EXAMINING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS WITHIN THE NEW

TEXAS TEACHER EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (T-TESS)

A Record of Study

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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December 2019

Major Subject: Educational Administration

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of fairness under the new Texas teacher evaluation system (T-TESS). Using the theoretical framework of procedural justice, the qualitative study measured the teachers' perceptions of fairness utilizing Leventhal's six rules (1976) of representativeness, bias suppression, consistency, accuracy, correctability, and ethics. A purposive sample of teachers and campus administrators from an elementary school were surveyed and interviewed. Data were analyzed using the themes from the theoretical framework.

Results from this study indicated that the participants found a positive perception of procedural justice in the area representativeness, bias suppression, correctability, and ethics. Procedural injustice was found in the area of accuracy and consistency. Teachers indicated that the observation cycle within T-TESS caused the feelings of unfairness due to the lack of frequency and feedback. This study reinforced the previous research that a strong implementation of the appraisal process is needed in order to create a just system for employees. Future research should be conducted to determine if similar findings occur at the secondary level, and if the addition of observation cycles during the T-TESS process would support positive perceptions of fairness within the teaching staff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Contributors

This work was guided and supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Dr. Jean Madsen, Committee Chair and Professor in the Department of Education Administration and Human Resource Development, Dr. Beverly Irby, Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Department of Education Administration and Human Resource Development, Dr, Wen Luo, Associate Professor in the Educational Psychology Department, and Dr. Karen Smith, Professor in the Department of Education Administration and Human Resource Development.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RT3), and the newly signed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 have focused on improving student achievement, improving teacher quality, and holding stakeholders accountable for closing the achievement gap (Croft et al, 2016; Jacob & Walsh, 2011). Additionally, another movement has emerged to support the retention of talented teachers by proposing merit-pay programs that link "teachers' salaries directly to their apparent impact on student achievement" (Jacob & Lefgren, 2006).

Donaldson (2013) suggested that human capital management is the key strategy for increasing student achievement, and school districts must focus on "elevating the competencies of teachers and school leaders" (p. 839). Researchers have found that there is a connection between competent teachers and increased student achievement (Kaplan & Owings, 2003; O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012) and professional evaluation is a necessary tool in continuing the pedagogical improvement of teachers (Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003). It is within this movement to reform schools through the usage of teacher evaluations that include student test scores that Texas has adopted a new teacher evaluation system (Texas Education Agency, 2014). In 2009, Weisburg et al. claimed in a report entitled *The Widget Effect* that teacher evaluation systems failed to tell us little about teacher performance; instead most systems assumed that classroom instruction differed between teachers. By denying individual teacher strengths and weakness, the

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evaluation systems were disrespectful to teachers, because they "labeled all teachers as good or great" and failed to recognize excellence or address poor performance (Weisberg et al, 2009, p. 4). As this research emerged, the federal government instituted specific provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act requiring states to implement teacher evaluation plans that included student growth measures; however, Texas along with other states applied for a waiver from this requirement to allow the state to develop a new appraisal system that was focused on improving classroom instruction and increasing student achievement (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Previously, the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) approved instrument for evaluating teachers was the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). This instrument was used by 86% of school districts in Texas and had been in place since 1997 (Texas Education Agency, 2015). The Agency, recognizing the research that supports teacher effectiveness as the number one school factor for increasing student achievement (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2011; Texas Education Agency, 2015; Young et al., 2015), and under the waiver requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act decided to revisit the state's current appraisal instrument. In 2014, a teacher steering committee comprised of Texas educators developed a new appraisal system, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), aligned to the Texas teaching standards (Texas Education Agency, 2015). In 2016-2017, this instrument was implemented statewide.

In 2011, TEA announced they would be creating a new appraisal instrument in response to the emerging research in the field of teacher evaluation and growth (Texas

Education Agency, 2014). A Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup was created and

included key members from the agency's Educator Initiatives department, the Texas

Comprehensive Center, Educate Texas, and the Region XIII Education Service Center.

Using the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality's publication, *A Practical

Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the

Development of Teacher Evaluation* Systems, the workgroup developed an appraisal

model that was later evaluated by a teacher steering committee (Texas Education

Agency, 2014).

In the Texas Education Agency's Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Frequently Asked Questions (2014), the agency addressed the need for a change away

from PDAS.

> Over time, however, PDAS drifted from its original intent- to be a professional
> development system for teachers - and became a system more focused on
> compliance with rules. In addition, education has evolved in the last 17 years,
> and T-TESS seeks to update the tools of evaluation to complement what's
> happening in classrooms throughout the state and to align with what many
> districts are already doing on their campuses - creating open, collaborative
> campus environments with a constant focus on instructional and professional
> improvement. (pp. 2)

The T-TESS rubric is comprised of three measures: observation, teacher self-assessment,

and student growth (Texas Education Agency, 2014). The observation is based on five

performance levels, and the student growth measure will include a value-add rate based

on student growth as measured by state assessments or student growth based on student

learning objectives (Texas Comprehensive Center, 2016).

Quality teaching is crucial to student learning (Kaplan & Owings, 2003; Nixon et

al., 2010), and the federal government has used several key legislative measures to

require highly qualified teachers (Kaplan & Owings, 2003). It is in response to these federal mandates that states have sought to develop new teacher evaluation systems (Derrington & Campbell, 2015) to address the greater accountability and assessment that No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required of student learning (Calabrese et al., 2004; Harris et al., 2014).

Statement of Problem and Significance

Employees experience decisions in an organization every day, and with each decision they internally ask was the decision fair (Coquitt, 2001). Teachers' perceptions of fairness within the appraisal process are integral to the success of any evaluation system (Mholo, 2014). The system must be perceived as fair (Kataoka, Cole, & Flint, 2006). Mholo (2014) found that fairness or a lack of fairness is an important factor in motivating workers to meet the organizational goals. However, a lack of perceived fairness in the evaluation process has shown to negatively impact a "teacher's attitude and state" (Li, 2014, p. 136.) Hoy and Tarter (2004) found that teachers feel a sense of fairness when they are able to participate in the decision-making process and feel their opinions are represented. The performance appraisal of employees is one of the most important practices in human resource management (Tuytens & Devos, 2012) with many governments requiring appraisals for teachers (Ibeogu & Ozturen, 2015), and yet it is doubtful if teacher appraisals are effective or fair. Instead, teachers report that the evaluations were unfair due to a poor implementation of the process (Mholo, 2014).

In 2016, Texas adopted a new appraisal system; however, the reality of teacher experiences during this new appraisal process in Texas and their perceptions of the

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fairness of the system are unknown at this time. Based on the T-TESS Appraiser Training Handbook (2014), the goal of the new appraisal system is to create a system that "would be used for continuous professional growth, while de-stigmatizing the observation process" and "moving away from compliance and toward feedback and support" (p. 3). The relative newness of this type of evaluation tool that includes a student growth measure requires further investigation to determine if the T-TESS appraisal system is able to foster professional growth and support between teachers and principals. An employee's perception of fairness is integral in success of the appraisal process (Poole, 2008) yet little research has been conducted in evaluating teachers' perceptions of fairness during the appraisal process. It is important that we understand the teachers' perspectives when participating in the appraisal process in Texas to determine if the newly adopted process is able to create a supportive environment where teachers feel valued and supported as professionals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is (a) to examine the experiences of teachers during the implementation of the Texas teacher appraisal system (T-TESS) and (b) to determine the teachers' perceptions of fairness of the new appraisal system.

Research Question

The research question for the study are as follows:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of fairness when participating in the T-TESS appraisal system?

Theoretical Framework

Organizational justice is determined when an employee makes a "personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct" (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007, p. 35). Employees make judgements about the actions of their leaders and determine the overall fairness of how they perceive this treatment (Poole, 2008). Cropanzano et al. (2001) described a generic model of organizational justice as a series of events: (a) an event occurs in the workplace; (b) this requires the application of a rule or standard; and (c) which leads the employee to make a judgement of fairness.

Researchers have described three types of organizational justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007; Cropanzano et. al. 2001; Poole, 2008). Distributive justice focuses on the fairness of the distribution of rewards or allocation of resources that some receive but others do not within the organization (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). It is usually connected to the fairness of a salary increase, a promotion or demotion, or a reward based on merit. Allocation of resources is seen as fair if the outcome is applied equally (everyone receives the same) or equitably (based on an employee's work). Procedural justice is based on the implementation of the procedures used to determine outcomes within an organization. Greenberg (1990) described procedural justice as "the perceived fairness of policies and procedures used to make decisions" (p. 402). It centers on the employee's role within the decision-making process, and the actions of the leaders in following these procedures (Poole, 2008). Interactional justice is simply how people

treat one another within the organization (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). A person can be seen as interactionally just if he/she is perceived as truthful and respectful to others within the organization. Interactional justice, sometimes known as informational justice and interpersonal justice, is both subjective and contextual (Poole, 2008). The employee will draw on their own experiences to determine if an action is just or unfair.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher seeks to determine the teachers' perceptions of fairness under the new teacher appraisal system. Organizational justice theory assists us in understanding the "employee's perception of justice in an organizational setting" (Poole, 2008, p. 25). The researcher has chosen to focus on the procedural justice related to the appraisal process in Texas. Procedural justice was chosen for two key reasons: (a) it looks at the process by which outcomes are determined; and (b) it measures the degree to which employees have voice within these decisions (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Since the purpose of the study is to determine the fairness of the new appraisal process in Texas, it must be reviewed through the lens of procedural justice due to the significant changes to the procedures and processes outlined in the new system. Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007) posited that procedural justice is "essential to maintaining institutional legitimacy" (p. 38). The T-TESS evaluation system must be examined through the lens of procedural justice to provide a better understanding of both the appraisal process and its role within the development of Texas teachers.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I contains the background of the study, statement of the problem and significance, and the purpose of the study. The theoretical framework and research questions are also included in Chapter I. Chapter II includes an outline of the literature as it relates to the study, and Chapter III contains the methodology of research, its procedures, and instruments along with the definitions, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions. A presentation of the data collected during the case study is provided in Chapter IV. Chapter V is comprised of the summary of findings, implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and further conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter contains a critique of literature related to the experiences of teachers and principals within an appraisal system and the political context that required the development of a new appraisal instrument in Texas. The evaluation of teachers by principals has been studied for several decades. This study will use the body of research to frame the experiences of Texas teachers and principals within the new T-TESS appraisal system. Therefore, it will review the perceptions, behaviors, and experiences of both the principals and teachers when participating in an appraisal system.

The development and implementation of a statewide appraisal system has far reaching effects on the state of education in Texas. The following critique of literature will provide an outline of the political agendas and legislation that led to the requirement for states to redesign their teacher appraisal system. It is within this political arena that the study will take place; therefore, it is important to understand the context surrounding the implementation of this new evaluation system.

A systematic review was conducted to allow for the establishment of clear criteria to identify only those studies that pertain to teacher evaluation and appraisal as this area of study contains a large body of research (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The following databases were searched: ERIC, ProQuest, EBSCO, LibCat, JSTOR, Google, and Google Scholar. The search was limited to research published between 1990-2018 in order to obtain a historical perspective of the teacher evaluation systems within the standards based instruction movement of the past thirty years. Key words used were:

teacher evaluation, teacher effectiveness, standard based or performance appraisal,

standard based or performance evaluation, teacher attitudes, teacher perceptions,

teacher perspective, teacher belief, teacher administrator relationship, principal

attitudes, principal perceptions, principal perspectives, and principal beliefs. Additional

studies were identified from the reference lists of related literature. Several books were

also identified concerning the role of trust in the teacher/principal relationship and

educational reform. The database search identified 217 articles which were transferred

into Coevidence, an online software product that allows one to manage the systematic

review process. Each abstract was reviewed to determine if the study met the criteria

set, and articles were eliminated if the study occurred outside of the United States and/or

did not include the experiences of teachers or principals during the evaluation process

(Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Twenty-nine articles were included in the review of

literature regarding the teacher and principal experiences during the appraisal process. A

full review of each article was completed, and documented within RefWorks software.

