Perception of Administrative Support and How it Relates to Professional Growth and Job

Satisfaction of Elementary Music Teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it related to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers. Participants (*N*= 3) were practicing elementary general music teachers employed full-time in public schools, one each from urban, suburban and rural school districts within a Midwestern state. Each participant was interviewed twice, with three weeks between each interview. The interview questions related to administrative support and its impact on job satisfaction and professional growth. The researcher transcribed and coded the data and the themes of interpersonal skills, autonomy and visibility emerged. The findings indicated that the areas of job satisfaction and professional growth were impacted by interpersonal skills and autonomy, while visibility only seemed to affect job satisfaction. It also appeared that job satisfaction and professional growth were closely linked and impacted by administrative support. Recommendations and implications for future research are then discussed with respect to these results.

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<center>**Chapter One**</center>

<center>**Introduction to the Study**</center>

"[S]chool will be no better for the students who attend than it is for the teachers who teach there" (Eisner, 2002, p. 577).

Orientation to the Study

  The desire to feel 'supported' is a common factor in a person's daily life. Whether on a personal or professional level, the kind of support a person might need is a wide and varied topic depending on personalities, work environment, inter-personal skills, along with many other factors. At home, support might be parents communicating how to be a team for discipline, or it could be a partner who helps with household tasks. At school, a teacher might lean on colleagues for support when handling a difficult conversation with a parent. That collegial support might also include discussing issues, venting frustrations, or assisting with supervisory duties to aid another teacher. Offering support might be intuitive for some, but it may also require a person to openly communicate needs to those around them. Additionally, support in the work environment can extend beyond colleagues to a working relationship with administration, one that might encompass listening, problem solving, or assistance with scheduling and fiscal requests.

  Throughout a teacher's workday, there are a myriad of issues ranging from the mundane to the urgent. This might include tasks as simple as assistance in supervising a class for a restroom break, or guidance in planning an upcoming lesson. It might be as time sensitive as contacting a parent with a student concern, needing a safe place to send a student who is processing through a crisis cycle, or lending support when a personal emergency arises. Both colleagues and administrators may be in positions to offer support, demonstrating that it may exist in a variety of forms, be communicative or action-oriented or both, and may involve only

one person or several. That support may be critical to the well-being of the teacher and his/her classroom, may directly affect functionality in the classroom, and thus, may determine success in teaching and learning, particularly if offered by the administrators in the school. This study aims to isolate the words 'administrative support,' and examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it relates to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music educators.

McKerrow (1996) found "[t]eachers thought it was important that administrators support them, make them feel successful, and provide help or advice for personal problems" (p. 330). An administrator who is building relationships and using support as a tool to help educators feel successful might encourage teachers to become more reflective practitioners. That support may provide teachers with confidence to be innovative and provide a willingness to take risks, which in turn benefits student success. It might also encourage teachers to be empowered and more open in their classrooms, creating an inclusive and comfortable learning community ("School/District Administrators | Safe Supportive Learning," 2019).

Administrative Support. Many studies have centered on perceived administrative support, gathering information about its impact on job satisfaction which, in turn, affects teacher retention, work place environment and culture, burn-out, and a professional's ability to adapt and grow in the classroom (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Baker, 2007; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Matthews & Koner, 2016; McLain, 2005; Scheib, 2003; Thekedam, 2010). Educators reported positive connections between administrative support and growth and innovation. When teachers felt they were supported, they reported being able to be innovative, providing them with "a great motivator…to do better" (Abril & Bannerman, 2015, p. 354). As such, teachers found that their programs could thrive if they had the support of their administrator. An administrator had a

direct impact on a school environment and can encourage all teachers, regardless of subject area, to work towards a common goal of educating students (Baker, 2007).

More specifically, Gardner (2010) found that a "[m]usic teacher's perceived level of administrative support had the most prominent influence on both music teacher satisfaction and retention" (p. 112). Additionally, Madsen & Hancock (2002) conducted a study where participants expressed concerns regarding administrative support and personal reasons were the primary reason for job dissatisfaction in education. Professionals leaving the field of music education reported that inadequate working conditions and lack of administrative support were the main reasons for leaving the profession (Matthews & Koner, 2016; Siebert, 2008).

Job Satisfaction. A variety of studies described numerous factors that impacted job satisfaction. This included, but is not limited to, the influence of an administrator (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Baker, 2007; Matthews & Koner, 2016; McLain, 2005; Scheib, 2003), work load (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Matthews & Koner, 2016; Scheib, 2003; Thekedam, 2010), schedule (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Matthews & Koner, 2016; Scheib, 2003; Thekedam, 2010), recognition (Allen, 2014; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; McLain, 2005; Sindberg, 2011; Thekedam, 2010), budget (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Matthews & Koner, 2016; McLain, 2005; Scheib, 2003), equipment and resources (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Matthews & Koner, 2016; McLain, 2005; Miksza, 2013; Scheib, 2003), isolation (McLain, 2005; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005; Sindberg, 2011; Thekedam, 2010), self-efficacy (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008), as well as personal growth.

Schieb (2003) reported that an expectation of the fulfillment of too many roles of an educator created a circumstance in which no role could be performed at a satisfactory level. The role and expectations of a teacher played into one's work load. Work load described the tasks a

teacher is expected to complete on a daily basis, as well as "environmental characteristics of a teaching situation" (Thekedam, 2010, p. 410). Another aspect of work load could have been the number of buildings an educator is required to serve (Matthews & Koner, 2016; Sindberg, 2011). The buildings served as well as the availability of part-time and full-time music educators can impact the teaching schedules for music educators. According to Siebert, career music educators found that "realistic teaching schedules" impacted their overall job satisfaction (2008, p. 7).

Recognition is another area that researchers reported having an impact on job satisfaction (Allen, 2014; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; McLain, 2005; Sindberg, 2011; Thekedam, 2010). Indeed, Madsen and Hancock (2002) stated:

> These issues include differing understandings of the importance of music education, a perception of music as an extracurricular activity, and challenges to the content of instruction. Concerns that are more specific relate to apathy for music education, music valued solely for utilitarian purposes, and music classes used as a respite for 'academic' teachers. (p. 15)

A lack of recognition as well as a lack of respect impacted job satisfaction, lead to teacher burn out, and negatively influenced the perception of value for music by non-music peers (McLain, 2005; Sindberg, 2011).

