instrument of their choice or to blend instruments to meet the perceived needs of each district. The evaluation process places the principal as the instructional leader of the school by providing data to base professional development decisions on (Guskey, 1999).

Table 1

## Comparison of evaluation systems domains

	Danielson's Framework for Teaching Danielson (2014)	Marshall's Teacher Evaluation Rubric Cartusciello (2014)	Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model Carrero (2015)	McREL's Teacher Evaluation System McREL (2009).	Stronge's Teacher Effectiveness Performance Evaluation System Stronge (2012)
Planning	planning and preparation	planning/preparation for learning	preparing and planning		instructional planning
Environment	classroom environment	classroom management	classroom strategies and behaviors	Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students	learning environment
Instruction	instruction	delivery of instruction		teachers know the content that they teach/ teachers facilitate student learning	instructional delivery/ professional knowledge
Assessment		monitoring, assessment, and follow up			assessment for learning/ student progress
Reflection			reflecting on teaching	teachers reflect on their practice	
Professionalism/ Other	professional responsibilities	Responsibilities/ family and community outreach	collegiality and professionalism	teachers demonstrate leadership	professionalism

**Professional development.** When professional development, which is teacher learning, is viewed through the same lens as student learning, there is a commonality that stands out. In the same manner that a teacher uses various assessments, such as diagnostic and formative to inform instruction, so must the evaluation process provide data from various and authentic sources, such as observations in the evaluation instrument to inform professional development (Guskey, 1999).

Teacher professional development is an essential element for school reform, and the value of professional development is often overlooked (Wei, Darling Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009; Pow & Wong, 2017). Professional development addresses teaching technology, data-identified student needs, pedagogy, classroom management, and evolving standards determined by state boards of education (Chiyaka, Kibirige, Sithole, McCarthy, & Mupinga, 2017; Zepeda, 2019). Furthermore, without improved professional development to improve teaching, the prospects are bleak for school turnaround (Wei, Darling Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009).

Professional development generally follows the Teacher Career Cycle, which consists of eight phases (Fessler, 1992, as cited in Pow & Wong, 2017). Pow and Wong (2017) divide teacher professional development into the following eight stages: (a) pre-service, (b) induction, (c) competency building, (d) enthusiasm and growth, (e) stability, (f) frustration, (g) career wind-down, (d) career exit (p. 69). The first four stages of professional development find teachers are more willing and accepting of participating in professional development due to the individual needs being greater (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015; Pow & Wong, 2017). In the case of veteran teachers, the group that composes the final four stages of professional development, their professional development needs are often unmet (Patton et al., 2015). This may be due to

general professional development that fails to recognize the areas of mastery that the veteran teacher possesses and increases a passive response to professional development (Pow & Wong, 2017). The final three stages of professional development reveal a greater decline in motivation to participate in professional development (Pow & Wong, 2017). The downward trend in interest in professional development by veteran teachers correlates to the discouragement of feeling their needs are overlooked. Professional development activities, such as classroom management and mentoring focus on the needs of new and less experienced teachers rather than the needs of experienced teachers (Bressman, Winter, & Efron, 2018).

**Effective professional development measures.** The planning of professional development goals and activities should incorporate data that is congruent with achieving specific targets (Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009). It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that the data needed to plan for professional development must be collected with fidelity and disaggregated to successfully plan professional development activities (Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009). Upon making data-based decisions to determine areas of professional development need, training teachers to implement the interventions that lead to improved student learning must occur.

Professional development measures must facilitate teacher development with enhanced student learning in mind (Chiyaka, et al., 2017; Patton et al., 2015; Pow & Wong, 2017). Effective professional development encompasses teacher engagement, improving teacher practice, and improving student learning (Chiyaka, et al., 2017; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Hallinger et al., 2014; Patton et al., 2015). Patton et al. (2015) propose that eight central features support effective professional development:

1. Professional development centers on teacher needs and interests.

2. Professional development acknowledges learning is a social process.
3. Professional development has collaborative opportunities within learning communities of educators.
4. Professional development is ongoing and sustained.
5. Teachers are treated as active learners.
6. Professional development Improves teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge.
7. Professional development is facilitated with care.
8. Professional development focuses on improving learning outcomes for students. (pp.4-11)

Teacher learning is ongoing and rejects the passivity of teachers (Patton et al., 2015).

Pow and Wong (2017) point to four factors that determine the success of professional development: (a) access to professional development, (b) arrangement of participation, (c) ability to experiment with new techniques, (d) and the administration's long-range commitment to new techniques that are implemented. School leadership, a learner-driven culture, and support provided for professional development are the primary drivers of a successful teacher learning experience.

### **Purpose of Walkthroughs**

Specifically, regular walkthroughs provide the principal information, such as the teachers are implementing curriculum, students are engaged, and who the teachers are that need redirection (Marshall, 2003). Instructional practice is improved for non-tenured or less-experienced teachers by walkthroughs because low-level teaching issues can be addressed and a corrective conversation can take place (Range et al., 2014). Many teachers perceive walkthroughs as occurring too infrequently but welcome the opportunity for feedback and



discussion that can occur with walkthroughs that are conducted regularly throughout the year (Ginsburg & Murphy, 2002). Walkthroughs allow the administrator to monitor implementation of agreed upon instructional practices that target student achievement (Skretta, 2007).

The term administrative walkthrough is indicative of a brief informal classroom visit lasting from 3 to 20 minutes (DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012; Garza, Ovando & O'Doherty, 2016; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Skretta, 2007). Walkthrough observation is used for a myriad of purposes, such as collecting data to ensure teachers are following district mandates. For that matter, data can be collected on any instructional indicator the principal chooses to observe (Range, Finch, Young, & Hvidston, 2014). The data that the administrator attempts to garner from the walkthrough varies by individual administrator, school, and district. Certain districts use a “look for” template to document targets that teacher reach during the walkthrough (DuFour & Marzano, 2009).

Overall school climate is easily discernable when the principal visits classrooms regularly (Protheroe, 2009). As common-sense dictates, unannounced classroom visits increase in teacher time on task and focus on student instruction (Protheroe, 2009). Walkthroughs designed to observe interns can facilitate conversation between the principal and higher educational institution that can provide intervention for the individual intern as well as improving overall teacher preparation programs (Danley & Theiss, 2015). Walkthroughs aid administrators in acting as the instructional leader of the school by providing focus on teaching and learning (Ginsburg, 2008). The walkthrough creates a collegial atmosphere where teachers share with each other and leads to a responsive culture that recognizes learning needs (Ginsburg, 2008). Schoolwide walkthrough needs staff agreement on the process and acceptance that reflection can improve practice and student learning (Ginsburg, 2008). Finally, the walkthrough presents the

principal with the opportunity to communicate with the students of the school that they are important and their learning in of paramount importance by the physical presence of the principal in classrooms (Ginsburg, 2008).

The use of the walkthroughs to observe the school's faculty provides the principal with data needed to properly identify instructional strengths, weaknesses, and patterns throughout the school (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011). Walkthroughs have the potential to nurture focus, create reflection, and lead to collaborative adult learning (Ginsberg, & Murphy, 2002). Walkthroughs open the chain of communication and lead to an increase in dialogue (Skretta, 2007).

Formal observation often fails to identify teacher quality, and walkthroughs provide that opportunity due to brevity of time and frequency of occurrence (Hill, & Grossman, 2013). The desired outcome of walkthroughs is reflective teaching, redirection, and continuous improvement of teaching (Kachur, Stout, & Edwards, 2009). Thus, the unannounced walkthrough provides the administrator the opportunity to view unscripted teaching and leads to reflection and improvement (Gillespie, 2016).

This unscripted teaching presents the principal with the opportunity to create dialogue with the teacher for the purpose of self-reflection. Gillespie (2016) listed the follow reflective questions for teachers that designed to nurture growth after walkthroughs:

- What was my rationale for the process and implementation plan?
- What instructional decisions or student behaviors led to that action?
- What would I do differently if I could reteach this lesson?
- What was the most effective component of the lesson?
- How can I better serve all students in my next lesson? (Gillespie, 2016, p. 14)

The walkthrough generates the opportunity of self-reflection and this is foundational for school excellence (Gillespie, 2016).

### **Walkthrough Models**

A necessary guideline of a well-designed walkthrough system is that a teacher will do three things: review the data, reflect on the data, and adjust professional practice based on the data (Gillespie, 2016). The precursor for modern walkthroughs was the business model developed by Hewlett-Packard called Management by Wandering Around (MBWA). The concept behind MBWA was managers could get a true picture of the inner workings of the individual employed by Hewlett-Packard by daily walks (Frase & Hetzel, 2002). Frase and Hetzel (2001) used MBWA in a school setting to improve principal communication with teachers and to increase the visibility of the principal on campus.