A table was also created to notate the citation, methodology, data source, and key

findings of the study. An example of the review method (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006)

that was used to identify the literature is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Synthesis of Literature

Author	Date	Key Findings
Anast-May et al.	2011	Teacher's perspectives on the benefits of feedback
Bradley	2014	Supportive conditions required for teacher growth
Brandt et al.	2007	Principal perception of district guidance on appraisals
Calabrese et al.	2004	Principal and teacher perceptions of summative conference
Cooper, Ehrensal, & Bromme	2005	Principal experiences in evaluating teachers
DePasquale, Jr.	1990	Experienced teachers value a focus on growth in appraisals

Table 1. Continued

Author	Date	Key Findings
Derrington & Campbell	2015	Principal experiences in implementing new appraisal system
Donaldson & Donaldson Jr.	2012	How districts should support teacher evaluations
Donaldson	2013	Principal's identify constraints in evaluating teachers
Halverson & Clifford	2006	Sense-making in a new evaluation system
Harris, Ingle, & Rutledge	2014	Impact of principal perceptions and value added score
Hoy & Tschannen-Moran	1999	Importance of trust in principal and teacher relationship
Ingle, Rutledge, & Bishop	2011	Principal's perceptions on teacher quality
Jacob	2011	Principal dismissal practices
McCullough et al.	2015	Student growth measures and teacher evaluations
Nixon, Dam & Packard	2010	Role of teacher dispositions in evaluation process
Nixon, Packard, & Dam	2013	Reasons for teacher non-renewals
Price	2012	Role of principal commitment on teacher attitudes
Range et al.	2011	Perceptions of principals in evaluating teachers
Range , Young, & Hvidston	2013	Teachers' perceptions on pre and post conference
Range, Hewitt, & Young	2014	Principals' perceptions on dealing with marginal teachers
Rigby	2015	Principal approaches to teacher evaluation
Riordan et al.	2015	Factors that effect a new teacher evaluation system
Ruffini et al.	2014	Principal/ teacher perceptions of new evaluation system
Taylor & Tyler	2012	Effect of observation process on teacher effectiveness
Torff & Sessions	2009	Principal's perspectives on teacher ineffectiveness
Walker & Slear	2011	Teacher perceptions of how principals' behavior affects them
White et al.	2003	Implementation of state-wide teacher evaluation system
Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton	2003	Teacher's perspective on the 4 roles of the principal

The following review of literature is representative of the literature relevant to the research study; specifically, the teacher's experiences and perceptions of the principal and the evaluation process, and the principal's experiences and perceptions of the teacher and the evaluation process. A general review of the political context is also included to frame the development of the T-TESS instrument within the state of Texas

as well as research related to the understanding of procedural justice and evaluation practices.

Teacher's Perspective of the Evaluation Process

The teacher's perspective of the evaluation process is highly influenced by the administrative staff of a school (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012). A review of the literature revealed that many teachers see the traditional evaluation process as stressful (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012); a source of anxiety or a waste of time (Calabrese, Sherwood, Fast, & Womack, 2004); and not constructive in their pedagogical growth (Donaldson & Donaldson, Jr., 2012). Teachers expressed that evaluations were only done to fulfill contractual obligations and not to improve their performance within the classroom (Cooper, Ehrensal, & Bromme, 2005). Educators also expressed a concern about the subjectivity of the evaluation process and the principal's inability to collect accurate evidence for the rating (Calabrese et al, 2004) and the lack of inner rater reliability among administrative staff (Ruffini, Makkonen, Tejwani, and Diaz, 2014).

Training of the appraisal systems were seen as insufficient and not helpful to teachers (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012) with a lack of information provided on the evidence needed to meet the requirements of the evaluation system (Ruffini et al., 2014). Many teachers commented that the evaluation systems took too much time to complete the required paperwork and prepare to meet with principals (Riordan, Lacireno-Paquet, Shakman, Bocala, & Chang, 2015). Cooper et al. (2015) found that teachers, in an effort to avoid conflict and hasten the summative conference, limited their voices and simply received the principal's perception of the summative evaluation while focusing on

"negotiating with the principal as to the final placement of the checkmarks on the evaluation form" (p. 110). However, many teachers' perceptions concerning the evaluation process were highly correlated to ratings and support received by the teacher (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Riordan et al., 2015). Teachers want high ratings from their principals (Calabrese et al, 2004), and they indicated the evaluation process as positive when they receive a high rating (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012).

Teachers also expressed a desire for certain behaviors from their principals within the evaluation process. They indicated a need for a communicative relationship (Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003) that provides constructive, timely feedback from observable data each time a teacher is observed (Anast-May, Penick, Schroyer, & Howell, 2011; O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Range, Hewitt, &Young, 2014; Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003). In a study conducted by Ruffini et al. (2014) 60% of teachers in pilot districts noted that classroom observations coupled with timely feedback was the most beneficial component of improving instructional practice (p. 6). Anast-May et al. (2011) found that the post conference after an observation was a necessary vehicle for promoting "reflection and allow teachers to plan and achieve new goals" (p. 2).

Teachers desired principals to use a standardized process and to be committed to helping the teachers improve in their pedagogical skills (Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003) while implementing the appraisal system with fidelity and valuing the evaluation process (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Riordan et al., 2015). Walker & Slear (2011) found that a principal's ability to model instructional behaviors and communicate effectively is positively related to teacher efficacy. Principals must believe in the work

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they do with teachers and discuss classroom practices regularly to improve instructional performance. Some teachers were skeptical about the administrators' ability to support and guide the professional development of teachers (Kowalski & Dolph, 2015); however, teachers do want a principal that mentors them and provides guidance, coaching, and growth (Calabrese et al, 2004; O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003).

A large component of a teacher's professional growth is the opportunities provided for self-reflection and goal setting (Halverson & Clifford, 2006; O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Range, Young, & Hvidston, 2013; Ruffini et al., 2014). Halverson and Clifford (2006) conducted a case study in which teachers were asked to self-evaluate and set goals prior to their conference with the principal. This process allowed the principal to guide the teacher's self-reflection and help them seek the appropriate professional development based on their personal goals. Ultimately, teachers view the evaluation process as one where the principal works in tandem with them to identify areas of growth and support their professional learning. Taylor and Tyler (2012) describe an effective teacher evaluation system as one where the teachers' gain information through feedback; which encourages the teacher in self-reflection; leading to more opportunities for conversations between teachers and principals about effective practice; ultimately leading to long lasting effects on instructional practice. However, based on the research, our current evaluation systems are ineffective and fail to provide the feedback our teachers need to grow as professionals.

Principal's Perspective of the Evaluation Process

It is the responsibility of the principal and assistant principal to monitor and evaluate teachers (Cooper et al., 2005; Derrington & Campbell, 2015; Nixon, Dam, & Packard, 2010; Rigby, 2015). Due to their educational background, certifications, and experience, principals believe they are capable of evaluating their staff (Torff & Sessions, 2009). Researchers have found that principals use the ratings of teachers to make personnel decisions (Jacob & Walsh, 2011) such as: promotion and compensation (Walker & Slear, 2011); reassignments and dismissals (Brandt, Mathers, Oliva, Brown-Sims, & Hess, 2007; Halverson and Clifford, 2006; McCullough, English, Angus, & Gill, 2015; Walker & Stear, 2011); draft growth plans and target staff development (Jacob & Walsh, 2006; McCullough et al., 2015); and provide insight into teacher quality and effectiveness (Calabrese et al., 2004; Halverson & Clifford, 2006; Torff & Sessions, 2009; Young, Range, Hvidston, Mette, 2015). In a study conducted in Chicago, Jacob (2011) reported there was a strong correlation between dismissal and poor evaluations specifically when there were a high number of absences by the teacher. Principals value teachers who have the ability to raise standardized test scores, manage classrooms, and collaborate with colleagues (Jacob & Lefgren, 2006). Effort (Harris, Ingle, & Rutledge, 2014), dependability, honesty, knowledge (Nixon, Packard, and Dam, 2013), and a willingness to take additional job opportunities (Ingle, Rutledge, & Bishop, 2011) are characteristics that principals consider when conducting a teacher's evaluation.

Rigby (2015) reported that principals' perspectives and experiences influence their implementation of teacher evaluation systems. In fact, Jacob and Lefgren (2006)

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noted that principals give higher ratings to teachers "with more or better teaching credentials, more experience, and fewer absences" (p. 447). In a later study, Jacob and Walsh (2011) determined that there was a high correlation between a principal's evaluation of teacher effectiveness and the improvement of student scores when this student data is included within the evaluation leading some to conclude that principals know who their high performing teachers are (Harris et al., 2014). However, Derrington and Campbell (2015) have rejected this claim citing that some teachers received low ratings due to the challenging students they teach, and other teachers receive their higher ratings due to a lack of economically disadvantaged students found in their classrooms. These findings point to the injustice that some teachers face during their evaluations based on the composition of the students within their classrooms. Ultimately, principals are charged with managing the public opinion of the perceived quality of classroom instruction (Calabrese et al., 2004), while receiving feedback on teacher effectiveness from students, parents, other teachers, and their own perceptions (Harris et al., 2014).

Principals reported that they had a negative outlook on the evaluation process (Kowalski & Dolph, 2015) and found that they were "constrained" by the rules, laws, and procedures required (Cooper et al., 2005). Principals indicated the evaluation process was too time consuming (Donaldson & Donaldson, Jr., 2012; Ruffini et al., 2014; Range, Scherg, Holt, &Young, 2011; Riordan et al., 2015) to complete classroom visits (Derrington & Campbell, 2015). Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano (2014) found that principals spent 7-10% of their professional time on the evaluation process. In a case study, Halverson & Clifford (2006) noted that there was a significant time

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commitment related to the evaluation process with 2-3 hours spent writing up the actual evaluation and another 2-2 ½ hours needed preparing for the post-observation process. The evaluation process required an increase in paperwork for principals (Deerington & Campbell, 2015; Donaldson & Donaldson, Jr., 2012) with an evaluation instrument that was inadequate for the needs of the principals (Donaldson, 2013; Range et al., 2011) and not constructive for the teachers (Donaldson & Donaldson, Jr., 2012). Researchers also found there was a lack of training provided on the local district evaluation process (Deerington & Campbell, 2015) with principals noting that this could lead to "varied implementation" across campuses and administrators (Rigby, 2015, p.388). In a study of district policies, Brandt et al. (2007) reported that only 8% referenced any form of training on the evaluation process, and this training was generally focused on appraising the beginning teacher.

Despite these negative experiences, Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) found that principals rate their personal evaluation as the most important data source in identifying the need for teacher support. The principals in this study indicated that these evaluations must include classroom walkthroughs as the most frequent method of data. Classroom observations are an important component of the evaluation process because they allow principals to collect data on teacher effectiveness; give feedback to teachers; inform ratings; and provide evidence for discussions about instructional practice (Young et al., 2015; Calabrese et al., 2004; Range et al., 2011). Principals in a 2014 study suggested that there was a need for district and state policies to require short, unannounced classroom observations to collect data for teacher appraisals (Range et al.).