Access to resources and equipment through a budget also affected job satisfaction. A lack of resources or a tight budget was perceived as a lack of support at the building or district level and even throughout the local community (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Matthews & Koner, 2016; Miksza, 2013). An issue that Abril and Bannerman (2015) explored is the financial implications of staffing. An example given in the study shared how music staff came together and saved their music programs, along with the superintendent, by reducing the number of music educators in

the district. Districts with a fine arts coordinator, who acted in earnest as an advocate for arts educators, were more likely to have access to adequate funding and resources (Miksza, 2013). According to Allen (2013), educators reported a lack of resources and funding due to an inequity between music and non-music staff.

Isolation was an area that could be experienced by all educators, but one that especially affected the job satisfaction of music educators, due to the fact that in most buildings regular classroom teachers outnumbered music educators (Sindberg, 2011). The ability to connect with peers throughout the building and the opportunities to connect with music colleagues outside of the building could influence job satisfaction. According to Sindberg (2011) music educators reported a level of connectedness to their music colleagues while maintaining a level of disconnectedness with their building peers. Sindberg labeled this disconnect as the emotional impact of isolation and explained that external factors, such as work load and work culture, may influence a feeling of isolation. She reported that a lack of communication could influence a teacher's ability to connect with peers within a building, and isolation was influenced by an administrator's ability to communicate clearly (Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005; Sindberg, 2011). On the other side of this issue, music educators also reacted positively in regards to access to colleagues of similar disciplines, time for collaboration, as well as professional development opportunities directly related to their subject area. Interactions with colleagues of similar disciplines were found to positively impact job satisfaction, but they also helped music professionals experience growth and access to lifelong learning (Abril & Bannerman, 2015).

Isolation for teachers might have contributed to feelings about success in teaching. Klassen & Chiu (2010) maintained that self-efficacy, explained as "[an] individual's beliefs about their capabilities to carry out a particular course of action successfully" (p. 741), played an

important role in an educator's perspective of job satisfaction. Bandura (1997) stated that there were four main components to self-efficacy: teaching that results in student achievement, the ability to observe a successful lesson, constructive feedback from a trusted educator and an emotional or physical response to a teaching situation. Self-efficacy could impact the areas of behavior management and instructional strategies which have been documented to heavily influence focused instruction (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). A high level of self-efficacy could lead to a higher level of job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), ultimately influencing perceived support.

Professional Growth. An educator's role in school is to create learning opportunities for students. However, the learning an educator received and continues to expand upon could contribute to the teacher's effectiveness. According to Hesterman (2011), "[l]ifelong learning should be a major building block in constructing the educator's career" (p. 38), "prevent[ing] stagnation and open[ing] doors of renewal and opportunity throughout a teacher's career" (p. 36). Professional growth for an educator, in turn, provided a better learning environment for students because it offers a model to them.

Music educators often seek their own learning opportunities outside of the school building (Allen, 2014; Bowles, 2002; Conway, 2008; Hesterman, 2011; Riddle, 1958). Bowles (2002) reported that educators preferred learning experiences provided at the university level or music-specific workshops in order to become more effective and knowledgeable educators. While Conway's (2008) participants ranked interactions with music colleagues as the most influential form of professional development, both studies reported that music educators not only sought out opportunities for growth, but did so with other colleagues outside of their primary professional placement in a school. Conway suggested that perhaps the next step of research

could be to implement valuable learning opportunities for music educators within their own school setting to break the 'one-size-fits-all' professional development model; this might be focused on particular development pertinent to music education, influencing both teaching and learning.

Statement of the Problem

According to the literature, administrative support could influence a teacher's well-being, job retention, and job satisfaction. These areas are important, as they can impact a teacher's attitude, attention to work, and pedagogical practices, which, in turn, may affect student learning outcomes. The researcher defined administrative support as "a congruence [that] exists between a teacher's concerns and a principal's action" (McKerrow, 1996, p. 330). For there to be 'congruence' there must have been a common understanding of what was positive support for the educator and in what areas support was absent. Research on administrative support, job satisfaction and professional growth demonstrated that some studies addressed each topic in education, but to date, there had not been a study that considered how those factors specifically influenced the music educator. This study may contribute to a clearer understanding of support for both administrators and music educators, clarifying what teachers need in order to experience job satisfaction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it related to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers. This was accomplished through interviews of three elementary music educators on their perception of support experienced, and its impact on their

job satisfaction and professional growth. The research questions guiding the study were the following:

Research Questions

1. What sources of support do music educators receive to assist them professionally, and how does that perceived support affect their job satisfaction? Who provides these supports?

2. How does perceived support affect their professional growth? Who provides these supports?

3. In what ways does support exist at the building and district level for music educators to grow as professionals in their area of expertise?

4. How would a supported elementary general music teacher describe job satisfaction? How would a supported elementary general music teacher describe professional growth?

Assumptions

During this study, it was assumed that the participants were answering truthfully and to the best of their ability.

Delimitations

In order to ensure consistency in this study the following delimitations were set:

1. This study included participants who teach at the elementary school level, one from each a rural, suburban and urban school setting.

2. Interviews were conducted twice with each participant to ensure reliability.

3. Sample collection was limited to one geographical location in the United States, thus, the data may not be generalizable to other settings.

Limitations

The following limitations were beyond the control of the study:

1. Despite the richness of data collected, the sample size limited the study's generalizability.

2. Because the data were collected through interviews, the researcher assumes the accuracy and depth of responses were correct and thorough.

Definition of Terms

Administrative Support: "[A] congruence exists between a teacher's concerns and a principal's action" (McKerrow, 1996, p. 330). For the purpose of this study, administration will be considered at both the building and district level.

School Administration: "Persons usually responsible for leadership, curriculum and instruction, and other educational issues in the school setting" (Parsons, 2009, p. 18).

District Level Administration: District administration can include superintendents as well as central office staff, all of whom are under the guidance of a school board ("School/District Administrators | Safe Supportive Learning," 2018).

Building Level Administration: School building administrators may include both a principal and assistant principal ("School/District Administrators | Safe Supportive Learning," 2018).

Job Satisfaction: "[T]he overall quality of one's experiences in one's work role" (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012, p. 879).

Professional Growth: "[L]earning communities in which students and teachers alike are provided ample opportunities to construct and sustain their learning and development" (Borman & Rachuba, 1999, p. 369). Both Borman and Rachuba (1999) and Hesterman (2011) agree that professional growth affects not only the educator but the students as well, "[m]easured in the results brought forth in the classroom with the students" (Hesterman, 2011, p. 36).

Perception: To express views and opinions as well as "establish and explain common feelings and thoughts about a situation, a process, an action, or interaction concerning a particular topic" (Parsons, 2009, p. 9).

School setting: A reference to a school district being rural, suburban or urban.