There are several models of walkthroughs (the three-minute classroom walkthrough, daily impact walkthroughs, focused walkthroughs, the learning walk, the instructional rounds model, Moss and Brookhart model, and school management program) that can be used as an instrument designed to gather data to improve professional development. These same models also serve the dual purpose of being a connector between the instructional leader and the teacher, which creates an opportunity for meaningful dialogue about instructional practices to occur.

The Three-Minute Classroom Walkthrough model that came into prevalence in 2004 is buoyed by brief informal observations (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004). The focus is on curriculum and instruction and is not evaluative and is designed to foster conversation between the observer and teacher (Downey et al., 2004). The process is non-threatening and is collaborative in nature with an end goal of being improved teacher practice through reflection (Downey et al., 2004).

Daily impact walkthroughs are performed to align instruction and ensure consistency of instruction by the faculty (Etheridge, 2014). Each classroom should be visited weekly for approximately 15 minutes. It is imperative that individual teachers receive written feedback and the feedback should be provided three to five times each semester (Etheridge, 2014).

Focused walkthroughs use the daily impact mechanics with a four-member team to look for schoolwide foci (Etheridge, 2014). The focus is based on school data and needs of the school (Etheridge, 2014). This is non-evaluative and is used to create dialogue between teachers and the lead member of the team (Etheridge, 2014). A model that is similar to focused walkthroughs is the learning walk.

The Learning Walk is composed of a team of observers from within and outside of the school that determines a focus (Goldman, Resnick, Johnston, Micheaux, & Seitz, 2004). After determining the focus, decisions are made on how to identify evidence that will be sought prior to the observation (Goldman et al., 2004). This model is not evaluative and focuses on getting an overview of how the school is progressing at meeting predetermined goals (Goldman et al., 2004).

The Instructional Rounds model is a team-based observation that seeks to determine teaching and learning (Etheridge, 2014). Teams observe 3 to 5 classrooms and write a narrative of what is said by teachers and students and seen in each classroom (Etheridge, 2014). Data from the observation is then placed into the following quadrants: (a) answer does teaching support instructional focus, (b) answer does teaching work against organizational focus, (c) reflection by the observation team, (d) recommended next steps (Etheridge, 2014). This occurs twice per semester and should be 10 minutes in length (Etheridge, 2014).

The Moss and Brookhart (2012) classroom walkthrough model is based on identified targets and a list of look-fors designed to focus feedback. The principal determines detailed targets to gather data and present in the form of feedback to the teacher to foster collegial conversation with the teacher and to guide the teacher in self-reflection (Moss & Brookhart, 2012).

The UCLA School Management Program (SMP) classroom walkthrough procedure is based on schools gathering real-time data (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007). The SMP is based on teachers attempting to answer their own questions about their individual teaching practices and is not evaluative (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007). The teacher makes the determination of what the observer will look for and then a conference is held to use the data gathered by the observer to drive a culture of continual improvement at the individual teacher level that permeates the entire school (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007).

### **Perspective of Walkthroughs by Administrators and Teachers**

While evidence exist that principal classroom walkthroughs are an effective leadership to improve instruction, research also indicates classroom walkthroughs are ineffective with veteran or tenured teachers (Range et al., 2014). Additionally, many principals view classroom visits as time consuming with a low return in pupil achievement when compared to the administrative time allocated (Brown & Coley, 2011). Even though walkthroughs are loosely related to the post-World War II classroom visits that fostered collegiality, threats exist to the effectiveness of walkthroughs to improve instruction. Many teachers are threatened and are uncertain of the motives of the administrator conducting the walkthroughs (Brown & Coley, 2011). The differences in perspective of teachers and administrators threaten the effectiveness of walkthroughs to improve instruction. There is also the view that teacher evaluation systems are

too time consuming for administrators and do not provide the dividends of improved instructional practices of other strategies such as professional learning communities (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Range, Scherz, Holt & Young, 2011).

There are stark differences in the perspective of teachers and administrators concerning evaluations and walkthroughs. These differences in perspective can impede the principal from using walkthroughs to improve the faculty's teaching practice. Teacher evaluation serves the dual purpose of evaluation for job status and evaluation to improve teacher practice, which can lead to tension in the relationship between the principal and teacher (Rigby, 2014). To gain understanding of the nature of this conflict, one must examine the way teacher evaluation, principal evaluation, and student learning impact employment. While it is apparent that improved teacher practice will result in improved student achievement, there is clash between the different uses of evaluation. The dichotomy is that in one instance a walkthrough is conducted to stimulate discussion that leads to collaborative efforts to improve teaching capacity in the building, and conversely, the use of the same walkthrough practice is often used to determine employability status. Most principals and district administrators view teacher evaluations, of which walkthroughs are a component, as being a critical element of supervision in overall school operation (Acheson & Gall, 1997). This being the case, there are perspectives that are both supportive of and against a robust walkthrough and evaluation protocol.

Walkthroughs provide the principal an opportunity to identify gaps in the curriculum and a platform for feedback to teachers (Walsh, 2014). Keruskin (2005) found that principals felt that walkthroughs led to new habits for teachers attempting to meet the look-for matrix. These habits spread from individual teachers to others in the building. Essentially, walkthroughs contributed to faculty members incorporating other teachers' best practices. During

walkthroughs, principals can ascertain what are impediments in individual teacher classroom environments and provide resolution or resources to improve the situation (Frase, 2001).

While administrators feel the walkthrough is integral to teacher supervision, they also view the time demands of their administrative position make walkthroughs an arduous task (Sheppard, 2013). Furthermore, walkthroughs are often viewed as required formalities that must be conducted that lack return on investment (Lemons & Helsing, 2009). Many principals view walkthroughs and teacher observations in general as having a negative impact on teacher attitude (Coulter, 2013). Principals also perceive the threat of increasing union activism because many teachers are resistant to change and resentful of negative feedback from the principal being in classrooms (Coulter, 2013).

Misunderstanding the purpose of walkthroughs is a risk that impedes the effectiveness of the walkthrough process. It is vital that teachers do not perceive walkthroughs as only the principal checking for compliance. When compliance with district and school directives are being examined through walkthroughs, teachers feel unfair pressure. When walkthroughs are used to determine teacher effectiveness pursuant to the teacher evaluation, the teacher is often resistant to view the principal's feedback as a professional learning opportunity (Downey et al, 2004). This is because a walkthrough is for a brief time and teachers might not use an instruction strategy during the time frame that instruction is being observed (Marzano et al., 2011).

Teachers are often distrustful about evaluations and feel that cronyism is exhibited with favorable evaluations going to administrative favorites (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Larsen, 2004). Beatty (2017) found teachers felt that district evaluations, while purposeful, did not align with professional development. One perspective that teachers hold regarding administrative

observation is not enough time spent in a snapshot of time to properly address and acknowledge the professionalism of the teacher (Myung & Martinez, 2013). Rather, the brief amount of time that a walkthrough comprises does not properly recognize the complexity of pedagogy and the learning process (Myung & Martinez, 2013). In fact, many teachers feel the power structure and design of the observation process is completely one-sided with the administration having all power (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). Often, teachers feel the principal is not qualified to properly evaluate the teacher because the principal has inadequate knowledge of subject matter to determine the effectiveness of the teacher (Kelly, 2014).

The presence of the principal and others conducting walkthroughs can be a source of anxiety, fear, and dread to teachers even when the purpose of the walkthrough is clearly defined and communicated to the faculty (Valli & Buese, 2007). For example, Valli and Buese (2007) cited a principal, who attempted to reduce anxiety and trepidation by communicating exactly what the administration was looking for during the walkthrough and specifically that the walkthrough was not intended to be a “gotcha” (p. 544). Describing the concern of one teacher, Valli and Buese (2007) stated, “He wondered when any of the visitors had last taught, and his teammates expressed concern that they would be singled out for doing something wrong” (p. 544). Principals must establish trust while demonstrating an awareness of pedagogical practices of teachers they observe.

