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# Dynamics of Trust and Faculty Involvement in Community College

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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2019

Abstract

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MEd, Xavier University, 2000

BA, University of Kentucky, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

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Abstract

The complex dynamics of the phenomenon of trust, defined as a psychological state where one is willing to accept vulnerability based upon the positive expectations of a specific other or others, and the influence trust has on faculty involvement in institutional decision-making were explored in this case study. Faculty involvement is a key element of institutional success, yet many faculty at community colleges are not satisfied with their involvement or choose to remain uninvolved. Although researchers have established a substantial body of research on trust in organizations, a gap remains regarding the role trust plays in community college faculty involvement in key decision-making. The purpose of the current research was to address this gap by exploring the faculty experience of trust within the context of the unique social structure of 1 specific community college. The research question prompted an exploration of 1 specific college's complex social and organizational structures by examining organizational charts and documents, while semistructured interviews with a purposeful sampling of 20 faculty members allowed for insight into the unique perspectives of community college faculty. Data were analyzed using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method looking for emergent themes. It was indicated that trust dynamics play a role in faculty involvement in decision-making. Themes emerged that support 3 types of trust and 5 facets of trust that are part of the faculty experience within the specific case. Results can be used to contribute to positive social change by influencing continuous improvement efforts in higher education, improving institutional effectiveness.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to all of the men and women who have dedicated themselves and their careers to working in higher education. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) are unique organizations with their own set of challenges and rewards. The relationships that are developed within and among staff, faculty, administrators, and students are what fuel progress and prosperity both for the institution and for each individual. Learning is what keeps us all going.

I would also like to dedicate this to my mother who taught me the importance of obtaining higher education and who has inspired all of my educational pursuits.

Acknowledgments

      I want to thank my husband, Jeremy, for his persistent support and encouragement throughout this extremely long process. I would have not been able to do it without him. To my loving children; Isabella, Eli, Ben, and my beautiful stepdaughters, Gwyneth, Gracie, and Gretta, I hope this accomplishment is a lesson to never give up on your dreams and to want what you deserve. To my Chairperson, Dr. Elisabeth Weinbaum, you were there with continuous support, encouragement, and constructive feedback even when I was ready to give up. Your wisdom and patience were invaluable to me. To all of my participants, your words and experiences are valid and important beyond this body of work. You have made significant contributions to the college you serve, and you have helped change the lives of your students.

Table of Contents

i

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

**Introduction**

Multiple scholars have examined the positive role trust plays in effective

leadership, employee motivation, governance, and facilitating social change through the

lens of multiple disciplines, including leadership, management, and higher

education(Bachmann, Gillespie & Priem, 2015; Carter &Mossholder, 2015; Kater, 2017;

Kezar, 2004).Researchers from the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher

Education, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, have acknowledged that trust is

at the top of the list of effective ingredients necessary for effective academic governance

(as cited in Ott & Mathews, 2015). Overall, trust plays a significant role in

institutional functioning (Awan, 2014; Bahls, 2014; Savage, 2017), and as a form of

social capital, trust can empower organizational roles and influence the effectiveness of

governance (Kater, 2017).

In 2018, researchers examined community college faculty and their desire for

involvement in institutional decision-making, finding significantly low levels of inclusion

in decision making, particularly for part-time faculty (Ott & Dippold, 2018).Community

college faculty perceptions of shared governance as well as the effectiveness of shared

governance are not new topics to academic inquiry (Kater, 2017; Migliore, 2012), yet

little scholarship has been noted regarding the community college faculty perception of

how trust influences willingness to participate in governance and key decision-making

roles. The question addressed in this research was the following: What is the faculty

experience of trust and involvement in institutional decision-making at one specific

community college, and what does it tell us about how trust dynamics influence faculty

involvement in decision-making and governance?

Chapter 1 includes an explanation of the knowledge base from which this study

was rooted and addresses the case that faculty involvement in decision-making and

shared governance is desirable for optimal organizational health. In Chapter 1, I also

explain the problem, community college faculty are not as involved in decision-making

as they would like to be, and the purpose of the research, which was to explore the

possible influence of trust dynamics on community college faculty involvement in

decision-making. The main research question and subquestions are stated in Chapter1as

well as the conceptual framework for the study and definitions for terms. Lastly, Chapter

1 includes a brief discussion of the assumptions made in doing this research; the scope,

delimitations, limitations of the research; and the significance of the study in terms of

social change.

## Background

Interest in faculty involvement in institutional governance and the importance of

trust are not new to those interested in studying the effectiveness of institutions of higher

education. In 2003, Tierney and Minor found that 43% of faculty did not believe that

faculty senates were highly valued in their institutions and that for effective shared

governance, there must be sufficiently high levels of trust. In 2004, Kezar examined

effective governance in higher education and found trust to be an important factor.

Throughout the next decade, the role of trust in higher education and how trust influences

aspects of personality, culture, motivation, values, reliability, competence, and intuition

were examined in detail (Migliore, 2012).Migliore (2012) found that trust is essential in creating collaborative environments that promote shared governance and encourage innovation and performance excellence at all levels.

Trust is a key element of productive and effective institutions (Bahls, 2014).If nonexistent, or if trust has been broken due to organizational trauma, the process of rebuilding trust can be difficult (Awan, 2014).The path to rebuilding trust within an organization of higher education can be paved by organizational structures such as shared governance, which specify faculty involvement in decision-making, yet structure alone does not ensure involvement (Kater, 2017; Kezar & Sam, 2014).The promotion and maintenance of a culture of trust are what lead to faculty and staff who choose to be involved (Awan, 2014).

Little of the extant research regarding trust speaks directly to community college faculty experience and the role trust plays in involvement. According to the American Association of University Professors (2018), approximately 50% of all faculty are part-time, and 70% are contingent faculty members, those who are part-time and those who are nontenure track faculty, which is the majority of all community college faculty members. Ambiguity exists, because of this tilt, to understanding the needs of contingent faculty at community colleges in particular. Institutions have attempted to reduce this ambiguity through changes in hierarchical features and streamlining institutional decision-making by placing an emphasis on written job descriptions, rules, and regulations, all which seek to increase organizational certainty and efficiency (Scott, 2015).

Recently, researchers have examined community college faculty desire for involvement in institutional decision-making (Ott & Dippold, 2018).When asked to respond to a questionnaire, more than 1,200 community college faculty responses indicated that there are significantly low levels of inclusion in decision-making, particularly for part-time faculty (Ott & Dippold, 2018).Another study involving a qualitative analysis of faculty interviews from nine community colleges in five states indicated the presence of themes such as the importance of the faculty voice, trust and transparency, and apathy and disengagement when it comes to involvement in decision-making (Kater, 2017).

Pertaining to the community college, the role of college structure, governance, and policy has been examined (Kater, 2017; Kezar &Sam, 2014; Ott & Dippold, 2018) extensively, but nothing has been noted specifically about the influence of trust other than that trust is a common theme from interview and questionnaire data. To date, there is no specific examination of how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in decision-making within the community college. There is a gap in the current literature and a need to examine the experiences, specifically of community college, contingent faculty, their psychological experience of trust, and the specific trust dynamics that exist due to the social and organizational constructs of the community college.

With the current study, I explored the faculty experience of trust to describe how trust influences involvement within the context of the unique, complex social and organizational structures, and the unique culture of one specific community college. More specifically, I looked at the organizational structure of one community college to

gain pertinent insights into faculty participation/nonparticipation in the governance process. This research can contribute to positive social change by creating a better understanding of the dynamics of trust in the community college as well as the implications of faculty trust as it relates to institutional governance and decision-making.

## Problem Statement

This study addressed the problem that community college faculty involvement in decision-making is very low; some are choosing not to participate and others have limited opportunity to participate. Not having the faculty voice adequately represented can undermine employee investment in the institution's success, limit meaningful contact with other faculty members, and negatively influence the overall wellbeing of the institution and its stakeholders, which includes students and community members. Community college faculty in particular are not satisfied with their level of involvement (Gerber, 2014; Ott & Dippold, 2018).According to a recent study of over 1,200 community college faculty, when asked about 22 different areas in which they might be involved in institutional decision-making, the results showed that for all of the 22 areas (100%), there was a significant gap between the reported level of current involvement and the desired level of involvement (Ott & Dippold, 2018).There is research that addresses the importance of faculty involvement in decision-making and shared governance (see Kater, 2017) and research regarding the role trust plays in effective organizations (see Bachman et al., 2015; Campbell, 2015; Cerna, 2014; Kater, 2017; Ott & Matthews, 2015).However, none of the extant research has addressed the phenomenon

of trust as experienced by community college faculty or the role that trust dynamics may play in faculty willingness to engage in opportunities for involvement.

In order to improve faculty involvement in community college decision-making and in order to improve institutional effectiveness and execute effective shared governance, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of the dynamics that are at play between faculty and the college's current leadership and structure. The complex dynamics of the phenomenon of trust are of particular interest. I desired to better understand these dynamics, inspiring this research.

## Purpose of the Study

My intent of this research was to explore how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in institutional decision-making at one southwestern community college, within the context of the complex social and organizational structures and processes that are unique to that particular college. In order to explore trust dynamics at this community college, I used a purposeful sampling of faculty and conducted semistructured interviews. I also reviewed job descriptions and organizational structure charts to see what, if any, influence roles and/or position had on the perception of trust. The role trust plays was analyzed by triangulating these multiple sources of evidence. Within and among these multiple sources of data, patterns emerged that elucidated a subjective understanding of both the perception of trust as well as an individual faculty member's willingness to become involved as it relates to the expectation for involvement (see Yin, 2014).

An exploratory, single, holistic case study was conducted to answer the question of how the phenomenon of trust influences faculty involvement in decision-making and

governance and what institutional factors may influence trust within the unique and complex social constructs of one community college. Conducting an in-depth case study allowed for insight and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of trust in the community college as well as allowed for further elaboration and hypothesis creation on the subject (see Yin, 2014).The findings of this study can provide insight and limited transferability that may supplement other methods of inquiry. Results may be useful when determining appropriate strategies for improving faculty trust and increasing faculty involvement in key decision-making processes--ultimately improving overall student success and institutional effectiveness. The findings regarding the role of trust do not attempt to prove or disprove a particular hypothesis, but rather introduce possible answers to the how and possibly why of behavior and lead to new research directions (see Yazan, 2015).

## Research Questions

Central question: What is the faculty experience of trust and involvement in institutional decision-making at Community College X (pseudonym), and what does it reveal about how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in decision-making and governance?

The subquestions were as follows:

Research Question RQ1: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of trust?

RQ2: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of involvement in decision-making at Community College X?

RQ3: What do Community College X faculty job descriptions indicate about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

RQ4: What does a review of the organizational and governance structure of the college reveal about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

**Conceptual Framework**

A thorough literature review yielded a few key concepts for consideration when exploring dynamics of trust and involvement. First, there are three types of trust within the organizational setting: interpersonal, institutional, and organizational (Cerna, 2014).Second, five facets of trust have been identified that affect the three types of trust: reliability, competence, honesty, benevolence, and openness (Cerna, 2014).Third, the individual psychological experience of trust is both cognitive and affective (Carter & Mossholder, 2015).Affective trust is that which is born out of emotional ties with others, and, therefore, to understand affective trust, it is necessary to understand the larger social context in which those ties develop and are sustained (Schlosser, Fetchenhauer, Dunning, 2015).Last, trust is a form of social capital (Kater, 2017; Migliore, 2012; Savage, 2017).

