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Principals' Perspectives on the Effect of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning

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Jacqueline Bruton Wray

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Walden University

2016

Abstract

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by

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MA, Liberty University, 2008

BS, Liberty University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2016

Abstract

Standardized tests are designed to show what students have learned and retained in a classroom setting. The study examined principals' perspectives related to the impact standardized testing has on teaching and learning in Grades K-12. In addition, the correlation between principals' perceived effects of standardized tests on students' performances and principals' characteristics was investigated. Vygotsky's theory was used as theoretical framework of the study, as the theory suggested nonstandardized assessment approaches are more effective. Research questions focused on principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within the school district in North Carolina and the extent that principals' experience, type of schools, gender, and academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized tests on student performance. A quantitative method with descriptive and correlation design was used to answer the research questions. A purposeful sample of 31 participants completed the online Likert survey. Data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, and correlation tests. Findings indicated that principals perceived that standardized testing hinder students' performances. There was not a significant relationship between principals' perception related to the impact standardized testing has on teaching and learning in grades K-12 and their years of experience, type of school, gender, and academic degree. A positive social change implication includes informing educators about principals' views related to standardized testing as a feasible tool to enhance curriculum content delivery and student achievement.

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Dedication

This study is devoted to all of the audacious principals and teachers who devote their time to changing the lives of others in spite of the ever-changing pressures and demands bestowed upon them.

Acknowledgments

My parents, John K. (deceased) and Julia M. Bruton: Thank you for instilling the importance of a valuable education in me and the benefit of life-long learning.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Standardized tests are designed to show what students have learned and retained in the classroom setting. However, it is unknown whether standardized tests accurately depict a student's level of knowledge. Each year millions of students are administered standardized tests, impacting on teaching and learning for students in grades K-12 (Wells, 2012). These tests allow school districts to measure academic success comparatively between students. The results from the tests are used as a standard for measuring the school's progress toward developing the skills and abilities of district students (Cuban, 2007). The tests are used to determine student skills in subject areas which also measure teacher effectiveness and promotional decisions about students (Hershberg, 2004). The role of a teacher is to promote learning in his or her students. In recent years, the educational reform movement has focused on raising academic standards. In an effort to maximize student performance, teachers and administrators focused on test content, basic test taking skills, and critical thinking (Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008).

The purpose of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is to ensure all students receive a fair and equal chance to achieve a first-rate education through accountability. The NCLB created pressure for both students and teachers to perform on standardized tests. Under NCLB, teachers are responsible for how students perform on standardized tests, which does not accurately show what is being taught in the classroom (Johnson, 2006).

Standardized test scores inform educators what students have learned, but do not tell educators why or how they know the information. Teachers become teachers because they want to have a positive effect in a child's life. Test results only measure a portion of a student's learning ability. As stated by Tully (2008): test scores can be used to assess educational effectiveness, but only when built into a sensible evaluation design. A student's achievement level in certain subject areas is measured but not in all subject areas due to NCLB.

Standardized achievement tests are not a suitable way to determine students' performance level because many aspects of a student's education and background effect test performance (Popham, 2001, p. 74). Standardized testing can be discriminatory and biased. The tests are not structured to accommodate each individual student's learning style or possible learning disabilities. The structure of standardized testing also does not account for potential testing differences with regard to students from a low-income family background, or who identify with an ethnic or racial minority group, both of which may negatively impact student test scores. Language barriers may also affect a student's test scores (Bhattacharyya, Junot, & Clark, 2013). If a student comes from a home where English is spoken as a second language, then they are at a disadvantage when taking an English-written test (Popham, 2001). Haladyna (2006) stated that *teaching to the test* is becoming a big problem in education, which "creates a biased test score" (p. 37). This method of teaching can give the impression that students are retaining more classroom instruction than they are retaining. There are many criticisms surrounding the belief that standardized test contain biases based on a person's ethnicity,

gender, and culture. Researchers have shown that very little can be done to change individual students' differences and background such as English as a Second Language and inequities of poverty (Everson & Millsap, 2004).

Learning is most effective when the learner is rewarded with mastering the subject area. Effective learning is one of a teacher's greatest challenges because it requires student commitment to a learning task and diligence. Teacher dedication and enthusiasm tends to promote student engagement, although there are several ways to communicate such commitment in the classroom and beyond. The biggest responsibility for teachers is not the communication of subject matter, but the selection and design of proper learning tasks (Tully, 2008).

With all of the emphasis being placed on standardized testing, principals are at the forefront of the accountability results. In a rural Southeastern North Carolina school system school administrators are responsible for improving student achievement scores. The administrators must provide schools with the necessary tools they need to meet current policies while improving student academic success. Students are expected to receive high-test scores based on curriculum adapted to focus on tested materials. For teachers, this causes stress to meet requirements on time, and it can affect student scores, which in turn can reflect negatively on the teachers. This predicament leads to problems with teacher retention, which ultimately leaves the school with the daunting task of finding and keeping highly qualified teachers, a downward cycle of teacher turnover.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of standardized testing on teaching and learning focused around school principals' perspectives within the research

school district in North Carolina. In addition, the purpose of the study was to find (a) whether there was a correlation between principal experience and their perceived effects of standardized test on student performance, (b) principals' type of school and their perceived effects of standardized test on student performance, (c) principals' gender and their perceived effects of standardized test on student performance, and (d) principals' academic degree and their perceived effects of standardized test on student performance. Data were collected by surveying principals of K-12 schools in various rural North Carolina school systems. The data were collected by using a survey instrument (Appendix B). The survey contained demographic questions and questions regarding the principals perspective about the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning.

Definition of the Problem

The local school district consists of several well diverse schools that meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards annually. It also has one minority middle school with 98% African American inner city students that fed directly to one minority high school with 96% African American inner city students (North Carolina Department of Instruction [NCDPI], 2009). Both of these schools failed to meet AYP standards. However, the local school district did not attempt to create diversity by either rezoning the school districts or by ensuring the schools received the most highly qualified teachers in the classrooms.

Scaccia (2009) and Hirsch (2009) stated that reading comprehension on standardized test tend to be about things like history and places geographically distant from the student population. Many inner city students in the study school district may not

be familiar with the Appalachian Mountains, but may be expected to answer questions correctly about the location or history the mountains. The challenge with the study local school district was to randomize the test across cultures, class, religious and background, or make it community specific (Rooks, 2012).

More educators suggest removal of standardized test scores as the premise for assessing classroom instruction. Researchers have continually warned that these evaluations of schools and educators are not reliable. They do not take into account all of the out-of-school reasons that could affect how a student performs on a test such as family status, ethnic background, and community (Strauss, 2012). Additionally, numerous teachers are accused of misconduct on standardized achievement tests. For years, veteran teachers received exemplary evaluations but are now feeling pressured by principals eager to raise students' test scores. Cheating has been uncovered across the country as multiple school districts and states have made test results the key factors in teacher evaluations (Blume, 2011).

Heightened accountability brought about by NCLB emphasized the importance of standardized test score thereby magnifying stressful challenges for school administrators across the nation. Schools that are located in high-poverty areas are the most challenging for school administrators to successful meet achievement requirements. High-poverty schools have become the focus under pressure to meet AYP mandated standards AYP standards are assessed on all subgroups at different achievement levels. Failure to score an acceptable achievement level results in the school being identified as *in need of improvement*.

This type of description gave parents a choice in their child's education by allowing them the flexibility to put them in a different school (NCDPI, 2009). The caliber of education has become increasingly visible to the public through standardized test scores; however, test scores do not show school administrators why some teachers are high performers (Augrist & Guryan, 2007). In particular, the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning based on school principals' perspectives within a school district in North Carolina is unknown. Also, it was unclear whether there was a correlation between principals' of Title 1 Schools and their perceived effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning.

The State of North Carolina placed all schools classified as *in need of improvement* on a watch list that was managed by a state-appointed judge. Principals of schools on the list were required to meet face-to-face with the judge every quarter to report on the schools' progress and measures they took to improve their schools status. The principal had to increase their AYP scores to above 70% in order to be removed from the watch list. Naturally, the principals' focus clearly became increasing the test scores because they would be replaced if scores of 70% or higher were not achieved with three years. A principal's perception of how to help a low performance school caused teachers to stay and work through the challenges of being pressured to increase AYP scores or resign to work at another school location. If the principal believed the test scores were the driving force in the classroom, then educators felt pressured to teach to the test instead of teaching the desired curriculum lessons (NCDE, 2012).

Currently, there is a gap in the literature showing exactly how much of an effect standardized testing has on decisions being made by principals. Corcoran, Schwartz, and Weinstein (2009) found a specific link between principal involvement and school achievement especially in math test scores. Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2013) stated that an effective principal has a strong impact on student achievement. An effective teacher produces the same results as the principal, but the difference is that teachers only impact students in their classroom whereas principal quality affects the entire school. Until recently there was very little research conducted to show the importance principal quality has on the effect on student achievement.

A principals' perspective can help the low-performance school in the researcher's school district by the impact they have in the area of experience from years of being in the education systems and thoroughly understanding standardized testing. The local school district should seek out those principals with higher-level educational degrees that may have exposed them to in-depth testing techniques that they could share with the teachers (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010). Baker and Cooper (2005) used the choice of a principal or teachers undergraduate college as a substitute for their ability to educate others. They determined that principals who graduated from certain colleges are prone to hire educators from a comparative college. According to Baker and Cooper (2005) and Brewer (1993) the principal's academic background is essential in their choice of educators and it shows in their caliber of being a leader. Brewer (1993) stated the higher principals with high academics tend to hire teachers with the ability to improve student

test scores; and the higher percentage of teachers selected by principals with lower academics result in lower student test score improvements.

Using the same reasoning, graduate education and learning plays a vital part in the high quality of an academic leader as well as their capability to develop and also keep an excellent group of teachers. A growing number of researchers have suggested (a) different graduate institutes have basically the same capability to produce efficient leaders (Baker, Orr, & Young, 2007), (b) different graduate institutes create various qualities of principal (Fuller, Young & Orr, 2007), and (c) different graduate programs features are linked with high schoolwork (Young, 2008; Young & Grogan, 2008; Young, Fuller, Brewer, Carpenter, & Mansfield, 2007). However; it remains unclear how principals' qualification may affect principals' views on standardized testing.

Hallinger (2011) conducted a study on the impact gender differences had on instructional leadership and discovered that after three decades and 23 Principal Ratings, female principals were consistently rated higher on evaluations than males. However, it was not clear if principals' characteristics affect their perspective toward students' assessment and using standardized testing.

A validated and reliable pre-established survey instrument (See Appendix B) was used to explore principals' view about the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning in grades K-12.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The problem teachers faced in several rural school districts of North Carolina was the effect of standardized testing. A principal's perspective can cause a problem for the teacher due to the principals' demands for better tests scores versus teacher concern for students understanding the materials. When a principal's perspective of the classroom teacher's success rate is evaluated according to how students perform on standardized tests, teachers will be eventually be driven to teach to the test in order to achieve higher test scores. Principals must ensure policies set by state and local officials are followed. School leaders view testing programs more favorably compared to teachers because it gives them more student and teacher information that is helpful in their job as an educational leader (Gooden, 2013). Principals stated that their stress levels increased in their district due to the pressures, effort to maintain or improved the schools accountability grade, the public advertisement of AYP, and the competition between educators (Jones & Egley, 2006). Regardless of what the teacher did in the classroom if it was not geared towards increasing the AYP scores, then the principals encouraged the teacher to revise their learning objectives. Teachers often used pacing guides to ensure the North Carolina Standard Course of Study were being met. Because students learn at different paces, all areas may not be mastered prior to North Carolina End of Grade (NCEOG). Thus, from a principal's perspective all material needed to be covered because it gave the school a better chance at achieving higher scores. From a teacher's perspective

students should not move to the next area until they have a full understanding of the prior subject area (Diamond, 2007).

Teacher play a crucial role in getting their students ready for standardized testing. This is partially true in school districts where teachers and principals are liable for student test scores. Locally, standardized tests scores are used to decide if teachers are held accountable for student performance and whether they can continue to teach in the North Carolina school districts.

The NCEOG test currently evaluates individual school systems based on the accountability standards of No Child Left Behind. The relevance to this study, is based on the premise that yearly, the state of North Carolina test thousands of students in grades three through eight. These students are tested using ten stated designed achievement tests, this is standard procedure for North Carolina in the spring (North Carolina Department of Education, 2012).

The purpose of this study was the effect standardized testing had on teaching and learning based on school principals' perspectives within the research school district of North Carolina is unknown. In addition, the correlation between principals' perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances and the principals' characteristics including experience, school type, gender, and academic degree are not clear.