Young et al. (2013) found that principals believe that the most important purpose of teacher evaluation was to provide formative feedback. They indicated that the evaluation systems should "align practice to performance expectations; reflect a growth-oriented view of professional practice; [and] use multiple measures to assess teacher performance" (p. 169). Researchers in other studies corroborated this belief with principals indicating that evaluations should provide opportunities for professional growth and impact instructional practice (Derrington & Campbell, 2015; DePasquale, 1990; Donaldson &Donaldson, Jr., 2012; Range et al., 2013). Halverson and Clifford (2006) reported that evaluations that focus only on summative results and lack multiple classroom observations led to few opportunities to provide valuable feedback to teachers. Unfortunately, principals are faced with negotiating their role of an evaluator that complies with district policies while still meeting the needs of their teachers (Calabrese et al., 2004). Cooper et al. (2005) noted that principals described this conflict of the principal to be both an "instructional leader and unit manager" (p. 117). Principals are forced to balance between focusing on the improvement of their teachers and compliance with district policies concerning teacher evaluations which led them to try to nurture the growth in teachers while at the same time minimizing the potential liabilities of ineffective teachers. These opposing perspectives leave principals dissatisfied with the teacher evaluation process.

The Context Surrounding the Implementation of the T-TESS Appraisal System

Quality teaching is crucial to student learning (Kaplan & Owings, 2003; Nixon et al., 2010), and the federal government has used several key legislative measures to

require highly qualified teachers (Kaplan & Owings, 2003) in the nation's classrooms. It is in response to these federal mandates that states have sought to develop new teacher evaluation systems (Derrington & Campbell, 2015) to address the greater accountability and assessment that NCLB required of student learning (Calabrese et al., 2004; Harris et al., 2014). In the late nineties, a series of research studies were released that focused on the impact of teachers on student achievement, and specifically the need for providing effective teachers to disadvantaged youth (Haycock, 1998). With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2002, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the federal government focused on greater accountability for states, schools, and teachers. There were two main requirements related to teaching personnel imparted by the federal government: the need for (a) highly qualified teachers and (b) equity access to excellent educators. The highly qualified teacher requirement mandated that school districts must employ teachers who have a Bachelor degree, an appropriate state certification, and demonstrate subject matter expertise (American Institutes for Research, 2015). NCLB also focused on improving the academic achievement of disadvantaged students by promoting reform that would improve student access to effective teachers. This begins the discussion of equity in access for poor and minority children by examining the percentage of classrooms led by an inexperienced, unqualified, or out of field teachers (American Institutes for Research, 2015).

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was passed at the federal level to fund educational improvements through a series of grants such as the Teacher Incentive Fund, the Race to the Top Fund, and the State Fiscal Stabilization

Fund. These grants spurred a movement away from the qualification of teachers toward an emphasis in teacher effectiveness (American Institutes for Research, 2015). All three of the grants sought to have states invest in the improvement of the professional development and compensation provided to their teachers. At the same time, the *Widget Effect* (2009) was released. This report examined the evaluation systems of 12 districts and found that 99% of teachers received a satisfactory rating when evaluated. Discussion began to emerge about the flawed teacher evaluation systems that did little to improve teacher practice and student achievement.

In 2012, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Waivers were instated. These waivers allowed states to apply for flexibility from the requirements of NCLB through the development of comprehensive plans to improve the quality of instruction and minimize the achievement and equity gaps within the state. Within these comprehensive plans, states would be required to develop teacher evaluation systems that included student achievement data and student growth measures. Additionally in 2014, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) required states to submit educator equity plans to address the inequities found in schools with disadvantaged youth and to reinforce the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 and 2012.

National Perspective of Teacher Evaluation Policies

Federal policies such as Race to the Top and others encouraged states to begin to make changes to their teacher evaluation systems. Nationally, there seemed to be a focus on the inclusion of student achievement as a component of teacher evaluation

within these federal initiatives. Between 2009 and 2015, "28 states enacted teacher evaluation laws requiring that objective measures of student achievement be included in teacher evaluations" (Pennington & Mead, 2016, p. 3). Additionally, there has been a debate on whether it is appropriate to hold teachers accountable or include student achievement into the teacher evaluation systems, but to date 43 states require student growth within their teacher evaluation systems (Pennington & Mead, 2016).

The United States Department of Education (2019) noted that there are differing evaluation processes across the states since ESSA provides for greater flexibility amongst the states and less federal oversight within these policies. Ohio and Florida have delayed implementation of updated evaluation processes due to changes in their state testing system. Others like Kansas, New Hampshire, Wyoming, Alabama, and Texas has submitted waivers to put off the development of state policies. South Carolina, Utah, and Wisconsin have developed teacher effectiveness policies without student achievement in spite of the federal push for this measure (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015). Not all states require teachers or principals to be evaluated annually, nor do they define how student achievement will be included in the teacher or principal evaluation. The National Council of Teacher Quality (2015) reviewed teacher evaluation policies of all 50 states and found that only five states: California, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, and Vermont have no formal policy for evaluating teacher effectiveness. Figure 1 provides an overview of each state's evaluation policies.

	State requires *annual* evaluations for *all* teachers	State requires annual evaluations for *all* principals	State specifies that teacher evaluations are to be "*significantly*" informed by student achievement/growth		State requires that student achievement/growth is the *preponderant criterion* in teacher evaluations	State requires that student achievement/growth is the preponderant criterion in principal evaluations.
			Explicitly defined	Not explicitly defined		
Alabama	✓	✓				
Alaska		✓			✓	✓
Arizona	✓	✓	✓			
Arkansas	✓			✓		
California						
Colorado	✓	✓			✓	✓
Connecticut	✓	✓			✓	✓
Delaware	✓	✓			✓	✓
DC	✓	✓			✓	✓
Florida	✓	✓	✓			
Georgia	✓	✓			✓	✓
Hawaii		✓			✓	✓
Idaho	✓	✓	✓			
Illinois			✓			
Indiana	✓	✓		✓		
Iowa		✓				
Kansas				✓		
Kentucky		✓			✓	✓
Louisiana	✓	✓			✓	✓
Maine				✓		
Maryland	✓	✓		✓		
Massachusetts						
Michigan					✓	✓
Minnesota		✓	✓			
Mississippi	✓	✓			✓	✓
Missouri				✓		
Montana						
Nebraska						
Nevada	✓	✓	✓			
New Hampshire						
New Jersey	✓	✓	✓			
New Mexico	✓	✓			✓	✓
New York	✓	✓			✓	✓
North Carolina	✓	✓			✓	✓
North Dakota	✓	✓				
Ohio	✓	✓	✓			✓
Oklahoma		✓			✓	✓
Oregon				✓		
Pennsylvania	✓	✓			✓	✓
Rhode Island		✓	✓			
South Carolina		✓				
South Dakota				✓		
Tennessee	✓	✓			✓	✓
Texas		✓				
Utah	✓	✓				
Vermont						
Virginia			✓			
Washington	✓	✓				
West Virginia	✓	✓				
Wisconsin						✓
Wyoming	✓					
TOTAL	27	34	10	8	17	19

Figure 1. Overview of state evaluation policies for identifying effective teachers and leaders. Reprinted from Doherty, K., Jacobs, S. (2015). *State of the states 2015: Evaluating teaching, leading and learning*. National Council on Teacher Quality. (p. 4).

Texas' Perspective of Teacher Evaluation Policies

In response to these federal policy changes and the requirements imposed by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), Texas submitted the State Plan to Ensure the Equitable Access to Excellent Educators to the USDE in 2015. Within the introduction of the plan, it was noted that "the most accurate means of identifying an excellent educator is through a well-designed teacher evaluation system using classroom observations and multiple measures" (Texas Education Agency, 2015, p. 2). The report also indicated that the state was currently in the "process of developing and piloting such an evaluation system" (Texas Education Agency, 2015, p. 2). The state plan described the initiative as the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and stated that this process would allow Texas administrators to accurately identify excellence in educators by determining where a teacher performs on a "continuum of excellence" (Texas Education Agency, 2015, p. 6).

Thus, the new teacher evaluation system was developed in Texas as a strategy to positively impact the achievement of disadvantaged youth through increasing all Texas students' "equitable access to excellent educators" (Texas Education Agency, 2015, p. 21). The T-TESS system was heralded by TEA (2015) as the "most promising of initiatives" (p. 24) because it would help both the teachers and administrators within Texas schools to determine the training needed to accelerate an educator's growth. The T-TESS was first piloted in 2014-2015 and was fully implemented across the state in 2016-2017 (Texas Education Agency, 2016). The state plans to seek feedback on the implementation of this new system in order to refine the program as needed.

The Texas Education Agency (2015) has deemed the T-TESS as one of the "most promising of initiatives" (p. 24) indicating that it will improve educator excellence, and decrease the inequities found in schools with poor and minority students because it is focused on teacher growth. The components of classroom observations and feedback necessary to teacher evaluation systems (Anast-May, Penick, Schroyer, & Howell, 2011; O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Range, Hewitt, &Young, 2014; Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003) can be found within the evaluation process of the T-TESS; however it is yet to be determined if the design of this process is perceived as fair by those who participate in it. It is within this context that the researcher will conduct a case study to learn the experiences of teachers and administrators during the appraisal process of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System.

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice concentrates on the perceptions of how decisions are made (Poole, 2008) and how processes are applied to employees (Cropanzano et al. 2001). When employees perceive the actions of the managers as fair, it creates trust in the organization and "helps create a culture of justice" (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007, p. 40). Procedural justice emphasizes the voice principle, or participation in the decision-making process (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). The voice an individual has during the decision making process; the influence the person has; and the perception of how the manager adheres to a fair process are integral to procedural justice (Colquitt, 2001; Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). Greenberg (1990) concluded that there was a high correlation between an employee's perception of fairness and their ability to express

their feelings or give input about the evaluation. Appraisal processes should be designed to encourage the voice of the employee as this has been found to increase job satisfaction and a sense of fairness about the process resulting in more motivated employees (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007).

Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland (2007) described a just or fair process as one that is "applied consistently to all, free of bias, accurate, representative of relevant stakeholders, correctable, and consistent with ethical norms." Further, they maintained that just procedures can "mitigate the ill effects of unfavorable outcomes" (p. 38). Administrative procedures should make employees "want what the system wants"; thus, encouraging greater loyalty and support for the organization (Poole, 2008, p. 26). Organizational procedures should create trust and commitment to the organization (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007), encourage employees to accept the decisions of their managers, and see them as positive for the organization (Hendrix et al., 1998; Tuytens & Devos, 2012). Conversely, procedural injustice produces emotional distress that creates distrust and resentment which ultimately will reduce cooperation of workers within the organization (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). Procedures must be designed properly or they will create more problems for the organization.

When evaluating teachers' perceptions of justice during the appraisal process, Tutyens and Devos (2012) suggested that researchers should use the lens of procedural justice as it has been shown to be important to the evaluation process. Typically, teachers do not receive extrinsic rewards such as bonus pay or increased benefits. Instead, the teachers' reward is found in the feedback and rating assigned during the

evaluation process (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Riordan et al., 2015). Teachers desire

an evaluation system that will support them in their professional growth through an

appraisal process that provides meaningful feedback from their principal. Cohen-

Charash and Spector (2001) noted that procedural justice "may affect performance

through its effects on attitudes" (p. 285), and that the relationship between the employee,

the organization, and its processes are key to creating a positive, trusting environment.