A reoccurring theme of teacher dissatisfaction is the administrators conducting evaluations lack the steadfastness, ability, or pedagogical knowledge to provide an accurate evaluation of teaching, and fail to provide meaningful feedback (Maharaj, 2014). From the early 1970s, teachers have viewed the evaluation process with skepticism, viewing inconsistency of the observer and observer bias as devaluing the evaluation (Maharaj, 2014). In fact, teachers



view observations as lacking feedback in the form of praise or constructive criticism (Range, 2013). Dougherty's (2009) study of 182 educators found that teachers were not confident that the administrators evaluating them possessed the ability to demonstrate the needed teaching improvements. The study also found that teachers view the standards that are addressed as not being individualized enough for differing subject areas, such as reading and mathematics (Dougherty, 2009). Nonetheless, Brutto's (2016) study that found teachers that were evaluated were more connected with their own professional development needs than their peers that had not been evaluated. Walsh's (2014) study found that teachers viewed walkthroughs as an opportunity to augment their pedagogical expertise because they were attempting to meet administrative look-fors. The individual teacher's desire to be prepared for unannounced observations led to improved practices, such as teachers using higher order questions (Walsh, 2014). Frequent classroom visits by the principal lessen teacher feelings of isolation and give the teacher connectedness with another adult (Frase, 2001).

Range (2013) found that when principals engaged in walkthroughs of each classroom on a weekly basis, teachers felt the principal saw a more complete picture of their individual classrooms. In fact, frequent walkthroughs lead to improved teacher attitude toward professional development (Frase, 1998). When principals provide feedback, but especially positive feedback first, teachers felt that the principal recognized their strengths and were more receptive to new ideas (Range, 2013). Teachers have indicated that improved teaching methodology, tighter instructional focus, and increased collegiality are a byproduct of walkthroughs and the feedback that is generated by data collection and sharing (Keruskin, 2005).

The erosion of trust will undermine the collegial conversations that are needed to improve instruction (Skretta, 2007). Infrequent walkthroughs lack consistency and are a barrier

to both trust and effective walkthroughs (DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012). Principals lacking working knowledge of subject area standards of each classroom where they perform a walkthrough, face a hurdle to articulate information that is essential to improve instructional practice (Range et al., 2011). The veteran teacher is often resistant to feedback from walkthroughs due to tenure and the protection that it affords, and the fact they attribute negative feedback to flawed instrumentation or walkthrough process (DuFour & Marzano, 2009).

### **Summary**

Chapter Two served as an overview of research on accountability, evaluation, and the effect of walkthroughs on teacher practices. The concept of improved instructional practice should correlate to improved student achievement. The educational leadership practices employed by the school principal have a tremendous impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. It is not an understatement to declare that an outstanding teacher is the greatest indicator of student success.

The principal has a tremendous impact on the climate and organizational effectiveness of his or her school by both implicit and explicit educational leadership practices. There are transformative leaders that change the culture and expectations of low-performing schools. These turnaround specialists generally show a marked improvement within two years. The evaluation and observation protocol that is in place must have the structure needed for frequent classroom visits. There is a need for an informal component that is not evaluative in order to create meaningful conversations that promote teacher self-reflection and continual growth. The concept of continual growth is also applicable institutionally. In fact, low-performing schools often have deficiencies in teaching and learning that are systemic.

School reform measures such as NCLB of 2001 and the Obama administrations implementation of RTTT in 2009 has increased the focus on improved teaching and learning. The high school principal is responsible for student achievement of all sub-groups of students.,

With increasing accountability, principal use of classroom walkthroughs has potential to improve student achievement by refining teaching practices and facilitating a collegial atmosphere. However, there are attitudinal differences that must be reconciled for this to occur. For example, the attitude of district office personal to emphasize various managerial duties placed on principals takes time away that is need for effective classroom visitation. Another example is the differing beliefs of the purpose of walkthroughs by both administrators and teachers. These differences lead to a rejection of constructive conversation.

The 2015 ESSA placed low-performing school leaders under the microscope and will subject school leaders to possible loss of employment or a change of work location through the transfer process. The lowest schools will receive the greatest share of turnaround resources from the district but will also receive strict monitoring to ensure compliance with school district, state, and federal mandates. Walkthroughs significantly increase the opportunity for the principal to ensure that teachers implement these mandates with fidelity in each classroom. Regular walkthroughs lead to improved conversations about instruction and precipitate the development of common language centered around instruction (Protheroe, 2009). The greatest benefit of walkthrough should be increased student achievement (Skretta, 2007).

While there is a solid case made for principal classroom walkthroughs to improve instruction, there is also evidence that indicates classroom walkthroughs are more effective with less experienced teachers than veteran teachers. Additionally, time constraints are cited as a prevalent factor that hinder school administrators from conducting enough walkthroughs

(Grissom et al., 2013; Range et al., 2011). The difference in perceptions between administrators and teachers of the amount of time allocated for the walkthrough is an issue. Many teachers view 25 minutes as the minimum amount of time needed to give an accurate portrayal of teaching for the walkthrough (Garza et al, 2016). When administrators are in classrooms for shorter visits, there is potential for teachers to question the validity of the information.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the mean number of principal walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida. A survey that the principal completed, provided the following: name of school, number of teachers, number of administrators that perform walkthroughs, and the total number of walkthroughs conducted. Archival data from the Florida Department of Education was used to determine school economic status, student population, raw score, and school type. A bivariate regression was conducted to determine if there is a significant relationship between walkthrough and school grade in Florida high schools. Chapter Three covered design, research question, hypothesis, participants and setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis.

### **Design**

This study utilized a quantitative, correlational design to determine the predictive relationship of mean of principal school wide walkthroughs and school grade in Florida schools. A correlational design is appropriate to determine the relationship between a predictor variable and a criterion variable (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The predictor variable was mean of school-wide walkthroughs. A walkthrough is defined as a brief informal classroom visit lasting from three minutes to 20 minutes (DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012; Garza, Ovando & O'Doherty, 2016; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Skretta, 2007). The mean of school wide walkthroughs is defined as taking the total number of walkthroughs and dividing by the total number of teachers. The mean of school wide walkthroughs is similar to the mean of observations of Whitehurst, Chingos, and Lindquist's (2015) study, which divided the number of observations by the number of teachers. Whitehurst, Chingos, and Lindquist's (2015) study sought to determine the

correlation of teacher evaluation scores with the following year's value-added score. The criterion variable is school grade. School grade for Florida high schools is based on earning points in 10 categories worth 100 points each for a total of 1000 points with the percentage of total points earned determining the grade (Florida Department of Education, [FLDOE], 2017).

### **Research Question**

**RQ1:** Is there a predictive relationship between the mean number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs and Florida high school accountability grade?

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the mean of school wide walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida.

### **Participants and Setting**

The data used for this study was drawn from high schools in the state of Florida during the 2018-2019 school year. The schools are diverse in terms of ethnic composition, socio-economic status, and community setting is rural, urban and suburban in Florida's 67 school districts. Based on Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) accountability data for the 2017-2018 school year, there were 477 high schools in Florida (FLDOE, 2018). Florida's graduation rate is 76% and ranked as the second poorest graduation rate, next to Louisiana, in the Southeastern United States (United States Department of Education [USDE], 2018). Florida schools are represented by the following ethnicities: American Indian .3%, Black 22.5%, Hispanic 31.5%, Pacific Islander .2%, and White 39.5% (USDE, 2018). There are 288,809 English Language Learners (ELL) in Florida's public schools (USDE, 2018). Finally, 59% of Florida's public-school students are classified as low income (USDE, 2018). Florida has legislation that caps high school class size at a maximum of 25 students (FLDOE, 2002)

This study used a convenience sample of 72 high schools. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) defined a convenience sample as “A group of cases that are selected simply because they are available and easy to access” (p. 636). The sample was identified from all Florida high school principals that agree to participate in the study. A convenience sample is employed by this study because the sample “suits the purposes of the study and that is convenient” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 175).

Through email addresses that were public record and on district and school websites, all high school principals of participating School Districts in Florida were presented the opportunity to participate in this study. The principals at each participating school accessed a self-report survey created by the researcher to report name of the school, total number of teachers in this school, and the total number of administrative walkthroughs as previously defined as lasting three to 20 minutes each. Next, the researcher went to the schools’ report card on the state accountability report (FLDOE, 2019), which is public record, to determine the following: each school’s grade, Title 1 status, number of students, and the school type either rural or urban. The reported survey was matched with each individual school grade. The number of schools was at 72 which exceeds the required minimum of 66 for a medium effect size with a statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level (Gall et al., 2007). The sample represented 22 districts and 72 schools. 35 of the schools had greater than 60% of their student body on free and reduced lunch. The sample reflects the following school grades: 28 A schools, 19 B schools, and 25 C schools.