Principals are held accountable for AYP, which is shown through standardized testing. Since principals are faced with the task of making sure there school progresses each year it is important to get their perspectives on the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning. Although standardized testing was not necessarily a fair form of

assessing students and teachers, the test scores do carry a lot of weight. American students are assessed utilizing the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) assessment instrument. This instrument measures the students' level of mastery in reading, science, social studies, writing and mathematics.

The NAEP incorporates testing accommodations for students with learning disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL) (U.S. Department of Education 2011). Barton (2005) realized that valuable educational data could be gathered and analyzed by comparing students of the same grade level from year to year. This research produced

data that validated persistent achievement gaps spanning more than three decades for minority students.

Teachers are faced with the challenging role of ensuring all students are properly prepared to reach the highest possible success on not only the local benchmark tests but ultimately show mastery on the state-mandated EOG assessments. When the students test scores are below 60%, principals and administrators require teachers to figure out why their students did not score well. In the data analysis meeting, discussions provided more insight as to why test scores are not as high at some schools as others (S. Register, personal communication, May 3, 2012).

The role of the principal has become more complex since NCLB. The demands of raising standardized test scores are an everyday challenge facing school Principals. Increased responsibility has triggered principals to think of their viewpoint on standardized testing for responsibility actions, examination credibility, usage of examination information, the influence on educational program, as well as the quantity of anxiety and stress pertaining to testing (Au, 2011, pp. 25-45).

Some of the reasons discussed in the meeting are as follows:

- The amount of teacher experience
- Rigor of lesson
- Lack of teacher and/or student expectations
- The amount of preparation put into the topic

Standardized tests have become a major determinant of what is done in schools by administration. NCLB was implemented to place the responsibility of student

achievement on school leaders and to identify schools that do not make AYP as *in need of improvement*. This label allows parents the choice of leaving their child in the current school or transferring them to a different school (Taylor et al., 2010). In addition to losing students to other schools, the principals' job is threatened. Title I schools are subject to losing their federal funding if AYP is not met for two consecutive years (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Although the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning based on a school principals' perspectives within a school district in North Carolina is unknown, further evidence suggest the problem does exist. The proportion of North Carolina schools that failed to make AYP has been as high as 69%. In an effort to get more schools making AYP requirements, North Carolina has made numerous modifications in its screening program as well as its approaches for computing AYP ratings. Those modifications consisted of the application of new reading tests, revamping the ways tests are administered and counting retest for AYP purposes (NCDPI, 2009). Additionally, North Carolina reported an increase in safe harbor schools for 350 in 2008 to 987 in 2009 as a way to help the number of schools makes AYP. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reported that currently in North Carolina there are 443 schools on the "in need of improvement" AYP list (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2012).

Principals should higher expectations for their faculty and staff so they can put their visions in place to improve student learning in this ever changing and very challenging 21st century. They have to take a proactive approach towards improving standardized test scores while focusing on accountability matters and attending to the

needs of the community as well as attending to the needs of student with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged and ELL. A list of standards for school administrators was published by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. According to Streshly and Gray (2008), school leaders should possess the following skills and abilities:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who is relentlessly, aggressively and is always involved with the primary focus of the school.
2. A school administrator is an educational leader who has compelling modesty to give credit where it is due and accepts the blame for their failures.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who is humble yet firm and will stand up for their staff members.
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who confronts the brutal facts, analyses student data, and diligently works to make improvements.
5. A school administrator is an educational leader who focuses on student achievement and promotes teacher responsibility.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader that encourages student success by activity being involved with family and community members, takes action on diverse community matters in a fair and honest manner (Streshly & Gray, 2008).

The essential roles principals are faced with are concentrating on the mission and objective their school. They encourage an environment of collaboration and trust in the schools. The characteristics of principals may affect the outcome of students' learning by influencing the teaching and learning environment. Principals who spend more time on

organizational management tasks have seen increased results on standardized tests performance (Hornig, Klaskik, & Loeb, 2009).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

North Carolina administers 49 tests to students. School administrators and several people in high positions have spoken out against all of the testing and now the state is trying to find a way to decrease the amount of pressure put on school administrators, teachers and students. According to North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory, “we need to slow down and regroup with all these tests and let our teachers teach”(Governor, 2013).

Standardized testing is not new to the public school system, and most school systems were giving their students standardized testing before NCLB was implemented. However, once NCLB became law, it placed more emphasis and pressure on the test scores, which made accountability standards more difficult for school systems, administrators and teachers (Hamilton, et al. 2007).

Students, teachers, and principals are held responsible for the outcome of high-stakes assessment. If the assessments are used for other reasons, the analyses might not be ideal or bona fide. State-mandated standardized testing has become an increasingly popular tool that is utilized to make decisions about a student being able to advance to the next grade level. Since standardized testing is being considered such a valuable tool, it is important to look at what the literature discusses about the effects testing have on students, teachers and principals (Brown, 2010).

Regardless of opinions on standardized testing, it cannot be denied that state-mandated goals and expectations suggest high expectations to close the achievement gap

by improving student learning (Amrein-Beardsley, Berliner, & Rideau, 2010).

Increasingly, standardized test scores measure and determine a lot about students. Many students benefit from standardized tests and earn placement in advanced classes.

Likewise, students who do not score well on the tests are placed in lower level classes.

The pressures that surround these tests have greatly affected what teachers are teaching their students' and the quality of their teaching (Barrier-Ferreira, 2008).

Teachers are spending instructional time teaching how to do the test rather than allowing students to learn all subjects to the fullest of their ability. Educational leaders need to stop putting so much emphasis on testing and begin to focus on the quality of teaching that students need to be exposed to in order to be successful in life. Schools should allow educators to make a decisions about what will work best for the student in their classroom (Sitler, 2009, para 1).

In July 2013 the North Carolina legislation voted to end K-12 teacher tenure, which is commonly known as career status in favor of a tiered contract system (1-, 2-, and 4-year contracts). North Carolina teachers will no longer earn career status after teaching four consecutive years in the same school system; instead the top 25% of teachers will be identified and receive annual pay raises. The new legislation will also do away with its pay incentive for earning an advanced degree.

- 90% of school administrators and teachers think the removal of teacher
- tenure will negatively effect on teaching and learning.

- 98% of school administrators and teachers believe removing incentive pay for advanced degrees will negatively impact the quality of work teachers will put in educating students (Allen, 2014; Banchero, 2013).

In November 2009, a principal in an North Carolina middle school authorized students to sell candy for test scores. The previous school years candy fundraiser sale was not successful which caused parents to suggest students selling candy for additional test points. The principal agree stating that the additional 20 points would not be enough to change a student's overall grade. However, NCDPI Chief Academic Officer did not agree with students being able to buy grades and how it may get them in trouble in the future by offering money for grades. District leaders and other educators immediately put a stop to this plan stating it would send the wrong message (Bonner, 2009).

In 2013, the NCDPI warned the parents and educators that standardized test scores would be lower because tests were written prior to the new Common Core standards. Some educators and parents wanted the State Board of Education (SBE) to lower the bar but the SBE was reluctant to lower the bar. The SBE refused to lower the bar to avoid sending the wrong message to parents and students about their child's performance. If the SBE would have lowered the bar some students would have received proficient when in reality they were not. When the test scores were released many were disheartened by the results but the state believes test scores will get better as educators have time to adjust to the new Common Core standards (Star News, 2013, October 7).

The local problem of the effect of standardized testing on students' performances continues, and little is done to explore principals' views in their districts. The number of

tests students take each year bothers many educators and members' community. They are troubled by the amount of weight the tests carry and the impact the tests have on students and teachers. Even though there is no official testing policy that could allow students to opt out of testing. If a student refuses to complete the answers, they will receive a failing score. The teacher, school and school district performance scores are factored into the overall school score (Q. Stewart, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

Principals will benefit from this study by causing them to stop and analyze how much standardized testing has changed the perception they have about their school, beliefs, and the educational process as a whole. The anticipated benefit of this research for society is to identify principals' perceptions on standardized testing which may help major stakeholders to make more informative decision on using standardized tests in schools. This study will provide an educational insight and synopsis into correlation between school leaders' characteristics and their perspectives on standardized tests from a school leaders' perspective.

Definitions

Accountability: Accountability is the practice of holding educational systems and each separate component of the system, liable for the level of a student's education and performance (Center of Education Policy, 2008).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): In this study AYP is a series of state and federal efficiency standards that all schools, local education agencies, the State are required to meet at the same time as determined by the law in order to comply with effectiveness goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCDPI, 2009).

High Stakes Tests: Coined by George Madaus, is used to describe tests that are used for making choices about the student's grade level, promotion, retention, tracking, and graduation. They are also tied to school funding, teachers' merit pay and accreditation (Madaus, Russell, & Higgins, 2009).

In need of improvement: Under NCLB, every state has to establish goals for their school to meet. If a school does not meet the goals or two consecutive years they will be labeled as needs improvement (Payne-Tsoupros, 2010).

Low Performance School: Schools are generally classified as "Low- Performing" or "Failing" because of constantly having test scores that are below average and in some cases due to a decline in graduation and increased student dropout rates (Wright, 2009).

North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCS): In an effort to establish proficiencies for every grade level and high school course, North Carolina developed a Standard Course of Study. It is a strenuous set of requirements that are consistent throughout the state (NCDPI, 2009).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): NCLB is a United States Federal Law that authorizes several federal mandated educational programs aimed at improving student achievement levels at primary and secondary schools (NCDE, 2012).

Safe Harbor: Under Safe Harbor provisions are made for schools that are making progress although they failed to meet AYP standards. Safe harbor's alternate route to AYP is allowing a 10 percentage point decrease in non-proficient students from the previous school year, the non -proficient students improved on the other states academic indicator, and 95 percent participation rate (Madaus, Russell, & Higgins, 2009).

Standardized Testing: Testing that meet the following criteria: (a) the format of every question is the same for every student, (b) every student receives the same instructions for taking the test, (c) the time permitted for each student to take the test is the same, (d) each student to choose the same correct answer for each question (Diamond, 2012).

Title I: Title I program is intended to help disadvantaged students by providing assistance for them by improving their educational achievements. The objective Title I is to guarantee all students have the same quality of learning and earn proficiency on standardized tests (Center for Education Policy, 2008).

Significance

Principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning can have a significant impact on the classroom. One of the many roles of the principal is to create a positive school climate conducive to learning. Student achievement has become the focal point of the United States education system as evident in federal laws such as NCLB. The most effective changes in increased student achievement occur when principals, teachers and students model the values of education as a cohesive team (Diamond, 2007). In developing this study, the importance and principals perspective on standardized testing can disrupt classroom instruction and eventually adversely affect student achievement.

Based on state actions previously discussed, school administrators are facing increased pressures in the schools to improve standardized test scores. I believe that as school administrators receive more and more pressure to achieve passing scores, their

perspectives on how to address the five dimensions of standardized testing may vary depending on several variables. Experience and education levels can create more positive working conditions between principals and teachers, thus minimizing the adversity in the classroom.

This research will see if there is a statistical correlation on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning based on school principals' perspective. The specific areas that will be examined from the completion of this research are as follows:

1. This research may provide valuable information about what percentage of principals agree or disagree with standardized testing.
2. This research may provide information for the dialogue between Title I and non-Title I school principals' perspectives on standardized testing.
3. This research may extend discussions to the significance of a principals' gender of perspectives on standardized testing.
4. This research may create a body of knowledge that school leaders may use to assign principals based on educational degree level.
5. This research may contribute to ongoing discussions of how principals experience levels should contribute to using standardized testing for teacher's assignment decisions.

Guiding/Research Question

North Carolina Schools that score below 60% on the NC EOGs are placed on the states' low-performing schools priority listing. This means that the State of North

Carolina now monitors and assist schools with developing a plan for improvement. Principals and teachers may be removed from their positions if the schools fail to meet AYP. Schools placed on the low-performing school list can lead to pressure from the state level all the way to the classroom thereby guiding the principal to place a great amount of emphasis on increasing test scores (NCDPI, 2009).

The following research questions were used in this study to determine Southeastern North Carolina's kindergarten- through 12th-grade principals' perceptions regarding the impact of standardized testing on teaching and learning. According to several principals, teachers are concerned that people who have not experienced being a classroom teacher are making decisions that will impact their future. Many principals, teachers, and parents are opposed to testing scores carrying so much weight. They do not think it is fair for a single test to be used to measure a student or schools success rate. Examining principals' perspectives may help teachers perform to the best of their ability. Principals have to make sure teachers are prepared to provide students with enough education, so standardized testing requirement can be met. Professional development is used to help teachers to brush up on their skills as well as learn new approaches to strategies that will enhance a teacher's knowledge and skills (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

Research Question 1: What are principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within the school district in North Carolina?