- Rural: "Census-defined rural territory" with three category options for type of rural community. Fringe includes territory "less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster." Distant includes territory "that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster." Remote includes territory "that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster" (NCES, 2019);

- Suburban: "Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area" that has three tiers of population categories: large with a population of 250,000 or more, midsize falls within the range of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000 and small is less than 100,000 (NCES, 2019);

- Urban: "Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city." Urban, also referred to as a city, can be categorized into three levels of population: Large, 250,000 or more; midsize, between 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000; and small, less than 100,000 (NCES, 2019).

Summary

In this study support was defined as a 'congruence' between an administrator and an educator which means there must be a mutual understanding or agreement to what supports

should be in place for success. Support can encompass a wide array of opinions and experiences so achieving a mutual understanding required reflection on how it affects job satisfaction and professional growth.

In this study, participants were interviewed and asked a series of questions related to support and administration in order to investigate how each impacted job satisfaction and professional growth for music educators.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Teachers in PreK-12 schools experience a wide variety of sources of support for themselves and their professional work ranging from hugs from students to financial elements that contribute to classroom equipment and remuneration for professional conference attendance. When asking if a teacher feels supported, there can be a direct yes or no response, but often, when probed about what kind of support educators need from their peers or an administrator, the responses can vary greatly depending on a person's position, experience, and personal preference.

The word support has many definitions and can mean many things to different people. It is no surprise that when someone is asked "what do you need to feel supported?" there can be a plethora of responses. Some educators might need emotional support in their choices for the classroom or their personal lives, and others might need support when it comes to advocating for more time in the daily schedule. In a public-school setting, there are many professionals responsible for providing support for student success, but who can provide support for the educators responsible for student success? Specifically, for music educators, what supports are needed to gain job satisfaction and grow professionally? How does support from an administrator impact music educators regarding gaining job satisfaction and growing professionally?

Perception of Support

It is possible for people to go through the same experience and yet have entirely different interpretations of what occurred. Thus, this study will use the word 'perception' to present the personal and professional views and opinions in reporting data.

Teachers may experience various kinds of support comprised of assistance with student behavioral issues, constructive feedback on a new lesson, help with collaboration with colleagues or determining equitable teaching schedules or duties at school. In particular, McKerrow (1996) defined administrative supports as "a congruence [that] exists between a teacher's concerns and a principal's action" (p. 330). In his study, he found that there was a discrepancy between what educators needed and what administration did in a "supervisory situation" (p. 332) and also reported that teachers felt that support required administrators to look at interpersonal issues such as helping teachers feel successful, providing input on personal issues and simply listening to them. Additionally, communication and transparency can influence expectations in a positive manner. Communication played a large role in providing what people perceived as the expectations for their work role (Scheib, 2003).

As such, the connection between music teachers and administration requires clear communication. According to Madsen and Hancock (2002), it was necessary for all invested music educators to advocate and inform their administrators to help communication and understanding for support. Davis and Wilson (2000) found similar results. "For elementary music educators to garner this support from school administrators, it is important to understand administrators' perceptions of the learning outcomes and broad curricular goals in music education" (p. 7). However, the issue at hand can be that the perception of both the administrator and the educators can be quite diverse points of view (Baker 2007). If teachers and principals perceive support in different ways, there is a fundamental difference that requires resolution.

The Role of the Administrator

Most frequently, the term "administrator" is correlated with a building principal. However, the definition can vary based on the size of a school building as well as the size of a

school district. School building administrators may include both a principal and assistant principal. District administration can include superintendents as well as central office staff, all of whom are under the guidance of a school board. "Within each school, the principal plays a central role in providing leadership, articulating goals and behavioral expectations of teachers, and supporting staff in developing an effective school. When teachers and staff are supported, students are supported" ("School/District Administrators | Safe Supportive Learning," 2019). The primary role of a principal is to lead a school that encourages academic and social growth for students. Effective principals build relationships with and amongst staff, as well as the students and their families to provide high expectations for the learning environment ("School/District Administrators | Safe Supportive Learning," 2019).

Price (2012) found that "principals are central figures in schools whose actions directly shape their schools' climate" (p. 40). Minckler (2014) goes on to assert that, the choices leaders make and the things they say and do make a difference in a community, of which the school might be considered the center. Additionally, leading and leadership can manifest itself in different goals for a person in administration, as not only are there many roles in leadership, but also various styles to be utilized amongst staff personalities. Thus, when leadership is effective and purposeful, there should be an impact on job satisfaction for employees.

Davis and Wilson (2000) found that when administrators worked to empower their teachers through identifying and reinforcing positive professional choices, educators perceived themselves as having a greater impact through their work. Additionally, Pelletier and Sharp (2009) found that administration can play a significant role in the growth or regression of an educator through social construct. Multiple studies have also suggested that the development of positive relationships through trust and empowerment is crucial to the success of an organization

(Mazyck, 2012; Price, 2012). Indeed, Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) wrote, "[l]eadership practices that share power are credited with creating greater motivation, increased trust, and risk-taking, and building a sense of community and efficacy among its members" (p. 458).

A positive work environment often stems from interpersonal relationships, impacting job satisfaction. According to Kelly and Kutch (2017), research demonstrated repeatedly that employees who engaged with work and peers had a positive effect on the workplace, especially in support of involvement and execution of the organization's mission. The authors also asserted, "[i]f you fail to care about people at a human level, at an emotional level, they'll eventually leave you regardless of how much you pay them" (p. 38). Therefore, if a leader does not support and care for their employees, they will constantly be picking up new pieces and starting the process of team building again. Kelly and Kutch go on to support the idea of a culture of care, which is defined as an environment where "leadership is not about being in charge…leadership is about taking care of those in your charge" (p. 38). The environment must have a significant focus centered on employees and their need within the company, thus becoming human-centric.

The majority of researchers reported the impact of an administrator at the building level, but they did not reference the effect of a music supervisor at the district level. However, a position at the district office dedicated to supervising and leading music educators increased job satisfaction (Matthews & Koner, 2016). The existence of a role at the district level to negotiate on behalf of music educators allowed open communication and clear expectations for the programs that affect every student in the district. This same professional could help bridge the educational gap between a teacher and an administrator who may have had limited knowledge of music education standards and policy (Gardner, 2010).

Miksza (2013) found that elementary principals who had the assistance of an arts supervisor also reported having "adequate funding, instructional time, and specialists for the arts" (p. 30). In a study conducted by Siebert (2008), participants who had a music administrator at the district level felt as though they had positive supports in place. Participants' comments reflected the practical impact of having more than one supervisor to problem solve. Indeed, Gardner (2010) suggested when both building level and district administrators worked together to improve job satisfaction for music educators, those professionals were more likely to remain employed in a district.