The conceptual framework for this study focused on trust as a complex social construct with resulting individual psychological experiences. Social constructivists have posited that reality is socially constructed and that there may be multiple realities depending upon the relative meaning of time, context, culture, and values (Yazan, 2015).The experiences of the individual faculty members at Community College X are truly unique to their own individual actions and interactions with others. Community

College X has its own unique circumstances and characteristics that affect the overall culture of trust at the institution and ultimately may influence the individual psychological experience of trust for individuals. Therefore, the exploration of trust at Community College X required an examination of the organizational context and culture as well as the individual psychological experiences of faculty. Social constructivism provides a lens through which the study can be conducted that focuses on the real world context and the construction of meaning that is relevant to the specific experience of individual faculty members at Community College X.

I did not intend to answer a specific research question or uncover specific relationships among variables. However, I sought to describe the faculty perception of trust at Community College X and considered the experiences of the faculty in terms of time, context, culture and values. By conducting semistructured interviews, I looked for emergent themes in faculty perceptions of trust, both cognitive and affective, that influence involvement in key decision-making at Community College X.A review of college documentation such as job descriptions, organizational charts, and shared governance structure allowed me to consider the influence organizational structure and organizational role expectations may have on faculty participation in decision-making. Finally, in an attempt to answer the central question, I summarized the overall faculty experience in a descriptive fashion, as it is within the unique organizational framework of Community College X.

**Nature of the Study**

I aimed to describe the experience of the faculty at one specific community college in term of perceptions of trust and participation in decision-making. I did not wish to make predictions or determine cause and effect. There are three main types of descriptive methods: observational, case study, and survey methods. More information was needed than what could be obtained through simple behavioral observation, and I was interested in looking for patterns of subjective understanding among individuals, which is not often discernable from surveys. It was logical to conduct a case study using faculty interviews, organizational records, and specific organizational structure documentation to obtain enough information to adequately describe the phenomenon of trust in the particular social and organizational context of this community college.

According to Yin (2014), case studies are the preferred strategy when the researcher is interested in knowing the how or why of a contemporary, complex social phenomenon in a real-life context. Based upon the research question and subquestions, I conducted a single, holistic case study of Community College X using semistructured interviews, a review of organizational records, and specific organizational structure documentation. The specified reason for using multiple data sources was that it enhanced the construct validity of the research by allowing for triangulation and convergence of the various sources of evidence (see Yin, 2014).Construct validity, internal and external validity, and reliability are all necessary conditions for case study research (Yin, 2014).

The goal of this research was to explore the faculty experience of trust and describe how trust dynamics influence involvement in institutional decision-making

within the context of the organizational complexities of Community College X.I describe

the college's organizational and governance structure as well as pertinent faculty job

descriptions. I designed interview questions (see Appendix A) to elucidate faculty

perceptions of trust as well as their perceptions regarding opportunities for involvement

in decision-making. The interview questions were peer-reviewed and field tested to

ensure validity. Interviews were conducted with a purposeful sampling of 20 participants,

including both full-time and part-time faculty, from each of five departments across the

institution. The participants reflected various disciplines and various amounts of time

employed by the college. The one-on-one interviews, using an open-ended style of

questioning, were recorded with permission and analyzed using the modified Stevick-

Colaizzi-Keen method as described by Moustakas (1994).I discuss the process for

achieving data saturation in Chapter 3.

Phenomenological reduction and horizontalization as well as organizing regular

qualities and themes as they relate to the construction of a textural description were

employed (see Moustakas, 1994).I explain how, as a researcher, I practiced epoché to

achieve phenomenological reduction and bracketing in detail in Chapter 3.Finally,

NVivo12 software was used to manage the collection, organization, and evaluation of

data.

In summary, I attempted to understand how trust influences faculty willingness to

participate in key decision-making at Community College X.A thorough review of the

organizational structure and processes as well as an understanding of the unique

perspective of the faculty members themselves was important. Analyzing the complex

interaction between the expectations set forth via structure and process together with the

human psycho-social experience is key to answering the question of how trust affects

faculty involvement in decision-making at Community College X.

### Definitions

*Affective trust:* The emotional tie that emerges from positive interactions between

parties and includes the care and concerns between them (Carter & Mossholder, 2015).

*Cognitive trust:* Stems from judgments about ability and dependability and

facilitates transactional relationships between individuals (Carter & Mossholder, 2015).

*Institutional trust:* Involves processes within an institution acting as a form of

support for risk-taking behaviors (Cerna, 2014).

*Interpersonal trust:* The trust that an individual has in another individual (Cerna,

2014; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

*Organizational trust:* The sentiments of individuals regarding the motivations and

behaviors of various organizational or institutional members based upon the roles that

they play and the interdependencies of those roles (Cerna, 2014; Fulmer & Gelfand,

2012).

*Shared governance*: According to the American Federation of Teachers (2017)

Shared governance refers to the practices used by college faculty and staff who

participate in making key decisions that inform and guide the operation of the institution.

Shared governance is the organizational work in public and community colleges that is

shared between faculty and administration and involves active participation in making the

decisions that affect the lives of those within the campus community (Kater, 2017).

*Social capital:* Social capital is a result of the networks and relationships that develop among people that enable them to function effectively (Migliore, 2012).

*Trust*: Trust is a complex social construct that involves believing that the person who is trusted will do what is expected; it is a psychological willingness to accept vulnerability based upon the positive expectations of a specific other or others (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

## Assumptions

Qualitative researchers such as Yin (2014) and Creswell (2017) have discussed the importance of sharing assumptions that frame the study's epistemological and methodological approach. Conducting a constructivist study, I was interested in exploring the unique social and contextual experiences of community college faculty. The first assumption was that faculty members who responded to the email soliciting for participants would share experiences and perceptions via the interview process in an honest and candid manner. I assumed this because there was no other motive, such as payment or release time, to incentivize participation. The second assumption was that the interview questions would sufficiently prompt dialogue from which I could extrapolate the experience of trust. The interview questions pertained to faculty involvement in decision-making and were open-ended to allow the participants to use their own words, pertaining to their own individual and contextual experiences. The third assumption was that confidentiality was maintained via the one-on-one interview process by only recording with the participant's permission and the participant's awareness that at any time they could voluntarily remove themselves from the participant list.

**Scope and Delimitations**

To effectively obtain information about the social and contextual experiences, specifically of community college faculty, I chose to conduct this case study using a purposeful sampling of the faculty at one specific community college in the southwestern part of the United States. It was necessary to limit this to a purposeful sample to adequately triangulate the sources of evidence and describe the perceptual experience of the faculty member within the context of the specific college's structures and processes. I did not examine the experience of administrators as the focus was on the faculty experience. I did not examine another institution as the complex social structures and processes are unique to each institution.

**Limitations**

Choosing faculty participants purposefully from one specific community college limited the focus of this research to the unique nature of this particular community college; therefore, transferability is limited. I conducted analysis with the nature of this one specific college in mind, and I report results accordingly. I addressed dependability and issues of consistency by clearly documenting research procedures so that they may be replicated, using a code-recode procedure when coding the data and data triangulation. To triangulate, I gathered data from three sources of evidence: one-on-one interviews, organizational charts, and job descriptions. I took care to minimize personal biases in the study by practicing epoché, setting aside judgment and reporting only what the participants said or did during the interview itself. I only interviewed faculty currently employed by Community College X and acknowledge that the college chosen for this

case study does not have a collective bargaining agreement. It is in a "right to work"

state, and the faculty do not have tenure. This is important to understand as a limitation in

terms of how the fear of losing one's contract may have influenced willingness to

participate in certain endeavors. Lastly, the participants were not compensated for their

time.

**Significance**

The significance of this study is to deepen the current understanding of the trust

dynamics within a specific community college environment. By conducting this study, I

intended to elucidate the perspective of the faculty operating in a specific community

college environment, and I explored how trust influences their involvement in key

institutional decision-making and participation in governance. It is my hope that this

research provides an opportunity for the application of findings from recent related

research regarding trust in institutions of higher education, such as creating welcome

opportunities for building and rebuilding trust (see Awan, 2014; Cerna, 2014), reducing

resistance to change and interpersonal conflict (see Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012), and

increasing support for innovation (see Vineburgh, 2010).Overall, the results add to the

current body of literature regarding trust and involvement in organizations of higher

education.

The focus of the research was to look for that which is specific, unique, or deviant

to faculty members' experiences and to look for patterns regarding context, culture, and

values in order to add to the larger body of knowledge related to faculty trust and

involvement in midsize community colleges. The specific college examined may

consider appropriate changes that could improve the level of faculty involvement in key decision-making processes. Broader social change implications could include contributing to continuous improvement efforts regarding quality and efficiency of community college education, improving community college faculty workplace satisfaction, and ultimately improving the community college student experience.

**Summary**

In summary, Chapter 1 included a description of intent to explore structures, processes, and the lived experiences of community college faculty at a midsize community college. The problem and purpose were presented in Chapter 1 as well as a justification for the research design, a case study. The main research question and sub questions were also found in Chapter 1.The research questions have been designed in accordance with the literature reviewed and with the express purpose of gaining insight into the psycho-social state of trust experienced by individual faculty members at Community College X as well as the social constructs that comprise the multiple realities of each participating faculty member. The conceptual framework as well as the nature of the study have been explained, and data collection methods were described, including multiple sources of evidence to attempt to explore the role of trust in terms of faculty involvement in key decision-making processes. Lastly, Chapter 1 included the assumptions, the scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the current study.

In this study, I intended to address the gap in the research concerning community college faculty experience of trust as it pertains to becoming involved in institutional

decision-making and overall institutional success. In Chapter 2, I explain the research

strategy as well as the conceptual framework and an in-depth summary of the

foundational literature and germane, current literature that inspired the research question.

The literature review is crucial to the realization of the research problem and purpose.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Introduction**

Faculty involvement in key decision-making is both desirable and expected at most institutions of higher education (Kezar & Sam, 2014).Participation in decision-making can increase the level of employee investment in the institution's success as well as provide contingent faculty with meaningful contact with other faculty members, encourage the idea that all faculty are professionals, foster collegiality, and support the overall wellbeing of the institution (Kater, 2017; Savage, 2017).Trust is a key element in organizational effectiveness and is found to be an influential factor in faculty involvement in decision-making in 4-year colleges and universities (Bachmann et al., 2015; Migliore, 2012; Ott & Matthews, 2015, Vineburgh, 2010).Little research can be found that offers an explanation for why a large number of faculty are dissatisfied with their level of participation and the value of their participation in key decision-making opportunities (Gerber, 2014; Ott & Dippold, 2018).A gap remains in examining the experiences of community college faculty regarding the influence various trust dynamics have on contingent faculty involvement in decision-making. It is important to deepen the understanding of community college faculty individual experiences within the social constructs that are unique to the community college and that shape their perception of trust. This can provide greater depth to understanding the role trust dynamics play in faculty involvement in key decision-making.

The purpose of this research was to explore trust dynamics and faculty involvement in institutional decision-making at one specific community college, within

the context of the college's unique, complex social and organizational structures and processes. According to the previous two faculty senate presidents at Community College X, the number of faculty members who elect to serve on the faculty senate as well as committee involvement continue to decline. I wanted to explore how trust dynamics may affect faculty involvement in key decision-making opportunities in the context of the current organizational structure and culture at Community College X.