Research Question 2: To what extent principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H₀2: Principals' experience are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

H₁2: Principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Research Question 3: To what extent principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H₀3: Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

H₁3: Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Research Question 4: To what extent principals' gender are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H₀4: Principals' gender are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

H₁4: Principals' gender are correlated to perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Research Question 5: To what extent principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

H₀5: Principals' academic degree are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

H₁₅: Principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

A quantitative study with a correlation design was used to collect data from public school administrators by gathering their data from the survey instrument they completed. The data analysis will allow the researcher to determine whether different perceptions can be identified amongst various area principals.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this section contains a review of literature and research associated with historical changes that occurred during the development of the American educational system regarding standardized testing and theoretical viewpoints and perspectives regarding the impact standardized testing has on teaching and learning.

Literature Review Search

A review of the literature was conducted using electronic databases accessed through Walden University searched on Google Scholar, EBSCO host, Master-FILE Premier, Master-FILE Select, Business Source Premier, ERIC, ProQuest Central, and SAGE Premier. In order to find research to support my topic the following keyword searches were used individually or in conjunction included standardized testing, high-stakes testing, NCLB, school principals, school leadership, school administrators, accountability, AYP, teacher leadership, curriculum, classroom instruction, research-based practices, value added system, Vygotsky, scaffolding, and Department of Education.

There were a limited number of peer-reviewed articles specifically relating to a principals perception of standardized testing. An example of a search I did using ProQuest with the keywords *state department of education + school district + standardized testing* produced 199 newspaper articles, seven trade journals and six peer-reviewed articles. Out of the six peer-reviewed articles, four of the articles were within the last five years. When I ran this same search in EBSCO host, six articles were found but none was peer-reviewed. I conducted another search in ProQuest using the keywords *public school principals + standardized testing + NCLB*. This search produced 15 articles of which I was able to use eight of them in my study.

I continued to search the databases using the aforementioned keywords in various ways until I reached saturation that was when repetitive searches began to demonstrate a replication of literature sources. I primarily searched for literature within the last five years; however research older than five years was not omitted from this study because it has a significant impact on the amount of literature relating to standardized testing. A total of 32 peer-reviewed articles are included in the literature review with 23 of the articles being published within the last five years.

Theoretical Framework

Lev Vygotsky was a contemporary of Piaget in Piaget's early days. Vygotsky appears to have been correct in saying that Piaget underestimated the importance of social interaction with more experienced people while learning (Durington & Du, 2013). Many studies have demonstrated that children are receiving help from other people

pickup skills that they probably could not have mastered alone. Based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD), a child who can follow the examples by an adult or peer would gradually learn to complete the task without assistance (Gredler, 2012).

Vygotsky believed that social interaction with cultural tools or artifacts from the simple things to the more complex things are a part of a learner's psychological development (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010). There are four components of collaborative learning according to Vygotsky, which are individual development, skills students' work on, team processes and communication media (Durrington & Du, 2013).

Vygotsky (1978) in his Sociocultural Learning Theory suggested that historical and cultural background plays very important role in assisting people think, communicate, and solve problems as opposed to cognitive development which requires help from others (Petrová, 2013). He concluded that through communicating students sociologically interact and communicate to learn the cultural values of the society in which they live (Thompson, Cothran, & McCall, 2012).

Vygotsky's theory has provided a tremendous starting point for contemporary theorists because many of his ideas, in spite of their usefulness are rather underdeveloped (Durrington & Du, 2013). There have been numerous theoretical developments in social constructivist theory. When teachers provide students with help to complete tasks that they normally would not be able to complete on their own it is called scaffolding. Scaffolding strategies are used to assist learners across the ZPD (Griffin, 2011). Scaffolds allow students to deal with complex problems while simultaneously learning how to solve the problem independently. Weeks in advance teachers plant seeds of curiosity in

students involving them in opening scenarios through the use of concrete activities to quickly engage students' interest in the problem. The more students are involved will result in harder working students to find a solution (Gredler, 2012).

Vygotsky believed that educational leaders need to create learning opportunities that will allow students to complete tasks on their own as well as with the help from others (Karpov & Haywood, 1998). According to Vygotsky students do not learn in isolation instead learning is strongly influenced by social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). In the classroom, teachers have to provide small portions of instructions and interactions with students based upon what they currently know and can do. When teachers and parents are attuned to the student, they can observe and ask questions to learn where they are within the zone of proximal. The teacher is also responsible for assisting the student until he/she can successfully move through all of the tasks independently (Gredler, 2012).

Before a teacher can help the student with a learning concept, they have to know how cognitive task will match the child's social activities. A child's social environment is a crucial element that helps them adjust to new and different circumstances. This process is called scaffolding, which are tasks the teacher builds on to develop the learners' zone of proximal (Campbell & Ching, 2012). Scaffolding does not allow students to passively sit and listen to the information instead it prompts the student to build on their prior knowledge (van Kuyk, 2011).

Vygotsky's theory does not provide specific tools for research through numerous tests and experiments. However, he does provide a framework for cognitive development

concentrating on the social and developmental elements of learning and cognition (Anh & Marginson, 2013).

Vygotsky's ZPD and assessment has two different interpretations. The first perspective proposes a student's ZPD is measured as an individual trait, that is, assessment of the ZPD. This perspective is based on the fact that assessment methods need consider a student's Zone of Proximal Development. Two students may appear to have the same actual development but what they can do on their own may differ in the number. The objective of the assessment methods needs to be focused on the actual and potential development of the student. Instead of limiting assessment to what children can do on their own, it should include what they can do with different levels of assistance, which is known as dynamic assessment. In the second perspective, the ZPD assessment happens when continuous communications in an educational environment takes place that will improve the teaching-learning process. This perspectives' goal is to optimize instruction by assessing whether different teaching styles will increase learning amongst different students. The purpose of this analysis is not to conclude the student's progress but the student's ability to respond to different types of scaffolding (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010; Resing, 2013)

Les Vygotsky did not believe in standardized testing. Vygotsky believed that students learn differently. Collaborative opportunities along with peer interaction support Vygotsky's theory (Rahimi, 2013). I will explore a belief of Vygotsky's theory through the use a survey instrument to see if principals agree or disagree with Vygotsky's suggestions about standardized testing.

Research Problem

Standardized testing is a well-integrated part of most school systems. The concept of the test is to allow a universal and unbiased assessment of all students who take the test. Standardized tests have always been an important part of a student's future. Students of all ages are required to take tests and depending on how they score determines where the student should be placed.

The Impact of Testing on Teaching and Learning

Throughout the United States, educational reform has been shaping teaching and learning in ways that can be considered independent resulting in literacy skills being treated as neutral. These reforms are driven standardized test data whereby the results come from teacher evaluations, curriculum decisions, and government funding (Campano, Ghiso, & Sánchez, 2013). The rationale behind the government for putting so much attention on low-performing schools is to help improve educational opportunities (Laman, 2012).

Not long after testing requirements were implemented under NCLB were suspected inadequacies reported in the public school system. Many schools began to offer financial incentives to teachers for helping students test scores improve over the previous years scores. In Chicago, teachers welcomed the incentive program. But as it turned out, teachers did not need incentive pay to try and help students raise test scores. Many Chicago area teachers were eager to raise student test scores to avoid sanctions than to receive pay bonuses (The Times Tribune, 2011, July 17).

In 2009, a forensic analysis was conducted on the Pennsylvania School System which uncovered cheating on standardized tests had occurred which is inappropriate regardless of whether it was done by the teachers, students or administrators. This left federal and state administrators wondering if current state laws were putting too much emphasis on test results (Gunzenhauser & Hyde, 2007).

In a survey conducted in school districts located in Richmond, Virginia and Fresno, California teachers were not opposed to sanctions for ineffective teachers and that accountability requirements under NCLB were “fundamentally unfair”. However, they were not in agreement with mandated tests and publicized AYP to produce academic improvements (Sunderman, Orfield, & Kim, 2006, p. 21). In Texas, three principal’s reputations were tarnished due to the publicity of an alleged failure to meet accountability standards although in previous years they had excellent records (McGhee & Nelson, 2005).

The Wisconsin Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development conducted a survey asking participants to indicate either positive or negative effects of standardized testing under NCLB. The results showed only 27% of the responses were positive. However, 36% of the participants indicated that data taken from the tests are valuable. (Zellmer, Frontier, & Pheifer, 2006, p. 46)

Standardized testing is a valid measurement of accountability, but it cannot measure actual instruction that took place in the classroom. But since the implementation of NCLB, teachers across the United States have been voicing their opinion about how

the priority has gone from teaching students how to think and learn to teaching them how to pass standardized tests (Chatterji, 2013).

Standardized Testing in the 21st Century

Historically, standardized tests are used to measure how students compare to other students and how much they have learned about a particular subject (Hout, Elliott, & Frueh, 2012). In recent years, a lot of emphasis has been placed on standardized testing which has made accountability a complex matter in the current educational system. Accountability is primarily the responsibility of the principal. In order for principals to attend to accountability issues they have to take a proactive approach towards standardized testing while providing quality educational programs that not only focus on needs of the community but minorities, English as a Second Language learners, financially under privileged, and learning disabled students (Lau & Nie, 2008).

Americans should stop relying so heavily on tests that will predict a student's future and start evaluating students on their performance. Sometimes students have to repeat course because standardized tests are used to determine if they should pass or fail a course. It is based solely on the results from one test that can determine if a student's entire semester worth of learning was effective or not (Center of Education Policy, 2008; Kesson & Ross, 2004).

Some educators believe that due to the increased amount of requirements being placed on standardized testing within school systems has caused them to do more paperwork (Thangarajathi & Enok, 2010). When North Carolina a student takes the End-of-Grades and End-of-Course exams and score below their grade level, Personalized

Education Plan (PEP) has to be created for the student (NCDPI, 2012). In a personal communication with school administrator Baldwin he stated that there are many reasons why high-stakes testing is problematic in his rural schools district such as:

1. At-Risk Students: using the same tests for all students when some schools are grossly ill equipped.
2. Lower Graduation Rates: End-of-Course and End-of-Grade testing has increased student dropout rates
3. Shrinking Curriculum: with so much attention being given to high-stakes testing, teachers are not giving as much attention to subjects that are not on the tests.
4. Teacher Stress: teachers are in support of high standards, but they are not fully supportive of learning being measured by one test (A. Baldwin, personal communication, May 3, 2012).

Sikka, Nath, and Cohen (2007) suggested high stakes state-mandated testing programs often contradict educator's views of sound classroom educational practices due to pressures to raise test scores from school administrators. Teachers in my school district who do not achieve satisfactory AYP scores are removed from the school regardless of classroom makeup students. Several teachers have filed grievances with the local school board about the overwhelming pressure of achieving high test scores override the sound teaching being conducted in the classroom (Watanabe, 2007).

It is well documented that standardized tests scores are being used to assess teachers, students, and schools. These same test scores have become the basis for

determining if students can be promoted to the next grade, graduate high school, or to determine if teachers are doing their job of educating students, and for school funding. Several studies are being conducted because of the pressures surrounding accountability standards. Some of the studies are conducted to show the amount of pressure administrators are putting on teachers, the effect accountability has on classroom instruction and teachers behavior towards these standards (Spouvitz, 2009). In a study conducted on veteran teachers the results showed that they are more likely to believe students low-test scores are not a result of their lack of classroom instruction rather it is due to discrepancies in the test and curriculum (Angrist,& Guryan, 2007).

Sikka, et al (2007) also studied factors that contributed to increases in the amount of pressure teachers are under to improve test scores. When school administrators turned to “high stakes testing” it brought on added pressures for teachers to help their students perform better on state testing so they would not have to face the consequences. The high stakes testing phenomenon led teachers to believe that test scores were going to be used measure their teaching capabilities and not to analyze and help students raise their test scores.

According to Faulker and Cook (2006) found that the added pressure for teachers to raise students test score resulted in teacher teaching what students what students would be tested on and doing away with non-tested curricula that is essential to students growth and development. Schools began to implement such actions as using worksheets that mimicked state tests or redefining course objectives in an attempt to improve test scores.

Standardized testing cannot be taken out of the schools but there needs to be a more effective way of measuring achievement levels for students, teachers' and school systems. However, using one means to evaluate learning is not fair to anyone involved because a variety of issues can cause students test scores to be good one day and bad the next day. Standardized tests can also have an effect on how teachers focus on curriculum. In recent years, the educational reform movement's focus has been on raising academic standards. In an effort to maximize student performance, teachers teach what will be on the test (Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008).

Teachers believe that principals want them to teach to the test, however, because standardized test are intended for broad use, they make no pretense of fitting precisely and equally well specific content being taught (Posner, 2009). Teachers also indicated that standardize testing measures are racially, culturally and socially bias against ethnic and cultural minority children (CDE, 2010). The way the results of the test are used they can potentially be harmful to students. Standardized tests, especially those given by the state, are aimed at rating schools. Schools are complimented or criticized on the basis of those rankings. Teachers insist that tests do not measure how students perform on local curriculum standards within particular demographics and therefore tests are not a fair way to evaluate schools. As the number of assessment increase, much time is spent reviewing and testing while leaving less time for the regular curriculum (Fulmer, & Turner, 2014).