Few studies have been conducted investigating the issue of fairness in teacher

evaluations. Zainalipour, Fini, and Mirkamali (2010) found that perceptions of fairness

were linked with positive job satisfaction in teachers. Additionally, a 2015 study

reported that when teachers feel that the behavior of their administrator is fair and just, it

led to an increase in job performance and loyalty to the organization (Ibeogu & Ozturen,

2015). The inclusion of a clearly defined process and procedures during the appraisal

process has been shown to increase perceptions of fairness (Kataoka, Cole, & Flint,

2006), and this view of procedural justice can help teachers accept a less favorable

teacher appraisal (Tuytens & Devos, 2012).

Narcisse and Harcourt (2008) stated that evaluating the employees' perceptions

of fairness of their appraisal is helpful in determining the success of the appraisal

system, and it is within this context that this study will investigate the procedural

fairness of the new T-TESS appraisal system. Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) found

that procedural justice was the best indicator of work performance, and it is evident that

the Texas Education Agency has designed an evaluation system that they believe will

assist the state in building more effective educators. Therefore, for the purposes of this

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study, it will focus on the application of procedural justice during the evaluation process of teachers under the newly adopted Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). It is important to provide insight into the implementation of the appraisal process during the initial years of implementation in order to inform the work of the practitioners in the field. It is the goal of the researcher to evaluate the T-TESS system through the lens of procedural justice theory by collecting the perspectives of the teachers and administrators who participate in this process.

However, within this framework, there must be a measure to guide how a teacher determines if a process is fair. Leventhal's seminal work (1976) identified six rules that define the criteria a procedure must meet in order to be perceived as fair. They are: (1) consistency; (2) bias suppression; (3) accuracy; (4) representativeness: (5) correctability; (6) and ethics. These attributes or rules have been used by researchers in the field to define how people determine the fairness of a procedure or process and assess their perceptions (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001; Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007; Greenberg, 2011). In 2011, Greenberg summarized the years of research which utilized Leventhal's rules by defining these factors as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Leventhal's Rules

Rule	Description
Consistency	Procedures should be consistent across time and persons
Bias Suppression	Procedures should not be affected by personal self-interest or blind allegiance to existing preconceptions

Table 2. Continued

Rule	Description
Accuracy	Procedures should be based on valid information, with a minimum of bias
Correctability	Procedures should contain an opportunity to modify or reverse decisions (e.g. appeals and grievances)
Representativeness	Procedures should reflect the basic concerns, values, and outlooks of the individuals who are affected by them
Ethics	Procedures should be in keeping with the moral and ethical values held by the individuals involved

Adapted from Greenberg, J. (2011). Organizational justice: the dynamics of fairness in the workplace. In S. Zedeck, & S. Zedeck (Ed) (Eds.), (pp. 271-327). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

It is within this theoretical framework that the study will examine the procedures associated with the teacher evaluation system in Texas. Teachers and the administrators that evaluate them will be asked to examine their experiences within the evaluation system and measure their experiences based on Leventhal's rules (1976). By utilizing Leventhal's framework, the researcher will apply research-based criteria to obtain much needed insight into the T-TESS process and inform both the Texas administrators currently using this tool, as well as extend the research concerning teachers and the appraisal process. Utilizing a case study approach to the research, the researcher plans to survey the teachers' perceptions of fairness and consequently gain insight into the implementation of a new appraisal process during an academic school year.

Leventhal's framework (1976) provides a measure to evaluate the procedural fairness of the T-TESS process. These criteria will supply a lens for the teachers within the study to determine if the procedures required by the new appraisal system are fair. The literature review clearly outlined that teachers seek a voice, and the ability to

participate within the evaluation process. Teachers desire feedback from their

principals, and expect their principals to be knowledgeable about their pedagogical

practices. Therefore, we must determine if the T-TESS system that TEA has developed

will support the growth and development Texas teachers. Leventhal's (1976) criteria of

(1) consistency; (2) bias suppression; (3) accuracy; (4) representativeness: (5)

correctability; (6) and ethics will provide the definitive attributes to frame the teachers'

perceptions of the T-TESS process. By utilizing this framework, the researcher will

apply a research-based, validated instrument to measure the teachers' perceptions of

fairness during their evaluation process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was (a) to examine the experiences of teachers and administrators during the implementation of the new Texas teacher appraisal system T-TESS and (b) to determine the teachers' perceptions of fairness of the new appraisal system. In this chapter, the research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis will be discussed.

Research Approach

This study employed a case study design for the research study. Hays and Singh (2012) insisted that case studies are the "optimal research tradition" to use when educators wish to answer "how or why" questions (p. 44). Creswell (2003) suggested that case studies are strategies of inquiry that allow researchers to "explore processes, activities, and events" (p. 183). This universal research tradition requires the phenomenon to have distinct boundaries such as time, event, or process, and allows the researcher to study the phenomenon in its natural context (Hays & Singh, 2012).

The study employed a case study design because it provided the structure that was necessary to meet the needs of the study. Using the case study design, the researcher was able to capture the perceptions of teachers and principals during the implementation of the T-TESS evaluation system during the course of an academic school year. Each teacher and administrator participated in a T-TESS training and the teachers were evaluated by the T-TESS appraisal system. The intent of the study was to

determine the teachers' perceptions of fairness as they participated in the appraisal process.

Data Sources

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was the sampling strategy for this study. This strategy required the researcher to establish a specific set of criteria for obtaining information from the population, and was an excellent way to "build rigor into your sampling strategy" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 164). Purposive sampling was needed within this case study as the purpose was not to "generalize the findings to a broad population," but instead "maximize discovery" of themes within a "particular context" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 82). The initial criterion of this sample was an elementary campus where teachers and administrators (a) have more than one year of experience with T-TESS; and (c) were currently participating in the T-TESS appraisal system at the time of the study. This criterion was set in place to investigate the experiences of a faculty beyond the initial implementation year and the overwhelming changes associated with teachers and principals learning a new appraisal system.

Selection of Site

The selection site was selected based on multiple criteria. The site must be currently participating in T-TESS implementation. The researcher has chosen to select an elementary school since the majority of the research on teacher appraisals has occurred at the secondary level. The researcher sought permission from a Central Texas school district to conduct the study at one of its 11 elementary schools. The elementary

school that was selected is a K-5 campus consisting of 765 students located in Central Texas. Each grade level averaged about 125 students per grade level. The ethnic distribution of the student body consisted of: 45.5% Hispanic; 43.0% White; 5% African American; 4.8% Two or More Races; and 1.2% Asian. 65.4% of the students are economically disadvantaged with 15.6% students labeled English learners; 12.3% of students enrolled in special education; and 5.2% of students labeled gifted and talented. The professional staff of the school was comprised of 47 teachers; 1 instructional coach; 1 part-time librarian; 1 counselor; and 2 full time administrators. The ethnicity of the teaching staff was predominately white with 37 white teachers; 9 Hispanic teachers; and 1 African American teacher. There were 44 female teachers and 3 male teachers. The campus administrators, librarian, instructional coach, and counselor were all female as well.

The elementary campus was recently opened in 2014 as part of the long range plan to accommodate the growth of the school district. The current principal is only the second principal to serve this campus, and she was previously the assistant principal on the same campus. In fact, the teachers of the campus indicated a strong support for the campus principal remarking that they had chosen her to lead the campus. The administrative team has been serving on this campus for multiple years which has created a stable environment for the faculty and students. Additionally, the staff at the elementary school is relatively stable with minimal turnover in their teaching staff.

The elementary school is considered to be a high achieving campus, earning a met standard rating with 5 distinctions in the Texas accountability system. Of note, this

campus earned a distinction for the academic growth of its students and closing the achievement gap between the minority and white students. This type of achievement is indicative of a school culture that meets the needs of all learners and is inclusive of all students. There is a sense of positive culture among the teaching staff as well as a positive image amongst the community about the effectiveness of both the school and the school district.

Participants

9 of the 47 staff members responded to the survey. 2 of these participants failed the screening process during the survey because they were either not currently participating in the T-TESS appraisal system or had not participated in it the previous school year. All participants were female with the following ethnic breakdown: (a) 14% Asian; (b) 43% White; (c) 29% Hispanic; and (d) 14% African American. 57% of the teachers had 6-10 years of experience in teaching. 1 teacher had 1-5 years of experience; 1 teacher had 11-15 years of experience; and 1 teacher had 16-20 years of experience. All teaching grade levels were represented in this participant group. Of the 7 staff members, 4 were chosen to participate in the follow-up interviews. In order to obtain the perspectives of a diverse group, teachers were chosen based on their ethnicity, years of experience, and grade level of instruction.

The appraisers of these teaching participants were also included as part of the sampling process. These participants were necessary to the study in order to capture the perspectives of both the principal and the teacher in the appraisal process. The school counselor and the instructional coach were also included in the interview process in

order to hear the voices of administrative staff that do not directly evaluate using the T-TESS appraisal instrument, but have daily interactions with both the teachers and administrators. Based on the necessity for "quality not quantity", the sample was limited for the interviews to four teaching participants, the campus administrators, the instructional coach, and the school counselor to provide an opportunity for more "information richness" than "information volume." (Erlandson, et al, 1993, p. 84).

Data Collection

The researcher used multiple methods of data collection including open ended surveys, semi-structured interviews, and a review of documents distributed to teachers about the campus appraisal process. These multiple methods were used in an effort to triangulate the data and achieve better results (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Survey Instrument

An open ended survey was adapted from Colquitt (2001) to survey the teachers and principals at the elementary campus. This survey was created and validated by Colquitt in 2001, and in its entirety addresses all four areas of organizational justice. The purpose of the survey was to create a reliable measure that would accurately determine an employee's perspective of organizational justice. Colquitt (2001) created questions to assess the perceptions of justice in the area of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice based on the research surrounding organizational justice. Colquitt conducted multiple studies to validate the survey, and since 2001, this survey has been widely used by researchers and has even been translated into six languages. Greenburg (2011) noted that the instrument gave researchers a tool

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to "measure justice perceptions with confidence," and had stimulated research in organizational justice due to its "convertible measure" (p. 293). The constructs are easily adjusted to align with the issues or situation being addressed. The researcher can simply substitute the appropriate words or phrases within the stem to make the questions more applicable to the process or procedure being studied.

Seven questions from the Colquitt (2001) survey were adapted for use in the open-ended survey in order to assess the teachers' perceptions of procedural justice. Colquitt's (2001) questions were aligned to Leventhal's rules or criteria for determining if a procedure is fair (1976). Each of the questions addressed one of the criteria that must be met to determine if a process is fair. Leventhal's (1976) criteria of (1) consistency; (2) bias suppression; (3) accuracy; (4) representativeness: (5) correctability; (6) and ethics are included in the survey with two questions addressing the criteria of representativeness. Due to the flexibility of the survey, the researcher used the seven questions aligned to Leventhal's criteria as the basis for the open-ended survey and wording was slightly adjusted with the inclusion of the word "appraisal" and "T-TESS evaluation". The remaining questions addressing distributive or interactional justice were not included in the survey as those questions did not support the intent of the study to examine procedural justice. Table 3 shows the open ended questions used to solicit the teacher's responses.