In Chapter 2, I provide the research strategy, a detailed overview of the conceptual framework, and a summary of the primary literature pertaining to the phenomenon of trust. In Chapter 2, I also provide descriptions of studies that establish the role of trust in organizations of higher education as well as studies that promote the research question about trust as a specific construct of interest concerning faculty involvement in key decision-making. Through this study, I explore the psycho-social concept of trust, dynamics of trust within the organizational context, trust in higher education and shared governance, and the rebuilding of trust in higher education.

## Literature Search Strategy

To conduct this research, I used multiple databases: ProQuest Central, PsychARTICLES, PsychINFO, Academic Premier, and Google Scholar. Search terms included but were not limited to *trust*, *trust and organizations, faculty trust and motivation, shared governance and trust, trust and empowerment, organizational empowerment and higher education, faculty involvement and institutional management, community college trust, leadership and trust,* and *faculty trust and shared governance.* I found the most germane, scholarly work pertaining to this topic in psychological,

educational, and leadership journals. Although the concept of trust is rooted in the work
of sociological and philosophical academics, an understanding of trust as a psycho-social
construct in higher education has been expounded upon by research within the past 5
years (Awan, 2014; Bachman et al, 2015; Cerna, 2014;Kater, 2017; Ott &Mathews,
2015).Despite such scholarship, no research addressing the specific experience of
community college faculty and the role trust plays in their involvement in key decision-
making was uncovered in this research process.

## Conceptual Framework

Trust is both a social and a psychological phenomenon that is perceived by
individuals from within a specific organizational context and is unique to their individual
experience (Carter & Mossholder, 2015; Frederiksen, 2012).A careful review of literature
has yielded that there are there are three types of trust as well as multiple facets of trust
that are involved in determining trustworthiness (Cerna, 2014).Social capital is also a key
element in the development of trust and maintenance of trust within an organization, both
of which are important to the overall health of the organization. Some organizations
promote the development of these social networks through formal structures and
processes such as shared governance, and this can both support the development and
maintenance of trust as well as undermine it. It was important to explore the phenomenon
of trust as perceived by individual faculty members at one specific community college.

Trust is a complex social construct that influences an individual's psychological
experience in cognition and behavior (Fulmer & Gulfand, 2012).Researchers have
examined the psychological experience of trust as an emotional experience (Carter &

Mossholder, 2015), distinguishing between two types of trust: cognitive and affective

trust. Affective trust is born out of emotional ties with others and is inherently a social

experience (Schlosser et al., 2015).The desire to understand how trust dynamics influence

the social context and the personal psychological experience, particularly the resulting

behavior of participating in key-decision making, is what inspired this research.

I conducted this phenomenological case study through the lens of social

constructivism with holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathic characteristics (see

Yazan, 2015).Social constructivism maintains the point of view that reality is socially

constructed, and, as a result, there may be multiple realities depending upon the relative

meaning of time, context, culture, and values of the individual. Given the very nature of

social constructivism, I assumed that the experiences of the individual faculty members at

the specific community college were truly unique to their own individual relationships

and social interactions. Each individual community college has its own unique

circumstances and characteristics that influence the faculty experience. The focus of this

exploration was on the particular context, culture, and values associated with faculty

lived experiences at Community College X and conclusions drawn that provide limited

transferability, add to the overall body of academic knowledge, allow for the

development of hypotheses, and inspire further research. I described the experiences of

faculty members at one specific community college in terms of trust and involvement in

institutional decision-making or governance.

Through a careful review of structures and processes at Community College X,

through interviews with individual faculty members, and with observation, I established a

psychosocial point of view that may deepen the understanding of the role trust plays in community college faculty involvement in key decision-making. I examined faculty perceptions of trust and the influence those perceptions appear to have on an individual's thoughts and behaviors as revealed through the interview responses. I looked for evidence of mechanisms within the social and contextual fabric of the institution that may influence perceived trust by examining the faculty job descriptions and organizational structure and process documents.

## Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

### Trust as a Psycho-Social Construct

Trust as a social construct has a long history and broad relevance across the social and behavioral sciences (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).Sociologists have described trust as a highly variable, relational state that may appear in very different ways depending on circumstances (Frederiksen, 2012).Trust can be viewed as general trust, directed at no one in particular, or it can be viewed as specific social identities with symbolic boundaries of in- and out- groups, in the form of social capital (Fredrickson, 2012).In order to examine trust as a social construct, the role of the trustor and the trustee within the context of the larger organization must be considered. Roles themselves may promote a sense of trust. For example, a leader may be seen as trustworthy simply by being in a leadership role.

Trust as a psychological concept involves how we think, emote (feel), and behave in relation to trust. Psychologists differentiate between two kinds of psychological trust – affective and cognitive (Carter & Mossholder, 2015). Cognitive trust is that which is

based on knowledge and evidence, and affective trust is that which is born out of emotional ties with others. Schlosser et al. (2015) conducted experimental research to examine the emotional dynamics of trust. They wanted to know whether people engaged in behavior that requires trusting another person as a result of anticipated emotions pertaining to the possible outcome (cognitive trust), or whether immediate emotions, such as judging the person to be trustworthy (affective trust),may play a larger role in the decision to engage in trusting behavior (Schlosser et al., 2015).They found that anticipated emotions could be a predictor of a participant's willingness to trust; however, immediate emotions were a slightly stronger predictor (Schlosser et al., 2015).When the participants engaged in a nonsocial gamble like a coin toss, they were less likely to trust and experienced little immediate emotion (Schlosser et al., 2015).When the gamble was a social one, requiring a decision to trust another person to return some money, the participants were more likely to trust if they felt that the person was trustworthy, a decision requiring an immediate emotional decision (Schlosser et al., 2015).This suggests that there are strong ties between the social experiences we have with others and psychological aspects involved in the decision to trust.

In order to better understand the role of social interaction in the experience of trust, Schilke and Huang (2018) examined personal contact and perspetive taking in regard to what they referred to as swift trust accuracy-- assessments made quickly in the absence of prior exchange history.Perspective taking is described as an active, cognitive process, but is in inherently social too, as it requires one to put themselves in the shoes of someone else in another role (Schilke & Huang, 2018).Schilke and Huanghypothesized

that interpersonal contact would improve swift trust accuracy but also that interpersonal contact would improve perseptive taking and the inverse, together improving swift trust accuracy even more.The results supported their hypothese,s thereby supporting the notion that having opportunities to interact and make personal contact improves trust between parties, and having the opportunity to take the others perspective does as well (Schilky & Huang, 2018).

Research that pertains specifically to faculty trust in higher education has indicated that faculty who have had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles and therefore have had the opportunity to interact with adminstration as well as had the opportunity to see things from an administrators perspective may trust administrators and administrative decsions more than those who have not (Vineburgh, 2010). Vineburgh (2010) examined aspects of faculty employment for more than 3,000 faculty members at 73 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).Of numerous findings, there is a positive noted between trust and each of the following: faculty members' time teaching, education level, and previous administrative experiences, as well as their involvement in implementing innovation, being open to change, and having lesser degrees of interpersonal conflict(Vineburgh, 2010).The unique qualities of HBCUs present a limited ability to generalize findings to other institutions of higher education but inspire questions to ask of other institutions. However, the results support the notion that social contact and the process of perspective taking both influence trust.  This inspired me to want to ask similar questions of community college faculty.

**Three Types of Trust in the Organizational Context**

Three types of trust have been identified in the organizational context; interpersonal, organizational, and institutional (Cerna, 2014; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).*Interpersonal trust* is the trust that an individual has in another individual (Cerna, 2014; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).It is human nature to find someone trustworthy if he or she exhibits competence, honesty and reliability. *Institutional trust* involves processes within an institution acting as a form of support for risk-taking behaviors. If individuals do not have confidence in the various processes within an institution then the degree of institutional trust can be compromised (Cerna, 2014; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).Finally, *Organizational trust* refers to the sentiments of individuals regarding the motivations and behaviors of various organizational or institutional members based upon the roles they play and the interdependencies of those roles (Cerna, 2014; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).If a faculty member trusts a fellow faculty member, but does not trust the institution or the role that the fellow faculty member is currently acting in, then trust may be negatively impacted by the lack of organizational trust. Interpersonal trust alone is not enough to sustain trust in light of other aspects of the social context. It is this knowledge of three types of trust that fuels my desire to understanding how trust dynamics, within the social constructs of an organization, can impact the psychological experience of trust for an individual. Specifically, I would like to know how the hierarchy of the organization and the expectations for participation illustrated by role expectations (job descriptions) influence a faculty member's experience of trust and if that experience of trust influences the faculty member's willingness to participate in decision-making.

**A Model of Trust**

In 2014, an analyst in the Directorate for Education and Skills at the OECD in Paris published a paper discussing why trust matters in policymaking and governance including the national government, judicial system, local police, healthcare, and education (Cerna, 2014).Cerna's work recognizes that trust matters in policymaking and governance, and examined different definitions of trust, presented different ways of measuring trust, and proposed a way to explain the complexity and asymmetries of trust specifically in education systems by identifying factors that contribute to the development and sustainment of trust (Cerna, 2014).Through this work, a model was proposed for understanding the complex nature of trust due to the contextual characteristics of people when they conduct social transactions, through the interaction required for governance. The model includes understanding what influences the initial psychological experience of trust (input), and what is perceivable because of the experience of trust in the organizational culture (output).

Input is the individual characteristics that feed into the psychological perception and experience of trust- affective trust. Input can include the trustor's predisposition to trust, the trustor's character, motives, abilities and behaviors, and the nature of the trustor-trustee relationship (Cerna, 2014).The input is then processed as a belief, as a decision, and as an action. Trust as a belief, relates to the way an individual perceives the existence of trustworthiness in a person, a group of people, or process. Trust as a decision, is reflected in whether or not an individual chooses to see a person (individual trust), group of people (organizational trust), or process (institutional trust) as meriting

the trust of another individual. Trust as an action, involves an individual adjusting their behavior because of the trust that they have in another person, group of people or process.

Output includes the elements that apply to governing education systems (Cerna, 2014).The output may include but is not limited to, complexity, asymmetries, cooperation, accountability, and professionalization. The output is what is ultimately perceivable by those within and without the institution, the institutional culture. A thorough exploration of the organization's structures, as well as expectations as communicated through the college's shared governance model and job descriptions, will enhance understanding of the output at Community College X. It is my hope that understanding this model, the input and output of trust, will allow me to better understand how to identify themes and organize the data that is collected through this qualitative inquiry.

**Trust as Social Capital**

There is a social component to trust. Contact and familiarity with others and the ability to see things from another's point of view, are important in facilitating trust. Social capital is defined as the networks and relationships that develop among people that enable them to function effectively (Kater, 2017; Migliori, 2012; Savage, 2017). The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges states that the fifth of five practical steps to making shared governance work is to increase social capital between board members and faculty members (Bahls, 2014).Researchers have examined how times of challenge may influence trust between faculty and administrators at small, private, four- year colleges where 98% are tenured or tenure-track (Hoppes & Holley,

2014). The results of that research indicate that a significant number of networks link various stakeholders and that some networks are outlined by the structure and processes of the college, while other networks and ties are developed as social capital (Hoppes & Holley, 2014).Trust is essential in creating social networks that build social capital; therefore, we need to consider the social roles and socialization of faculty within the culture of the unique institution (Kater, 2017).