The Role of the Principal

Principals are faced with a challenging balancing act due to the impact of the current educational reform. Principals must understand that all students are capable of

learning so they must stay focused on improving their learning environment. To create a better learning environment, principals must make their school physically safe and nurturing, reduce disruptions during instructional time, and reconnect with the community (Ylimaki, 2012; Ylimaki, Jacobson, & Drysdale, 2007).

In 2010, Louisiana passed House Bill 1033 allowing a percentage of student test data to be used for evaluating its principals by 2012-2013 (Louisiana State Legislature, 2010). In recent years, policymakers have been leaning towards using student test scores as an effective way to measure school administrator's performance and compensation decisions. In 2011, Florida passed the Student Success Act. This act allows at least 50 percent of student test scores to be used as means for evaluating school administrators that is in accordance with state assessments guidelines (Florida Senate, 2011). The bill also requires school systems to include the principal's evaluation when considering the salary. Both of these laws follow the same requirements as the state of Tennessee including using test data for hiring, firing, and compensation decisions (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2011).

Principal quality significantly affects numerous school outcomes. Evidence has been found linking principal experience with the quality of their work. Some school districts are considering the use of student test scores when setting administrator pay.

In a study conducted by Horng, Klaskik, and Loeb principals in low-income, minority, and low-test scores are normally less experienced than their counterparts (2009). The purpose of this study is to investigate K-12 principals' perspective of standardized testing. Principals are in an intense race to raise their schools standardized

tests scores, especially math and reading. Improved academic achievement challenges has created a demand for Principals to successfully lead their schools towards mandated standards established by the states. (Strong, Richard, & Catano, 2008). As more and more pressure is being placed on accountability, principals are beginning to put more focus on how to raise their school test scores. This includes socioeconomically challenged students, minorities, English language learners and students with disabilities (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). Effective leadership is the paramount to ensuring schools are successful in meeting state and local standards. According to Noddings (2005), today's leaders want students who are prepared to make informed decisions, who can solve challenging problems. Leaders understand the importance of providing an environment where everyone involves shows growth. They bring in new ideas, programs and instructional strategies that can improve teaching and learning.

Amrein and Berliner (2002) conducted a study that showed a relationship between high-stakes testing and test scores. They also found that in some cases that standardized tests were causing a high student dropout rate, increased cheating, and lowering teacher morale. In a subsequent analysis, Amrein and Berliner (2002) confirmed that there is a correlation between graduation exams and academic achievement.

Hanushek and Raymond (2005) reviewed Amrein and Berliner's data and concluded that the accountability programs were designed to improve student performance, but it varied amongst different groups of minorities. African American students gained the least while Hispanics gained the most, which made the introduction

of accountability appear to widen the achievement gap between Hispanics and African American students, instead of narrowing the gap.

In a study conducted by Rosenshin (2003) he analyzed school districts with definite high-stakes versus states without high-stakes. Rosenshin discovered that high-stakes regimes were associated with the increases in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In fact, the effects were enormous considering the insensitivity of NAEP tests.

Principals are tasked with the duties and responsibilities to meet all accountability requirements while increasing overall standardized test scores for students in the 21st Century has complicated the role for today's school leaders (Murray, 2013). Principals have to be more than managers; they need to be community members that help promote the good for all (Thornton, 2010). As the reports and articles show, principals are expected to play a critical role in students' performance evaluated by standardized testing. Thus, it is imperative to explore principals' perspectives toward the testing. However, principals' perspectives are unclear. In addition, the correlation between principals' perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances and the principals' characteristics including experience, school type, gender, and academic degree are not clear. It appears as though 21st century principals are validating what Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) stated:

At present there are differences of opinion...for all peoples do not agree as to the things that the young ought to learn, either with a view to virtue or with a view to

the best life, nor is it clear whether their studies should be regulated more with regard to intellect or with regard to character. (as cited in Howe, 2003, p. 96.)

Because the effect is unclear and controversial, I will conduct a study to explore principals' perspectives on the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning in a school district in North Carolina.

Implications

The goal of this study was to survey K-12 school principals perspective on the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning. The chapter includes a discussion of the literature on school principals and the way standardized testing impacts their role as school leaders. The results from this study imply that school principals might perceive the implementation of NCLB as an obstruction to effectively execute strategies and for them to function as instructional leaders. A positive social change implication includes informing educators about principals' views related to standardized testing as a feasible tool for accountability purposes that may help educators improve standardized testing accordingly. The study also looked at how school principals that met AYP may have different views about their roles as instructional leaders than school principals who did not meet AYP goals. Based on the findings a workshop will be prepared to share the results with district principals.

Summary

Standardized testing is a very debatable topic amongst educators across the United States. This has caused school principals to operate in a much more complex and competitive educational environment. Several school principals and parents believe that

standardized tests are causing damage to the educational arena as well as to the lives of many children (McFarlane, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning based on school principals' perspectives within the research school district in North Carolina. It was also conducted to help school principals overcome barriers that were built when NCLB was implemented. An apparent correlation exists between the positive characteristics and behavioral aspects of successful principals and their impact on student achievement. This study also provided a review of the literature pertaining to school principals' perception and how teaching and learning affects teachers and students. Section 2 describes the methodology and design of the proposed study. Section 3 contains the project, and Section 4 concludes the study with a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate K-12 principals' perspectives on the effects of standardized testing. Descriptive tests for the means and correlations between principals' characteristics and their perspectives related to the effects of standardized testing was investigated using Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation tests. In addition, correlation between principals' characteristics and their perspectives related to the effects of standardized testing was investigated using Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test. A non-experimental approach, using a correlation design was used to investigate the research questions. The quantitative method of research was selected over other methods because this study found answers to an inquiry through numerical evidence and because the study aimed to explore correlations among some variables that impact the results (Creswell, 2003). A quantitative approach was also appropriate because the study afforded itself to data collection, data analysis through statistical procedures, and hypothesis testing (Creswell, 2007). After I reviewed several research designs, a quantitative method with non-experimental correlation designs and descriptive analysis were selected to allow me to answer the research questions and solve the research problem that investigated principals' perspectives on effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within a school district in North Carolina.

This study was conducted by utilizing a survey instrument (Appendix B) to gather information from a chosen sample in several rural Northeastern North Carolina school systems. Data analysis allowed me to investigate if there was a correlation against

principals perception and principals experience; principals perception and type of school; principals perception and gender; principals perception and academic degree. Creswell (2009) explained that the survey design gives a quantitative or numeric portrayal of patterns, numbers, or presumptions of a population by concentrating on an example of that population.

Setting and Sample

To find the significance of Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test at 95% confidence interval or significance level of $\alpha = .05$, with a .58 effect size, and power of .80, the necessary, minimum sample size is 28 (Cohen, 1992). For the purposes of this study principals, assistant principals and school administrators who work in the North Carolina Public School System as a current or past school administrator were eligible for convenient sampling. Purposeful sampling was used in this study to include participants who were readily available to be researched. This type of sampling made the selection of certain participants possible under circumstances such as time, cost, accessibility, and effort. Convenience sampling is not under the control of the researcher and happens through natural causes (Creswell, 2008).

After receiving Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I sent a cover letter (Appendix C) and a copy of the survey instrument to the superintendent of several school systems requesting authorization to conduct the research study. After approval, I sent the potential participants a consent letter (Appendix E) and the link to the survey. I gathered the finished surveys in a convenient way. As per

Creswell (2009), it is beneficial and economical to use a survey because of it has a fast turnaround when trying to collect data.

Principal Demographics

The number of participants for the study comprised of 31 current or past (within the last 5 years) principals and assistant principals who work in the Southeastern region of the North Carolina Public School System. Table 1 shows the detailed demographic data for the survey participants.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Gender (<i>N</i> = 31)	Female	15
	Male	16
Type of School (<i>N</i> = 31)	Title I	12
	Non-Title I	19
Years of administrative experience (<i>N</i> = 31)	1 – 4 years	6
	5 – 14 years	20
	15 or more years	5
Current administrative position (<i>N</i> = 31)	Current Principal	18
	Current Associate/Assistant Principal	12
	Past Principal (within the past 5 years)	0
	Past Associate/Assistant Principal (within the past 5 years)	1
Highest degree earned (<i>N</i> = 31)	Masters	26
	Educational Specialist	1
	Doctorate	4

Instrumentation and Materials

The Impact of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning survey (ISTTL; Appendix B) was used to collect data for this project study. The survey was divided into four sections. The ISTL survey consisted of 36 total questions (five demographic questions that provided me with five different variables, 12 supporters of testing questions, seven consequences of testing questions, and 11 critics of testing questions that provided me with one variable the principals perspective). Each response was given a certain number of points (*Strongly Disagree* – 1, *Disagree* – 2, *Unsure* – 3, *Agree* – 4, *Strongly Agree* – 5). The number represented the degree in which the participant perceived a factor impacted their satisfaction with standardized testing. To calculate the degree level of the participant's perceptions, every response to each question was tallied once the survey was submitted to Survey Monkey. Data from Survey Monkey was exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet where the numerical values for each participant's responses was averaged. Data were imported into SPSS for analysis of the mean and Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test.

For the purpose of this project study, the following changes were made to the original survey:

- Item 1 - Introduction was deleted (Reason: contained developers personal information).
- Demographic Information D2 – Deleted (Reason: school size was not pertinent for this study).

- Demographic Information D5 – Deleted (Reason: years of teaching experience is not relevant to this study).
- Demographic Information D7 – Deleted (Reason: campus rating was not relevant to this study).
- Survey Item 3 – Changed the word “Texas” to “North Carolina” (Reason: the study is being conducted in North Carolina).
- Survey Item 7 – Deleted “TEKS” (Reason: Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills is not pertinent for this study).
- Survey Item 32 – Deleted (Reason: open ended questions are not part of a quantitative study).

These minor changes did not impact the reliability or the validity of the instrument.

The first section of the survey collected demographic information about the participants. The second section of the survey collected information about the participants' perception of standardized testing supporters opinion. The third section of the survey collected information regarding participants' perception of the unintended results of using standardized testing as found in the literature. The fourth section of the survey collected data concerning participants' perception of critics regarding the use of standardized testing as found in the literature. Responses to all questions in sections two, three, and four are on a five point Likert scale indicating (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c)

uncertain, (d) disagree, (e) strongly disagree. Data from the survey will be made available only by requesting it from me.

To assess the reliability of the ISTTL survey, Denny (2008) constructed a panel of five secondary administrators from various Texas school districts to pretest the surveys significance, wording, and other validity matters. The questions for the survey were developed based on information from data concerning participants' perception regarding supporters of the use of high-stakes testing; participants' perception of unbiased researchers regarding the importance of high-stakes testing; and participants' perception of critics of high-stakes testing.

Face validity examined by directing the items that seem irrelevant be marked by the group respondents in order to analyze principals' opinions of standardized testing. The respondent remarks confirmed that the items surveyed were relevant to this survey. Items that were considered unclear or ambiguous were also asked to be marked as a method of expanding the instruments dependability. A field test consisting of 10 secondary administrators from various Texas school districts was conducted in the Fall of 2006 to guarantee clarity and content validity. The dependability investigation conveyed Cronbach's alpha of .8762 (Denny, 2008). I used a pre-established validated and reliable survey that a previous study used and established its validity and reliability. During the referenced survey reliability was established by test-retest of the survey instrument by Denny (2008).

Table 2

Research Questions and Variables

RQ1	Principal perception	The total of all 31 questions for each participant
RQ2	Variable 1	Experience - demographic question #3 on the ISTTL survey
RQ3	Variable 2	Type of School - demographic question #2 on ISTTL survey
RQ4	Variable 3	Gender - demographic question #1 on ISTTL survey
RQ5	Variable 4	Highest Degree Earned - demographic question #5 on ISTTL survey

Data Collection and Analysis

A request to participate in the research was sent via email to each principal identified by the superintendent of each participating county requesting their participation in the research. Included in the email was the consent form and hyperlink to access the Impact of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning (ISTTL) survey online through Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey was used to track the responses and send email reminders to all participants who were initially invited to participate in the study. Reminder emails were not sent to those who opted out of participating in the study.

Survey Monkey collected the online survey data for two weeks then compiled the results and sent thank you letters to all participants of the study.