Principals play a key role in shaping a supportive work environment, especially in regards to how that environment impacts music education (Abril & Gault, 2006). When the professional relationship with a school administrator is positive and support is demonstrated equally, the stress of 'extra' duties often assigned to specialists feel more like contributing to a bigger cause as opposed to being a burden (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009). The positive relationship between administrators and educators led to intrinsic empowerment which created positive momentum for a school (Price, 2000). Beyond the classroom, long-range effects may occur; for example, Gardner stated, "[m]usic teachers' perceived level of administrative support had the most prominent influence on both music teacher satisfaction and retention" (2010, p. 112).

Job Satisfaction for Teachers

Job satisfaction is a blend of teacher success and support throughout the school, and this can be heightened by an administrator who is encouraging and validating in their support and advocacy. According to Davis and Wilson (2000), "[j]ob satisfaction refer[red] to individuals' affective relations to their work role and what [was] a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it is offering" (p. 350). Job

satisfaction was a key component which impacted the learning environment, relationships, and instructional value for teachers and students. Thekedam (2010) cited individual influences of self-efficacy, professional growth, recognition and achieving goals as having an impact on overall job satisfaction.

A number of studies have also focused on the consequences of job dissatisfaction. According to Klassen and Chiu (2010), "[t]eaching may bring personal satisfaction, but it also brings stress, with demands from administrators, colleagues, students, and parents compounded by work overload, student misbehavior and a lack of recognition for accomplishments" (p. 742). Additional tasks and demands can make a challenging job even more difficult. Many studies listed scheduling, adequate school facilities, school administration, instructional time, budget, equipment or resources, management or student behavior, and lack of recognition as other significant areas of impact on job satisfaction that can eventually lead to burnout (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Baker, 2007; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Matthews & Koner, 2016; McLain, 2005; Scheib, 2003; Thekedam, 2010). Additionally, Scheib (2003) described factors that added frustration to an educator's work load including an uncertainty of job expectations, too many conflicting communications, not enough resources, and an inadequate use of a teacher's skill set.

Another factor that impacted music education job satisfaction specifically is isolation (Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Sindberg (2011) conducted a study that described how "communication, workload, physical proximity, schedule, and perceived lack of value" contributed to teacher's ability to connect [with staff] (p. 14). The same study asserted that the 'lack of value' is manifested through a misunderstanding between peers and colleagues about the content of work a music educator does. This finding aligned with Scheib (2003) and the existence of role ambiguity. Gardner (2010) found, "[m]usic educators may be especially

sensitive to a lack of support from administrators because music courses are often electives, and, therefore, music courses and job could be viewed as expendable" (p.119). This lack of support from administration trickles down to school-wide support which may lead to discord between music and non-music staff. Furthermore, Van Maele and Houtte (2012) found that trust between individuals, faculty, and leadership, directly affected job satisfaction. A recommendation was that school administrators should have a vested interest in what impacts job satisfaction, such as involving educators in leadership opportunities and decision-making (Thekedam, 2010).

Professional Growth

Professional growth may be facilitated by professional development, learning opportunities to better practice, which can be provided by the school, district or sought out by the educator (Borman & Rachuba, 1999). One of the ways in which teachers grow professionally is through collaboration with colleagues. Along with planning and teaching a cohesive curriculum, a music educator must seek vast amounts of information to adjust and adapt to the needs of the population of students they serve. The availability of collaboration time to work with building-wide peers as well as colleagues in similar disciplines was an opportunity for music educators to create and establish supports for student success (Brewster & Railsback 2001). Collaboration with colleagues can also contribute to improving instruction, building better student-teacher relationships, and further enhancing success in learning, all as means of improving professional growth (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

Eisner (2002), emphasized the role administration can have in supporting teachers and their development as professionals which may contribute to "[t]he kind of schools we need." He also noted that "[a]dministrators can be in a position to recognize different kinds of talents among faculty members; they can help initiate activities and support the initiatives of teachers"

(p. 579). For music educators, seeking opportunities directly related to their subject matter is essential for growth in the classroom. In many instances, there is only one music educator in a building, which implies that the person must access other music educators within a district, or find learning outlets outside their immediate setting in order to grow as a professional (Hammel 2007; Hesterman 2012; Sindberg 2005).

Eisner (2002) further suggested that time should be provided during the school day for teachers to collaborate. "The school needs to be designed in a way that affords opportunities for teachers to learn from one another" (p. 577). For a music educator, there are different facets that could be addressed in terms of collaboration, such as setting aside time to communicate with grade level teachers in regards to specific student success, as well as time to meet with other music educators to continue to develop a curriculum to best fit the needs of students and the school community. Indeed, Eisner stated that schools must "[p]rovide opportunities for members of subject-matter departments to meet to share with work. It would recognize that different fields have different needs and that sharing within fields is a way to promote coherence for students" (p. 578).

Another form of professional growth related to experiences outside of the school setting can include attendance at professional workshops. The ability to attend and participate in job-related workshops helped educators to learn, as well as validate ideas and practices (Riddle, 1958). In comparison, Conway (2008) conducted a study in which participants overwhelmingly responded that the most impactful form of professional development was to interact with other music colleagues in an informal setting. Along with the participants validating that time with colleagues in similar disciplines was important to collaborate, in a finding also corroborated by

Eisner (2002), Conway (2008) asserted that "music teachers need time with other music teachers in order to reflect on their practice" (p. 16).

Furthermore, Hammel (2007) listed several aspects of professional development that educators needed: "time, resources, leadership, shared governance, collaboration, focused goals, and support structures [to] foster learning" (p. 30). Additionally, many studies referenced the importance of seeking professional growth opportunities for life-long learning, but often have no mention of how to fund these experiences (Bauer 2007; Conway 2008; Hammel 2007; Hesterman 2012; Riddle 1958; Smith & Haack 2000). Access to professional development requires time and money, and teachers are often responsible both for continuing their professional growth and education (Bowles 2002). The same study asserted that administration may be better informed to support music educators in their professional growth by assisting with "more attractive, valuable and reinforcing learning experiences" (p. 40) as well as help with necessary fees.

When focusing on professional development, an additional issue of concern for music educators was the "one size fits all" model. Hammel (2007) reported that music educators often attended in-service sessions that did not relate to music standards or curriculum. She also suggested that music teachers can work with administration to encourage implementation of "reform measures that include the arts and our unique and multisensory approaches to learning in general education classrooms" (p. 23) as well as keep conversations transparent with administration on the particular professional development needs of a music educator's classroom. Music-specific conferences were a way for music teachers to gain access to extensive and diverse learning opportunities. Hesterman (2011) recommended that music educators seek

learning experiences beyond an annual state conference, such as Orff and Kodály workshops, and take opportunities to present at various conferences to encourage professional growth.