There is a down side. Valuing one's social capital over a facet of trust such as competence may be dangerous and it may result in accepting justifications for questionable practices as opposed to seeing deficits that need to be addressed (Kater, 2017).Personality, motivation, values of culture, as well as competence, reliability, and intuition influence our interactions within social networks (Savage, 2017).Intuition pertains to the impact of unconscious factors produced during the first impression, an aspect of the psychological experience of trust (Migliore, 2012).Seminal work in leadership studies, such as that of Migliore (2012) speaks to the benefit of being mindful of these unconscious factors and the role that they may play on perceptions of trust. We must take care to recognize when the presence of social capital may blind us from other important facets of trust, such as competence and reliability.

**Five Facets of Trust**

Academic thinkers in fields such as leadership, organizational studies, and higher education (Cerna, 2014; Migliore, 2012) agree that there are aspects of human nature that are key to understanding trust. They have comprised a list of five facets of trust that

impact individual trust, institutional trust and organizational trust (Cerna, 2014; Migliore, 2012):

- Reliability- *the* extent to which one can rely upon another for action and goodwill.

- Competence- the level of skill involved in fulfilling an expectation.

- Honesty- character, integrity, and authenticity.

- Benevolence- confidence that a person or group will protect one's well-being and interests.

- Openness- extent to which relevant information is shared and actions and plans are transparent.

These facets of trust are aspects of character that require a situation to be expressed. Hoppes and Holley (2014) conducted a qualitative study of faculty at a small, private, American university. They examined the complexities of trust, and, how these complexities influence the overall functioning of a college or university. They found a significant number of networks and ties (social capital) that link various stakeholders with some of the networks explicitly outlined by the structure and processes of the college, and that these networks and ties become part of the organizational culture. Based upon an analysis of participant statements, Hoppes and Holley (2014) identified five emergent themes associated with increased levels of trust as well as concluded that an abundance of opportunities to nurture trust exists; and when opportunities to nurture trust are missed, or they are poorly managed, trust is weakened. The themes include faith and intentionality, the campus as a safe place, demonstrating expertise, participatory

governance, and transparency. Based on a review of the comments that Hoppes and

Holley (2014) analyzed to develop these five themes, the following comparisons to the

aforementioned five facets (Cerna, 2014) can be drawn:

- Faith and intentionality-- Honesty

- The campus as a safe place -- Benevolence

- Demonstrating expertise-- Competence

- Participatory governance-- Reliability

- Transparency -- Openness

As situations change, as structure changes, it is important to consider how it

affects the expression of these facets of trust. When these facets are present,

organizations may experience an increased probability that actors will invest their

resources, increase innovation, have less uncertainty about opportunistic behaviors, and

reduced transaction costs (Cerna, 2014).Overall, when trust is present, it helps build

consensus and facilitates professionalism (Migliore, 2012). Therefore, it is desirable that

these five facets of trust are evident in an institution. I will be looking for evidence of

these themes in the data that I intend to analyze from Community College X.

**Shared Governance**

Shared governance, in terms of college organizational structure, has the potential

to foster the development of social capital, offering opportunities for faculty to

experience different roles, and become familiar with various roles on campus (Kater,

2017).The participation can be mandatory or voluntary and in some cases, it can be a

variation of the two. Shared governance usually consists of a set of practices that define

how faculty and staff work together to make significant decisions regarding the operation of their institution (AFT, 2017).Shared governance has been a topic for scholarly research since its inception in the 1960s, with particular interest paid to both 4- year and 2-year colleges. Historically, research has focused on three primary areas: faculty opinions about shared governance, where faculty have an influence on institutional governance, and the relationship between faculty participation in governance and institutional performance. However, unanswered questions remain, and these unanswered questions shape the focus of current research and have fostered my own interest in examining a community college.

Faculty beliefs about the importance of shared governance and their levels of involvement yield differences in how faculty view shared governance based on the type and size of the institution, the presence of collective bargaining agreements, and other organizational differences that result in varied educational cultures and workplace climates. In order for shared governance between faculty and administration to be effective, there must be high levels of trust and communication (Kater, 2017; Kezar & Sam, 2014).Trust is important to governance and yet the very complex nature of governance systems has the potential to negatively affect levels of trust, and may actually create a lack of trust (Cerna, 2014; Kezar & Sam, 2014).For example, if the structure is perceived as top heavy, having administrators at the top making all of the decisions, then the very nature of the structure may foster a lack of trust and a feeling that the faculty is powerless.

Institutional trust involves perceiving the processes within the organization to be trustworthy and organizational trust involves perceiving the organization and those roles

within the organization to be trustworthy (Cerna, 2014).If the governance structure or

processes associated with the practice of shared governance is not perceived as

trustworthy, or there is a lack of trust in the individual leadership to effectively utilize the

governance structure, then the overall purpose of shared governance is undermined. This

exchange complicates the role trust plays in faculty willingness to support and become

involved in key institutional decision-making or participate in shared governance. I feel it

is important to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of trust for community

college faculty at a college notably experiencing a decline in faculty willingness to

participate in shared governance.

There are a number of points made with research, over the last ten to fifteen years,

which elucidate the inefficiencies of shared governance. For example, although faculty

overall appears to view institutional governance as important, 70% are not participating

at a satisfactory level (Gerber, 2014).The former chair of the American Association of

University Professors' Committee on College and University Governance, believes that

effective faculty governance is eroding due to the rise of adjunct faculty employment and

the style of management of colleges and universities becoming increasingly more

corporate (Gerber, 2014).Community colleges have some of the highest percentages of

adjunct faculty across the country and are subject to frequent shifts in vision and

management style because of state and local politics (Kater, 2017).Faculty, particularly at

community colleges, are not often included in strategic planning and overall college

governance; rather, faculty involvement is more specific to areas such as grievances,

curriculum, faculty evaluation, sabbatical, and the college calendar (Kater, 2017).

Administrators reportedly view faculty influence in institutional governance as higher than faculty view it themselves (Kater, 2017).Conducting interviews with faculty from nine community colleges in five states Kater (2017) sought to deepen the understanding of faculty leaders' perceptions of shared governance. Not surprisingly, themes emerged such as the importance of the faculty voice, trust, and transparency. However, there is no current research exploring the dynamics of trust in relation to faculty' perceptions of shared governance.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education hosts The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE).In 2015, they published a paper discussing Effective Academic Governance: Five Ingredients for CAOs and Faculty (Ott & Matthews).They conducted interviews with 20 Chief Academic Officers and reviewed literature pertaining to making shared governance work and found that there are five ingredients necessary to make academic governance effective: trust, shared sense of purpose, understanding the issue at hand, adaptability, and productivity. The words may be different but the sentiments across much of the literature reviewed is consistent with the idea that trust is important to organizational functioning and in order to trust you must perceive the person or role to be at least three things: competent, honest and reliable. It is my hope to understand how community college faculty experience trust within the context of their unique college structure and culture. I would like to know what they perceive as the necessary ingredients, specifically how trust influences willingness to participate in decision-making, and what opportunities exist for them build it into the college structure.

With this study, I explored the individual, contextual experiences of faculty at Community College X, and the resulting perception of trust. By doing that, I am able to describe how the unique organizational structures and processes of Community College X may influence perceptions of trust. This description may be useful in modernizing and expanding the knowledge base for trust dynamics within the community college as they pertain to participation in decision-making and governance.

**Rebuilding Trust**

There is ample evidence to support the need to establish and maintain trust for institutional success (Cerna, 2014; Kater, 2017; Ott & Matthews 2015), but another recent area of interests to scholars include understanding what happens when trust is broken due to institutional trauma (Awan, 2014; Bachmann et al., 2015.)Trauma, which most institutions of higher education are familiar with, is defined as distress from fiscal mismanagement, administrator scandals, or misaligned efforts between state government and the institution. The emotional recovery process for the remaining faculty and staff of an organization can be difficult and fraught with feelings of distrust. Awan (2014) examined the rebuilding of trust within a specific community college after experiencing trauma, and he found that clear institutional goals and mission and vision statements alone could not repair trust. As trust begins to redevelop among the faculty, staff, and administration of a college, shared governance can provide a "path to recovery and to rebuilding a highly functioning college" (Awan, 2014, p. 54).Similar to Cerna's (2014) factors found present with existence of trust, Awan (2014) found specific factors that improved along with the rebuilding of trust, such as harder working staff and faculty,

longer tenure with the institution, improved ideas, and overall improved effort to pursue

the common goal of student success. However, using shared governance as a "path to

recovery (Awan, 2014, p. 54)" is not the only answer, even if it is effective for one

specific case.

Similarly, by reviewing and comparing the emotional recovery process after trust

has been broken, of multiple community colleges, it was noted that absent or damaged

trust not only negatively influences actions, attitudes, and an overall sense of safety, but it

can be counterproductive to participatory governance, organizational change, and

institutional effectiveness (Awan, 2014).Awan, like Hoppes and Holley (2014), proposed

that during the phases of rebuilding trust the leadership will need to foster the five facets

of trust (Cerna, 2014) among the college constituents in order to successfully build a

culture of trust.

Rebuilding trust has also been examined from a macro point of view, examining

multiple institutions, and no single mechanism is found to be solely responsible for

rebuilding organizational or institutional trust (Bachmann et al., 2015).However, six key

mechanisms for restoring and promoting trust have been identified (Bachmann et al.,

2015, p. 1126-1127):

- *sense making*- a collective learning process that involves a shared understanding
  of what happened to violate trust and what is required for effective trust repair
- *relational*-remorse and redemption approach that includes social rituals and
  symbolic acts that will aid in resolving negative emotion and re-establish positive

social relationships (reverse and social disequilibrium that occurred as a result of the violation of trust)

- *regulation and controls-* formal rules and controls that constrain untrustworthy behavior and therefore prevent a future trust violation

- *ethical culture-* informal cultural controls that help constrain untrustworthy behavior and promote trustworthy behavior

- *transparency-* sharing relevant information clearly and consistently regarding organizational decision processes and functioning with all stakeholders

- *transference-* facilitating transferring trust from a credible party to the discredited party

There are paradoxes and limitations of each mechanism and further examination as well as the development of theories that specify how contextual factors affect trust repair via a plurality of research methods and from multiple perspectives, is encouraged (Bachmann et al, 2015.)It is with this case study that I hope to elucidate mechanisms that pertain specifically to the experience of Community College X.

The six mechanisms for restoring and promoting trust can be interpreted in the processes currently used to evaluate quality improvement efforts in higher education, such as the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) for the Higher Learning Commission(HLC; 2017).The HLC provides a framework for institutions to use when examining key processes and for evaluation during their accreditation review cycle. Additionally, they allow institutions to analyze, understand, and explore opportunities for continuous improvement (HLC, 2017). These opportunities are designed to foster and

repair trust accordingly. They involve the use of collective learning processes that are carefully assessed continuously, transparency of policies and procedures that are evaluated regularly, as well as processes and procedures that value people and promote collaboration among all constituent groups (HLC, 2017).

However, despite these improvement efforts, many faculty members do not feel that they have any influence in their own schools' decision-making processes outside of that which pertains to the content of their own classes (Gerber, 2014; Kezar & Sam, 2014).According to research conducted in the 1990s, and 2000s, faculty, staff, and administration, believed that decision-making processes were ineffective (Kezar, 2017; Gerber, 2014).The push to address structures and formal processes began to occur in the 2000s but were less effective than hoped. Instead, a focus on building relationships based on trust has turned out to be more important in increasing institutional effectiveness (Bahls, 2014; Kezar & Sam, 2014).