Table 2  
*Summary of Variables and Demographics*

School	Administrators	Teachers	Ratio	Title	Grade	Rural/Urban
1	2	45	2:45	Y	B	R

2	4	114	2:57	Y	A	S
3	3	62	1:21	Y	C	R
4	2	38	1:19	Y	B	R
5	5	125	1:25	N	A	S
6	4	64	1:16	Y	C	S
7	3	29	3:29	N	B	R
8	5	70	1:14	N	B	U
9	4	112	1:28	Y	C	S
10	2	33	2:33	Y	B	R
11	3	38	3:38	Y	A	R
12	4	110	2:55	N	A	S
13	2	26	1:13	Y	B	R
14	4	76	1:19	N	A	S
15	4	98	2:49	N	A	S
16	2	33	2:33	N	B	R
17	3	69	1:23	N	A	U
18	4	55	4:55	Y	C	R
19	4	66	2:33	N	C	U
20	3	81	1:27	Y	C	U
21	5	95	1:19	Y	C	U
22	3	84	1:28	Y	C	S
23	2	48	1:24	N	A	S
24	5	110	1:22	Y	B	U



25	4	96	1:24	N	A	U
26	3	75	1:25	N	C	S
27	3	72	1:24	Y	C	R
28	2	43	2:43	N	A	R
29	4	92	1:23	N	A	S
30	2	36	1:18	Y	C	R
31	3	75	1:25	N	C	R
32	2	45	2:45	N	A	R
33	2	32	1:16	N	B	R
34	5	80	1:16	N	A	S
35	2	54	1:17	Y	C	R
36	5	115	1:23	N	B	U
37	3	37	3:37	Y	C	R
38	5	140	1:28	N	A	S
39	4	96	1:24	N	B	S
40	4	112	1:28	N	A	S
41	4	92	1:23	N	A	S
42	4	68	1:17	Y	C	R
43	2	34	1:17	N	C	R
44	4	74	2:37	Y	A	U
45	4	100	1:25	Y	C	S
46	2	35	2:35	Y	C	U
47	4	70	2:34	Y	C	S

48	4	90	2:35	N	A	S
49	4	72	1:18	Y	C	U
50	4	80	1:20	Y	B	U
51	5	125	1:25	Y	A	U
52	3	56	3:56	N	B	S
53	6	114	1:19	N	A	S
54	4	78	2:39	Y	C	R
55	5	115	1:23	N	B	S
56	2	33	2:37	Y	B	R
57	3	66	1:22	N	A	S
58	4	84	1:21	N	A	U
59	3	60	1:20	Y	B	R
60	4	104	1:26	N	B	S
61	2	53	2:53	N	C	R
62	4	82	2:41	Y	C	U
63	6	108	1:18	N	A	S
64	2	60	1:30	Y	B	R
65	3	60	1:20	N	A	R
66	3	45	1:15	N	A	S
67	3	40	3:40	N	A	R
68	4	102	2:51	Y	B	R
69	3	87	1:29	Y	C	U
70	3	32	3:32	Y	C	R

71	3	40	3:40	Y	A	S
72	3	54	1:18	N	A	R

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### **Instrumentation**

Data used to determine the schoolwide walkthroughs practices by administration for the academic year was reported by the principal on a researcher-created survey. In addition, the number of teachers was reported on the survey. See Appendix D for the survey. Informed consent to participate in the survey was in the email body above the survey link. See Appendix C for informed consent. There are six demographic questions followed by four questions regarding classroom walkthrough practice. The demographic portion of the SWS includes the following general questions designed to yield the following:

1. I indicate my consent to participate by checking permission granted on informed consent form.
2. Years served in current administrative assignment
3. Total years of administrative experience
4. Classification of school's geographical entity
5. District the school is located in
6. Name of the school
7. Number of teachers on the faculty during the 2017-2018 school year

The second section of the SWS focused on walkthrough practices. This data is gathered to determine relationship between walkthrough practices and school grade that is archival data in Florida. The second section asked four questions:

8. Do you conduct classroom walkthroughs in your school?

9. Which of the following statements best describes your current situation? (a) Classroom walkthroughs are mandated by central office administration, (b) I complete classroom walkthroughs through my own initiative, (c) and this is district mandated and I complete additional walkthroughs
10. How many walkthroughs were conducted during the 2018-2019 school year?
11. In what form do you usually provide feedback after a walkthrough has been completed?

### **Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

The first section of the SWS was composed of demographic information and is highly structured and can be considered to be more accurate according to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007, p. 229). The first and second section of survey questions on the SWS was proven valid by a review of the instrument by a group of teacher evaluation experts. The group was composed of five individuals that are currently employed as school principals or as district level personnel that have currently have evaluative duties and are very experienced in such duties. The group was composed of three members that held a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. (doctorate) in Educational Leadership, two of whom served as school principals and one currently serving as an assistant superintendent. The remaining two members held an Ed.S. (Educational Specialist) in Curriculum and Instruction for a director at the district level and in Educational Leadership for a school principal. Finally, the dissertation chair was given a copy of the SWS to examine and share with other faculty members.

The panel was given a letter of explanation, the instrument, and a validity worksheet to rate the validity of each item on the survey on a Monday in mid-April. The validity worksheet was patterned on Bartlett's (2007) form used to determine the validity of Instructional

Leadership Practices Survey (p. 48). Panel members reviewed the SWS and returned all validity worksheets within one month.

Content validity:

1. Is the survey instrument organized in an appropriate fashion? What could make the organization better?
2. Is the consent to participate (Question one) addressed in a clear and understandable manner?
3. In part one (the demographics section) is there information that is needed that is not currently requested?
4. Is part one clear and concise?
5. Is there an issue with the validity of any question in part one?
6. Is part one clear and concise as determined by Chapter Three of the APA Manual?

For part two of the survey, the following questions were asked:

1. Is question eight clearly and concisely written?
2. Do you have any validity concerns with question eight?
3. Is question nine clearly and concisely written?
4. Do you have any validity concerns with question nine?
5. Is question ten clearly and concisely written?
6. Do you have any validity concerns with question ten?
7. Is question 11 clearly and concisely written?
8. Do you have any validity concerns with question 11?

The panel reviewed the instrument and found the instrument to be valid (see Appendix B). The panel made four suggestions. First, a panelist suggested question one be identified in the body of the email as the point of opting in out of the study. Another suggestion was to increase spacing between

answer choices on all questions. Panelist four suggested that key information be bolded in question two and question three. Finally, the language in question nine was considered unclear. Adjustments were made based on the suggestions of the panel and question nine was changed from “Which of the following statements best describes your current situation?” to “Which of the following statements best describes how you conduct walkthroughs?” in an effort to communicate more effectively. Using SurveyMonkey rather than a paper survey rectified the spacing issues of the answer choices on the survey. Finally, due to the fact instrument is purely demographic and collecting information about the walkthroughs and it is deemed valid; it can be stated that it is in fact trustworthy and therefore reliable for this study. While trustworthy is often viewed as a qualitative statement; it is appropriate in the context of this quantitative study because this instrument is measuring school accountability grade and mean of administrative walkthrough to determine if a predictive relationship occurs.

### **Florida Standards Assessment Reliability**

The FLDOE (2015) contracted with Alpine Testing Solutions and determined that FSA were valid. The study found that items were fully aligned with the intended content and that items in FSA test forms demonstrated a good representation of the language arts and mathematics standards (FLDOE, 2018, p. 44). Furthermore, the FLDOE mapped test questions to subject area standards to further ensure validity (2018, p. 40).

### **Florida Standards Assessment Reliability**

Determining reliability of FSA testing, the FLDOE (2015) in conjunction with American Institutes for Research (AIR) found the following:

For English Language Arts (ELA) the Cronbach alpha ranged from 0.88 to 0.92, the stratified alpha coefficients ranged from 0.88 to 0.92, and the Feldt-Raju coefficients were between 0.85 and 0.91. For Mathematics the Cronbach alpha ranged from 0.90 to

0.95, the stratified alpha coefficients were between 0.91 to 0.95, and the Feldt-Raju coefficients ranged from 0.89 and 0.94. End of Course test (EOC) had Cronbach alpha that ranged from 0.87 to 0.95, stratified alpha coefficients ranged from 0.87 to 0.95, and the Feldt-Raju coefficients were between 0.88 and 0.93. The marginal reliability coefficients for all subjects and grades ranged from 0.85 to 0.93. (p. 10-12)

For the FSA ELA, Mathematics, and EOC assessments, the reliability coefficients were calculated by means of Cronbach alpha, stratified alpha, and Feldt-Raju coefficient (FLDOE, 2018). Multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice items were calculated as two distinct levels (FLDOE, 2018). According to Taber (2018), a Cronbach alpha of higher than .70 is acceptable in terms of internal consistency. All of Florida's assessments had a Cronbach alpha and Feldt-Raju coefficient of greater than .70 (FLDOE, 2015).