Table 3. Open-Ended Questionnaire

Questions
Have you been able to express your views and feelings during the appraisal process?
Have you had influence over the appraisal ratings arrived at by the T-TESS evaluation process?
Has the appraisal process been applied consistently?
Has the appraisal process been based on accurate information?
Have you been able to appeal the rating arrived at by the appraisal process?
Has the appraisal process upheld ethical and moral standards?
Would you be willing to participate in a follow up interview?

The use of an open-ended survey provided the researcher with the ability to allow every staff member who met the sampling criteria the opportunity to participate in the study. Directions were given to the teachers to complete the questions based on their personal experiences with the appraisal process. Participants were asked to answer questions concerning their years of experience, age, ethnicity, and grade level or teaching subject area as well.

The first step in the qualitative data collection process included an orientation session at the campus to explain the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of the responses, and the administration of the open-ended surveys. Teachers received a copy of the open-ended survey and the informed consent document at that time, and it was communicated that participation in the study was voluntary. The survey instrument was then emailed to each of the staff members. Since the survey was open-ended, and the goal was to allow reflection on their experiences, the teachers were given multiple weeks

to complete the survey and return it. Email reminders were sent to the campus principal asking her to send to staff to encourage the completion of the survey.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Once the questionnaires were returned, the researcher identified four teachers who were willing to be interviewed for further clarification of their experiences. Interviews are the preferred method of research among qualitative studies, and beneficial in obtaining information within a case study design (Hays & Singh, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Individual semi-structured interviews were administered, and participants were asked clarifying questions developed to extend or understand the information provided in the open-ended survey. These interviews provided information about the T-TESS process through the filter of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 1998). The semi-structured interviews conducted with the four teachers focused on seeking additional information on the teacher's influence on each component of the T-TESS process, specifically goal setting, the observation, and the student growth measure. Participants were also asked to clarify any comments they submitted in response to the survey.

Research has shown that judgements of procedural justice have been influenced by the participants' view of their ability to participate in the decision-making process (Colquitt & Greenberg, 2005), and it this through this lens the semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather additional information about the teachers' experiences. Each interview allowed the researcher to investigate the roles of the teachers and administrators in the decision-making process as well as determine if the procedures

used were considered just by the participants. Poole (2008) found that just procedures can minimize negative effects of an unfavorable outcome as well as lead to a greater trust within the organization, and it was the desire of the researcher to determine through the interview process the teacher's perceptions of the fairness of the T-TESS procedures.

These sessions were audio-taped for accuracy and transcribed. The researcher prepared probes in the instance that the interviewer needed to make adjustments during the interview process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Each interview was concluded with a question inquiring if the participant would like to add any other information to the interview. This was an important inclusion as it allowed the participant to express his/ her voice, and this is a necessary component of case study methodology (Hays & Singh, 2012). Interviews with the campus administrators followed the same format as the teachers with a focus on the administrator's perceptions of the teachers' experiences and their role of support. Administrators, the instructional coach, and the school counselor were interviewed at the same time as the teachers to allow for an accurate picture of both teacher and administrators' perceptions. Interviews were held on-site in the teacher's classroom or a common area used for staff development or teacher planning in order to assist in making the participants "comfortable in talking about their experiences in the interview setting" (Olson, 2011, p. 55).

Documents

The researcher requested the seminal documents distributed to teachers by the administrative team surrounding the T-TESS system during the interview process. Additionally, the researcher requested a copy of the teacher's evaluation documents for

review. The participants had the option to refuse to provide this documentation during the follow-up interview. These written materials were used as a "supplemental data collection" (p. 284) method to aid the researcher in understanding the "culture and context of the participant's experiences" (p. 287) during the implementation of the appraisal process as well as review the actual documentation provided on the teacher's performance (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Data Analysis

Once the surveys were collected, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted with the initial data. The data was reviewed to identify and categorize the demographic data of each participant. Additionally, a summary of each participant response to the survey question was created, and the descriptive statistics were calculated for each survey question to determine the frequency of the responses. Then, the researcher applied a qualitative thematic strategy to analyze the open ended responses from the surveys as well as the transcriptions from each interview.

Utilizing Leventhals' rules in Table 4 below (1976), the responses were coded from the survey, the interview transcripts, and the T-TESS documentation based on each theme.

Table 4. Leventhal's Rules

Rule	Description
Consistency	Procedures should be consistent across time and persons
Bias Suppression	Procedures should not be affected by personal self-interest or blind allegiance to existing preconceptions
Accuracy	Procedures should be based on valid information, with a minimum of bias
Correctability	Procedures should contain an opportunity to modify or reverse decisions (e.g. appeals and grievances)
Representativeness	Procedures should reflect the basic concerns, values, and outlooks of the individuals who are affected by them
Ethics	Procedures should be in keeping with the moral and ethical values held by individuals involved

Adapted from Greenberg, J. (2011). Organizational justice: the dynamics of fairness in the workplace. In S. Zedeck, & S. Zedeck (Ed) (Eds.), (pp. 271-327). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Miles and Huberman (1984) suggested that an ideal model for data collection and data analysis is one that allows the researcher an opportunity to "cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new-- often better--data" (p. 49). At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher analyzed the transcripts using Leventhal's framework as well as analyzing any supporting documentation provided by the teachers or administrators to determine what evidence emerged aligned to the themes. At the conclusion of the data collection process, the initial analysis was reviewed then to determine if any new themes arose.

Data Management

In order to maintain this ongoing data analysis process, field notes were completed after each interview. Transcripts were created for each interview as well, with careful notation of the participant's nonverbal cues. As the data was collected, they

were analyzed using a system to reduce the data and eliminate redundancies, and organizational tools were created to assist in the identification of possible themes (Hays & Singh, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Boyatzis, 1998).

Coding and Possible Themes

Once all the semi-structured interviews and the initial analysis of the qualitative data had been completed, the process of identifying possible codes and themes associated with the data began. An elaborative coding method was used during the second cycle coding process to "refine the theoretical constructs" of the previous research conducted on fairness in the workplace (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013, (p. 15).

Using the lens of Leventhal's rules (1976) of (1) consistency; (2) bias suppression; (3) accuracy; (4) representativeness: (5) correctability; (6) and ethics, the researcher analyzed the data to identify if these criteria were found in the teachers' experiences. Leventhal's rules focused on the important procedural elements that must be found in processes in order to be deemed fair. Greenberg (1990) noted that Leventhal's criteria focused on the most important elements needed to evaluate the fairness of procedures, and created a measure in which we can determine procedural justice. Procedural justice occurs when there are normed or accepted principles that encourage fairness. It has been found that when Leventhal's six rules are followed, it "yields procedures that are considered fairer than otherwise would have been the case." (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Thus, the researcher employed these criteria when analyzing the experiences of the teachers under the new T-TESS appraisal processes.

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Applying this framework to their experiences allowed the researcher to determine if the processes were just or unjust based on the teachers' perceptions.

These methods provided insight into understanding what the teachers' perceptions of fairness were when participating in the new appraisal system. Analyses of the documents associated with T-TESS on the campus were analyzed based on this framework as well. From this analysis, the data was codified and clear themes supporting each of Leventhal's (1976) criteria emerged.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

In an effort to maximize trustworthiness of the study, the researcher employed multiple methods accepted by the qualitative community. Both the sampling method and data collection process was aligned to the methodology of a case study. Hays and Singh (2012) stated that the "role of the researcher is an integral part of qualitative inquiry"; therefore, "keeping adequate notes and reflections throughout the research process is imperative" (p. 205). Reflective field notes were kept throughout the process to assist with the data being as comprehensive as possible.

Another strategy employed in order to maintain trustworthiness of the data collected was member checking. This process allowed the participant to clarify participant responses and insure the data collected was an accurate depiction of his/her experience (Hays & Singh, 2012). Each teacher and campus administrator was emailed his/her transcript and allowed to verify the information and/ or possible themes as the data was analyzed.

Each of these strategies was used in order to triangulate the data and maximize the trustworthiness of the study. These methods were administered at different times throughout the data collection and analysis process to provide a greater validation of the findings of the study.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used in the development of this dissertation. The terms are relevant to understanding of the research and the findings.

Administrators

Administrators in Texas K-12 schools are defined as leaders who hold positions as principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches.

Appraisal System

An appraisal system is the process in which K-12 teachers are evaluated on their job performance. The appraisal system in Texas consists of goal setting, a preconference, an observation, and end of year evaluation. Teachers are assigned ratings based on their performance. For the purpose of this research, appraisal system and evaluation system is used interchangeably.

Appraisers

Appraisers are educators who hold a valid Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System certification and have been approved by the local school board as an appraiser for the school district. An appraiser's role is the conduct the pre-conference, observation, and complete summative evaluation documents during the school year for a K-12 public school teacher.

Evaluation System

An evaluation system is the process in which K-12 teachers are assessed on their job performance. The evaluation system in Texas consists of goal setting, a preconference, an observation, and end of year evaluation. Teachers are assigned ratings based on their performance. For the purpose of this research, appraisal system and evaluation system is used interchangeably.

Equity

Equity or equitable access is defined as the opportunity for poor or minority children to have similar opportunities as their advantaged counterparts. This equates to effective teachers and schools that are properly trained to meet the needs of disadvantaged youth.

Fairness or Justice

For the purpose of this research, fairness and justice are used interchangeably. Procedures are deemed as fair to the extent that they are consistent, lack bias, accurate, correctable, representative of the values of the persons involved , and ethical (Colquitt & Greenberg, 2005).

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice addresses the fairness of the procedures used to determine an outcome (Hendrix et al, 1998). Procedural justice is determined by evaluating a process to determine if it has been "applied consistently to all, free of bias, accurate, representative of relevant stakeholders, correctable, and consistent with ethical norms" (Cropanzo, Bowen, & Gililand, 2007, p. 38).

Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency is part of the state government that oversees public education in Texas.

Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System (T-TESS)

The Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System is the teacher evaluation process created by the Texas Education Agency. This process includes (a) rubric with five levels of performance to allow administrators and teachers to differentiate instructional practices; (b) a teacher self-assessment that allows teachers to determine their professional development goals; and (c) a student growth measure that includes a value-add model. This evaluation system was implemented state-wide in the 2016-2017 academic school year (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS)

The Professional Development and Appraisal System, implemented in 1997, is the Texas Education Agency's approved instrument for evaluating teachers. This evaluation process includes a forty-five minute evaluation where domains are scored to support the identification of further professional development for the teacher, and a teacher self-report form. The fifty-one indicators in the eight domains are aligned to the Proficiencies of Learner-Centered Instruction adopted by the State Board of Education in 1997 (Region 13, 2016)

Researcher's Bias

As the researcher in this study, I also serve as a T-TESS evaluator at the district level. I work closely with campus principals in training them on the components of T-

TESS and support the campus implementation of this system. I have served on focus groups at the educational service center to provide input during the refinement year of the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 pilot years of T-TESS.

I have controlled for this limitation by selecting the site for the study to be one where I am unknown to the campus personnel. I signed a confidentiality statement to protect the participant identity and responses. I used member checking to allow participants to review all responses throughout the data collection process (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Limitations

The study conducted has some limitations. A case study design was employed during the study; therefore any generalization to an entire population will not be possible. Additionally, the sample of the participants was drawn from one elementary school in central Texas; therefore the results may not be generalized to teachers at other levels or within other school districts across the state. Additionally, the teachers volunteered to participate in the study. Some teachers who provided feedback during the survey process refused to participate in the follow-up interviews. Thus, the data provided within the study may not fully explain the views of the participants. This study was also conducted during the second year of the implementation of the T-TESS evaluation system. Therefore, the implementation of the process may have some variances between administrators and teachers based on the newness of this process.