Trust in leadership, strong leadership, and including faculty in decision-making are important to building and establishing trust; and to improving the effectiveness of institutions of higher education (Bahls, 2014).However, what is still not known is why so many faculty members are unwilling to accept opportunities to participate in key decision-making, which is known to build and maintain trust, and specifically what factors contribute to or correlate with a greater willingness for faculty to participate in institutional decision-making.

There is evidence to support the positive correlation between having had experience as an administrator and greater faculty involvement (Vineburgh, 2010) and

research to support the notion that trust is a form of social capital and that having social capital can help build and strengthen perceived trust (Kater, 2017; Migliore, 2012).However, no evidence exists that specifically addresses community college faculty and their experience of trust, particularly as it relates to involvement in decision-making. There are large differences from one college to the next in terms of size, population served, population employed, funding sources, community placement, and involvement, governance, etc. Qualitative data from a sample of faculty specifically in a community college setting would be useful in deepening the understanding of the role trust plays in organizational effectiveness and the presence, development, and understanding of trust as a form social capital in community colleges. I wanted to know more about the psychosocial experience of the community college faculty. My findings may even inspire future quantitative research.

## Summary

In summary, chapter 2 contains a review of the literature surrounding trust and faculty involvement in higher education. Trust is explained as a social and psychological experience (Fredrickson, 2012; Carter & Mossholder, 2015), having both a cognitive and affective component. Research suggests that there is a strong emotional component to choosing to trust another person (Schlosser et al., 2015), and that faculty involvement and trust are key elements in an effective college governance (Kater, 2015;Hoppes & Holley, 2014).Multiple scholars agree that trust can be viewed as a function of social capital (Kater, 2017; Savage, 2017) and that there are three distinct types of trust within organizations: interpersonal, organizational, and institutional (Bachmann et al, 2015).It is

noted that there is a paradox in that organizational structures, such as shared governance in higher education, can promote trust and simultaneously the very nature of shared governance can undermine the perception of trust (Kater, 2017).Awan (2014) posited that that institutional trauma can disrupt trusting relationships and they can become broken and need repair. Awan (2014) also noted six mechanisms that support improving trusting relationships within institutions of higher education. Vineburgh (2010) linked specific variables, pertaining to faculty individual experiences, to increased participation in decision-making in HBCUs. However, there is no research to date, that specifically examines community college faculty perceptions of trust or variables related to community college faculty participation in decision-making, or explores trust dynamics and the influence that various trust dynamics may have on faculty willingness to participate in key decision-making opportunities. I had a desire to understand dynamics of trust within the community college, and how the dynamics may influence faculty involvement in decision-making.

I believe that I have established a knowledge base from which I can begin my exploration into the role that trust plays in faculty involvement in decision-making at Community College X. Building upon the knowledge that trust plays an important role in organizational functioning, specifically in effective leadership and cooperation, I proposed to explore structures, processes and faculty perceptions with regard to trust and involvement specifically at Community College X.I looked for emerging themes and explored possible relationships among the structures, processes, and perceptions of trust

may affect faculty involvement in key decision-making and overall institutional effectiveness.

Chapter 3 expands upon how the chosen methodology was employed to fulfill the purpose of the research. It discusses the role of the researcher and provides a description of the methods and design including details about the particular case that are germane to the research process, demographics about the particular community college chosen for the case study, as well as interview participant demographics. Chapter 3 also contains an explanation of the ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality and data security. Finally, it describes how the data was collected, coded and analyzed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

## Introduction

The intent of this research was to explore trust dynamics and faculty involvement in institutional decision-making at a community college, within the context of the unique, complex social and organizational structures and processes. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), the problem indicates the applicable research questions, which in turn indicate the most appropriate research design. The problem that prompted this research was that even though there was an adequate amount of research to support the need for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making, faculty were not involved or were unhappy with their level of involvement. There is a substantial gap in the extant literature pertaining specifically to community college faculty experiences relating to trust and involvement in decision-making. I wanted to describe how trust influences faculty involvement in key decision-making at Community College X and explore various trust dynamics. In this chapter, I explain my rationale for choosing to conduct a case study as well as provide a justification for the methodology, discuss the role of the researcher, provide a description of participants, and include the plan for data collection as well as coding and analysis of data.

## Research Design and Rationale

According to Yin (2011), there are five features of qualitative research:(a)study the meaning of people's lives under real-world conditions, (b)represent the views and perspectives of people, (c)cover the contextual conditions within which people live, (d)contribute insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human

behavior, and (e)strive to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single

source alone. Because the goal of this research was to represent the views and

perspectives of faculty within the context of the community college using multiple

sources of evidence, qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate. Four qualitative

methodologies were strongly considered for conducting this research: ethnography,

phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study. According to Leedy and Ormrod

(2016), the primary emphasis of an ethnographic study is on observation, and it requires

that the researcher be immersed in the culture for a significant length of time. The goal of

this study was to quickly examine the overall contextual, personal experience of faculty

about their experience of trust. Therefore, ethnography would not have been an

appropriate choice. According to Leedy and Ormrod, a phenomenological study requires

looking at data as seen through the lens of the individual participant, limiting

understanding of the influence of various aspects of the social context, which were

important to this research. Therefore, a phenomenological study would not have been

appropriate. With grounded theory, the focus is on what and how something is being

done in a series of events, instead of who is doing it, and the important structures in place

that may influence the actions of a particular subject (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).With this

research, I explored the actions of faculty and the structures that may influence their

actions. Therefore, grounded theory was not an appropriate choice. Considering the

problem and purpose of this research, conducting only observation, only interviews, or

only focusing on a specific series of events would have limited my ability to sufficiently

describe the dynamics of trust as they relate to the complex contextual factors of the community college. Therefore, I chose the case study method of research.

The case study method of research allows the researcher to focus on a contemporary phenomenon in the real-life situation as well as to cope with technically distinctive situations and multiple variables of interest (Yin, 2014).Case study research allows for careful review of multiple sources of evidence, which allowed me to not only ask faculty about their own unique perspectives but also consider those perspectives within the context of the specific social and organizational structures of Community College X, converging the evidence. Using multiple sources of evidence provides the opportunity for triangulation, which enhances the trustworthiness of the research and aims to corroborate the same fact or phenomenon (Yin, 2014).Triangulation also helps avoid problems with construct validity because the various evidence provides multiple measures of the same phenomenon.

According to Yin (2014), there are six sources used to collect case study evidence: physical artifacts, interviews, archival records, participant observation, direct observation, and documentation. I have provided an in-depth description of the phenomenon of trust at Community College X without the control of behavioral events and in the real-life context. I have reviewed organizational structure documentation and archival records such as job descriptions and have conducted interviews.

Using a social constructivist framework, I examined the case of Community College X in terms of how aspects of time, context, culture, and values (see Yazan, 2015) influence faculty perceptions and experiences of trust. By examining themes that

emerged, I analyzed how trust dynamics appear to influence or shape faculty involvement in decision-making processes. I have done this not to seek an objective truth, but to examine patterns of subjective understanding of both the perception of trust as well as the individual's perceptions of how trust affects involvement within Community College X. Case studies, by design, do not seek to fully answer questions or test hypotheses; they allow for the elaboration of a topic and the development of hypothesis that can be examined in future research (Shank, 2006).Therefore, conducting a case study was the most appropriate methodology for this research.

Yin (2014) explained that case studies can be evaluative, explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive and have four possible designs: single holistic, single embedded, multiple holistic, and multiple embedded. This particular study fit Yin's description of a descriptive, single, holistic approach because I was interested in how 20 faculty members experience trust and involvement at one particular community college. This design was appropriate for describing the participants' perspectives without influencing them in any way. All participants were members of the bounded system, Community College X. This shared membership enhanced the likelihood that they would understand the value of the study and therefore would be more willing to participate fully. I describe participants, the selection process, saturation, demographics, and more, later in this chapter.

The following research question were those used to guide the research process:

Central question: What is the faculty experience of trust and involvement in institutional decision-making at Community College X, and what does it reveal about how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in decision-making and governance?

The subquestions were as follows:

RQ1: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of trust?

RQ2: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of involvement in decision-making at Community College X?

RQ3: What do Community College X faculty job descriptions indicate about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

RQ4: What does a review of the organizational and governance structure of the college reveal about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

I viewed this research through the lens of social constructivism. Interpretivist theorists, such as that of social constructionism, find that reality is socially constructed and that there may be multiple realities depending upon the relative meaning of time, context, culture, and values (Yazan, 2015).Given the very nature of social constructivism, I assumed that the experiences of the individual faculty members at Community College X were truly unique to their own individual actions and interactions with others and that individual community colleges have their own unique circumstances and characteristics that influence their overall culture. I used member checks to address the credibility of the interview process. I drew conclusions that offered limited transferability and added to the overall body of academic knowledge. I can use the results of this study to inform

recommendations pertaining specifically to Community College X as well offer limited

transferability to other community colleges. Transferability can apply in varying degrees

to most types of research, and unlike generalizability, transferability does not involve

broad claims but invites readers of the research to make connections between elements of

a study and their own experience (Barnes et al., 2012).

**Role of the Researcher**

In this research, I was an observer and recorder, gathering data via review of

institutional documents, archival records, semistructured interviews that used open-ended

questions, and observation. I am a faculty member at Community College X myself, and

according to Yin (2014), this can have complicated power and supervisory implications. I

had no supervisory or instructor relationship with the participants nor did my role as

researcher have any impact on my own role at the college nor the role of the participants

at the college. I have taken care to minimize personal biases in the study by practicing

epoché, setting aside judgment and reporting only what the participants' said or did

during the interview itself. I kept a reflexive journal and used it when analyzing the data

to aid in issues of trustworthiness. I purposefully sampled 20 participants, recruited by

email invitation (see Appendix B).With expressed permission, I recorded and transcribed

the participants' words verbatim. I dually informed the participants about the study,

concerning their right to withdrawal at any time and to protect participant identity by not

recording any personal information beyond the characteristics of the individual

participants that were very directly related to the research question. Characteristics that

were recorded, for example, were the length of employment, department in which they

were employed, and full-time or part-time status. All material obtained during the

research process is on an external hard drive in my home and will be kept for 3 years

after the published research. It will not be used for any purpose other than this

dissertation unless additional expressed permission is obtained from the participants at a

future point in time.

## Methodology

According to Yin's (2014) perspective, case study research should triangulate

using multiple sources of evidence in order to ensure construct validity. Yin suggested

the researchers make use of six evidentiary sources: documentation, archival records,

interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts, each of

which has its own strengths and weaknesses. Evidence was collected and triangulated

from multiple sources, including participants' recorded interviews, a review of participant

job descriptions, and organizational structure documentation, for example, the

organizational chart. I used participant data checks to enhance trustworthiness by

allowing them to review the recording after the interview. In addition to the participant

interviews, I worked with the college's Human Resources department to obtain, for

review, college documents such as organizational and governance structures and job

descriptions. I looked for the level of faculty involvement expected in decision-making,

based upon the evidence within the college documents. Overall, upon data analysis using

NVivo12 software, I identified emerging themes across the various sources of evidence

that painted a picture of the perceptions of faculty and the realities of the contextual

experience that pertained to faculty involvement in decision-making at the college and the influence trust has on that involvement.