### **Florida Accountability Test**

In examining school accountability grade and high stakes testing from a historical perspective, Florida's previous high stakes testing program was the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and it was implemented in 1998 (FLDOE, 2015). In 1999 school grades were given based on FCAT performance (FLDOE, 2015). In 2002, the FLDOE use learning gains, and learning gains of the lowest 25% to account for 50% of the school grade with student achievement comprising the remaining 50% (FLDOE, 2015). In 2003, science was added to the FCAT battery and in 2007 science performance and learning gains of the lowest 25% in mathematics were calculated in school grade (FLDOE, 2015). By 2010, acceleration, graduation rates, and college readiness were added as components of school grade (FLDOE, 2015). To create more rigor, Next Generation Sunshine State Standards were measured by FCAT 2.0 in 2011 (FLDOE, 2015). EOC assessments were implemented with Algebra 1 in

2011, geometry and biology in 2012, history in 2013, and civics for middle schools in 2014 (FLDOE, 2015). By 2012 school grade was computed adding FCAT 2.0 and EOC test (FLDOE, 2015). In 2014, the state of Florida transitioned from FCAT 2.0 to FSA which was in line with Common Core (FLDOE, 2015).

### **Florida School Grade Calculation**

School grade is measuring student achievement on high stakes assessments as determined by the Florida Department of Education. Supporting the use of outcomes of Florida high-stakes testing platform is Williams's (2011) study that examines the differences in student achievement as determined by the State of Florida between students enrolled in alternate block schedule and students enrolled in a seven-period traditional schedule (p. 68). School grade is archival data of Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) testing and is determined by 10 components valued at 100 points each for a total of 1,000 points (Florida Department of Education, [FLDOE], 2017).

There are four achievement components English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies that are determined by state standardized assessment (FLDOE, 2017).

English and mathematics have two additional components, one for learning gains from previous year and another for learning gains by the students in lowest performing 25% (FLDOE, 2017).

The ninth component is the graduation rate with points awarded that reflect the actual four-year cohort graduation percentage (FLDOE, 2017). The tenth component is college and career acceleration, which is based on the percentage of the graduating cohort who earned a passing score on acceleration examination such as Advanced Placement (AP), dual enrollment college classes, or earned an industry certification in an approved area (FLDOE, 2017). Grades are determined by the percentage of total points earned (FLDOE, 2017). The FLDOE school accountability grade is based on percentages as follows: A is 62% of points and higher, B is 54%



to 61% of points, C is 41% to 53% of points, D is 32% to 40% of total points, and F is 31% or lower of points (FLDOE, 2017).

### **Procedures**

Prior to the commencement of research, permission to conduct research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University (see Appendix A for IRB approval). Email address for all participating high school principals was on each of the 22 participating district websites. An email was be sent to the principal, the body contained the invitation to participate in the study and a link to the survey (see Appendix E for email). First, participating principals read and electronically signed the informed consent as question one. Then participating principals completed the remainder of the survey. The length of time to complete the survey was less than 10 minutes. SurveyMonkey compiled the results. I divided the total number of school wide walkthroughs (defined as all walkthrough performed by all building level administrators) by the total number of teachers to determine the mean number of walkthroughs. Then, I placed then school name and walkthrough mean on a spreadsheet. The data for school grades is archival and was obtained from The Florida Department of Education for the given academic year (FLDOE, 2018). The researcher used the raw school score in points from 10 categories that totaled potentially 1,000 points. The school grade was then matched with the corresponding principal's survey data. Coding involved each school being assigned a number to ensure anonymity. Then the mean of walkthroughs and total points was entered into SPSS.

### **Data Analysis**

First the assumption of bivariate outliers was tested using a scatter plot between the predictor variable and criterion variable was be used to determine extreme outliers (Warner,

2013). The assumption of normality was then tested. Due to the sample size exceeding 50, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and a histogram was used determine if the assumption of normality was tenable (Warner, 2013). The assumption of linearity was tested. A scatter plot between the predictor variable and criterion variable was used to determine if the assumption of linearity is tenable (Warner, 2013). The assumption of bivariate normal distribution was determined. A scatter plot between the predictor variable and criterion variable was conducted; the classic cigar shape was sought (Warner, 2013). Finally, the use of linear regression assisted the researcher in determining if there was a predictive relationship between principal walkthroughs and Florida high school accountability grade. To ensure a medium effect size with a statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level based on Cohen's *d* between .20 and .79 and a minimum of 66 schools was included (Gall et al., 2007, Warner 2013).

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Overview

This study sought to evaluate the predictive relationship between the number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs performed during the 2018-2019 school year in 70 Florida high schools and the high school accountability grades subsequently assigned to those schools by the Florida Department of Education. Chapter Four begins by restating the study's research question and its associated null hypothesis. The chapter then explains how the data obtained from 72 high schools were screened for univariate and bivariate outliers, resulting in the elimination of two schools from subsequent analyses. Descriptive statistics are then presented for the study's key variables, mean walkthroughs and school accountability grades for the 70 schools that passed data quality screening. Attention turns next to the bivariate linear regression analysis used to test the study's null hypothesis. Tests of the statistical assumptions of that procedure are described, followed by the results of the regression analysis.

### Research Question

This quantitative study addressed the impact of administrative walkthroughs on school accountability grade with a single research question.

**RQ1:** Is there a predictive relationship between the mean number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs and Florida high school accountability grade?

### Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis associated with the study's research question was as follows:

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the mean of school-wide walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

With 70 high school principals providing usable data out of 214 who were invited to complete the survey, this study achieved a response rate of 33.6%. The response rate was less than hoped for but not entirely unexpected in the absence of incentives to participate. Even so, the response rate seen in this study leads to questions about self-selection bias and the sample's representativeness. Babbie (2007) stated,

A review of the published social research literature suggests that a response rate of at least 50 percent is considered adequate for analysis and reporting. A response rate of 60 percent is good; a response rate of 70 percent is very good. (p. 262)

Fowler (2009) has suggested that response rates in the 20% range are indicative of self-selection bias and are unlikely to yield “credible statistics about the characteristics of the population as a whole” (p. 51). The reality, however, is that response rates to surveys distributed by email typically approximate 25% to 30% (Fincham, 2008) and “response rates higher than 50% are now anomalous, and rates lower than 40% are quite typical” (Laguilles et al., 2011, p. 538).

Descriptive statistics for mean walkthroughs (the study's predictor variable) and school grades (the criterion variable) for the 70 cases that passed data screening are presented in Table 3. The 95% confidence intervals included in the table provide ranges of values within which one can be 95% confident of finding variable means in the hypothetical population of schools like the schools which were examined in the study.

Table 3

*Sample Descriptive Statistics and 95% Population Mean Confidence Intervals for Mean Walkthroughs and School Grades (N = 70).*

Variable	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI Lower, Upper
Mean Walkthroughs	0.33	8.68	3.40	1.93	[2.94, 3.86]
School Grades	431	840	590.04	94.95	[567.40, 612.68]

Data on three school demographic characteristics were collected for purposes of sample description: school accountability grades, whether the school was designated as a Title I or non-Title I school, and school location (rural, suburban, or urban). Those demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 4 for the 70 schools that passed data screening.

Table 4

*Sample Descriptive Statistics for School Demographic Variables of Grade, Title Status, and Rural Status (N = 70)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
School Letter Grade		
A	28	40.0%
B	17	24.3%
C	25	35.7%
Total	70	100.0%
Title I Status		
Non-Title I Schools	38	54.3%
Title I Schools	32	45.7%
Total	70	100.0%
Rural/Suburban/Urban		
Rural Schools	27	38.6%
Suburban Schools	27	38.6%
Urban Schools	16	22.9%
Total	70	100.0%

Participant demographics are identified as letter grade, title 1 status, and whether the school is located in a rural area, suburban area, or an urban area. Letter grade was coded as 4 for an A, 3 for a B, and 2 for a C. The coding for title 1 status was a 2 if school was considered title 1 and a 1 if school was not labeled as a title 1 school. Rural schools were coded as 1, suburban as 2, and urban as 3 (Table 4).

## **Results**

Bivariate linear regression analysis was used in this study to test the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between the mean of school wide walkthroughs (the independent or predictor variable) and the high school accountability grade in Florida (the dependent or criterion variable). However, because the results of that analysis are only valid to the extent that the data display certain characteristics, those statistical assumptions were tested prior to performing the regression analysis. Tests of four additional important assumptions for the bivariate regression analysis, linearity of the relationship between the variables, bivariate normal distribution, absence of bivariate outliers, and homoscedasticity are described next, followed by the results of the bivariate regression analysis.