Need for the Study

There is considerable research regarding educators in the school setting, factors that assist them in their retention and job satisfaction. One of the influential elements of professional growth and job satisfaction was perceived administrative support for teachers; in this study, the focus was particularly on music teachers. There was scant research on how administrative support impacts elementary music educators specifically in the areas of job satisfaction and professional growth. The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it related to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers.

The results of this study could assist music educators in assessing their own needs and desires for professional growth and job satisfaction, ultimately enhancing their particular situations and contributing to the profession at large. The research questions guiding this study were the following:

Research Questions

1. What sources of support do music educators receive to assist them professionally, and how does that perceived support affect their job satisfaction? Who provides these supports?

2. How does perceived support affect their professional growth? Who provides these supports?

3. In what ways does support exist at the building and district level for music educators to grow as professionals in their area of expertise?

4. How would a supported elementary general music teacher describe job satisfaction? How would a supported elementary general music teacher describe professional growth?

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it related to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers. Due to the personal perspective and in-depth nature of this study, using a qualitative, phenomenological research design was determined to be the most appropriate method for addressing the research questions. In regards to the impact of qualitative research, Eisner (1996) claimed that "[q]ualitative research has the capacity to generate empathic forms of understanding" as well as "provid[ing] a sense of particularity that makes people and situations palpable (p. 12)."

According to Creswell (2007) "[a] phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (p. 57)." In this study, the commonality was administrative support in terms of job satisfaction and professional growth for general music teachers. Indeed, "[t]he type of problem best suited for this form of research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of phenomenon (p. 60)." The investigator also decided that a multi-site study design, looking at urban, suburban, and rural educators, would be the most inclusive option for the overall intent of the study and would allow for multiple perspectives on the perception support.

This section of the study outlines the methods utilized as well as procedures followed by the researcher. The outline includes information on participants, instrument, as well as data collection and analysis.

Hypotheses

The researcher hypothesized that there were particular identifiable facets of perceived support, specifically that administration played a significant role in the impact of support for music educators as well as that administrative support would influence job satisfaction and professional growth.

Participants

Purposive sampling was utilized for this investigation. Participants were chosen in consultation with university professors based on the researcher's knowledge of music educators who could potentially contribute to this study. The first criterion was that participants were current, practicing elementary general music teachers employed full-time in public schools. Second, participants in this study were three elementary music educators, one each from urban, suburban and rural school districts within a Midwestern state. The choice to have a participant from each district size was to sample a variety of district environments and participant perspectives. Beyond balancing the participants' geographical teaching situation, the researcher made the intentional decision to include both male and female participants.

Once the participants were identified, the researcher contacted them by email to inform them on the study and request their agreement to participate. They verbally agreed to do so upon which suitable interview times were arranged.

Participant One, "Foster," taught kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary /general music. He taught for eleven years at an urban, inner city school, and completed all eleven years at the school he served. Foster taught approximately 600 students throughout the school year.

Participant Two, "Vivian," taught kindergarten through sixth-grade elementary/general music, with a background in choral and band music. She taught for ten years, with the last two at

a school in a suburban school setting. Vivian taught approximately 460 students throughout the school year.

Participant Three, "Emerson," taught third-grade through fifth-grade elementary/general music as well as a guitar class at the high school and ran a fifth-grade choir. She taught for two years in a rural school setting. Emerson taught approximately 400 students throughout the school year.

Approvals

The researcher submitted the study proposal to the university's Institutional Review Board and was granted permission to conduct the proposed study.

Procedure and Instruments

Throughout the investigator's research, no instrument was identified as suitable for this particular study. Therefore, the researcher designed a new instrument, interview questions, based on the review of literature surrounding the ideas of administrative support and its impact on job satisfaction and professional growth for elementary music educators. The researcher then asked three practicing music educators to review the instrument to establish face validity, and only minor changes were necessary.

The interview protocol required each participant to take part in two sixty-minute interview sessions with the researcher. Participants gave oral consent after reading the information statement regarding the expectations of the research study. Each interview session occurred at least three weeks apart, to assure reliability for the study. Interviews were conducted in a non-classroom environment, a coffee house, and were repeated in the same setting for all participants. Additionally, interviews were recorded with a Sony digital recorder, and video-taped using a Sony Bloggie for ease and accuracy of the transcription. Upon completion of the

interviews, transcriptions were created. These were sent to the participants to verify authenticity

and accuracy (Creswell, 2007, pp. 208-209). The transcripts and recordings were validated by

another professional with experience in qualitative study designs, an external reviewer, who

compared approximately 20 percent of the recordings against the transcription to verify

accuracy.

Data Analysis

After collecting data via interviews, data were then transcribed into a Microsoft Word

document for analysis. Data were reviewed three times to ensure that commonalities and

differences were recognized. Themes were allowed to emerge through "detailed description" and

according to Creswell (2007), "[t]his detail is provided *in situ,* that is, within the context of the

setting of the person, place or event" (p. 151). The individual interview transcriptions were

organized into common themes, patterns and categories, also known as coding (Creswell, 2007).

The next step was to combine the themes, patterns and categories from both interviews from an

individual participant into one common Microsoft Word document to identify commonalities and

differences. The researcher then compared the findings from individual participants against each

other to configure overarching themes organized by the research questions. Once the themes

were established, the researcher compared relevant literature in order to establish triangulation

and draw conclusions.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it relates to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers. The review of related literature reflected on factors that impact job satisfaction and professional growth. This, in turn, shaped the interview questions.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The initial three sections presented data from each individual participant. Each participant provided insight into job satisfaction and professional growth at both the building and district levels. The themes that emerged that present a picture of the overall results are discussed in the fourth section.

Foster

Foster taught kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary/general music in an inner city urban school district. He taught approximately 600 students, in 24 sections, which he saw for 30 minutes twice per week. He was also expected to supervise students before and after school. In his position, Foster also served as the advocate for specials on the building leadership team.

Job satisfaction. At the building level, Foster spoke of administration having enough trust in him as a professional music educator to do what he deemed best in the classroom; he interpreted this as a significant source of support impacting job satisfaction. He also placed value in an administrator who consulted with him about his opinion and feedback regarding various situations, which included input about a building-wide schedule. Indeed, he stated, "I do think this [administration] is good about understanding that we see the building at a more macro

level." His administration also tried to keep a positive school culture through small gestures such as recognizing birthdays, as well as on a larger scale through staff team-building activities.