**Participant Selection Logic**

In qualitative research, the population is the specific set of objects or persons that share some common characteristics as defined by the sampling criteria developed by the researcher. As discussed by Asiamah et al, (2017) it is important to also understand the notion of the targetpopulation and accessible population. The target population is the group within the general population that share specific "attributes of relevance or interest" (Asiamah et al, 2017, p. 1612) and the accessible population is further defined as the group within the target population who may participate and can be accessed for the study (Asiamah et al, 2017).In this case, the general population is the community college faculty at Community College X. The target population is the group of faculty who meet the research criteria i.e. teach full or part-time for one of the four academic departments, and the accessible population is the faculty who respond to the recruitment email expressing interest in participation in the research study. There are approximately 428 faculty members at Community College X, 283 part-time and 145 full-time. Community College X does not have a collective bargaining agreement with its faculty and therefore faculty members are working with contracts that are reviewed and renewed each academic semester. The state in which the college resides is an "at will" work state. These faculty members have no tenure, no guarantee that they will have their jobs should the college decide that they needed to let a faculty member go they may do so "at will".

I chose to conduct one-on-one, open-ended interviews with a purposeful sampling of 20 participants, full-time and part-time faculty from Community College X, of various disciplines and time employed by the college. Yin (2011) describes a purposeful sampling as a deliberate selection of participants. Sampling is important because it is, in the broadest sense, the process of selecting specific data sources from which data are collected to address research objectives (Gentles et al, 2015). According to Yin (2011), purposeful sampling is, "the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions" (p. 311).Purposeful sampling differs from random sampling or snowball sampling in that the researcher purposively selects the sample thus sampling occurs at two levels, the case, and unspecified data sources within the case (Gentles et al, 2015).

I believe that this purposeful sample across different departments allows for elucidation of multiple perspectives across the college and for themes to emerge that may help describe the dynamics of the faculty experience of trust and involvement that pertain not just to the particular college, but also to the unique departmental structures and job descriptions. Different job descriptions may lead to different expectations both for the faculty member themselves as well as the departmental management.

Data saturation is necessary to ensure that adequate and quality data are collected and it reached when no new themes appear to be emerging in the data; no new categorical information can be added to what has already been obtained. Interviewing 20 faculty, four from each of the five academic divisions at the college, I have taken care to ensure

saturation with each group being interviewed. If saturation is achieved at two interviews, I will conduct two more interviews to ensure saturation and stop.

**Participant Recruitment**

A recruitment email was sent to all faculty at Community College X requesting their volunteer participation (see Appendix B).Four participants and one alternate were selected, from each of five college divisions: Business and Computer Information, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Math and Science, English/Communication and Arts, and Nursing/Allied Health to participate in 30 minute, audio-recorded interviews. Each participant represents one of the following categories: 1-3 years employment, 4-7 years employment, and more than 7 years of employment. Should there have been more than four faculty volunteers from a particular division, I would have made the selection of four randomly. I would have only interviewed an alternate, the fifth participant, should one of the four not be available at the time of the scheduled interview, or if needed to achieve data saturation. Participants were required to consent prior to conducting the interviews. Interviews were conducted in a private library study room on campus during normal business hours. Participants were informed of the 30-minute time limit, and that they would be given a 5-minute warning when the time is almost up. Lastly, verbal permission was obtained from the participants upon initiating audio recording.

**Instrumentation**

The interview session was designed to extrapolate the general psychological perspectives, and social constructs that pertain to the individual participants based upon their unique experiences within the institution. I hoped that interview session would help

paint a picture of how the social and organizational context is perceived and experienced by the individual faculty members/participants at Community College X. Open-ended questions were created to facilitate faculty members sharing their experiences and perceptions of trust and involvement at Community College X (see Appendix A).The open-ended questions were field tested to check for validity and reliability. Five experts from a local community college were asked to preview the questions and provide feedback concerning the appropriateness of the questions pertaining to the focus of the study. The volunteers were not asked to provide responses and therefore no data were collected. Feedback from experts helped refine the questions in order to reduce ambiguity and establish authenticity. The process of field-testing was conducted in accordance with the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 C.F.R. §46.101 (2009).The interviews were recorded and transcribed into NVivo software (QSR International, NVivo 12).Data checks were performed by requesting that the interviewees review the transcribed reports to ensure that their statements have been accurately captured. That did require additional time of the interviewee to respond to an email, following the interview.

**Data Analysis Plan**

Multiple sources of evidence were used for data collection: interviews, observations, and review of structural documents. As mentioned earlier in participant selection logic, data saturation is necessary to ensure that adequate and quality data are collected and it reached when no new themes appear to be emerging in the data; no new categorical information can be added to what has already been obtained. Once data saturation was achieved, I employed the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (Moustakas, 1994)

method for data analysis of the recorded faculty interviews in order to address research

subquestions 1 and 2.The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (Moustakas, 1994) method involves the

following steps: Obtain a full description of the experience of the phenomenon (the

participant interviews). From the verbatim transcripts, consider each statement with

respect to significance, record all relevant statements, list non-repetitive statements and

cluster the invariant meaning into units and themes, then formulate a textural description

of the experience using imaginative variation that captures the essence of the experience.

For research subquestions 3 and 4, I reviewed college organizational material such as

faculty job descriptions, organizational chart and shared governance structure.

In order to support the validity of the data collection process, I practiced epoché.

According to Yin (2011), epoché is a process involving blocking or suspending biases

and assumptions in order to view, and possibly explain, a phenomenon as it is and not

simply how the researcher's experience may allow them to see it. I have attempted to set

aside my own personal beliefs to be able to see the phenomena of the participants as they

are, and focus on the analysis of the experience without judgment. The recording of the

actual statements made during the interview as well as the use of member checks for

accuracy aided the internal validity of this process.

In order to conduct this data analysis, I used the NVivo12 software package

provided by QSR International. NVivo was designed to support analysis of large amounts

of research data that is extensively text-based, and/or includes multimedia information.

The coding was done with the assistance of NVivo12 technology, which helped speed up

the process and supported consistency. A coding frame was be used to capture word

frequencies and key words in context, as well as identify patterns across various text and data sources. Overall, the software supports the researcher identifying emerging themes, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation of the data.

Finally, I have produced a composite of these textual and structural experiences that will represent the essence of the experience of the entire group within the context of the case of Community College X.I used Stake's (1995) 20-critique checklist to assess the quality of the overall case study report.

**Issues of Trustworthiness**

Internal validity, external validity and dependability are all necessary conditions to maintain trustworthiness in qualitative, case study research (Yin, 2014).In this study credibility (internal validity) is established by the use of specific strategies such as early familiarity with the culture of the participating organization, triangulation, participant (member) checks, variation in participant selection, reflective commentary of the researcher, and thick description of the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2014).These strategies ensures that the study can describe what it intends to describe which, is the faculty experience of trust. According to Yin (2014), providing specific operational measures for how the concept of trust is to be studied is extremely important in order to ensure that the findings are congruent with reality. These are detailed in the earlier methods and data analysis sections of this chapter.

Transferability, dependability, and confirmability must also be established for trustworthiness of qualitative research (Yin, 2014).Transferability, the extent to which the findings of this study can be applied to other situations (Yazan, 2015), also seen as

external validity, is maintained by establishing a strong background and knowledge base, clearly articulated methods that involve a variation in participant selection, and inclusion of thick description of the phenomenon. Dependability establishes that if the study were conducted again in the same context, with the same methods, and the same participants, that it would produce similar results (Yin, 2014).According to DeVault, (2017), triangulation involves asking the same research questions of different participants and by collecting evidence from multiple sources. In this study, the methods are clearly articulated and evidence collected from multiple sources. Lastly, according to Yin (2014) confirmability in qualitative research is comparable to objectivity in quantitative research. It is maintained by the researcher taking steps to minimize researcher bias and practicing reflexivity. In this case, I kept a reflexive journal throughout the investigative process and included an audit trail, a systematic account of the decisions made throughout the investigative process.

**Ethical Procedures**

Anonymity of the college and participants is important in this case study. I have protected the anonymity of the college used for this case study by referring to the college only as Community College X. Using a private, one-on-one interview process will maintain the confidentiality of the participants, and I obtained participant permission prior to recording the interview sessions. Having utilized the informed consent form (see Appendix C), I reminded the participants that they will be able to remove themselves from the participant list at any time. Recorded interviews will be kept on my personal computer, which only I have access to, for up to 2 years after the study is complete. The

files will then be deleted. Coded and analyzed data from NVivo12 software have been saved as project files, also on my personal computer, and deleted 2 years after the study is completed and then deleted.

There are some ethical concerns that are important to discuss transparently. With all faculty participants being faculty at Community College X, the experiences of the faculty will be unique to this particular community college. The faculty employed at College X have no tenure and no collective bargaining, which means that they are at will employees. The participants volunteered at their own will to participant in the study. The participants were not compensated for their time. The participants are colleagues of mine, as I too am faculty at the college; however, I have no supervisory responsibilities nor does their participation in this study have any bearing on my role or their role within the institution. In order to make the interviews as convenient as possible for the participants, I chose to conduct the interviews on campus; however, despite the assurance of confidentiality, this choice of location may have limited the participant's level of comfort in sharing information that may appear to be derogatory toward the institution. I have no expectation that the result will lead to specific changes at Community College X. Community College X's IRB has deferred to Walden University IRB for the purpose of this research. Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-08-19-0161471.

**Chapter Summary**

In Chapter 3, I focused on the purpose of the study and the research design and rationale rational. It also included the role of the researcher and the methodology, which includes participant selection and recruitment, and the data analysis plan. A detailed

explanation for why specific qualitative methods are employed for data collection,

analysis, and presentation of data is also included. Details regarding the one-on-one

interviews with a purposeful sampling of the faculty are also provided. In Chapter 3, I

explained how I analyzed the interviews using the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen

method as described by Moustakas (1994).I used phenomenological reduction, including

bracketing and horizontalization, as well as organized regular qualities and themes as

they related to the construction of a textural description for analysis (Moustakas,

1994).The study as a whole explored the dynamics of trust and faculty involvement in

key decision making within the particular case of Community College X.

Chapter 4: Results

**Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to explore how trust dynamics influence faculty

involvement in institutional decision-making at one community college within the

context of the complex social and organizational structures and processes that are unique

to that particular community college. The central research question was as follows: What

is the faculty experience of trust and involvement in institutional decision-making at

Community College X? This question prompted and exploration of the faculty experience

to see what can be determined about how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in

decision-making. The following subquestions guided the semistructured interviews and

data analysis:

RQ1: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of trust?

RQ2: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of

involvement in decision-making at Community College X?

RQ3: What do Community College X faculty job descriptions indicate about

expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

RQ4: What does a review of the organizational and governance structure of the

college reveal about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-

making?

In order to explore trust dynamics and involvement at Community College X, I

conducted semistructured interviews with a purposeful sampling of faculty members and

reviewed college documents. The four research questions previously stated guided this

process. The interviews were designed to specifically address RQ1 and RQ2.The exact questions asked of participants are viewable in Appendix A. To address RQ3 and RQ4, I reviewed job descriptions for full-time and part-time faculty in each of the five divisions and reviewed organizational structure documents to see what, if any, influence roles and/or position may have on the perception of trust. Within and among these multiple sources of data, patterns began to emerge that helped me formulate a subjective understanding of both the faculty perception of trust and dynamics of trust and the expectation for faculty involvement in key decision-making, based upon job description and the organizational structure of the college.