### **Assumptions Tests**

**Linearity.** Bivariate linear regression analysis evaluates the strength of the linear relationship between variables. If that relationship is strongly nonlinear, the linear regression analysis underestimates the strength of the relationship. Consequently, the assumption of linearity is really an assumption that the variables do not show a strongly nonlinear relationship. The assumption of linearity was tested in this study by generating a scatterplot capturing the relationship between mean walkthroughs and school grades. This scatterplot was examined for indications of linearity by fitting a line through the scatterplot (Figure 2). Using the  $r^2$  goodness

of fit measure the line provided a very poor fit to the scatterplot ( $r^2 = .00$ ). However, the scatterplot did not show any indications of strong nonlinearity, such as would be indicated by a curved distribution of points (e.g., banana-shaped, U-shaped, or S-shaped). It was concluded that the relationship between the variables was not strongly nonlinear in a manner that would cause measures of linear relationship strength to be attenuated.

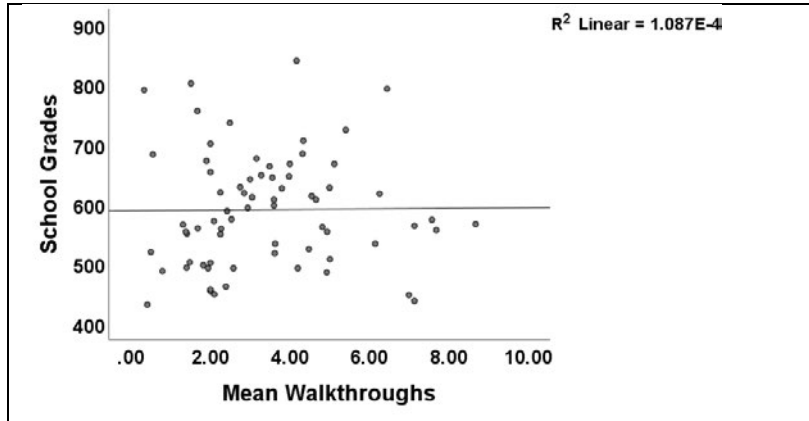
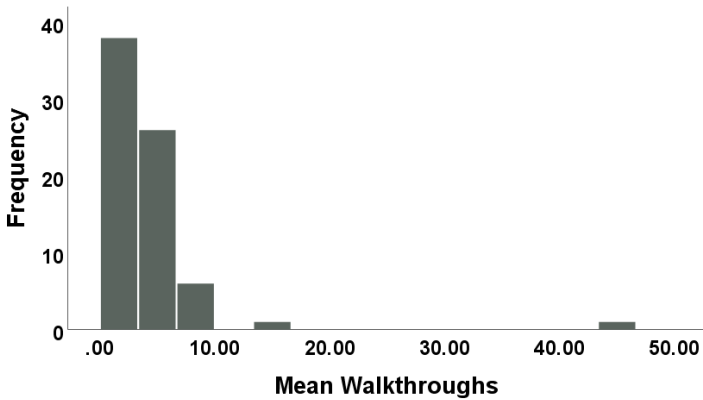


Figure 2. Scatterplot depicting the relationship between mean walkthroughs and school grades, with line of best fit.

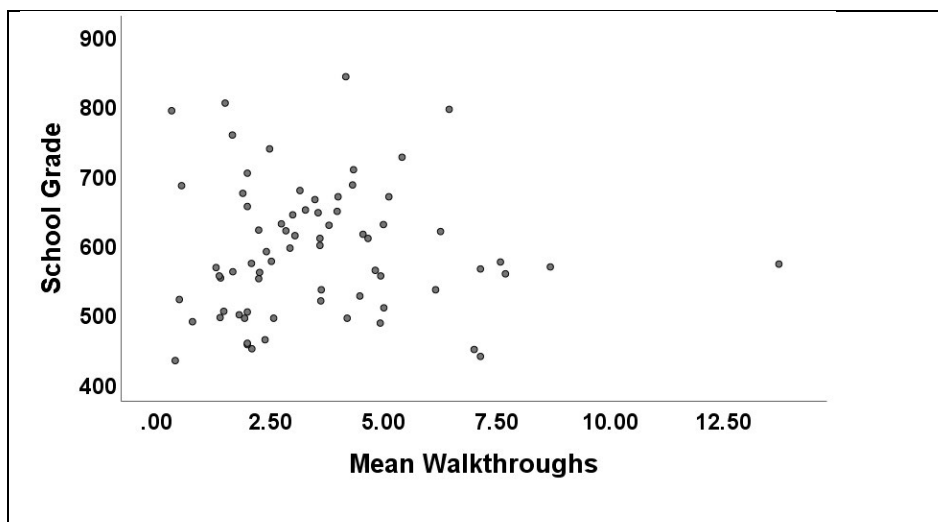
**Bivariate normal distribution.** Bivariate linear regression analysis also assumes that the variables show a bivariate normal distribution. This assumption was tested by examining the scatterplot shown in Figure 2 for the classic cigar shape pattern, this assumption was not met.

**Absence of bivariate outliers.** As reported previously, the Mahalanobis distance statistic was used to evaluate the data for bivariate outliers which would exert a disproportionate effect on the positioning of the regression line and attenuate the calculated value of  $r$ . One such outlier was identified on the frequency histogram and school 29 was removed with a raw score of 45 (Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* Frequency histogram showing the distribution of mean walkthrough scores for all 72 reporting high schools. The high-scoring outlier (raw score 45,  $z$ -score 7.59) is apparent. The case located at 13.72 mean walkthroughs ( $z = 1.78$ ) did meet the criterion to be identified as a univariate outlier (i.e.,  $z > \pm 3.0$ ).

Following that removal, the scatterplot depicting the relationship between mean walkthroughs and school grades shown in Figure 4 was inspected for any remaining bivariate outliers. In a bivariate study such as this one, data are unusable unless valid scores are available on both variables under investigation. Therefore, all data from the outlier school 43 which was over 12.50 mean walkthroughs (i.e., both mean walkthroughs and school grade) were deleted (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Scatterplot depicting bivariate outlier.



After removal of the obvious outlier, the points were broadly scattered in a manner suggesting little to no relationship between the variables, there were no obvious bivariate outliers.

**Homoscedasticity.** Homoscedasticity in a bivariate regression analysis means that the accuracy of predictions is similar across all values of the predictor variable (Warner, 2013). Warner (2013) pointed out that violation of this assumption (i.e., heteroscedasticity) weakens the regression analysis because it means that no single measure of predictive accuracy, like the correlation or standard error of the estimate, captures the fact that the relationship is stronger in some ranges of the variables than in other ranges. The homoscedasticity assumption was evaluated in this study using a preliminary run of the regression analysis in order to take advantage of the diagnostic tools included in the output from that analysis, specifically, a plot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted school grades. That plot is shown in Figure 5. Homoscedasticity is indicated by a rectangular plot that shows approximately equal vertical scattering of points across the full length of a horizontal line fitted through the plot. Heteroscedasticity is indicated by a horizontally oriented triangularly shaped plot or bowtie shaped plot. No evidence of heteroscedasticity was observed and it was concluded that the assumption of homoscedasticity was satisfied.

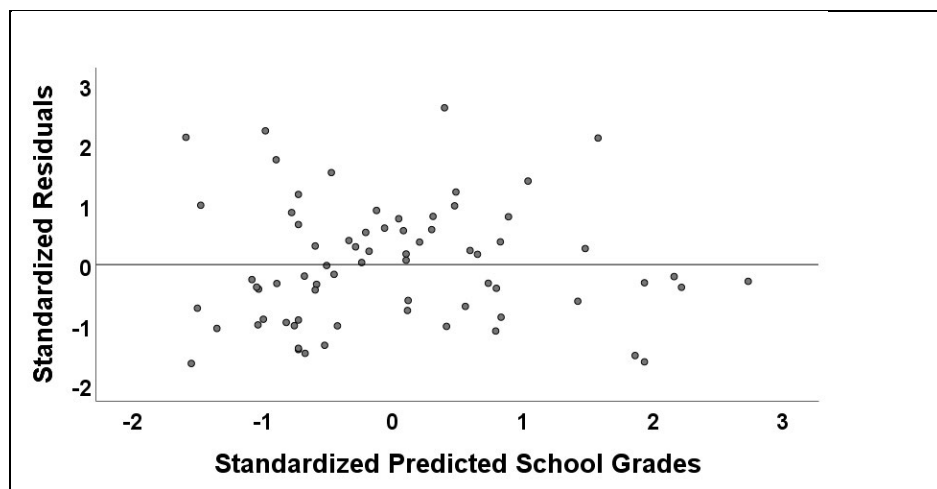


Figure 5. Plot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted school grades.