This was a quantitative study designed to investigate principals' perceptions of standardized testing. Descriptive analysis was used to measure the mean and Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test which is inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform data analysis to test null hypotheses. Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test was used which is an inferential analysis. As stated by Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle (2006), pp. 316: "A basic component of the inferential process is to test hypothesis and make a decision about its veracity". Correlation analysis with hypotheses are considered inferential analysis (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006). There were four predictor variables in this study: gender (male or female) with nominal scale, type of school (Title I or non Title I) with nominal scale, and years of administrative experience (1 to 4 years, 5 to 14 years, and 15 or more years) with an ordinal scale and highest degree earned (Masters, Educational Specialist, or Doctrate) with a ordinal scale.

There was one criterion variable, which was constructed by adding all options of the 31 questions in the survey. Those variables of standardized testing were the results of the principal component of 31 items on the survey instrument (Section 2 items 1 through 31). For survey questions with five options were coded: 5 - strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 unsure, 2 – disagree, and 1 – strongly disagree and questions 18-31 were reverse coded:

1 – strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – unsure, 4 – disagree, and 5 – strongly disagree. I added the codes for each question and came up with a total score for the 31 questions for each participant. This represented the variable for perceptions of participants on standardized tests that was used for research questions 2-5.

Point-Biserial correlation for Research Questions 3 and 4. Spearman's correlation for research questions 2 and 5. Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test were used to examine the correlation between these variables. Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test score ranged between -1 to +1 with the positive numbers used to identify a positive relationship and negative numbers used for negative relationship. A score of 0 suggested there was no correlation between the variables (Creswell, 2008). One interval variable was constructed in the survey, which was the participants' perception. Data supplied by participants were analyzed, and descriptive analysis indicated the mean.

My intent was to explore the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning based on K-12 school principals' perspectives within the research school district in North Carolina. The questions answered in this quantitative study were the following:

Research Question 1: What are principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within the school district in North Carolina?

Research Question 2: To what extent principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H₀2: Principals' experience are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

*H*₁₂: Principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Research Question 3: To what extent principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

*H*₀₃: Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

*H*₁₃: Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Research Question 4: To what extent principals' gender are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

*H*₀₄: Principals' gender are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

*H*₁₄: Principals' gender are correlated to perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Research Question 5: To what extent principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

*H*₀₅: Principals' academic degree are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

*H*₁₅: Principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

I assumed that the survey instrument I chose for this inquiry was appropriate and that participants clearly understood each question and responded accordingly. I also assumed the data collected from this study would be a representation of North Carolina principals' view on the effects of standardized testing. It was also my assumption that participants were honest in reporting the effect standardized testing has on teaching learning in their school.

The limitations of the study are that I removed or changed the following information, however, these changes do not affect the survey reliability and validity. The survey developers personal introduction:

- Demographic questions regarding school size, years of teaching experience, and campus rating.
- Changed the surveying state from Texas to North Carolina and deleted Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills test.
- Deleted the open ended questions.

The study results may produce a low rate of return by using only one survey instrument. My predisposition regarding the amount of pressure placed on state administered testing was my most evident constraint.

The scope of this study included K-12 current or past principals and assistant principals of K-12 public schools in North Carolina. There are 100 countywide school districts in North Carolina.

Protection of Participant Rights

To protect the rights of all participants, I obtained permission from the IRB at Walden University approval # 05-08-15-0137167 as well as permission from the schools that participated in the study (Appendix C). There were no past or current professional relationships with the participants of the study that would have affected data collection and my experiences or biases that are related to the topic.

To ensure survey responses were kept anonymous and secure, I was the only person collecting and analyzing the data, no other individuals were able to retrieve or access the data. The data were stored in locked safe that can only be accessed by me. The following confidentiality statement was at the beginning of the survey: The information you provide on this survey will be kept strictly confidential. The consent explained the purpose and procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, the risks and benefits of participating in the study, confidentiality, the statement of consent, and researcher contact information. Participants were not be identified.

A hard copy and an electronic copy of the survey instrument will remain in my possession. A hard copy and an electronic version of the survey has been stored in a locked file drawer in the researcher's home; the electronic file version is password protected on an external drive. The data are secure and will be kept for at least five years and then destroyed. A hard copy will be shredded, and the electronic version will be permanently deleted from the external drive. Since participation was strictly voluntarily and it does not require any treatment participants should not have any physical or emotional problems as a result of them voluntarily participating in the study.

The Findings

The data collection and analysis of this study explored principals' perspectives related to impact of standardized testing in grades K-12 in North Carolina. Correlation between principals' characteristics and their perspectives related to the effects of standardized testing was investigated using Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test. Survey responses were exported from Survey Monkey into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The numerical values that corresponded to each participant's responses were correlated to each factor (principals' perspective, gender, type of school, years of experience, and type of degree). Table 3 shows the frequency of each participants response to the demographic questions.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

	Response	Frequency
Years of experience	1-4 years	6
	5-14 years	20
	15 or more years	5
Total		31
	Response	Frequency
Title I School	Yes	12
	No	16
Total		31
	Response	Frequency
Gender	Female	15
	Male	16
Total		31
	Response	Frequency
Highest degree	Masters	26
	Educational Specialist	1
	Doctorate	4
Total		31

Data were then imported into SPSS and analyzed against the five research questions that guided the project study:

1. What are principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within the school district in North Carolina?
2. To what extent principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H2: Principals' experience are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Ha2: Principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

3. To what extent principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H3: Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Ha3: Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

4. RQ4: To what extent principals' gender are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H4: Principals' gender are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Ha4: Principals' gender are correlated to perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

5. To what extent principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

H5: Principals' academic degree are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Ha5: Principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Assumptions

In this sub-section all of the assumptions are related to Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test were discussed. Table 4 shows there was an independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.915 which was very close to 2, therefore it was accepted that there is independence of errors (residuals). For the Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation tests one variable is interval and the other variable is nominal.

Table 4

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.450 ^a	.202	.079	.22274	1.915

a. Predictors: (Constant), D5. Highest degree earned, D1. What is your gender?, D3. Years of administrative experience, D2. Is your school Title I?

b. Dependent Variable: Avg Score

An assumption of multiple linear regression showed a relationship between the independent variables collectively are linearly related to the dependent variable.

The relation between the independent variable and dependent variable are linear.

The assumption of homoscedasticity was that the residuals are equal for all values of the predicted dependent variable. There was homoscedasticity, the spread of the residuals will not increase or decrease as they move across the predicted values.

An assumption of multicollinearity showed none of the independent variable have a correlation greater than 0.7. The tolerance values are not greater than 0.1 (the lowest was 0.675), so there was not a problem with collinearity in the data set.

There was one outlier (3.75) that was left in because it will not significantly change the data. The leverage values did not show any cases that have problematic values. The ordered values for Cook's Distance was not above 1 so there are not any cases that are influential. The standardized residuals appear to be approximately normally distributed

A Point-Biserial correlation test was run to assess the relationship between principal's perception and principal's gender and type of school. A Spearman's correlation test was run to assess the relationship between years of experience and type of degree. Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with variables normally distributed as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk $p > .05$ and there was one outlier that would not significantly change the data.

Research Question 1

What are principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within the school district in North Carolina? The guiding research question 1 was answered using participant's responses to survey questions 1 – 31 as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Participant Statistics

Participant	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	1.74	.773	31
2	2.06	.854	31
3	2.45	.995	31
4	2.32	.945	31
5	2.81	1.302	31
6	2.45	1.234	31
7	2.06	.727	31
8	2.35	.950	31
9	1.81	.910	31
10	2.32	.832	31
11	2.03	.605	31
12	2.35	.877	31
13	1.90	.746	31
14	2.19	.792	31
15	2.13	.718	31
16	2.39	1.022	31
17	2.06	.727	31
18	1.94	.964	31
19	1.84	.374	31
20	1.97	1.016	31
21	1.77	.762	31
22	2.32	.909	31
23	2.16	.779	31
24	2.81	1.515	31
25	1.58	.672	31
26	1.84	.638	31
27	2.32	.871	31
28	1.84	.735	31
29	1.58	.502	31
30	3.81	.873	31
31	1.26	.445	31

The mean for each factor represented a numerical average of participants' level of perception in regards to factors that impact standardized testing while the standard deviation identified how much principals' responses deviated from the mean. The mean of all participants average score was 2.14 and the standard deviation was .232. The mean of 2.14 indicates the average score that principals perceived standardized testing has a negative effect on teaching and learning within a school district in North Carolina.

Research Question 2

To what extent principals' experience are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances? The guiding research question 2 was answered using participant's responses to survey questions 1 – 31. Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient test results in Table 6 shows there was no statistically significant correlation between principal's years of administrative experience and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $p > .05$, $r = .116$. Principals' experience are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances. There was not a significant relationship between principals perception and years of experience, therefore, the null hypothesis was failed to reject as shown in Table 6.

Research Question 3

To what extent principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances? The guiding research question 3 was answered using participant's responses to survey questions 1 –

31. Point-Biserial correlation test results in Table 6 shows there was no statistically significant correlation between the type of school and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $p > .05$, $r = -.264$. Principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances. There was not a significant relationship between principals perception and type of school, therefore, the null hypothesis was failed to reject as shown in Table 6.

Research Question 4

To what extent principals' gender are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances? The guiding research question 4 was answered using participant's responses to survey questions 1 – 31. Point-Biserial correlation test results in Table 6 shows there was no statistically significant correlation between principals' gender and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $p > .05$, $r = .021$. Principals' gender are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances. There was not a significant relationship between principals perception and gender, therefore, the null hypothesis was failed to reject as shown in Table 6.

Research Question 5

To what extent principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances? The guiding research question 5 was answered using participant's responses to survey questions 1 – 31. Spearman's

rank-order correlation coefficient test results in Table 6 shows there was no statistically significant correlation between principal's academic degree and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $p > .05$, $r = -.289$. There was not a significant relationship between principal's perception and academic degree, therefore, the null hypothesis was failed to reject as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Correlations between Principals Perception and Participants Demographics

	Avg Score	Years experience	Title I	Gender	Highest degree
Point-Biserial Correlation	1		-.264	.021	
Spearman's Correlation	1	.116			-.289
Avg Score	1		.152	.912	
Point-Biserial Sig. (2-tailed)	1				
Spearman's Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.535			.115
N	31	31	31	31	31

Note: Correlation marked with an asterisk (*) are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

The methods for this project study were presented in this section. A quantitative method with non-experimental correlation design was used for this study. A 36 question, Likert survey gathered data regarding principals' perspectives related to the impact of standardized testing in grades K-12 located in the Southeastern region of North Carolina.

In addition, correlation between principals' characteristics and their perspectives related to the effects of standardized testing was investigated using Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test. A convenient sample of current and past (within the past 5 years) principals and assistant principals who work in the North Carolina Public School System represented the sample for this study. Participants were invited to participate in the study via an email invitation that provided a link to the Impact of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning (ISTTL) (See Appendix B). All participants were asked to complete the survey within a 2-week time period.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure the mean and a Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test determined if there was a significant correlation between principals' perception and demographics (Questions D1 – D5). Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test results displayed in perspectives on the effects of standardized test on students' performances and the principals' characteristics including years of experience, type of school, gender, and academic degree. The results of the survey will be made available by submitting a request to the researcher. The results will also be presented to the participants via a professional development workshop. Findings of this study does not support a principals' perspective on the impact standardized testing has on teaching and learning based on a principal's characteristics. A description of this project, goals and rationale are presented in section 3.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate K-12 principals perspective on the impact standardized testing has on teaching and learning in Southeastern NC. Through research I learned that a principals characteristic does not have an impact on K-12 teaching and learning. I used the findings from the research to develop the project.

The project includes a professional development workshop using Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2011 as its presentation tool. The professional development will consist of a three-day workshop. The project will begin once the project study has been approved by Walden University.

Description and Goals

I will conduct a three-day professional development workshop entitled “Principals’ Perspectives on the Effect of Standardized Testing for K-12”. The professional development workshop will be held in the Central Services conference room and it is projected to take place Winter 2016. I would like to conduct the workshop March 2016 after all End of Course testing has been completed.

Each day the professional development workshop will begin at 8:00 a.m., break for lunch from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. Day one the morning professional development workshop will be on the principal’s’ role in recognizing effective teaching strategies that improve high stakes testing performance; and afternoon sessions will be on how principals can effectively connect the use of instructional time to standardize test results.

Although motivating teachers will not be directly addressed, principals will be able to use the skills learned in the workshops to motivate their teachers to help students to learn.

On day two of the professional development workshop the morning sessions will be about leadership accountability and closing the achievement gap and one afternoon session on using test data followed by an open forum. The open forum will allow participants to engage in discussions about what instructional strategies that directly address increasing standardize testing performance methods that work best for their staff, ask questions and allow their colleagues to respond based on their experience and what they learned in the workshop.

On day three of the professional development workshop the principals will travel across the street to the middle school for a school visit. The school visit will allow principals to put theory into practice by visiting classrooms and recognizing those strategies discussed during the professional development workshops. Principals will be looking for strategies that were identified during the professional development workshops that target and increase student performance on standardize testing. Principals will report out to the group with their observations and recommendations for improvements to the workshop group of what they observed during the classroom visits.