This chapter includes a description of the setting for data collection as well as a presentation of demographic characteristics for the study participants. I continue the chapter with a description of the implementation of the data collection and data analysis procedures described in Chapter 3, a discussion of the evidence of trustworthiness of the study's results, and a presentation of the results themselves. The presentation of results includes the analysis of the 30semistructured interviews and a description of how the transcriptions were analyzed to identify emerging themes using NVivo 12 software. I conclude the chapter with a summary.

**Setting**

The setting for this study was one specific community college with a student population of about 8,000 students in a large submetropolitan area in the south. With the college's permission, interviews of 19 faculty members were conducted on the college campus in a secluded library study room that was not within any of the academic

divisions. One interview was conducted by phone, in my home, when no one else was home. The interviews were scheduled to be 30 minutes in length to provide ample time for participants to respond to all six interview questions. Due to the nature of the location of the interviews, some faculty members may have withheld information that could have been perceived as negative about the institution. However, given the rather candid responses from the majority of participants, I do not believe that this was the case for the majority of participants.

## Demographics

Participants consisted of 20 contingent, nontenure track, faculty' members with no collective bargaining agreement, representing both full time and part time teaching roles from each of the five academic divisions and with varying lengths of employment. Some of the faculty interviewed have been both part time and full time at various points in their employment. The full details of the demographic categories are presented in Table 1.The recruitment email (Appendix B) was shared with all faculty currently employed, and participants were selected upon response until four from each division had replied. A fifth participant from each division was notified that they would be scheduled for an interview should one of the first four not follow through with their scheduled interview. The first four all followed through, and the fifth faculty members were notified in a timely manner that they would not be interviewed.

Table 1

*Demographic Data*

| Demographic category | % of total participants |
|---|---|
| Employment status | |
|     Full time currently | 80% |
|     Part time currently | 20% |
|     Part time at some point | 45% |
| Academic division | |
|     Business & Computer Information Systems | 15% |
|     English, Communication & Arts | 15% |
|     Center for Health Professions | 20% |
|     Math & Science | 20% |
|     Social & Behavioral Sciences | 30% |
| Length of employment | |
|     1-4years | 20% |
|     5-10years | 15% |
|     10-14 years | 35% |
|     15+years | 30% |

*Note N* = 20.

## Data Collection

Interview data were collected from 19one-on-one, face-to-face interviews conducted in a private study room on campus and one phone interview conducted in my home. The interviews were audio recorded with the participants' consent using a digital recording device. The average duration of the interviews was approximately 15 minutes. The plan presented in Chapter 3 was followed without the need for any deviation, other than the one phone interview due to the faculty member being out of town for an extended period. No unusual circumstances were encountered during the data collection process.

Data were also collected via the Human Resource department as well as the public facing website. Faculty job postings and job descriptions were obtained via the Human Resources department of the college, and three were obtained via the public facing web page for employment postings. The organizational chart was obtained from the president's office. A copy of the faculty senate by-laws was obtained by the faculty senate's public facing web page.

**Data Analysis**

All participants were asked the same six semistructured interview questions that were provided to the IRB for approval and are included with the study (Appendix A).Based upon participant responses and flow, there were instances in which I provided clarification of a question for a participant and where I asked an additional question to ensure my own understanding of a participant's response. The planned interview questions prompted sufficient data, and no deviation from the plan was warranted.

After the interviews were completed and recorded, I used NVivo transcription software to transcribe the interviews. Each interview was transcribed as a single document, and participant names were removed and replaced with a participant number 1 to 20.Once complete, the transcriptions were uploaded into NVivo. I then listened again to correct any grammatical inaccuracies that the NVivo transcription may have missed that diminished the participant statements. Finally, I used NVivo for coding and thematic analysis.

In order to gain a sense of the whole interview and note nuances of each participant, I listened to the recordings a second and third time and took some notes to

attempt to identify units of meaning. I also used the printed transcriptions to highlight any phrases or word sequences that conveyed meaning and had significance in terms of creating a textural description of the phenomena. It was through this process that I was able to complete the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (see Moustakas, 1994) and identify themes using the analysis tools provided in NVivo 12.This process, although rooted in the technology of NVivo, still requires a significant amount of reading and re-reading of participant interviews, highlighting key words and phrases, and connecting data to a node. Specifically, I assigned equal value to each statement made by faculty members who participated to allow these statements to represent a specific meaning. The statements were clustered into themes. The themes and segments were then synthesized into a description of the "what" or "texture" (see Chun, 2013). Imaginative variation was applied from the textual (what) and structural (how) descriptions, followed by a synthesis by which the textual and structural descriptions form the essence of the experience (see Chun, 2013.)The specific context, space, and time when the phenomenon was observed was emphasized, and then the process was repeated for each participant.

<div align="center">**Evidence of Trustworthiness**</div>

**Credibility**

Internal validity, external validity, and dependability are all necessary conditions to maintain trustworthiness in qualitative, case study research (Yin, 2014).In this study, credibility (internal validity) was established by the use of specific strategies such as early familiarity with the culture of the participating organization, triangulation, participant (member) checks, variation in participant selection, reflective commentary of

the researcher, and thick description of the phenomenon being studied (see Yin, 2014).These strategies ensured that the study could describe what it intended to describe ;the faculty experience of trust. In this study, I used data triangulation with participant interviews, job descriptions, and organizational documents. I also noted my own researcher bias and employed member checks by asking participants to review the transcripts prior to data analysis.

**Transferability**

Transferability, dependability, and confirmability must also be established for the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Yin, 2014).Transferability, the extent to which the findings of this study can be applied to other situations (Yazan, 2015), in other words, external validity, was maintained by establishing a strong background and knowledge base, clearly articulating methods that involved a variation in participant selection and the inclusion of thick description of the phenomenon via the semi structured interview process.

**Dependability**

Dependability establishes that if the study were conducted again in the same context, with the same methods, and the same participants, that it would produce similar results (Yin, 2014).According to DeVault, (2017), triangulation involves asking the same research questions of different participants and by collecting evidence from multiple sources. In this study, the methods were clearly articulated and evidence collected from multiple sources.

**Confirmability**

According to Yin (2014) confirmability in qualitative research is comparable to objectivity in quantitative research. It is maintained by the researcher taking steps to minimize researcher bias and by practicing reflexivity. I kept a reflexive journal, throughout the investigative process, and, created an audit trail, a systematic account of the decisions made throughout the investigative process. The audit trail consists of all documents created during the collection and analysis of the study.

## Results

In this study, I explored one central research question. What is the faculty experience of trust and involvement in institutional decision-making at Community College X and what does it tell us about how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in decision-making and governance? Four subsequent questions guided my exploration process.

RQ1: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of trust at Community College X?

RQ2: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of involvement in decision-making at Community College X?

RQ3: What do Community College X faculty job descriptions indicate about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

RQ4: What does a review of the organizational and governance structure of the college reveal about expectations for faculty involvement in institutional decision-making?

I conducted 20 semistructured interviews with faculty members from each of the five academic divisions, representing both full time and part time as well as various lengths of employment at the college. The specific questions asked are found in Appendix A. In analyzing the responses from all 20 participants, as well as reviewing organizational structure documents such as the college's organizational chart, and Faculty Senate Bi-Laws, I was able to surmise a few key points that I summarize below concerning each research question. It is important to recall that this research intended to look specifically at trust dynamics and how they may influence involvement. Research conducted with community college faculty in 2017 (Kater) already indicated that the faculty voice, trust and transparency, and apathy and disengagement are key indicators to faculty involvement in decision-making. These findings support that research and provide a more detailed view of trust.

In regard to Research Question 1: "How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of trust?" participant feedback indicated that, division to division, things are very different based on transparency of the leadership (dean) and the level of trust faculty have in leadership. Faculty from one specific division reported high levels of trust and involvement. Specifically, they trusted in their dean's ability to manage and provide clear and transparent communication. Faculty from two other divisions, similarly to one another, reported a pervasive mistrust and a desire to simply do their job. They did not wish to be involved. One specifically stated, "There is not much trust in administrators like my dean..."Common sentiments expressed included feeling that their dean could improve communication, that the dean is not held accountable and,

that their feelings of mistrust stem from decisions made in the past that they do not

understand. Some also reported that even when the dean had attempted to advocate for

them, that they perceived the VP to be tying the dean's hands. It is important to note that

the majority of full time faculty who have been at the college over 10 years had unique

and individual experiences that influenced their trust.  Although there were similarities,

none of the circumstances were pertaining to the same incident. It is also important to

note that when faculty have had administrative experience themselves, i.e. have a

program that they are responsible for or have chaired a committee, etc., that they reported

greater understanding and therefore trust was less negatively affected.

Most faculty, from all divisions, full and part time, reported that they trust their

fellow faculty more than the administration and, that trust varies depending upon the

specific administrator and the manner in which their role is perceived. This appears to

indicate that their perception of trust is based upon interpersonal trust and the individual

experiences that each have had with their respective administrator. Also, the perception

of trust is tied to the specific leadership role within the institution, such a dean or

department chair, which is based upon organizational trust.

The majority of faculty also reported that they trust the current president and feel

that she is benevolent and has their best interest at heart. A few specifically mentioned

that the past five years have proven to be better than prior years, indicating that trust can

be rebuilt. The current president's transparency, her willingness to communicate openly

and frequently, seems to have contributed to the rebuilding of trust. It is not clear whether

these perceptions are tied specifically to the president and her development of social

capital or whether the role of the presidency has improved in terms of its processes and methods that account for increased trust in both an organizational and institutional nature.

In regard to Research Questions 2: "How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of involvement in institutional decision-making?" participant feedback indicates that the willingness of faculty members to participate in committees and other decision-making opportunities depends on whether the faculty member perceives that their input will matter and make a difference- whether their voice will be heard. Faculty, who expressed a positive experience of trust, were content to serve on committees (departmental and college wide) when they felt that they had a voice and that their input was actually factored into decision-making. However, when their voice is not heard it is frustrating and feels like a waste of time. One faculty member shared, "When I voice an opinion in a [college wide] committee that I am on, I feel like I am just shouting into the wind." In addition, one faculty reported that the faculty senate just "meets to feel good about it." It is sentiments like these that give faculty pause about committee participation, especially college wide committee participation.

However, others felt that they feel that their voice is heard within their department just not when it comes to college wide decision-making. For example, one faculty member stated, "I think that I have more influence in my department than in the college as a whole." Another stated, "I feel like in the past my voice has been heard in decisions that relate to my area, as for the college as a whole, that's been more limited." Yet, still a few faculty, who have had experience serving on college wide committees, reported that their experiences were good and that they felt that they did make a difference in decisions

that pertained to academic issues and faculty issues. The individual experiences vary significantly. Like with Vineburgh's research in 2010 that found a positive correlation between having had experience as an administrator and involvement, the data indicates there is a link between having had experience as an administrator and trust in administrators. One with prior experience will better understand the demands, motives and challenges of the administrator and therefore judge differently.