Delimitations

The delimitations utilized by the researcher in this study were determined by a desire to capture the perceptions of teachers who are participating in the teacher evaluation system. In order to categorize these experiences, the researcher chose to utilize a case study design to limit the time boundary to an academic school year; therefore the researcher conducted the study using one school. A second delimitation used by the researcher was to the use of an elementary school as the site of the case study. An elementary school was chosen due to the limited research surrounding the experiences of teachers within the appraisal system. Few studies have been conducted and those few were associated with secondary schools.

Assumptions

This study was based on several assumptions. The first assumption was that the data gathered from the participants would be accurate. It was also assumed that the T-TESS evaluation system was implemented with fidelity within the school district where the data were collected. Furthermore, teachers and administrators would be honest in their responses to the survey questions and the during the interview process.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the teachers' experiences when participating in the new Texas teacher appraisal system, and specifically to determine the teachers' perceptions of fairness. In order to provide a framework in which to measure the teacher's perceptions, the researcher used Leventhal's six rules (1976) to categorize the teachers' responses and determine if the procedures used in the T-TESS system were perceived as fair.

System satisfaction is highly related to procedural justice (Greenberg, 1990). Therefore in order to determine if the new T-TESS evaluation system can support the system of teaching and learning in the state of Texas, it must be examined to see if the procedures are considered just by the teachers who participate within the processes. Procedural justice examines the relationship between the employee, the organization, and its processes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Each of the survey questions was aligned to one of Leventhal's rules (1976) of (1) consistency; (2) bias suppression; (3) accuracy; (4) representativeness: (5) correctability; (6) and ethics, and the follow-up interviews sought to delve deeper into the teachers' perceptions of the organization and its processes. Procedural justice is determined by evaluating a process to determine if it has been "applied consistently to all, free of bias, accurate, representative of relevant stakeholders, correctable, and consistent with ethical norms" (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007, p. 38). This chapter contains the analysis of both the quantitative and

qualitative data collected and the themes that emerged based on Leventhal's criteria

(1976) for measuring procedural justice.

Survey Results

The open-ended survey was completed by 9 of the 47 staff members at the

elementary campus. All participants were female. 2 of the responses were not included

in the analysis below as they did not meet the selection criteria. The ethnic breakdown

of the participants included 43% White; 29% Hispanic; 14% Asian; and 14% African

American. 57% of the teachers had 6-10 years of experience in teaching. 1 teacher had

1-5 years of experience; 1 teacher had 11-15 years of experience; and 1 teacher had 16-

20 years of experience. 57% of the teachers taught grades three through five; 29% of the

teachers taught all grade levels (kindergarten through fifth); and 14% of the teachers

taught grades kindergarten through second.

The descriptive statistical analysis of the frequency of responses is shown below

in Table 5.

Table 5. Survey Results

Question	Yes	No	Undetermined
Have you been able to express your views and feelings during the appraisal process? (*Representativeness*)	100%		
Have you had influence over the appraisal ratings arrived by the T-TESS evaluation process? (*Representativeness*)	71%		29%
Has the appraisal process been applied consistently (*Consistency*)	57%	43%	
Has the appraisal process been free of bias? (*Bias suppression*)	100%		
Has the appraisal process been based on accurate information? (*Accuracy*)	57%	14%	29%
Have you been able to appeal the rating arrived at by the appraisal process? (*Correctability*)	14%		86%
Has the appraisal process upheld ethical and moral standards? (*Ethics*)	86%	14%	

The statistical analysis revealed that the participants have a positive view of the fairness of the procedures in the areas of representativeness; bias suppression; and ethicality. There seemed to be a greater disparity on the perception of fairness when determining if the appraisal process was applied consistently or if it was based on accurate information. In the area of correctability, the data revealed that only 14% felt that they had the ability to appeal a rating given during the rating process. However, this statistic may be misleading as 57% of the participants cited "no need to appeal" in their comments suggesting that this was unnecessary to their T-TESS experience.

Along with each question, the participants were asked to explain their answer with the addition of a "Why or Why not" question. The answers provided by the participants were included in the thematic coding of the qualitative data collected during the interviews. The findings of the qualitative data have been summarized by each of the criteria aligned to Leventhal's framework.

<center>**Qualitative Data**</center>

The qualitative data collected after the initial survey was used to both validate the survey results and further investigate the participants' perceptions of fairness of the T-TESS evaluation system. By comparing the participants' experiences to Leventhal's rules (1976), the researcher was able to create a match to the interview data and provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of each participant. A summary of the qualitative findings are found below.

The qualitative data revealed there were positive perceptions of procedural justice in the areas of representativeness, consistency, lack of bias, correctability, and

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ethics which was consistent with the quantitative findings of the survey. Teachers indicated the procedures were representative of their views because they had opportunities to collaborate with their appraiser and discuss both the process and the ratings throughout the school year. Teachers felt they had a sense of control during the process which supported their positive feelings of procedural justice in the area of representativeness. Teachers and administrators shared that the process had a high level of consistency. This consistency was supported through the standardized procedures and documents used by all teachers and administrators, as well as the consistent communication about the expectations associated with the process. Teachers perceived a lack of bias in the ratings they received throughout the process which supported a positive perception of procedural justice. Teachers concluded that ratings were based on only the evidence collected by their appraiser through the classroom observations and/ or evidence provided by the teacher. Teachers indicated the ratings were objectively based, and were not influence by the appraiser's personal opinions about the teacher. There was a strong perception of ethical standards during the T-TESS appraisal system. Teachers reported that there was a clearly defined process that was followed by all staff members. This positive view of ethical processes led to both teachers and administrators reporting a trusting culture on their campus.

In the area of accuracy, there seemed to be possible concerns by some of the teachers about procedural injustice which was consistent with the data reported during the initial survey. Most teachers reported that the appraisal ratings they were given were accurate because they were shared "verbatim" with the teachers and there was

opportunities to discuss these rating prior to the final evaluation process. However,

several teachers reported a concern that the ratings were less likely to be an accurate

picture of the teacher's abilities simply due to the lack of formal observations. The T-

TESS system only requires one classroom observation, and some teachers

communicated that this was not a sufficient number of walkthroughs on which to base

their appraisal rating. These teachers advocated for on-going walkthroughs to allow

their appraisers to obtain evidence over the course of the school year before completing

the appraisal process.

The qualitative findings based on each of Leventhal's criteria (1976) are found

below.

 Representativeness

Representativeness describes procedures that "reflect the basic concerns, values,

and outlooks of the individuals that are affected by them" (Greenberg, 2011). This

concept is typically connected to the ability of the employee to express their views and

provide input during the evaluation process. Research has found that people react more

positively to decisions when they feel they have an opportunity to voice their opinion or

have some control on the decision-making process (Wu & Wang, 2013).

Based on the review of data, the qualitative findings supported the survey results.

Teachers had a positive perception of procedural justice in the area of representativeness

and this was revealed through multiple subthemes. The subthemes that emerged were

(a) collaboration; (b) open conversations; (c) and the teacher's sense of control during

the evaluation process. Collaboration and open conversations were seen through the

development of the teacher/ principal relationship that developed throughout the T-TESS appraisal process. The sense of control was noted by the teachers' ability to identify their personal goals as well as give input on their professional progress.

Teachers in the study cited the ability to share concerns and express their views during the appraisal process indicating a strong perception of representativeness during the evaluation process. One teacher noted that her administrator invited her to share her thoughts about the process; while another noted that she had discussed her ratings with her administrator. This was a surprising finding since the research surrounding teacher evaluations suggested that teachers were not afforded the opportunity to share concerns with their principals, and in fact Cooper et al. (2015) noted that teachers did not express their views during evaluations, but instead waited for the principal's perception of their performance. The opportunity to collaborate with their appraiser and discuss the components of the evaluation systems seemed to be the key to allowing the teachers to feel a sense of representativeness during the evaluation process.

Multiple teachers indicated that there were honest and open conversations with their appraisers noting that the process was "like a partnership" in which they were able to share their input. Several teachers explained that they are able to give feedback to the appraisers during the post conference explaining "we're able to have discussions after the observations." Teachers pointed out the there was a focus on "on-going conversations throughout the year" to support the teachers' development, and that these conversations were representative of their thoughts on their performance. One teacher noted,

> We're presented with the data and the scores and things like that and there's always an opportunity to have the conversation. If something needs to be changed, and we can back it up with evidence, then there are opportunities to have it changed.

This collaborative, communicative relationship with the teacher's appraiser was another significant factor in teachers feeling a strong sense of fairness. Research has shown that teachers desire opportunities to communicate with their principals and discuss their performance throughout the school year (Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003). The T-TESS appraisal process seemed to have created opportunities for both the teacher and the principal to discuss ratings and create a collegial partnership which was the initial goal of this new appraisal system.

Many teachers described this feeling of representativeness within procedural justice as a sense of control indicating that "as a classroom teacher, you have more control over what you're being appraised over or what you're being held accountable to." The concept of teachers setting their own professional goals is a new component of the T-TESS process, and yet the research tells us that goal setting and reflection are essential to the professional growth of teachers (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Allowing teachers to set their own goals both supported them growing as professionals, but also increased their sense of fairness about the appraisal process. One teacher shared that her appraiser would

> Ensure that the goals I set for myself on the T-TESS are one fair to me. [She said] we need to make sure that it's fair to you…to set goals that you can definitely prove that you achieved and share with others because then it's a learning experience.

The ownership of goal setting by the teachers allowed them to feel in control of the appraisal process which created a strong sense of procedural justice. The opportunity to participate in the appraisal process and be heard by their appraiser was instrumental in allowing the teachers to feel the evaluation process was fair and representative of their views.

The administrative team shared that the T-TESS system was structured in a way that encouraged more opportunities for the teachers to talk with their appraisers, thus increasing their opportunities for the teacher to be represented in the evaluation process. One noted that it "opened up dialogue" and "required more face to face time." The administrators felt the process encouraged them to have regular conversations about the T-TESS rubrics and the rating system. One administrator noted that the teachers were able to communicate their ideas to "make sure we have all of the information before we give them a rating." The ability of the teachers to participate in the evaluation process created an opportunity for the administrators to openly discuss teacher performance and obtain teacher feedback that minimized frustration and improved teacher morale.

Consistency

Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland (2007) define consistency as all persons being treated the same. Evaluation procedures are deemed to be fair when they are consistent; they are applied uniformly regardless of the person involved or the time of the year. Leventhal (1976) posited that a lack of consistency may cause an individual to feel "violated" (p.23). Thus, consistency is a strong indicator of procedural fairness and should be evident within the T-TESS process.

The survey data revealed a disparity with only 53% of the participants indicating the system was consistent. However, the teachers noting an inconsistency in the system were unwilling to participate in the follow-up interviews. The qualitative data below showed a positive perception of procedural justice based on the consistency of the process. The subthemes found were (a) fidelity of implementation and (b) calibration among the administrative staff.

Teachers indicated there was a strong consistency in the evaluation process due to the required timeline and procedures outlined within the T-TESS process. The participants shared that all the administrators on campus completed the major components of the appraisal system-the pre and post conference; goal setting; rating system; timeline; and their documentation was consistent. One teacher noted that the system was "black and white" and that the appraisers "follow all of the expectations." Another teacher explained that they were provided a timeline of the procedures throughout the year indicating that they would "get a newsletter" that "breaks down" the information. It should be noted that the previous appraisal system in Texas required a timeline for completing all components of the appraisal process; therefore what was most interesting about this finding is that the teachers commented on knowing the expectations and that all faculty members were required to follow the expectations indicating there may have been some unfairness associated with this process in the past.