The goal of the project will be how a principals' characteristic does not impact standardized testing and the effect it has on teaching and learning. The project is designed to help participants gain an understanding about how principals feel about the workshops and to determine if it will help them prepare their schools for End of Course

testing. The project will also provide principals with the instructional tools needed to help their staff create daily lesson plans, instructional strategies to help teachers acquire a common language to use across a content area, and to develop student involvement approaches that centered around student-driven instructional practices. This workshop will relate to the findings of my study by providing principals with the tools to transform their schools from traditional teaching to a focus that promotes high standardized testing performance. The learning outcomes for the target audience, hour by hour training, and the necessary materials for the professional development workshops are located in Appendix A.

Scholarly Rationale

The audience for this workshop will be principals and assistant principals. The professional development workshop genre was selected to address principals perspectives on the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning. This consists of providing principals with a chance to collaborate and understand the gap in student skill levels. According to Easton (2012) teachers learn better when they collaborate with other teachers while reviewing student data.

Professional development can be a meaningful way for improving knowledge and skills to overcome unsuccessful practices. Regardless of a person's profession, professional development training can strengthen their knowledge and skills (Wei, 2010). Additionally, collaborative learning communities make it possible for professionals to

participate in important learning to create new skills and abilities (Patti, Holzer, Stern, & Brackett, 2012).

In this quantitative study, I explored K-12 school principals perspective on the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning in North Carolina public schools. The study allowed me to gain insight into the areas administrators felt were most significant in their opinion. The problem that caused this study to be conducted relates to whether principals' characteristics affect their perspective toward students' assessment and the use of standardized test data. According to the data analysis in Section 2, there was not a significant relationship between principal's characteristics and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning. Based on the statistical analysis results for the study research questions 2-5, I learned principals felt like they received very little or no training on how to increase students test scores and how to close the achievement.

In conclusion, there was a strong need to provide principals with knowledge of various teaching strategies that work or do not work with different learning styles and ideas to improve standardized test scores.

Review of Literature

The literature in this section contains an analysis of research and theory relevant to the development and implementation of the professional development genre, which includes professional development, conceptual framework and, collaborative learning

theory. Also, through the use of literature review I explained the development of the project.

The review of literature was used to identify principal's perception of standardized testing. Through the use of Walden University library dissertations, peer-reviewed articles, books and journal articles were accessed. Additionally, the database searches included ProQuest, Sage Publications, EBSCOhost, Education Resource Information, and Dissertation. The key terms used to find pertinent information to support the study were: *Professional development + collaborative learning + workshops + best practices + learning strategies + zone of proximal development*. Peer-reviewed journal articles from studies published within the last 5 years were also used.

Professional Development

Professional development should provide school administrators with the essential tools they need to recognize the best classroom practices to improve standardized testing performance (Musanti & Pence, 2010). The purpose of conducting professional development is to help principals and assistant principals gain an understanding about how to analyze and interpret data from assessments. Additionally, the workshops will assist principals and assistant principals in determining how to better prepare their schools for End of Course testing. Currently, educators are under more pressure to better prepare students for standardized tests (Jellison-Holme, Richards, Jimerson, & Cohen, 2010). The workshops will focus on helping schools conquer interferences, which hinder educators from participating and learning in collaboration with colleagues across the

disciplines (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013).

Administrators are concerned with accountability and change; making it harder for teachers to teach and for students earn their high school diploma (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2012). Educators are challenged with changing their content, delivery, and assessment methods (Peabody, 2011). Particularly in core academic areas where teachers are spending more time with test preparation and less time with formal classroom assessment (Munoz, 2011).

According to Bullock and Russell (2010) public school educators are faced with difficulties when they try to change current educational practices. Educators must continue to develop new ways to involve students educational opportunities that motivate and keep students eager to learn (Falasca, 2011). Cultural patterns and routines related to teaching and learning are embedded in everyday life from a very young age and in this manner profoundly resistant to change (Hunter-Johnson, & Closson, (2012). In essence, all adults are aware of what teaching and learning should consist of because they spent many years learning when they were a student (Ferrara, Svetina, Skucha, & Davidson, 2011).

Professional development that improves a principal's mindset involves examining and reflecting on their current trends and consequently changing the logical reasoning of their responsibility of an educator (Males, Otten, & Herbel-Eisenmann, 2010).

Professional development is a process educators use to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities (Broadley, 2012). According to Chou (2011), in order for professional development to be successful, its participants must have a desire to be involved in

selecting the types of workshops that will be offered. Professional development workshops are designed to change assessment approaches that enhance standardized testing performance (Grigg, et. al., 2012). On every level, professional development is an opportunity to enhance instructor quality (Barrett et al., 2012). Effective communication is the key to successful professional development (Bates, Swennen, & Jones, 2014). People who learn how to comprehend which skills to study are more capable of directing their own learning, remain motivated, and gain more knowledge from their learning experiences (Edmondson et al., 2012). Research shows that professional development has the ability to improve principal supervisory skills to increase student assessment capability (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). Maddox and Marvin (2012) noted that throughout the United States of America, professional development training programs are emerging to help address the increase pressures for principals to improve standardize test scores .

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guides this study is Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) outlined in Section 1. The development of understanding within the context of a child's own experience is essential for principals to recognize those experiences and the connection to standardized testing performance.

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development promotes scaffolding. Scaffolding allows its participants to engage in project-based learning where instructional approaches are used to create realistic classrooms. It also involves small group activities that allow its participants the opportunity to help each other learn to effectively analyze assessment data and how to align content the create success on standardize testing.. Each

workshop will build upon the next to help its participant's move from concept to mastery of utilizing data to enhance testing performance. The workshops will use techniques to help the adult learners engage in meaningful learning by using modeling and collaborating as suggested by Jeffries and Maeder (2009). According to Savery and Duffy (1996), social constructivists support the need for adult learners to have an opportunity to reflect on what they learned and the learning process before the conclusion of the workshops.

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory encourages teachers to support each other's learning strategies with professional ideas so learning can be scaffolded through interaction. I will utilize Vygotsky's social constructivism theory for the professional development part of this study because principals and assistant principals will participate in active collaborative project-based setting to develop authentic artifacts to support their learning styles.

Pella (2011) noted that social constructivism is beneficial for adult learning. In this study, the educators will participate in training pertinent to the classroom content they desire to improve. Subsequently, it is essential to see how adult learners comprehend when developing professional development for themselves. Short, Echevarria and Richards-Tutor (2011) conducted a study and learned that students score significantly higher on standardized tests when they receive intervention from principals and assistant principals who participate in professional development on assessments.

Vygostky (1978) promoted three focal premises of social constructivism for the adult learner: scaffolding, social context and situated cognition.

The problem the professional development workshops will focus on are based on the findings from the study is that principals' characteristics are not correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances on K-12 teaching and learning. The learning activities will address the problem administrators have with problem-solving activities and developing strategies teachers can use in their classrooms. The environment for the activities will be as authentic as possible to ensure learning will be useful and meaningful so the participants can to taken the information back to their classrooms. Pella (2011) believed that participants learn better when the setting is realistic and participants interact with each other to share their knowledge, skills and resources.

Collaborative Learning

According to Nihalani, Wilson, Thomas and Robinson (2010) collaborative learning is a small group of people that cognitively and cooperatively participate in a common task to attain the same goal. Researchers support the idea of creating professional learning communities within the schools to change current practices and implement student learning (Darling- Hammond & Richardson, 2009). School administrators understand that learning involves a social growth process (Lieberman & Mace, 2009). When individuals participate in collaborative learning practices they get support to help them as well as provide quality instruction to the students (Zheng, Yang,

Cheng, & Huang, 2014). Learning communities allow individuals the opportunity to develop learning that will meet the needs of the students (Oyler, 2011). Burke (2012) stated that educators favor professional development that influences reform training activities. Research shows that professional learning communities enhances teachers' adequacy and strengthens their teaching and learning (Hawley and Rollie, 2009).

Project Description

Needed Resources, Existing Supports, and Potential Barriers

The resources needed to conduct the professional development workshop will include a laptop with Microsoft office PowerPoint 2011, Internet access, thumb-drive with the PowerPoint presentation loaded for backup, hardcopies of the presentation, and writing utensils. The school system will provide a conference room with a smartboard, an LCD projector, 10 tables to seat at least five people per table and a computer technician to troubleshoot any technical problems that may occur during the workshop as well as the visiting schools administration support. I will also provide light refreshments such as coffee, water, and pastries.

Potential barriers of the professional development workshop may be the lack of attendance and commitment to attend all of the sessions each day. Administrators have to be convinced that the workshops will be beneficial to them and their staff. Some administrators may be overworked and/or understaffed which may result in them not being able to attend nor send a representative from their school.

The district Superintendent will strongly encourage principals and assistant principals to participate in the three-day professional development workshop. The benefit

of attending the three-day workshop will be the awarding of one credit towards recertification.

Implementation

After this study has been approved by Walden University, I will request permission from the district Superintendent to conduct the professional development workshop. I will give the Superintendent a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, a list of all the needed resources and existing support I will need to conduct the workshop.

I will be the presenter at the three-day professional development workshop. I will make sure the laptop and PowerPoint slides are properly loaded and working. On day one of the workshops I will share some of the findings with the participants that I deemed necessary to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively utilize standardized testing data. On day two of the workshop, I will discuss leadership accountability, closing the achievement gap, the effective use of test data followed by a collaborative learning open discussion session. On day three of the workshop, the group will travel across the street to the middle school to conduct live classroom walk throughs, this hands on activity will enable the principals to put theory into practice. A more detailed time table to the three-day workshops are located in Appendix A.

Roles and Responsibilities

As the researcher, it is my responsibility to facilitate the workshop by ensuring school administrators have the necessary resources to be successful at their school. To

maximize the effectiveness of the workshop sessions, school-building principals must be willing to share the professional development with their staff and school. Keeping the workshops organized and well planned will enable the participants to remain actively engaged throughout the entire workshop.

The role and responsibility of the principals and assistant principals will be to ensure effective collaboration occurs. They should recognize that collaboration is advantageous, and important to increasing standardized testing performance. Collaboration should start with assessing the data and getting input from other participants to develop or outline a successful plan of action for their school.

Project Evaluation

The guiding purpose for conducting an assessment is to survey results and determine if any changes are necessary (Creswell, 2008). A goal-based evaluation serves as the most appropriate method to be used at the conclusion of the workshop. Goal-based evaluation is the most suitable approach due to the professional development workshops objectives. The goal of the professional development workshops will be to provide administrators with adequate time to collaborate and brainstorm about various aspects and the effectiveness of the assessment. An additional goal is to initiate a session that will include discussions of the implications from this study that the administrators identified as very important. The overall goal is to ensure administrators clearly understand the purpose of assessment and how to effectively transform discussions into

active engagement to assist teachers in incorporating the process with content delivery in the classroom.

The school administrators are the key stakeholders who will benefit from the professional development since it is was developed based on their needs. The professional development will not only help administrators when developing their own seminars but focuses on the most important issues administrators considered important to be incorporated in further professional development workshops. In addition, teachers are also key stakeholders because they would benefit from their administrators enhancing their knowledge base to help better prepare their students for future success. By helping students to be more prepared for college or the workforce when they graduate high school will make them more valuable to the community and as members of society. Appendix A includes the recommended project evaluation.

Project Implications

Many educational systems across the country feel the effects of rapid growth on standardized testing and culturally diverse students. Professional development contributes to social change by enabling educational leaders to see increases in student achievement on standardized tests.. Professional development workshops assist these leaders in creating enthusiasm for students to perform their best on mandated assessments tests. When educational leaders attend workshops their interaction with other school leaders create a shift from everyday maintenance school functions into highly engaged student activities. Student activities that encourages student achievement and explicitly

address areas that increase standardized testing scores. Social change implications can be as simple as changing the instructional emphasis from convergence of course content to targeting the crucial areas of teaching and learning coupled with building effective communication skills.

Educational administrators at all levels and all across the country face a daunting list of responsibilities, duties and roles that obligate them to ensure schools are open for students to enter and learn. Importance of the project to local stakeholders in a larger context establishes a consensus of forward thinking. This removes unconnected single issues professional development events towards a more detailed and strategically planned team building workshop programs. New partnerships emerge and arrangements are formulated through design to initiate, review and to assess each school district processes. School administrators from across the country visualize group theory and practices that are successful while reevaluating and reorganizing those that are ineffective. These nationwide school initiatives establishes a stable balance between helping the students learn what is required of them while informing educational leaders what the practicing profession of education requires of its instructors.