Additionally, in terms of the overall experience of trust and the role that institutional trust plays in the willingness of faculty to participate in decision-making opportunities, it would appear that for many faculty, having processes that work efficiently really does make a difference. Although it was not a theme specifically expressed in a majority of the interviewers responses verbatim, those who did express discontent with processes used words and phrases that indicated they felt very strongly. For example, "I don't trust processes here," and "Completely no trust! Not in the administrators not in the decision-making processes." One of the faculty who expressed this sentiment has very little to do with the college outside of their own department, and the other has, in the past, been quite involved. However, both indicated that they do not choose to volunteer for committees or the Faculty Senate due to this lack of trust in processes.

Faculty perspectives indicate a lack of transparency and understanding surrounding the college's organizational structure. When asked how faculty would describe the college structure, I was surprised that nearly two thirds were quite negative. For example, approximately one third said things such as: "It is top heavy," "lots of

pieces," "more top down than roots up," hierarchical," "too clunky," "dysfunctional." While others' negativity came in the form of lack of knowing, such as: "I have no idea," "I don't think I could describe it for my life," "I honestly do not understand it," "there is a president and a bunch of VPs I think," "too many layers," "confusing." The positive comments still left room for improvement concerning communication about the structure: "Typical, but I wonder if it is appropriate for education." "The structure has improved over the past five years." "I don't think it is any more complicated than any other college I've worked for." "Seems to be fine." "There is a lot to know, we have a governance and a board of directors." This lack of contentment and lack of understanding about the structure among the faculty can be contributing to the lack of trust. If faculty knew more about how the college was structured, why it was structured the way it is, and where and how decisions were being made, it could be helpful. Clearer and more transparent communication about the college's structure could possibly improve perceptions about how decisions are made and potentially facilitate faculty desire to involvement.

Lastly, regarding research question 3and 4, reviewing the job descriptions and organizational chart, I found that there was zero mention of part time faculty participating on committees, attending college wide or departmental meetings, etc. Full time faculty job descriptions across all five divisions indicate that faculty duties include attending college wide, division, and department meetings as scheduled, and performing other duties as assigned. Only, three of the five divisions' job descriptions specifically articulate that faculty responsibilities include serving on department and college wide committees.

The organizational chart does explicitly indicate where the president of the faculty senate is in relation to the rest of the college cabinet, but certainly does not read in such a way as to indicate that the faculty senate is a key player in the college's decisions making. If it is not clearly expressed how the faculty senate is serving as part of the governance of the college, and where the input of faculty is in regard to the other college leadership, it certainly could negatively affect the sense that there is a faculty voice and that it is heard. The lack of this clarity may fuel a hesitance for involvement since it is not clear how the faculty input will be valued in the overall structure and decision-making process.

## Summary

In response to the central research question- What is the faculty experience of trust and involvement in institutional decision-making at Community College X and what does it tell us about how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in decision-making and governance? The responses of 20 faculty interviews indicates that trust does influence involvement.  It also exemplified the differences between the three types of trust within organizations: interpersonal, organizational and institutional; and, that there are a significant number of facets of trust that must be present for trust to exist, especially between faculty and middle management/administration. Individual faculty voices, as heard via the one-on-one interviews, speak to the importance of trust in faculty involvement in decision-making. They also speak to the need for honesty, openness (transparency), benevolence, competence, and reliability- the five facets of trust purported by Cerna (2014).Lastly, certain faculty shared specific experiences that

indicate when trust in broken it impacts morale and involvement, and that rebuilding trust is extremely important, and possible.

These results are consistent with my own experience of trust and involvement at a community college, as well as what fellow faculty have reported from various other institutions. In addition, these results are consistent with the broader body of research pertaining to trust dynamics, and trust within organizations, particularly higher education, and will be elaborated upon in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in institutional decision-making at one southwestern community college, within the context of the complex social and organizational structures and processes that are unique to that particular college. In order to explore trust dynamics at this community college, I used a purposeful sampling of faculty and conducted semistructured interviews. I also reviewed job descriptions and organizational structure charts to see what, if any, influence roles and/or position may have on the perception of trust. The role trust plays was analyzed by triangulating these multiple sources of evidence. Within and among these multiple sources of data, patterns emerged that elucidate a subjective understanding of both the perception of trust as well as an individual faculty member's willingness to become involved as it relates to the expectation for involvement.

An exploratory, single, holistic case study was conducted in order to answer the question of how the phenomenon of trust influences faculty involvement in decision-making and governance, and what institutional factors may influence trust within the unique and complex social constructs of one community college. The findings provide insight and foster a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of trust in the community college as well as may encourage further elaboration and hypothesis creation on the subject (see Yin, 2014).

**Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings from this study are consistent with the body of literature reviewed in

Chapter 2. For example, I was able to identify a clear distinction between interpersonal

trust, organizational trust, and institutional trust (see Cerna, 2014; Fulmer & Gelfand,

2012). I was able to connect the emergent themes to the 5 facets of trust (Cerna, 2014).

When the faculty experience is void of trust certain facets were explicitly mentioned, i.e.

lack of honesty and transparency, lack of competency and reliability, and a lack of

benevolence, etc. These were noted in relation to individuals as well as to processes. I

was able to draw the conclusion that when trust is broken it impacts morale and

involvement and that rebuilding trust is possible as evidenced by the trust that the current

president built after taking office just over 5 years ago. (see Awan, 2014; Bachmann et al,

2015).  It also was evident that perspective and emotion both play a significant role in the

development and sustainment of trust (Vineburgh, 2010; Schlosser et al, 2015) and that

trust does act as a form of social capital; the way in which relationships that develop

among people enable them to function effectively or prevent them from doing so (Kater,

2017; Migliori, 2012; Savage, 2017).

Specific evidence of the three types of trust can been viewed in the experiences of

the faculty at Community College X and heard in their individual accounts of their lived

experiences. During the interviews, it became apparent that some faculty members had a

lack of interpersonal trust; they did not trust certain individuals based upon their personal

beliefs about the individual rather than something that was evident in the way that they

performed their role. Some had reported having had experiences that negatively affected

their ability to trust that the person would be effective in their role, competent and reliability. Some faculty reported a lack of organizational trust, noting that the role of dean was not equitably being held accountable across the divisions; some deans were held accountable while others were not. In some cases, problems with institutional trust was evident. Processes intended to foster transparency and consistency did the opposite; they seemed to breed frustration and apathy.

In terms of the five facets of trust, most faculty believed that the current president of the college is benevolent, honest, competent, reliable, and transparent. Her leadership is essentially viewed as very positive, and in some cases, she was identified as having played a role in rebuilding trust that was damaged under the previous leadership. The importance of the five facets of trust is evidenced by the words and phrases used by faculty when describing their experience of trust and their perception of the culture of trust at the college. A word search query indicated that 100% of the participants mentioned openness/transparency, 95% of them mentioned competence, 85% mentioned reliability, 70% mentioned benevolence, and 60% mentioned honesty at some point in their interview. Further review of the full transcripts confirmed that the five facets appeared in some fashion concerning perceptions of trust at approximately these rates of frequency throughout the interviews.

If I had probed deeper with the faculty participants experiences, I may have found even more evidence of trust as a form of social capital and been able to identify some of the social networks that impact trust (or lack of trust) as determined by social role. For example, in an organizational sense, the perception of many faculty that administration

cannot be trusted appears to be engrained in the faculty mentality, and even if a faculty member does not have personal experiences to draw their own conclusions about, they appear to feed into the collective contextual mentality that administrators cannot be trusted. This was also evidence of transference mentioned by Bachman et al (2015) as one of the six mechanisms for rebuilding trust. However, it works both ways; sentiments of one untrustworthy individual can be transferred to another or others. And, positively, when a trustworthy person is present and acts in a trustworthy manner then trust can be transferred from that one credible party to another or others.

### Limitations of the Study

As a fellow faculty member at Community College X, I have an interest in understanding trust dynamics and involvement that is congruent with phenomenological explorations (see Moustakas, 1994).However, this role presents potential bias for understanding trust in this context, which may have positive and negative implications. The positive implication is that this bias has instilled a curiosity in me to explore these dynamics and better understand the role that they may plan in faculty involvement in decision-making at the community college. The potential negative implication of this bias is that it could limit my ability to adequately and accurately hear and tell the stories of the participants. Because of these potential implications, I used a data analysis method that allowed me to manage my own bias by bracketing, reflexivity, thick descriptions, and member checks. This method minimized the potential for bias interfering with clear  data interpretation; however, it is still noted as a limitation.

Choosing to explore trust dynamics in the context of one specific community college and choosing faculty participants from that one specific community college limits the focus of this research to the circumstances and characteristics of Community College X and to the unique, subjective experiences of the individual participants, thus limiting transferability. It is important to consider these results within the broader view of trust within organizations.

## Recommendations

Opportunities remain for future research regarding trust dynamics and involvement within the community college. For example, knowing the importance of social role, gaining an understanding of the administrator's perspective would balance this research with the faculty perspective. In addition, creating a quasi-experimental design where one could identify, via assessment, the relationship between specific facets of trust and a trust score could be beneficial. No assessment tool was found during the research for this study that would be recommended; therefore, one would need to be designed. Lastly, the importance of clear communication was expressed and noted as a theme in this research. Implementing a new communication strategy at Community College X could be beneficial, and a follow up study to examine the overall effects of such a plan could also promote social change.

## Implications

### Positive Social Change

The results of this study add to the literature pertaining to trust and dynamics of trust, particularly in organizations and more specifically in higher education. The themes

that emerged strongly support the need for transparency and communication in building trust, and having positive trust dynamics (i.e., the five facets: honesty, benevolence, reliability, competence, and openness) do make a difference in the willingness of faculty to participate in decision-making. If community colleges would use this knowledge to develop training opportunities for faculty regarding organizational structure, and for leadership regarding transparency and openness and really listen to the faculty when they raise their voices about distrust in leadership and do something about it, then the morale and overall culture at those institutions could change for the better. Happy faculty members mean happy students, and happy students lead to positive social change in terms of the college as a business and the knowledge that students then impart as they enter their careers and the workforce.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to explore how trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in decision-making at the community college, within the context of the complex social and organizational structures and processes that are unique to one specific college. What was learned is significant to the effectiveness of higher education, particularly at the community college where the majority of faculty are contingent (part-time or nontenure track).The themes that emerged indicate where a college can focus to improve trust among the faculty as well as inform future experimental research where new programs and approaches may be piloted. Community colleges are important to the communities that they serve, and, therefore, improvement in the community college can support improvement in the community.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Main Research Question: How do trust dynamics influence faculty involvement in institutional decision-making at Community College X?

> Sub-questions to which these interview questions will contribute:
>
>> RQ1: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of trust?
>>
>> RQ2: How do Community College X faculty describe their experience of involvement in decision-making at Community College X?

1. How would you describe your experience of trust at Community College X?

2. How would you describe your involvement in key decision-making opportunities at Community College X?

3. How would you describe the current organizational structure of Community College X?

4. How would you describe the overall culture of trust at Community College X?

5. What role do you feel trust plays in your willingness to participate in key decision-making opportunities at Community College X?

6. Do you have anything you would like to add regarding any of the questions I have previously asked you today, or your experience overall at Community College X?

Appendix B: Solicitation Email for Participation

Dear faculty member,

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview that will support my doctoral research. Following the interview, I will send a brief email for you to review and verify the transcription of the interview. Your response will be required to complete the participation process. The entire interview process should not take longer than an hour.

Please email me if you would be interested and available to attend one of the following:

Date            Time

Date            Time

Date            Time

Upon confirmation of an interview time, I will send an informed consent statement for you to read and sign.

With appreciation,

Lenora Sotlar Clouse

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