Foster's building had a high frequency and scope of disciplinary issues. Foster listed behavior concerns in his school to include fights, racial issues, and sexual misconduct. Frequently, the behaviors had a tendency to increase in scale when transitioning between music and PE. He explained that while he had effective classroom management and often could handle issues on his own, it was important to his job satisfaction that a building administrator responded when he asked for help, especially since he did not often ask for assistance. Foster recognized that the administration in his building was doing the best they could, but that they were often overwhelmed with the number of disciplinary incidents throughout the building.

Foster's relationship with students was an area that helped him to balance working in a discipline-heavy school. When asked what job satisfaction meant to him, Foster responded with the importance of connection with students. He went on to state that he wanted to make a "positive difference" and that it did not matter if it was musical or not, he just wanted to do something that contributes to their lives. "If I feel like my kids are learning and moving in the right direction, I'm pretty happy."

Foster believed he had a high level of respect from his peers and administration throughout the building based on his willingness to be a team player, as well as his tenure in the building. According to Foster, "I think a lot of it is just [that] I've done what they asked and haven't quit. I think that's a lot of it, too."

He offered an interpretation of being valued as a teacher, an element of job satisfaction by stating:

[I]f you're not valued, you can still take some sense of accomplishment from moving

your kids along but I think it takes a toll on you. If you don't think that people that are

leading the building value you and I think it sets a tone for the building… A lot of that

starts at the top and that sort of equality we seem to have as a specials team with the

classroom teacher, I think, could be eroded by a poor administration who wasn't as

supportive.

At the district level, Foster said the fine arts coordinator provided job satisfaction by

making educators feel valued, as though "someone has your back." Foster also described many

kinds of support that were put in place by the district to assist professional growth, which in turn,

provided additional job satisfaction. One of those supports was adequate access to resources. Not

only did Foster have classroom instruments, but the district also provided instrument repair

through professionals housed in district. He stated that he could submit requests to the district

fine arts coordinator, and it was highly likely his primary requests would be honored. He

believed his district made a substantial investment in the music program by purchasing and

maintaining instruments as well as providing a position at district office to support the fine arts.

Professional growth. Professional growth was provided primarily at the district level,

according to Foster. At the building level, Foster stated that he did not find the provided

professional development to be beneficial because it often did not relate to music.

In his district, music educators met once per month to collaborate. Foster spoke highly of

the fine arts coordinator, and her ability to advocate on behalf of the music educators, saying

I trust our fine arts coordinator to go to bat for us, and advocate for us. [She] holds us to a

high standard, but I think… always be in our corner as well. I can't sing her praises

enough.

The district also provided content-specific professional development on a rotation for each department in music. In the past, the district brought in music professionals such as John Feierabend, a noted educator in the field, to support professional growth. There were also 'lead teachers' to support music specialists, which impacted the areas of both job satisfaction and professional growth. Foster served as one of the two lead teachers for elementary music, and his role required him to mentor new teachers, provide professional in-service opportunities, as well as communicate about goals and needs of the music educators in district.

Vivian

Vivian taught kindergarten through sixth-grade elementary/general music, teaching approximately 460 students throughout the school year. In her building, Kindergarten through fourth grades each had three sections of students and fifth and sixth grades had four. They met once every four days for 50 minutes, with the exception of Kindergarten who she saw for 25 minutes.

Job satisfaction. At the building level, Vivian felt support from her principal, especially in the area of visibility which, in turn, created a sense of appreciation. She noted one specific instance in which her principal and a handful of colleagues attended an honor choir performance on a Saturday morning. She recalled:

> And [the] concert starts, I see my principal walk in and she hangs out after, congratulates the girls – on a Saturday! Did she have to come? No. But she showed up…And so, just having that support showing [up]. [I]t was five kids who had taken the reins and done something different and cool. And they're like 'let's go support them.' And that was really cool.

Vivian also stated that she believed support needed to be reciprocal. She felt that she received support because she was a team-player who communicated what she needed from others, administration included. In her position, Vivian felt she had the support of not only her principal, but also fellow staff members. She affirmed:

> [R]elationships are huge. Knowing that I have supportive admin, knowing that I have supportive staff members that are on my team, knowing that I am not just the music teacher. I have other staff members who are going to bat for me, who stand up for me, who consider me on an even playing field with a classroom teacher. I think a lot [of] times [a] specialist get[s] called 'just' the music teacher… I feel like that we are so much more than 'just.'

She also asserted that the positive relationships extended to working with students, and that open communication about concerns and support of student needs allowed her and the rest of the staff to work together as a team. Vivian affirmed that she played a vital part in that communication.

When asked what job satisfaction meant to her, Vivian responded with how connecting with students was the highlight of her day. She emphasized that an important part of her job was not about teaching the music on the staff, but building relationships with students so they had positive memories surrounding music class. Her goal was to make students "fe[el] loved and supported and encouraged and that they enjoyed making music."

Another area Vivian described as evidence of job support was being allowed to innovate and take risks, while knowing her principal would support her decisions. Last year, she was encouraged by her principal to apply for a grant to add ukuleles to her classroom. She was awarded the grant and implemented the ukuleles in the classroom this year. Additionally, her principal provided an opportunity for teachers to explore a maker's space at a local library to

garner ideas for implementation in their classrooms. Vivian spent time in a sound lab and decided to make that an area she would include in her classroom for student use. Vivian described this particular means of support by stating, "[s]omebody who supports my ideas, who is willing to try new things, who's supportive of new things and new strategies in my classroom." She felt her current position and administration allowed this to happen, and in turn, added to her overall job satisfaction.

In Vivian's district, there was no longer an official Fine Arts Coordinator, rather the position was filled through various district administrators as well as a band teacher. The district also had a leadership group referred to as the cadre, and smaller groups that included every music teacher in the district. The music cadre, comprised of a select group of music educators, met quarterly to discuss the needs of their music educators. While Vivian was not in the cadre, she had colleagues who represented her specific area -- elementary schools that feed into the same middle and, eventually, high school -- to whom she could bring concerns or questions. Vivian's area-specific music educators met once per month to discuss standards and assessments, with their purpose being to share assessments and create commonality across the district's elementary music classrooms. According to Vivian, the area-specific group provided music educators opportunities to collaborate with one another on a regular basis, providing both job satisfaction and professional growth.