Conclusion

Section 3 described the development and details of the project that focused on the problem of the study. This section began with an introduction, which included the projects goals and a scholarly rationale for developing the project. A review of literature was conducted to support the content of the project followed by the needed resources,

existing support, the potential barriers, implementation, roles and responsibilities. Section 3 ended with the projects social change implications and the key stakeholders of the project. Section 4 will conclude the study with a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

A quantitative research method was used in conducting this study to survey North Carolina principals' perspectives on the effect standardized testing has on teaching and learning in grades K-12. The project focused on issues surrounding the frustrations principals have regarding their lack of ability to impact students and their difficulty understanding the demands placed on them to raise test scores.

Section 4 consists of a review of the projects strengths and limitations, which may be modified depending on the available resources at different schools. Each school may have similar challenges but the method administrator's use to address the problems with the teachers and students may differ. This section also includes recommendations for ways to address the problem, what I learned about scholarship, project development and evaluation, as well as leadership change. Additionally, I discussed my maturation as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer followed by an all-inclusive conclusion noteworthiness of my effort and what I cultured and utilizing the implications, and guidance for subsequent research.

Project Strengths

This project will seek to improve professional development activities for administrators to participate in during the school day and furnish their staff with on-site support during the school year. The professional development activities will enhance the instructional practices of the staff through continuous organization, collaboration, and peer examinations. The project study generates possibilities for administrators to gain

knowledge from each other as well as generate a great level of assurance inside the schools. The schools will be given opportunities to venture beyond the sheltered classrooms and establish pedagogical practices.

Project Limitations

The limitations of this project included sampling a small group of 31 administrators. Another limitation of the study was that only six of the participants had less than five years of experience. Further research should be done to this study that would encourage more participants. Professional development workshops are developed with particular goals in mind; however, several challenges can occur when developing and implementing the workshop. The most important limitation of the professional development workshops are that it requires all principals in the school district to participate in order to be effective. Since principals have so many responsibilities they may be unavailable to attend the workshops. Further limitations that could be associated with the project are the time constraints and lack of follow up for implementation.

Since the findings in this study consisted of a small number of participants, the outcome of this study provides an opportunity for further quantitative research to examine administrator's perspective of the impact standardized testing has on teaching and learning in other school communities.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to addressing the research problem of preparing teachers to assist students with achieving higher scores on standardized tests would be to create a

program that focuses on successfully achieving the projected outcome. Currently, in the research school district there are programs in place such as Project Upward Bound and Race-to-the-Top that concentrate on high achieving students by offering workshops and collaborating with other educators. It may be necessary for schools to incorporate a time each day for students to receive remediation to improve standardized test scores without affecting the required courses needed for graduation.

School administrator's success is highly dependent upon the results of student standardized test scores. The result of the standardized tests are used nationwide to measure student achievement. Students must meet mandated test scores for acceptance into colleges and universities. The more emphasis being placed on standardized testing has created a need for school administrators to include curriculum lessons that assist students in increasing their ability to perform better on standardized tests.

Scholarship, Project Development, Leadership and Change

Through this doctoral process, I gained more knowledge of research, by doing scholarly research. I learned research is a lengthy process that requires time and patience. It requires being focused, disciplined, organized, and time management. Scholarship requires consistently conducting in-depth research until saturation of the topic. During this process I learned that my own biases cannot be included in the analysis of literature review. Additionally, I increased my ability to examine my subject from various prospective while pinpointing the author's biases.

Each piece of literature focused on a particular aspect of standardized testing. This enabled me to gain a wealth of knowledge regarding a principal's perspective on standardized testing. By conducting this project study I learned that one particular principal characteristic does not influence how well a school will perform on standardized testing.

In this process I learned many valuable skills to successfully develop my project and evaluation that will be useful in helping me with future projects. This endeavor taught me that creating or revising new projects requires research, planning, and organizational skills. Additionally, I gained more insight into what needs to be considered when developing a project. Since all projects are not the same each projects has to be planned according to its purpose and audience.

Through the process of completing my doctoral study, I discovered how successful leadership produces positive change. As a result, I learned that the lack of communication skills can result in poor leadership at the school and district levels. This could prompt perplexity, disappointment, and inadequate implementation of a scholarly plan. It is essential to have good leadership with a well-defined plan of what it takes to promote change. An effective leader has the ability create a positive atmosphere and motivate others.

Scholar

As a result of my doctoral study, I became more productive as a scholar by increasing my knowledge, skills, and ability to successfully conduct research. I realized

that as a scholar it is important to have a desire to learn more about a particular subject and to be dedicated to learning. When I was developing my study, I learned how to determine if a topic is important enough to conduct a research. While collecting my data, I realized that there was ample reason to conduct the study and how important it was to support my assumptions with literature reviews. Also, I learned that I had to dedicate myself to my studies by spending long hours in isolation researching and writing while ensuring I did not disregard my family.

Practitioner

As a practitioner, I achieved a great sense of success from completing this study. When I think about how this journey began and how I struggled to understand what was expected of me to know being a scholar it brings me great pleasure. I learned that I had to keep my personal opinion and biases out of my study while focusing on facts that were supported by literature reviews. Through scholarly research I learned the problem I choose expanded far beyond North Carolina public schools. Prior to collecting data, I learned that getting permission to use an existing survey can be a painstaking process its originator is hard to locate.

Project Developer

As a project developer, I gained an immeasurable amount of knowledge while conducting this study. When I began this process, I was excited but also nervous about the road I was embarking upon. I based my project on themes I discovered doing research. This experience has given me firsthand knowledge of principals' perspective

on standardized testing. During this process, I had to remain determined to focus on the facts while continually examining the strengths and weaknesses of the project. After developing this project I am more confident in my ability to develop future projects that will promote a positive social change. While developing my professional development project, I learned that there are no guidelines to assist principals with developing programs that will enable students to improve their standardized test scores. Principals are often left to conduct their own research or seek professional development opportunities outside of their school districts at their own expense.

As a Doctoral Student at Walden University, I learned to open my mind and appreciate the thrill of understanding the author's viewpoint about how to effectively educate children. When I began my doctoral program I truly wanted to know how principals felt about standardized testing and through this process. I was able to gain a better understanding of a principals' perception that will help me grow as a school leader. Individualized understanding of different instructional procedures conveys small pieces of knowledge to the diverse levels of instructional echelons.. My dialogue with principals has given me new insight into the realm of educators who have a desire to be involved in changing students lives.

I have constantly viewed myself as a reasonable thinker throughout my professional life and as a doctoral candidate. I have tremendously improved my critical thinking and comprehension skills to learn the meaning of being a skillful researcher and scholar. Instead of directing my attention solely on the proposed implications or

historical foundations, I acquired the knowledge to persistently ask “why” on a wide range of levels. I honed in on how to look deeper when researching to reveal the smallest details that entwine texts together which allowed me to gain better knowledge of how important it is to have good leadership at all schools.

My chair and committee members have done an outstanding job of guiding me throughout my dissertation process and ensuring that I continued to grow as a researcher and a scholar. The advice and recommendations they provided were clear and precise. After my conversations with Dr. Kebritchi I knew exactly what was expected of me to successfully complete this process. She was always available to address my concerns and issues. I was very fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and caring chair to keep me motivated.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The importance of the project will contribute to the literature that surrounds the purpose and purview of principals and their roles in improving standardized test scores. The need for increased leadership in the school setting is a direct result of the growing accountability of student achievement. The results of the project will essentially accentuate school principal’s capability to carefully analyze the necessary skills for teachers to have an impact on students standardized test scores. The most methodical school principal seeks processes to produce opportunities as sustained communication with colleagues in relevant ways that will strengthen the dynamics of the instructional content delivery of the lessons.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project contains suggestions for changes in the current way a principals' character impacts teaching and learning. It can also unify programs across the district ensure the same training is received and to offer adequate resources and opportunities for collaboration with other teachers. The literature review conducted shows there is a connection between a principals' characteristic and teaching and learning. This project can be used in all testing areas to help teachers and students better prepare for standardized testing. Future research should focus on standardized testing and how a principals' characteristic impacts teaching and learning.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

In this project study I sought to explore the impact principals' have on standardized testing. The findings from this study could positively impact the school district by expanding principals' knowledge while working collaboratively with other principals to establish a cohesive learning community and to maintain openness to new strategies that might be more effective. A social change may occur through the use of professional development workshops, which will allow principals the opportunity to examine their beliefs and potentially change their role as an educator. Professional development that is geared towards social growth topics may help educators close the achievement gap.

The implication for social change that is limited to this study is that the district surveyed will receive professional development to help improved standardized test scores in their district. The local communities may be positively impacted by persistently

creating better learning environments for the students. This persistence may produce more high school graduates who are employable or prepared for college. These students will also make better community leaders.

Conclusion

Section 4 provided reflections and conclusions of the project that focused on its strengths, limitations, and recommendations. I also provided an analysis of what I learned about scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. Followed by an analysis of what I learned about myself as a scholar, practitioner, and a project developer. One answer will not fix the problems and challenges educators are faced with but the problems can be fixed by finding one solution at a time.

An educational leader must listen to its staff members, teachers, students and the community to make conscious decisions that will effect the culture of the school. Administrators need to support teachers by participating in professional development workshops with their staff members and provide meaningful feedback to help address the educational challenges they are faced with in the classrooms.

The major contribution for this study will assist in creating an understanding of how principals can work together to maximize student achievement on standardized testing. The combination of the research and professional development will give principals some very useful data in understanding how different principals approach standardize testing.

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Appendix A: A professional development workshop

RECOGNIZING TEACHING
STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVE
TESTING PERFORMANCE



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Promote active learning
- Match student and faculty expectations
- Stimulate learning in trainees
- Small Group Exercise

OUTLINE

- ▣ Course content - what needs to be covered (why? How?)
- ▣ Changing landscape
- ▣ Competencies (Outcomes)
- ▣ Making the connection (mapping)
- ▣ Some suggestions

RECOGNIZING TEACHING
STRATEGIES PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS

PRESENTED BY:
JACQUELINE BRUTON WRAY
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

HIGH STAKES TESTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



HIGH STAKES TESTING

- ▣ **Introductions**
- ▣ **High stakes, how did we get here?**
- ▣ **Data analysis of a strategy**
- ▣ **Integrated “test prep”**
- ▣ **Build Mathematical Confidence**
- ▣ **Build Teacher Confidence**
- ▣ **Other ideas, implementations**

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- ▣ **Society pressures**
- ▣ **Global economy**
- ▣ **Accountability**
- ▣ **Failing schools**
- ▣ **Pressures to compare, measure**
- ▣ **Success for students**
- ▣ **Business needs literate workers**
- ▣ **Information Age demands**

**HIGH STAKES TESTING
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

**PRESENTED BY:
JACQUELINE BRUTON WRAY
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE**

**Leadership Accountability
Professional Development for
School Administrators**

Goals for Today's Workshop

- Establish a common language around the keys to student achievement and teacher development
- Manage and support leaders in developing teachers effectively and achieving stronger student achievement results

Assessment Items:

1. Joe can mow a lawn in 2 hours. How long will it take him to mow three lawns?
2. Joe can mow three lawns in 4 hours. How long will it take him to mow six lawns?
3. If it took 7 hours to mow 4 lawns, then at that rate, how many lawns could be mowed in 35 hours? At what rate were lawns being mowed?
4. If it took 2 hours to mow 3 lawns, how much can be mowed in 20 minutes?
5. Jeremy has two 7-foot-long boards. He needs to cut pieces that are 15 inches long from the boards. What is the greatest number of 15-inch pieces he can cut from the two boards?

Closing the Achievement Gap
Professional Development
for School Administrators

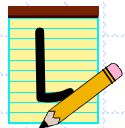
Guiding Principles of No Child Left Behind



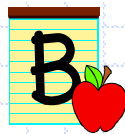
Accountability for Student Performance



Focus on What Works



Reduce Bureaucracy & Increase Flexibility



Empower Parents



No Child Left Behind: A Blueprint for Better Results

The NCLB Act calls for:

- ◆ Annual testing of all public school students in reading and math, grades 3-8 and high school, by the 2005-06 school year
- ◆ Annual report cards on school performance for parents, voters and taxpayers
- ◆ Ensuring that every child reads by the 3rd grade.
- ◆ A highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by 2005



A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

- ◆ Beginning with the first day of 2002-2003 school year, new teachers hired to teach in Title I-supported programs must be "highly qualified"
- ◆ State must have a plan for achieving annual increases in the percentage of highly qualified teachers, to ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified by 2005-2006



Closing the Achievement Gap Professional Development for School Administrators

Presented By:
Jacqueline Bruton Wray
Doctoral Candidate



CLASSROOM VISITS: RECOGNIZING TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVE TESTING PERFORMANCE



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Promote active learning
- Match student and faculty expectations
- Stimulate learning in trainees
- Small Group Exercise

OUTLINE

- ▣ Course content - what needs to be covered (why? How?)