This form of communication was essential in maintaining the teachers' perception of consistency by insuring the process was done with fidelity. Overall, the administrators appreciated the defined process within T-TESS, and felt that the teachers

were happy with the consistency. When asked if teachers would say the appraisal process has been applied consistently, one administrator noted,

> I think so. I feel like they would answer yes…I haven't had anyone feel like that or have them come to me. I feel like when they are getting appraised and having the post conference after; I haven't heard that it was not consistent. I mean I feel like they all think it was.

They indicated that they have not heard any complaints about consistency, and that there had been complaints during the previous appraisal process. In fact, one teacher noted about the processes that "I'm sure if it happened for me; that [it] should happen for everybody else." Teachers showed a strong degree of trust in their administrators to be consistent in the appraisal process which created a positive perception of procedural justice.

Additionally, the document analysis revealed that there was consistency in the documentation used to communicate teacher performance. Each teacher had the same instrument, and was supplied with evidence in each domain concerning the rating. This further supported the teachers' perception of fairness by providing a consistent form of evidence on the teacher's performance. During the administrative interviews, the appraisers concluded that the T-TESS process was consistent due to their focus on calibration by the appraisers. Both appraisers shared that they work closely together and discuss the process often to determine what it should look like on their campus. One appraiser shared that they "try to calibrate and have conversations" and that "most [teachers] say...it's pretty calibrated and fair." They felt that if the teachers compared appraisals they would find that their evaluations would be closely aligned and that the

feedback provided would be similar. The appraisers felt this was an important

component to insuring the teachers felt they were consistent and fair.

Bias Suppression

Bias Suppression or lack of bias has been defined as the factor that indicates if a

procedure is fair when it is not affected by personal self-interest or preconceived notions

(Greenberg, 2011). There is no ill-treatment or discrimination of people during the

appraisal process. Bias suppression indicates that the evaluator prevents to the best of

his/her ability the influence of personal prejudices, and does not allow preconceptions to

factor into the appraisal process (Leventhal, 1976).

Both the survey results and the qualitative data supported the teachers'

perceptions that the appraisal process was free of bias. Several subthemes were found

within the qualitative data to describe the teachers' perceptions. These subthemes were

(a) appraisals were evidence-based and (b) ratings were associated with the teacher's

professional goals. These subthemes supported the teachers' feelings of trust in their

administrators to be fair and just.

When questioned, the teachers shared that the appraisals were unbiased because

they were based on evidence collected throughout the year. This evidence was seen as

"black and white" and supportive of the ratings the teachers received. The T-TESS

appraisal system included a rubric with clearly defined indicators explaining the

expected student and teacher behaviors that should be seen during teaching and learning.

Based on the indicators seen by the appraiser, a teacher was rated as needs improvement,

developing, proficient, accomplished or distinguished. While Calabrese et al. (2004)

noted that most teachers express concerns about the subjectivity of the evaluation process and the principal' s inability to collect accurate evidence, the teachers on this campus did not share these concerns. Teachers felt that there was no bias during the appraisal process because the ratings they received were based only on their professional goals and observations from the current academic year.

One participant discussed an incident with a student that occurred earlier in the year that she felt demonstrated this lack of bias. She shared about an incident with a student

> …that resulted in a letter to my file for using inappropriate language with students. I cried and I was miserable. It was horrible. But that did not come up during my T-TESS. My T-TESS was truly about the goals set at the beginning of the year. As a matter of fact, the principal had not even told my evaluator about the letter.

The teacher was impressed that the principal had not told her appraiser about the incident and that "it had no weight or bearing on her evaluation at all." This teacher's experience affirmed her perception that the appraisal process was free from bias as she felt her appraisal ratings were not affected by the incident.

However, further analysis of the teacher's summative appraisal showed that the teacher received developing in two indicators under the domain of Professional Practices and Responsibilities. Indicator 4.1 Professional Demeanor and Ethics described the teacher as one who meets the district expectations for attendance, professional appearance, and procedural, ethical, legal, and statutory requirements. The appraiser's comment in the evidence section of the document stated the teacher "meets most professional standards." While the incident was not mentioned specifically on the

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appraisal document, it was clearly noted by the rating of developing. However, the teacher was positive about the event stating that the event "did not come up during my T-TESS" and this "made me feel really good as an educator."

The conversations led by the administrators on the specific evidence concerning performance and the high degree of trust created by perceived fair processes have allowed the teacher to continue to feel successful as an educator in spite of a rating of developing. One administrator noted,

> That's where the conversations throughout the year come in. It's not just, hey here is your appraisal, and it is really low. It's hey, we've been talking about all this stuff. I see the changes that you have made. This is where I want you to keep growing. I think that's where the conversations which builds that relationship naturally. I think that's where they're key.

In discussions with the administrative team, they agreed that the appraisal process was free from bias because a teacher's appraisal was based on factual information and "not opinion-based." They indicated there was a lack of bias due to the process being "black and white and cut and dry." In their view, the system eliminated the bias because the evaluation rubric indicated where the rating would fall. Thus, the teacher did not see the evaluation as personal or because the appraiser "doesn't like me;" it was a based on the evidence. One administrator described the evaluation process as a formula-"this is where your craft is...this is where you rank." Thus, the T-TESS appraisal process was viewed as fair since it was based on the evidence collected about the teacher's performance and not a personal opinion.

Accuracy

Accuracy is defined as correct, valid information that is without bias. In the

evaluation process, procedures are deemed accurate and fair if it is based on good

information and informed opinions (Leventhal, 1976). This criterion was clearly

connected to the methods the evaluator used to gather information in which an

employee's rating is based. Within the T-TESS system, evidence was gathered during

the classroom observations and the data associated with the teachers' goals. In order for

the procedures to be seen as fair, the evidence collected must be declared accurate.

Survey results showed that only 57% of the participants felt the process was

accurate. This disparity was also noted within the qualitative data with participants

indicating a measure of accuracy in some areas of the process, but concerns about the

observation component of T-TESS. The on-going communication between the campus

administrator and teacher during the T-TESS process was a subtheme that supported

teachers' positive perception of fairness of the accuracy of the appraisal process.

However, the teachers' concern about the observation process was another subtheme

found in the qualitative data that supported teachers' perceptions of procedural injustice

in the area of accuracy.

Interview data with teachers suggested that their appraisal process was accurate

due to the interactions the teachers had with their administrators during the school year.

The observational classroom data and corresponding conversation between the teacher

and administrator seemed to be the key to communicating the accuracy of the appraisal

rating. Teachers commented that the information and data collected during the appraisal

process was up to date and "shared verbatim" with them during the post conference. This seemed to be extremely important to the teachers that they were only rated on performance data for this school year, and that they were able to see the appraiser's evidence prior to the final rating. One teacher described this as being able to "have an open conversation about the evidence and rating." Another teacher noted,

> My appraiser and I had a very open conversation about why she picked each rating, and asked did I agree or did I disagree? And if I disagreed, please let her know that. It was a very open conversation with her, and I appreciated that.

It is no surprise that teachers wish to only be evaluated on their performance and seek to minimize the subjectivity or personal opinions of their appraisers. Tuytens and Devos (2012) found that the level of participation by the teacher in the rating process can lead to positive perceptions of procedural justice. It was evident that these teachers felt they were able to discuss both the evidence and the ratings giving them the sense that the data collected was an accurate picture of their performance.

However, the observation process seemed to be the procedure most questioned by the teachers in terms of accuracy. One comment from a participant indicated that she was not sure the appraiser was "completely focused "during the observation due to all the administrative responsibilities. Another shared that the rating was determined from only one observation and this was not enough information to base a "teacher's performance day in and day out." She stated "two visits is not enough time to make a good evaluation." These teachers commented that the goals and student data were an accurate reflection of their ability, but the appraisal was not always accurate due to the time, frequency, and notification of the process. This discrepancy concerning the

number of observations and amount of feedback has been debated for some time.

Observations and thoughtful feedback are time consuming tasks for administrators, and

many of them report that the evaluation process was too time consuming noting that it

consumed almost 10% of their professional time (Drago-Severson & Blum-Destafano,

2014). Yet, teachers argue that this work is the most important component in supporting

their professional growth. Ruffini et. al (2014) found that observations combined with

timely feedback were the most beneficial component of improving instructional practice.

It seems clear that there is a strong sense of procedural injustice surrounding the

observation process for teachers. One teacher shared,

> Administration has been in my room twice this year to watch me teach total. I
> take that as a backhanded compliment because they trust me enough to know that
> I'm doing my job, but at the same time if I was not a veteran teacher and needed
> a little more feedback or reassurance or mentoring or whatever, I wouldn't take it
> as a compliment because T-TESS, the big 45 minute observation is a
> standardized test. It's one picture of what happens in our classroom for 45
> minutes out of 173 school days…I think there's benefit in catching people when
> they're not prepared and not holding it to the same importance of the full T-
> TESS big observation.

It is clear that some teachers seek opportunities for more timely feedback and want a

principal that mentors them by providing guidance, coaching, and growth (Calebrese et

al, 2004; O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003).

The administrators posited that the information used to determine teacher ratings

was accurate because it was based on facts. They agreed that the requirement of

conferences within the T-TESS system assisted them in communicating the accuracy of

the information because it allowed them to help the teacher "understand what the

appraiser saw" and "how the teacher viewed it." The appraisers indicated that the

conversations allowed the teacher to share their interpretation of the data and the classroom observation to assist them in coming to a consensus about the evidence. The discussion of the evidence collected was seen as beneficial because the teachers seem "receptive" to the feedback, and it reaffirmed the accuracy of the final rating assigned to the teacher's performance. Interestingly, the administrators acknowledge that they can't be in "classrooms all the time" and were appreciative of a system that sets up conversations that give them "a pretty accurate snapshot" of the teacher's ability. It was clear that the administrators believed their current practice supports a fair and accurate process. However, this is definitely an area of contention amongst some of the teachers and will most likely need to be addressed. Procedural injustice can lead to both negative perceptions of the organization and counter-productive behaviors that can hurt the organization so it will be important to review this procedure during the refinement phase for T-TESS (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Correctability

Correctability is referred to as the ability for an employee to have the opportunity to appeal or grieve any decision. Greenberg (2011) extended this definition to include procedures to allow staff the opportunity to modify and/ or reverse decisions of their managers. Leventhal (1976) noted that there is a perception of greater fairness when the ability to review or modify decisions occurred throughout the evaluation process. Thus, the faculty was asked to evaluate their ability to modify or review decisions throughout the T-TESS appraisal process.

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While the survey results indicated that only 14% of the participants had been able to appeal a rating, this statistic may have been misleading as 57% shared that appealing the process had not been necessary for their experience within T-TESS. The interview data further supported this as the teachers' comments showed a positive perception of correctability throughout the process. The subthemes found within the data to support these perceptions of procedural justice were (a) the appraisers' receptiveness to concerns and (b) the ability to correct errors.