## Results of the Bivariate Regression Analysis

Having established that the assumptions upon which bivariate linear regression analysis is based were satisfied in this study, that analysis was performed to test the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the mean of school wide walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida. The absence of any linear relationship between the variables indicated that a linear regression equation would not provide any appreciable power to predict school grades from mean walkthroughs. That impression was confirmed by subsequent analyses. Table 5 provides a summary of the results of the bivariate regression analysis, including the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) between mean walkthroughs and school grades, the squared correlation ( $r^2$ ), and the standard error of the estimate ( $SE$ ). The weak correlation ( $r = .01$ ) indicated virtually no linear relationship between school grades and mean walkthroughs. Consistent with this fact, the squared correlation ( $r^2 = .00$ ) indicated that nearly none of the variance in school grades was explained by mean walkthroughs. The standard error of the estimate ( $SE = 95.64$ ) can be interpreted as approximately equal to the average absolute error of predictions and indicated that the average error in predicting school grades from mean walkthroughs in this sample of 70 cases was about 95.64 points on a variable that showed a standard deviation of 94.95. Table 6 summarizes the bivariate regression model including the regression constant, standardized regression coefficient, and raw score regression coefficient. That table also provides a  $t$ -test of the significance of the regression coefficient. That test showed that the regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.01$ ) was not significant,  $t = 0.09$ ,  $p = .932$ , indicating that mean walkthroughs provided virtually no power to predict school grades. Table 7 is an ANOVA summary table summarizing the  $F$  test used in evaluating the significance of the Pearson

correlation between mean walkthroughs and school grades. That correlation ( $r = .01$ ) indicated that there was virtually no relationship between mean walkthroughs and school grades and the  $F$  test confirmed that the relationship was statistically non-significant,  $F(1, 68) = 0.01, p = .932$ . It was concluded that there was insufficient evidence in this study to reject the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between the mean of school-wide walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida.

Table 5

*Summary of the Bivariate Regression of School Grades on Mean Walkthroughs (N = 70)*

Model	$r$	$r^2$	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.01	.00	95.64

Table 6

*Model Summary Table for the Regression of School Grades on Mean Walkthroughs (N = 70)*

		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
Model		B	Std. Err.	Beta	$t$	Sig.
1	(Constant)	588.30	23.25			
	Mean Walkthroughs	0.51	5.96	0.01	0.09	.932

*Note.* The dependent variable was school grade.

Table 7

*ANOVA Summary Table for the F Test of the Significance of the Pearson Correlation Between Mean Walkthroughs and School Grades (N = 70)*

Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	67.64	1	67.64	0.01	.932
Residual	621957.23	68	9146.43		
Total	622024.87	69			

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between the mean number of principal walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida. A bivariate regression was conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between walkthrough and school grade in 72 Florida high schools. This chapter gives a synopsis of the findings of this quantitative, correlational study and the implications of administrative observational practices in terms of improved teaching practices leading to improved student academic performance. Results of the null hypothesis are discussed as well as determining how the results align with prior research. Limitations of the study are examined, and the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between the mean number of principal walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida. This quantitative study endeavored to determine what the relationship was between administrative walkthrough and school accountability grade and answer the flowing research question: Is there a predictive relationship between the mean number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs and Florida high school accountability grade?

The research topic was chosen because insufficient studies were conducted that determined if there was a positive relationship between number of principal walkthroughs and student achievement, which leads to school grade (Boothe, 2013). However, it has been opined that teacher evaluation, which includes walkthroughs, leads to improved instructional practices that positively affect student learning (Danielson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2014). The null

hypothesis asserted there was no statistically significant predictive relationship between the mean of school wide walkthroughs and the high school accountability grade in Florida. Analysis was performed to test the null hypothesis, and that analysis indicated virtually no predictive relationship between mean walkthroughs and school grades,  $r(68) = .01$ ,  $F(1, 68) = 0.01$ ,  $p = .932$ . It was concluded that there was insufficient evidence in this study to reject the null hypothesis.

There is a plethora of previous research on leadership and school leadership that links leadership to heightened employee production. Leadership has a tremendous impact on the productivity of employees and overall effectiveness of the organization (Ahn, Lee, & Yun, 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Kouzes and Posner (2012) found employees viewed poor leaders as underutilizing their talents and great leaders as being able to utilize individual talents productively. Additionally, ineffective leadership resulted in low morale and uncertain results (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Murphy & Myers, 2008). The accountability movement significantly increased the perceived value of the principal to the school as a learning organization.

In 2015, the ESSA emphasized the need to improve chronically under-performing schools (Jacob, 2017). This attention on underperforming schools and districts has led to an increasing burden on school principals to ensure student achievement gains (Jacob, 2017). It is known that improved instruction leads to greater student achievement (Bright, 2011; Ehri & Flugman, 2018; Miri, 2012; Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). In fact, the effectiveness and future employment of administrators and teachers is often assessed based on student achievement. This has led to the principal and administrative team assuming instructional leadership of the building and attempting to improve instructional practices through professional development. The goal of teacher evaluation and walkthroughs should be improved instructional practices (Danielson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2014). The result of improving instructional practice should lead to

improved student achievement (Danielson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2014). Ultimately, increased student achievement should lead to improve student performance on high-stakes accountability test.

This study's failure to reject the null is in contrast with a tremendous amount of literature that was examined in chapter two. Several studies have associated improved teaching practice to improved student achievement (Bright, 2011; Ehri & Flugman, 2018; Miri, 2012; Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). Hitt et al.'s (2018) research found principals have a distinct influence on student learning and achievement. (Hitt, Woodruff, Myers, & Guorong, 2018). Among the foci of walkthroughs is teacher instructional practices. VanGronigen and Meyers (2017) found that principals' emphasizing improved student achievement focused on refining instructional practices. According to Hallinger and Heck (2010), to increase instructional capacity teacher evaluations must be employed efficiently.

Specifically, studies have been conducted that support walkthroughs and evaluations improving teaching practices (Marshall, 2003; Marzano, 2012; Range et al., 2014). Marzano et al. (2011) found walkthroughs provides the principal with data needed to accurately ascertain instructional strengths and weaknesses of the faculty. Furthermore, Gillespie (2016) found walkthroughs led to teacher reflection and improved teaching. Additionally, Range et al. (2014) found walkthroughs aided less-experienced teachers because low-level teaching issues can be addressed and corrected. The evaluation and feedback cycle of the principal should lead to increased teacher engagement, reflection, and improved instruction (Bird et al, 2009).

Ultimately, improved teacher instructional practices should lead to better student engagement. A plethora of studies on walkthroughs indicated an increase in student engagement led to improved student achievement (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014; Cervantes, Hemmer, & Kouzekanani,

2015; Muñoz & Dossett, 2016). Both Danielson (2011) and Darling-Hammond (2014) supported that evaluations, including walkthroughs, must lead to improved instructional practices that positively affect student learning (Danielson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2014).

However, the failure to reject the null in this study is supported by some research. Weisberg et al. (2009) describe teacher evaluation as a failure because all or a majority of educators are rated as effective and evaluations are not used as a means for improvement. The connection of improved student learning and effective teaching practices is difficult to quantify. This is in part because effective teaching is multifaceted and a single measure of performance, such as a walkthrough, fails to completely identify a singular link to student growth (Muñoz and Dossett, 2016). Hill and Grossman (2013) have found that formal, announced observations fail to identify accurate teacher quality. Additionally, administrators that fail to conduct sufficient walkthroughs on a regular basis do not get an accurate representation of teaching (Range, 2013). This supports the assertion that teacher evaluation and walkthroughs fail to lead to improved student achievement.

Often, teacher evaluation and walkthroughs are poorly accepted by veteran teachers and tenured teachers (Range et al., 2014). Principals frequently view walkthroughs and teacher evaluations as very time consuming with an imbalance of time invested for the amount of academic growth that occurs (Brown & Coley, 2011, DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Range, Scherz, Holt & Young, 2011). Brown and Coley (2011) found teachers were distrustful of administrative intent with walkthrough. In fact, the teachers felt threatened by the presence of administrators in classrooms (Brown & Coley, 2011). This distrust, and ineffectiveness, might be attributed to the dual purpose of evaluation and walkthroughs.