- ▣ Changing landscape

- ▣ Competencies (Outcomes)

- ▣ Making the connection (mapping)

- ▣ Some suggestions

- ▣ Small Group Exercise

COURSE CONTENT

- Link to desired outcomes

- Relate to mission, vision for school, program, course

- Ideally - defined by the needs of the workforce

STRATEGIES

- ▣ Problem-based learning
- ▣ Student-centered instruction
- ▣ Competency-based (outcomes-based) instruction

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- ▣ What are your biggest challenges in teaching?
- ▣ Do you have a teacher mentor?
- ▣ Is teaching valued by your chair, in A & P decisions?

CLASSROOM VISITS:
TEACHING STRATEGIES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

PRESENTED BY:
JACQUELINE BRUTON WRAY
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

Suggested Presenter Presentation Content

Research Title: Principals' Perspectives on the Effect of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning

Purpose of Research: The purpose of the study was to explore the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning based on school principals' perspectives within the research school district in North Carolina

Research Questions: What are principals' perspectives on the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning within the school district in North Carolina?

Is there any statistically significant correlation between principals' experience and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

Is there any statistically significant correlation between principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

Is there any statistically significant correlation between principals' gender and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

Is there any statistically significant correlation between principals' academic degree and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances?

Hypothesis 1: Null hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant correlation between principals' experience and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances Alternative Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant correlation between principals' experience and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Hypothesis 2: Null Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant correlation between principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances. Alternative Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant correlation between principals' type of school (Title I or non-Title I) and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Hypothesis 3: Null Hypothesis 3: There is no statistically significant correlation between principals' gender and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances. Alternative Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant correlation between principals' gender are correlated to perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Hypothesis 4: Null Hypothesis 4: There is no statistically significant correlation between principals' academic degree and their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances. Alternative Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant correlation between principals' academic degree are correlated to their perceived effects of standardized test on students' performances.

Instrument used/data collection:

- Impact of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning Survey (Appendix Developed in 2006 by Dr. David M. Denny III (Denny, 2006)
- Likert consisting of 36 questions
- Response range: 5 – Strongly Agree; 4 - Agree; 3 - Neutral; 2 -Disagree; 1 - Strongly Disagree

Participant demographics: A purposeful sample of approximately 160 principals were invited to participate. Total participants ($N = 31$)

- Gender
- Female 15
- Male 16

Findings:

- Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test results (Table 6 presented in next slide) did not show a statistically significant correlation between principal's years of administrative experience and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $r = .116$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 2 failed to reject.
- Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test results in (Table 6 presented in next slide) did not show a statistically significant correlation between the type of school and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $r = -.264$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 3 failed to reject.
- Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test results in (Table 6 presented in next slide) did not show a statistically significant correlation between principals' gender and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $r = .021$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 4 failed to reject.
- Point-Biserial and Spearman's correlation test results in (Table 6 presented in next

slide) did not show a statistically significant correlation between principal's academic degree and principals' perception of the effect of standardized testing on teaching and learning, $r = -.289$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 5 failed to reject.

School Administrators' Professional Development Workshop Winter 2016 Agenda

Day 1

8:00 am -	Sign In/Seating/Introductions
8:45 – 9:45 am	Session 1 Teaching Strategies
9:45 – 10:00 am	Break
10:00 – 11:00 am	Continue Session 1 Teaching Strategies
11:00 – 11:30 am	Open Forum Discussion
11:30 -1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 - 2:30 pm	Session 2 High Stakes Testing
2:30 - 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 - 3:00 pm	Continue Session 2 Leadership Accountability
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Open Forum Discussion
3:30 – 3:45 pm	Closing Comments

Day 2

8:00 am -	Sign In/Seating/Introductions
8:45 – 9:45 am	Session 1 Leadership Accountability
9:45 – 10:00 am	Break
10:00 – 11:00 am	Continue Session 1 Leadership Accountability
11:00 – 11:30 am	Open Forum Discussion
11:30 -1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 - 2:30 pm	Session 2 Closing the Achievement Gap
2:30 - 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 - 3:00 pm	Continue Session 2 Closing the Achievement Gap
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Open Forum Discussion
3:30 – 3:45 pm	Closing Comments

Day 3

8:00 am -	Sign In/Seating/Introductions
8:30 – 10:00 am	Middle School classroom walk through visits
10:00 – 10:15 am	Break
10:15 – 11:30 am	Continue Middle School classroom walk through visits
11:30 -1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 - 3:00 pm	Group discussion of observations (conference room)
3:00 - 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 - 3:45 pm	Reflections/Closing Comments

PROJECT EVALUATION

In order to continue to improve the quality of educational programming, I would appreciate you taking a few minutes of your time to complete this evaluation. Your comments and/or suggestion(s) will help plan future professional development to meet your educational needs.

SESSION TITLE: _____

SESSION DATE: _____

For questions below:

5=Strongly Agree; 4=Agree; 3=Neutral; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree

1. I acquired new skills or knowledge in relation to topic discussed

5____ 4____ 3____ 2____ 1____

2. The Lecture description was accurate

5____ 4____ 3____ 2____ 1____

3. The teaching format/length was suitable to content

5____ 4____ 3____ 2____ 1____

4. The teaching level was appropriate to audience

5____ 4____ 3____ 2____ 1____

5. The quality of the facilities was adequate for learning

5____ 4____ 3____ 2____ 1____

6. Suggestions for future topics, as well as comments on how this program could be improved to better suit your educational needs are always welcomed.

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Impact of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning

Please answer the following questions about your experience, your school, and standardized testing and its impact on your school.

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question. The information you provide on this survey will be kept strictly confidential. The consent form will also explain the purpose and procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, the risks and benefits of participating in the study, confidentiality, the statement of consent, and researcher contact information. Participants will not be identified.

1. Demographic Information

The information in this section will be used to make comparisons by demographic groups.

D1. Gender

- Female
- Male

D2. Title I Campus

- Yes
- No

D3. Years of Administrative Experience

- 1 - 4 years
- 5 - 14 years
- 15 or more years

D4. Current Administrative Position

- Principal
- Associate/Assistant/Vice Principal
- Past Principal (within the past 5 years)
- Past Associate/Assistant/Vice Principal (within the past 5 years)

D5. Highest Degree Earned

- Masters
- Educational Specialist
- Doctorate

2. Survey

Please answer the following question in regard to your school.

1. High-stakes tests have helped focus public attention on schools with low-achieving students and, as a result, have made these students more visible and less likely to slip between the cracks and fall further behind.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2. High-stakes tests are designed and implemented to improve instruction by helping teachers focus on what is most important to teach.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3. High-stakes tests have helped close the gap in achievement between minority students and majority students in North Carolina.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4. Teachers need to be held accountable through high-stakes tests to motivate them to teach better, particularly to push the least motivated ones to perform.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. Doing poorly on high-stakes tests will lead to increased student effort to learn.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. Students work harder and learn more because they know what's expected and that the high-stakes tests really count.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. The public display of high-stakes test scores motivates administrators to ensure that standards on which the tests are based are part of the curriculum and are being successfully taught.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. When high-stakes tests are developed and used appropriately, they are among the most sound and objective knowledge and performance measures available.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. Administrators need to be held accountable through high-stakes tests to motivate them to be more effective in supervising their staffs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Increasingly, from the classroom to the school board room, educators are making use of student performance data generated by high-stakes tests to help them refine programs, channel funding, and identify roots of success.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. Driven by the demands of high-stakes tests, professional development has improved by focusing on helping educators hone his or her teaching skills and content area expertise.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. The implementation of standardized testing has been a catalyst for increased attention to students with special needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. One result of standardized testing is that educators know more about testing than ever before.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. Prominent and public interest in pupil performance on high-stakes tests has resulted in an intensity of effort directed toward data collection and quality control that is unparalleled.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. High-stakes tests promote greater homogeneity of education. A result of schools' aligning their curricula and instructional focus more closely to outcomes embodied in high-stakes tests, the experiences of and aspirations for children in urban, suburban, and rural districts within a state are more comparable than they have been in the recent past.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. A profoundly positive effect that the introduction of high-stakes consequences has had lies in the tests themselves. High-stakes tests have evolved to a state of being: highly reliable; free from bias; relevant and age appropriate; higher order; tightly related to important public goals; time and cost efficient; and yielding remarkably consistent decisions.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. High-stakes tests have exposed educators to high-quality writing prompts, document-based questions, constructed-response formats, and even challenging multiple-choice items. This has led to teachers enhancing their own assessment practices.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

18. Standardized testing programs also result in massive amounts of test preparation, resulting in a loss of instructional time.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. Standardized testing has resulted in a loss of local control of what is taught, how it is taught, and who gets high-quality instruction. These decisions are now greatly impacted by policy makers at the state and national levels.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. A test that has been validated only for diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of individual students should not be used to evaluate the educational quality of a school or school district.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. Standardized testing compromises educational quality by leading educators to “teach to the test,” which results in a narrowing of the curriculum, limiting the scope of tested subjects and shortchanging or eliminating subjects not included in the assessments.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. High-stakes tests are too expensive and result in diverting scarce resources and attention from serious problems.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. A focus on standards and accountability that ignores the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms will not provide the direction that teachers need in their quest to improve instruction.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. Pressure exerted from the need to succeed on high-stakes tests often leads to inappropriate test preparation practices, including outright cheating.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. High-stakes tests draw an inaccurate picture of student achievement and unfairly jeopardize students or schools that are making genuine efforts to improve.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. Educational decisions based on high-stakes tests have a disproportionate impact on poor and minority children.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. Standardized testing and the accompanying consequences of failure lead to overstressed students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. The pressures inherent in preparing students for high-stakes tests are driving out good teachers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. High-stakes tests unfairly and inaccurately assess and penalize learners for whom English is not their first language.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. The standardized testing movement is resulting in a significant increase in student drop out rates.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. No high-stakes decision such as grade retention or graduation should be based on the results of a single test.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Appendix C: Letter to Superintendent of Schools

April XX, 2015

Dr. XXXXX XXXXX,
 Superintendent of _____ County Schools
 XXXXXXXX, NC XXXXX

Dear Dr. XXXXX,

My name is Jacqueline Wray and I am currently in the research phase of my dissertation in Educational Administration and Leadership doctoral cohort program through Walden University. My dissertation is entitled, *Principals Perspectives on Effects of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning*. I would like your permission to distribute my surveys to all K-12 current or past (within the last 5 years) principals and assistant principals in XXXXX County.

I realize your time as well as your principals' and assistant principals' time is limited, so the survey is designed to take the participants approximately 20 minutes to complete. Attached is a hardcopy of the survey that will be available through survey monkey for potential participants once permission has been granted.

If you have any questions you can contact me at jacqueline.wray@waldenu.edu or (910) 797-5151. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline B. Wray
 Doctoral Student
 Walden University

I _____ give Jacqueline B. Wray permission to
 (print your name)

conduct her research study entitled, *Principals Perspectives on Effects of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning*.

_____/_____
 Signature of School Superintendent / Date

Appendix D: Letter to Principal/Assistant Principal

May XX, 2015

XXXXX XXXXX
Principal/Assistant Principal
XXXXX School

Dear Principal/Assistant Principal,

My name is Jacqueline Wray and I am currently in the research phase of my dissertation in Educational Administration and Leadership doctoral cohort program through Walden University. My dissertation is entitled, *Principals Perspectives on Effects of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning*. The purpose of this study is to examine principals' perceptions regarding the recent emphasis being placed on standardized testing.

Prior to contacting you, the Superintendent of your school system granted me permission to contact you for assistance with my research. I realize that your time is limited, so the survey is designed to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. But before taking the survey you must consent to participate.

All of the information will remain anonymous and confidential. Your participation will not only help me finish my dissertation, but the research gathered will hopefully be able to provide school district personnel with information to better support principals and their success.

Thank you for your participation and best wishes with the remainder of the school year!

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline B. Wray
Doctoral Candidate
Walden University
jacqueline.wray@waldenu.edu

Appendix E: Permission to Use Survey

Dear Dr. Denny,

My name is Jacqueline B. Wray, a Doctoral Candidate at Walden University. I am in the process of submitting my proposal entitled, *Principals Perspectives on Effects of Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning* to the Institutional Review Board. I need permission from you to use your survey instrument as a part of my dissertation.

Therefore, I am asking you to complete the information below and return it to me so I can continue to move forward in this process. If you have any questions you can contact me at jacqueline.wray@waldenu.edu or (910) 797-5151. Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Place an X in the box below, provide your name, and email address as an electronic signature:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree to grant Jacqueline Wray permission to use my survey instrument.
Name and Email address (provides authentication for electronic signature):	

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline B. Wray
 Doctoral Candidate