Professional growth. Professional growth at the building level was mostly provided through staff-wide professional development. Vivian described occasional opportunities in which she was given the option to focus on music-specific content as opposed to participating in the staff-wide professional development. She said that while this was not a common occurrence she appreciated that her principal recognized the 'one size fits all' approach does not always pertain

to her classroom needs. Additionally, Vivian stated that on occasion she was given the opportunity to explore professional development on her own as opposed to sitting through meetings that did not relate to her area. However, those experiences were not a common occurrence. When they did happen, she appreciated the freedom to make her own choices. She said:

> There's lots of professional growth opportunities. I think we need to seek them out ourselves because our admin isn't always going to know what opportunities are coming up. If you don't vocalize your interest in taking part in these opportunities, they aren't going to send you to them because that might not be their wheelhouse.

In another example of support and professional growth, Vivian contacted her principal about attending a state music convention. She wanted to attend but did not want to use a personal day in order to go. In response, her principal allotted her a professional day, so she could attend the state music convention without having to incur the burden of using her personal time off. Vivian was still responsible for paying the convention fee, finding a hotel, and arranging for travel to the conference, but she believed it was still valuable if she could save her personal days for other uses, and felt supported by her administrator.

Additionally, Vivian's district had a policy designed for teachers to 'earn' two days off if they submitted documentation of professional growth opportunities. She felt that allowed her the flexibility to choose professional development most useful to her as a professional. As an example of her chosen learning opportunities, Vivian submitted documentation about her initiative to learn to play the ukulele in order to teach her students, which she believed to be highly beneficial to both her and her students.

Emerson

Emerson taught third-grade through fifth-grade elementary/general music, a guitar class at a high school, and ran a fifth-grade choir for two years in a rural school setting. Emerson taught approximately 400 students throughout the school year. At the elementary level, her classes were 25 minutes in length and occurred twice per week. She stated that her position had been a "revolving door" for many years prior to her arrival.

Job satisfaction. Emerson was quick to give her administrator credit for how supportive he had been for her and her program, and how that positively impacted her job satisfaction. Having a highly supportive administrator who showed his appreciation often meant that Emerson had the confidence to build her program, which included starting a fifth-grade choir for students. Her principal also encouraged her to apply for grants to receive funding in order to provide additional instruments for classroom instruction.

Trust was built through positive feedback that Emerson's principal provided on a regular basis. According to Emerson,

> [h]e is very supportive of all my endeavors that I do. He's so grateful for everything. He tells me all the time. It's not just 'oh, I think he thinks I'm doing a good job.' He tells me all the time. It's not just 'oh, you're doing a good job.' It's 'you're doing a good job because…' and he will list the things but he'll state them as fact, so it doesn't really feel like you're getting a compliment. It feels like you're being evaluated in a really positive way. So it's just that he is the administrator that I would want in any job.

Emerson also described various situations in which her principal was quick to assist, such as a time when buses ordered for a choir outing did not arrive. Instead, her administrator drove students to the event so everyone could attend. She reported that he also provided support by not

only attending music programs, but by helping with lights and sound as well as set up and tear down.

According to Emerson, "even though he might not fully understand [music] things, he tries to understand them and he does try to help me be a better teacher. He doesn't treat me like I'm second best." She continued to praise her administration by saying:

I have an administrator who's very supportive, both personally and professionally, and he really has created a very strong culture in our school between our staff and continues to work on that culture. To have that culture, and to be a part of that culture really improves my job satisfaction.

When asked what job satisfaction meant to her, Emerson responded with the fact that she loved going to work because of positive student interactions. "It's not an I have to, it's an I get to [go to work]." This excitement for her job extended to the enjoyment of spending time with students and it was important to her that she cultivated an environment in which students looked forward to attending her class. Indeed, she stated that she would prefer to see her students more frequently.

Areas that Emerson felt negatively impacted her job satisfaction included the size of her classroom, her amount of class time with students, and a lack of adequate resources. She spoke with her principal about the concerns of adequate space and resources, however, often issues brought to the principal were beyond his control. Despite this, he offered support and guidance to the best to his ability, such as promoting a fundraiser created by Emerson. She believed his response was supportive, that he acknowledged the challenging position Emerson was in, and she recognized that those issues were beyond the scope of his control. Emerson expressed that

even though her principal could not currently change her situation, she felt appreciated because she genuinely believed that if her principal could help, he would.

In Emerson's district, there was no fine arts coordinator or district administrator assigned to assist the music education department. Instead, that role fell to the building administrator. Emerson utilized her relationships with colleagues at the district's primary center, kindergarten through second grade, as well as at the middle and high school levels for support. They worked together to design a sequenced curriculum that supported music from kindergarten through high school. Emerson and her district-wide music colleagues worked closely to impart the importance of having music literature to support the curriculum. The various teachers also worked together to attempt to develop a more cohesive schedule and job requirements for each position, although their efforts were not supported at the district level. "I feel like [my music colleagues] understand that music is innovative and diverse in learning methods. I feel that is so important."

Professional growth. At the building level, Emerson had a positive view of professional development. "There are some times when I feel like the required ones are kind of silly... but I'm pretty good usually, even if it's angled at classroom teachers, at finding ways to make it applicable." She also felt that her administrator recognized that there were professional development sessions that did not apply directly to music and made a point to acknowledge that, even if they were still expected to attend.

Emerson's district provided $200 for educators to put towards professional growth opportunities, such as attendance at a state convention. They also provided an additional $200 for educators to use for higher education master's courses. Furthermore, there was an in-service day in which teachers were allowed to choose their method of growth, such as watching webinars, or observing another classroom. Emerson found this supportive because she was able to have

financial assistance to pay for her graduate degree, and she also liked the freedom to personalize professional development opportunities to best suit the needs of her classroom

Emerging Themes

In examining the data from the interviews, the themes of interpersonal relationships and autonomy emerged as having an impact on job satisfaction and professional growth, while visibility had an impact only on job satisfaction.

Interpersonal relationships. The first theme that emerged was interpersonal relationships, and included relationships with administration, colleagues, and students. Each participant described 'feeling' support from their administration. One area that provided the 'feeling' of support was the approachability of an open-door policy which had a positive impact on interpersonal relationships. All three participants used the open-door policy to describe their comfort in going to their administration to express concerns or seek advice. The participants noted that not only availability in regards to their current administrations, but also genuine and positive interactions with them.