The teachers' positive perceptions of correctability were linked to their ability to make changes or adjustments to their ratings during the appraisal process. Teachers indicated that their appraiser would be receptive to listen to their concerns if they disagreed with the rating assigned, or if an error occurred during the process. A specific incident occurred during the appraisal of one teacher in that her rating was changed after her summative discussion with her evaluator. She noted,

> It was during the summative. When we were in there, we went through the ratings together, and looked at the rubric. She put down accomplished but then when I got the evaluation it was proficient. Then I just said, hey we said this, and she said oh, you're right…and she changed it.

The teacher's ability to bring her concerns to her appraiser, and have errors corrected reinforced the teachers' perception of a fair evaluation process. Document analysis revealed that the document had been edited after the date of her summative evaluation. It is evident that the teacher valued the rating she received and felt comfortable challenging her principal to correct the appraisal documentation. The appraiser's willingness to correct the rating reinforced the teacher's feeling of fairness.

This positive perception of procedural justice was due to the ability of the teacher to participate in the process and be heard when there was a concern (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

The administrators discussed that it was evident that teachers have input into the process of evaluation. "It is very clear to them that if they want to change something...they know the process and can do it." The clearly defined process for teachers to appeal or give input into the evaluation process was instrumental in supporting a positive perception of procedural justice. When a process is deemed unfair, this can lead to a negative perceptions and counter-productive work behaviors that hurt the organization (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). However, due to the opportunities for teachers to be heard and based on the responses of the administrators, teachers believed the T-TESS procedures were fair.

Administrators also believed that the teachers were more comfortable giving input due to the new system. The collaborative conversations required by the T-TESS process throughout the school year built the teacher/ principal relationship naturally and allowed the teachers to give input during the entire process. This reinforced a positive collegial relationship between the administrators and teachers and the belief that the principal was able to support the teacher's professional growth (Kowalski & Dolph, 2013). The administrative team indicated that correctability measures were afforded to the teachers, and this was evident due to the lack of appeals and grievances under the new T-TESS system. The school counselor shared,

> In the last couple of years I've not had any teachers come and have that disgruntled, you know, I don't think it's fair or what can I do to change things? I think it's very clear to them that [if] they want to change something, that they know the process and can do that; and feel comfortable doing it.

It is important to note that this perspective came from the school counselor who during her interview indicated that the teachers see her as a non-administrator or a safe person for teachers to confide in. Her perspective reinforced the teachers' comments that they had the ability to correct or influence ratings during the T-TESS appraisal process and deemed the process as just.

Ethics

Ethical procedures are ones that are aligned to the moral and ethical values held by the participants within the evaluation system (Greenberg, 2011). Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, (2007) described this as when procedures do not violate the norms of professional conduct. Fairness will be reduced when a person's sense of morality or the values of the group are violated (Leventhal, 1976). Issues of transparency, campus culture, and standardization of approach are all necessary in order to maximize the appearance of fairness during the appraisal process.

The qualitative data supported the survey results that teachers' have a strong sense of procedural justice in the area of ethics. This fairness was seen through the subthemes of (a) transparency and (b) standardization of the process. Qualitative data revealed that teachers perceived the appraisal process to be ethical due to the transparency of the administrators' actions. Teachers spoke of the clear and specific processes that were transparent to everyone on the campus. Comments such as "I think the system is great" and "they follow all of the expectations" demonstrated the teachers' confidence in both the system and their appraisers. Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland (2007) posited that employees determine organizational justice based on the moral and

ethical standing of the manager's conduct. When teachers believed that their administrators were ethical, they perceived their workplace to be just and believed they will not be exploited or harmed by their supervisor. The transparency of the leaders to be clear both in expectations and actions created trust in their supervisor and reinforced a positive perspective of procedural justice.

The standardization of the process of utilizing a timeline and the campus protocols provided support for teachers and they noted that the administrators "coached me" and "guided me" through the process. Research has shown that teachers desired appraisers that implement the evaluation processes with fidelity and were committed to supporting teachers in the professional growth (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Riordan et al., 2015; Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003). It was evident in their comments that the teachers valued the expectations that all comply with the standards and the support provided by their administrators. This was seen as an indicator of a just process.

The administrative team agreed with the faculty that the process upheld the moral and ethical standard because they followed the process the way that it was designed. At the beginning of the school year, they outlined the procedures that would be taking place, and they held each other accountable in completing the tasks throughout the school year. The assistant principal, who was new in her role, discussed the importance of working closely together as an administrative team in order to ensure the teachers were experiencing a fair T-TESS process. She commented,

> We all work as an admin team; work so closely together and have really had some really good conversations about what things need to…what things on T-TESS mean, what they look like, what that transfer looks like in the classroom…I think that's important too. You need to have that kind of

calibration with your administrative team. We talk about what it looks like and so, to see if the teachers are getting a fair T-TESS.

It was evident that fairness and ethical standards were important to the administrators, and they established routines and protocols to ensure teachers saw the T-TESS process as just.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapter, the presentation and analysis of the data was presented. Chapter V consists of a discussion of the findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research. The purpose of this chapter is to further expand upon the findings as related to previous research in teacher evaluation systems and present suggestions for future research investigating the T-TESS on a larger scale.

Discussion of Findings

The case study design of the study was utilized in order to (a) to examine the experiences of teachers during the implementation of the new Texas teacher appraisal system (T-TESS) and (b) to determine the teachers' perceptions of fairness of the new appraisal system. Specifically, the study sought to answer the question:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of fairness when participating in the T-TESS appraisal system?

Previous research indicated in order for an appraisal system to be successful, it must be fair (Mholo, 2014). In 2008, Narcisse and Harcourt suggested that appraisal systems must be evaluated based on their fairness in order to show if the process is successful in increasing the professional growth of teachers. Procedural justice has been defined as the influence an employee has during the decision-making process and the perception of how the evaluator adheres to the appraisal procedure. This perception is a strong indicator if a process is deemed fair (Colquitt, 2001 & Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). Using Leventhal's six criteria (1976), the study evaluated the teachers' perceptions of

the procedural justice applied during the T-TESS appraisal process. The section below discusses the perceptions of the classroom teachers and the relationship to previous research.

Procedural Justice

The participants within this study indicated there was a positive perception of fairness in the area of representativeness, bias suppression, correctability, and adherence to ethical standards. These findings further support the previous research concerning teacher appraisal systems. Like the study conducted by Cooper et. al. (2015), teachers indicated the importance of a collaborative relationship in which teacher voices were heard, and that constructive feedback was given on a regular basis. This study further supported the need for principals that coach and mentor providing on-going conversations about instructional growth as described by Taylor and Tyler (2012). All the participants in my study confirmed the importance of allowing the teacher to participate in the decision-making process and indicated that the T-TESS system created opportunities for them to be heard. The teachers cited opportunities to give input, influence their appraisal rating, and control their personal goal setting.

Additionally, the research indicated that teachers sought a system that was standardized and implemented with fidelity (O'Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Riordan et al., 2015; Zimmerman & Dekert-Pelton, 2003). Both teachers and administrators noted a strong adherence to the procedures and the usage of a timeline to support consistent implementation under the T-TESS appraisal system. They noted that this minimized the possibility of bias and supported the teachers' view of a just process. Ethical standards

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were described by the emphasis placed on the partnership between the appraiser and teacher and the creation of a transparent process. Similarly to the previous research, there was a strong need for a collaborative relationship that includes coaching and feedback that supported teacher growth and created a supportive environment for teachers (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). The data collected indicated further confirmation for the previous research, and supported a positive perception of fairness in some areas of Leventhal's framework (1976).

Procedural Injustice

The participants within the study indicated a perceived unfairness in the areas of accuracy and consistency under the T-TESS appraisal system. The teachers cited that the observations that occurred were not consistent and not always accurate. Ruffini et al. (2014) noted that observations and feedback were integral to improving a teacher's practice and Calabrese et al, (2004) found that some teachers doubt the principal's ability to accurately rate their teaching. Most teachers within the study spoke to importance of the observation reflecting their teaching ability, yet, several were concerned it was not an accurate picture discussing the need for a greater frequency of visits or a stronger focus by the administrator. This finding seems to support the importance of the administrator being seen as a capable evaluator and raises the question about the importance of the observation within the appraisal process of teachers.

Like Young et al.'s study (2015), classroom observations were essential to teacher growth. This finding of perceived unfairness indicates a need for further exploration in the usage of observations during the appraisal process. Research has

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shown that the observation was needed to determine what is happening within the

classroom setting, and teachers seek feedback on their practice (Ruffini et al, 2014).

However, it is still unknown how the observation should be included within the appraisal

process. Teachers within this study cited concerns about the inclusion of only one

formal observation and the rating not inclusive of their daily work. It will be important

to continue to research the unfairness associated with the classroom observation to refine

the T-TESS process and support teacher development in Texas.

Implications for Practice

The T-TESS appraisal system was developed by the Texas Education Agency in

response to the inequities of access to effective teachers for the disadvantaged youth in

Texas schools. Heralded as the "most promising of initiatives" TEA (2015, p. 24) has

stated that the T-TESS system will improve educator excellence and has placed its faith

in this system as the answer to decreasing the inequities found in schools with poor and

minority students. Thus, it behooves practicing administrators to understand the

research surrounding teacher appraisal systems and the perceptions of their teachers who

participate in this system.

The research has clearly shown that many teachers see appraisal systems as

unfair due to poor implementation by the appraiser (Poole, 2008). Yet, the information

gleaned from this research indicates that a teacher can have a positive perception of the

appraisal process when the T-TESS system is implemented with fidelity. Administrators

should be encouraged to utilize the opportunities within the system to have focused

conversations surrounding the teacher's professional growth. Often, administrators cite

a lack of time as the reason they fail to complete all of the components of the appraisal process, but the goal setting, pre and post conferences, and on-going collaborative conversations have been shown to support both a teacher's growth and his/her perception of fairness. Additionally, campus appraisers should be intentional about supporting processes that allow the teacher voice to be heard both in the decision-making process, but also in an invitation to provide input into the final ratings. These practices have been shown to suppress the implication of bias and allow the teacher to feel represented during the process.

Secondly, the Texas Education Agency should further investigate the usage of the observation within the T-TESS process and the frequency of this component throughout the year. While the research clearly shows the importance of the classroom observation in gaining evidence and providing feedback on teaching and learning, there is a need for further investigation into the number of required visits. The T-TESS tool is early in its implementation, and refinement will be necessary to decrease the possible perceptions of injustice that were revealed through this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research design of this study was limited to an elementary school in central Texas. While its findings supported the previous research, there is a need for additional work in this area. The research was focused on the implementation of the T-TESS appraisal system at the elementary level. This site was chosen because most of the research has been done at secondary schools. However, the majority of the research on the perceptions of fairness during a teacher appraisal system was also found outside of

the United States. Further research should include qualitative studies at both the secondary level within Texas and within other states with similarly required appraisal systems. This would allow for additional data to better inform the development of appraisal procedures and the training of administrators.

Researchers should also look to conduct a quantitative study on a much larger scale across the state of Texas. The open-ended survey could easily be shared with Texas school teachers in the upcoming years to evaluate the implementation of the T-TESS system across the state. This research could provide the data needed to monitor the progress of the state's implementation and better inform any refinements or additional training to support Texas administrators and teachers. Comparisons could also be drawn between campuses with differing demographics and/ or years of leadership experience of the principal to determine if these factors influence the perceptions of fairness amongst the teaching staff. Based on the initial analysis, this study was a good first step in determining the fairness of our new state system, but further research is needed to ascertain if this will truly be one of TEA's "most promising initiatives" and positively impact the equity of access for our disadvantaged students (2015, p. 22).

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