Rigby (2014) opined that using evaluations for continued employment, and then using



evaluations to improve teaching practices, led to friction between teachers and administrators. In fact, the dual use of observation triggers teacher anxiety (Rigby, 2014). Administrators have tremendous constraints on their time. When a walkthrough is conducted, an opportunity is presented to use this as a component of the observation process due to collective bargaining agreements on number of observations and deadlines for final observations. Principals that choose to use the walkthrough as evidence to continue or end employment for teachers face difficulty in using the same walkthrough as a catalyst for improvement.

Frequently, teachers perceive the evaluation process and walkthrough feedback as being skewed by the administrator's personal relationships with the faculty and having favorites on the faculty (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Larsen, 2004). Teachers view the evaluation process with cynicism because of observer bias as devaluing the evaluation (Maharaj, 2014). A great deal of teacher distrust and discontent is rooted in the teachers viewing the administrator holding all of the power in the observation process (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). This distrust and discontent weaken the acceptance of feedback (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014).

Trust of academic proficiency of the evaluator is an obstacle to a meaningful walkthrough. Specifically, teachers view administrators as lacking pedagogical expertise. Teachers are often resistant to feedback from administrators who lack experience or understanding of their particular discipline (Kelly, 2014; Maharaj, 2014). In effect, a principal that has a social studies background might be viewed as lacking the subject area knowledge to provide feedback to a mathematics teacher for improved instructional practices. Dougherty's (2009) study examining the shortcoming of understanding of genetics in science students, determined that instructors lacked confidence in the evaluators ability to demonstrate needed instructional improvements.

Finally, the infrequency of walkthroughs conducted and amount of time of each walkthrough might impact the effectiveness of walkthroughs. Too few walkthroughs fail to develop consistency and trust (DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012). Also, many teachers view that a classroom visit of less than 25 minutes does not give an accurate portrayal of teaching for the administrator to provide feedback (Garza et al., 2016).

### **Implications**

This study is relevant and significant to the field of educational leadership and teacher supervision. There have been many studies on the impact of leadership on organizations (Ahn, Lee, & Yun, 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Furthermore, several studies have been conducted identifying behaviors of transformational school leaders (Allen et al., 2015; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Vekeman et al., 2016).

The findings of this study aided in reducing the gap in literature by supplying research on the principal walkthroughs and the impact they have on school accountability grades. Furthermore, this study added to the body of knowledge of supervision in terms of the effectiveness of informal walkthroughs and the impact they have on school grades. This study is important due to two interconnected circumstances. First, principal and school administrator time are a finite commodity and walkthroughs are time intensive. Secondly, improved teacher instructional practice that leads to improved student achievement must be a product of walkthroughs to justify the time consumed conducting the walkthroughs.

Additionally, the findings of this study can provide school districts information to make a rational decision in the investment of administrative time in walkthroughs. This information could also lead districts to provide targeted training for administrators that conduct walkthroughs to better lead to improved teaching practices. Finally, this might provide school districts

evidence that using walkthroughs for the dual purpose of employability status and instructional improvement is a conflict. In fact, districts might choose to use walkthroughs exclusively as a tool for improvement or as a component of employability.

### **Limitations**

All studies have limitations, as did this correlational study. This study was limited to public high school principals in Florida. Then the study was further limited to principals' that had at least one year of experience in their current assignment. There were several threats to internal and external validity of this study. First, participation in this study was based on high school principals' volunteering to take the survey. Gall et al, (2007) indicated that volunteers out of a target population are often biased. Supporting the fact that volunteers for studies are biased, Oswald et al., (2013) identified participants that self-select often do so due to the nature of the research. In fact, there are differences in the characteristics of volunteers and non-volunteers (Oswald, 2013). Based on the illustration of Gall et al., (2007) this study was comprised of 72 volunteers and 142 non-volunteers.

Additionally, the question of how many walkthroughs were conducted during the 2018-2019 school year can be considered vague. This is because many Florida high school principals did not track informal walkthroughs. Frequently, the only walkthroughs recorded were used for district mandated teacher evaluation. Many of the participants in this study estimated the total number of walkthroughs that were conducted. These estimations might be skewed and have a tremendous impact on the validity of the study.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The development of this study has made clear that further research is needed to determine the value of walkthroughs. The first recommendation would be to determine how and what type

of feedback is provided from walkthroughs. While there is a plethora of information about walkthrough models and mechanisms, there is a need to determine what specific practices are being used in high achieving schools.

A second recommendation would be to examine the walkthrough practices of high achieving high-poverty rate schools. The researcher would need to focus on schools that are successful and diverse. There is a need to separate high achieving schools that are advantaged from high achieving schools that are more diverse and disadvantaged economically because economically disadvantaged students are behind their more advantaged peers in terms of academic preparation and support (Payne, 2005).

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**APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL****LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 3, 2020

Robert Bennett

IRB Exemption 4117.030320: The Relationship between the Average Number of Principal Walkthroughs and School Accountability Grade of Florida High Schools

Dear Robert Bennett,

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:

(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

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,



**LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY.

*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

**APPENDIX B: VALIDITY TEST WORKSHEET**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Years in current position \_\_\_\_\_ Highest degree earned \_\_\_\_\_  
Conferring Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions concerning the survey instrument.

Is the survey instrument organized in an appropriate fashion? What could make the organization better?

**Part 1 Demographics**

1. In the **Demographics** is there information that is needed that is not currently requested?
2. Is the **Demographic** section clear and concise?
3. Is there an issue with the validity of any question in part one?
4. Is part one clear and concise as determined by Chapter Three of the APA Manual.

**Part 2**

1. Is question eight clearly and concisely written?
2. Do you have any validity concerns with question eight?
3. Is question nine clearly and concisely written?
4. Do you have any validity concerns with question nine?
5. Is question ten clearly and concisely written?
6. Do you have any validity concerns with question ten?
7. Is question 11 clearly and concisely written?
8. Do you have any validity concerns with question 11?



## APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

### CONSENT FORM

#### The Relationship Between the Average Number of Principal Walkthroughs and School Accountability Grade of Florida High Schools

Liberty University  
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on principal walkthrough practices. The study seeks to determine if there is a predictive relationship in average number of principal walkthroughs and high school accountability grade. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a high school principal in Florida and evaluate teachers. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Robert Bennett, doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

1. **Background Information:** This study attempts to determine a predictive relationship between the mean number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs and school accountability grade.

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

2. Click the link to survey monkey and answer 10 questions. The estimated time to complete the survey is 10 minutes.

**Risks:** The risks involved in this study “The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.”

**Benefits:** Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include determining if the time invested in walkthroughs translates to academic success. If walkthroughs are not productive, the time could be allocated in a more productive manner.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a non-identifying number, for example school 36.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

- All information will remain confidential

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Robert Bennett. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at rbennett17@liberty.edu You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, John Christopher Bartlett at jcbartlett@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Investigator

---

Date

## APPENDIX D: SCHOOL WALKTHROUGH SURVEY

*Principals: Please click on your selected response for each item.*

### Part 1 Demographic Questions

1. Including this school year, how many years have you served in your **current** administrative position?
  - a. 1-5 years
  - b. 6-10 years
  - c. 11 or more years
2. Including this school year, how many years have you served as an administrator in **this** or **any other** school district?
  - a. 1-5 years
  - b. 6-10 years
  - c. 11 or more years
3. What would you classify your school as?
  - a. urban
  - b. suburban
  - c. rural
4. In what District is your school?
5. What is the name of your school?
6. How many teachers were on the faculty for the 2017-2018 school year?

### Part 2 Questions Regarding the Classroom Walkthrough Process

7. Do you conduct classroom walkthroughs in your school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (If “No,” survey concludes)
8. Which of the following statements best describes how you conduct walkthroughs?
  - a. Classroom walkthroughs are mandated by central office administration.
  - b. I complete classroom walkthroughs through my own initiative.
  - c. District mandated and I complete additional walkthroughs
9. How many total walkthroughs were conducted during the 2017-2018 school year?
10. In what form do you usually provide feedback after a classroom walkthrough has been completed?
  - a. Mostly written (email and/or hard copy).
  - b. Mostly verbal (post-observation conference).
  - c. Verbal followed up by written.
  - d. Feedback is not typically provided after conducting classroom walkthroughs.

**APPENDIX E: INVITATION TO PARTICPATE**

Dear Principal

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to determine if there is a predictive relationship between the mean number of administrative school-wide walkthroughs and school accountability grade, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study. The study is 10 questions and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

To participate, click here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CJCKGD6> to complete the survey.

Sincerely,

Robert Bennett

Doctoral Candidate

Liberty University