Value was described as an aspect of support from an administrator, although each participant had differing perspectives. Vivian and Emerson spoke of feeling valued within the school communities, especially by their administration. Value was tied to their significance as music educators as well as ensuring that they were essential members of the school community. Emerson reported hearing on a regular basis how valued she was, while Vivian and Foster described value in regards to their expertise, evidenced by being consulted by administration. Foster provided a different perspective on the impact of feeling valued. He stated that as a new teacher, like those he mentored, feeling valued was an essential component of job satisfaction. He then described that as veteran teacher of his school, he felt fortunate to be valued but believed

that his need to be valued became a lesser concern over time. Overall, for the participants, feeling valued created a sense of trust and respect. All of this was a result of interpersonal relationships established with administration who explicitly and implicitly communicated value to the participants.

Fostering positive collegial relationships was another area that participants felt impacted their job satisfaction, however, they all discussed the effect that administration had on their collegial relationships. All three participants spoke about administration who may not be professionally knowledgeable about music, but who appreciated legitimacy by their colleagues. As a result, there was agreement that a significant factor that influenced collegial relationships was administrative support. Indeed, Foster asserted, "[i]f you're in a building that the people that run it don't value you, often the rest of staff won't." The resulting feeling was that being seen as legitimate by administration strengthened relationships with their professional peers, and ultimately led to a higher level of job satisfaction. Vivian described how positive collegial relationships made her feel, noting that her input and ideas were valued creating a feeling of being part of the 'team.' She went on to say, "[R]elationships are huge. Knowing that I have supportive admin, knowing that I have supportive staff members that are on my team, knowing that I am not 'just' the music teacher."

Another area identified by the participants was the impact of student relationships on job satisfaction. While student interactions were not explored during the literature review, it was overwhelmingly apparent that each participant felt strongly that a significant impact on job satisfaction was student interaction. Each participant described building relationships with students as an important component to job satisfaction. The responses ranged from the impact of

daily interactions to the life-impact students can make, the experience from positive relationships. Foster asserted, "I want to feel like I'm making a difference."

In addition to student interactions, it was also reported that administration can have an effect on the ability to build relationships with students, thus impacting job satisfaction. Emerson not only experienced support for building relationships through her principal's encouragement to plan activities for the choir, but also when a crisis arose, her administration actively helped solve the problem. Likewise, Vivian appreciated the focus on relationships from her administration, and how it impacted her job satisfaction. She stated,

> I love that [the] focus in our school is building relationships because I think that is the core of all we do. If a kid leaves my school and grows up and doesn't remember how to read any of the notes on the music staff but remembers how they felt in music and the connection that we had and that they felt loved and supported and encouraged and that they enjoyed making music, then I did my job. I think admin [sic] support makes that possible. And when we focus on those relationships, I think, having that emphasis on it as the core of what we do makes a huge impact not only on the staff, but on our kids.

Autonomy. Each participant communicated importance about the meaning of and need for autonomy; overall, they felt that having an administrator who did not micromanage aided their autonomy. They also associated autonomy personally, as highly educated music teachers, specifically in regards to their knowledge and experience in choosing best practices for their students.

At the building level, each participant felt that they were granted autonomy and that it was closely related to trust. Foster, with the most years of teaching experience of the participants, expressed the greatest desire for autonomy. According to Foster, his building administration

"[does] a pretty nice job of letting us serve our kids in the way that we think we need to." He went on to say that administration should ask questions to seek better understanding, but overall underscored his need for autonomy to be an effective music educator. He expressed confidence in his autonomy because of the presence of a district level fine arts coordinator to support him and his fellow music educators at the building level. Emerson and Vivian also reported the desire to be autonomous and felt that they were provided space to do so. Vivian believed having her principal's support encouraged her to explore what she considered best practice for students. For Emerson, autonomy was synonymous with being seen as a music expert. She felt that this was provided at the building level but expressed that sometimes she wished the district office would say, "you're the one with the music education degree. I'm going to let you do your thing and trust your judgement because you studied this."

Although autonomy was experienced differently for each participant, it was an important aspect of job satisfaction, and it allowed each to grow professionally. Autonomy gave the participants the flexibility and support to embrace risk-taking.

Each participant spoke to the significance of having administrative support to be a risk-taker in the classroom. They called it by various names such as, "freedom," "innovation," and "trying new things," but each participant wanted the ability to provide exceptional instruction t students through new and creative methods. They perceived that the ability to have that freedom meant needing support from their administrator, with varying importance from building to district levels. Risk-taking appeared to impact job satisfaction and professional growth for each participant.

Vivian was most adamant about the ability to be innovative in the classroom and have an administrator's support in those endeavors. Previously, she had been in a position where she

shared a much larger school with another music educator, while her current position allowed her to have more autonomy; she now experienced the freedom to experiment and make her program uniquely her own. This was supported through a professional development opportunity in which she was able to explore a sound lab and then bring that idea back to her classroom to begin to plan how to implement something similar for students. According to Vivian, "That's all I need to hear [from my principal], 'let me know how I can help. What are you looking at? What sort of things would be helpful?' Sometimes it's 'just let me know how I could help' and let me run with this."

For Emerson, risk-taking related to creating a five-year performance plan for students in her school, one that communicated her analysis of existing and desired equipment to improve the program. She presented a proposal to her administration to not only prepare but also purchase performance resources for each grade level to use, without repetition, for five years. This required her administration to make an investment to support her vision for her classroom and music program, and demonstrated her long-range planning skills as well as her intention to build and develop the music program in her district.

Foster generalized about the importance of having the support from the fine arts coordinator to confidently make decisions for his classroom. He also spoke of access to quality professional development opportunities to bring fresh ideas back to his classroom. Foster felt that he had the ability to take risks in his classroom because his administration trusted him to make decisions he believed to be best practice for students.

The participants all required support to be innovative, e.g., to take risks, although each described differing aspects of support during the planning process. This ranged from principal approval to find new endeavors for students' learning, to asking for trust in professional

judgement. Each participant felt fortunate to have support in the area of risk-taking, and it positively affected job satisfaction while allowing them to experience professional growth.

Collaboration provided license for individuals to feel confident in taking risks and collaboration opportunities were important to the participants, though these differed among them. Vivian and Foster spoke of the advantage of having a group of music educators in district to have collaboration opportunities. Vivian described how being able to "bounce ideas off" other music educators, as well as get insight into new resources, was beneficial to her professional growth. Foster's role in his district was to provide guidance and support for new music educators. He, along with another lead-teacher, also presented in-service learning to the music educators in the district, providing growth opportunities for others, but also recognized this enhanced his learning as well. Additionally, both Vivian and Foster taught in districts that provided music-specific professional development, which encouraged educators to grow in their field. Emerson did not have music-specific professional growth at the district level, but her district did provide financial assistance, and she actively sought out opportunities on her own.

Visibility. Each participant described the importance of an open-door policy with administrators in terms of building interpersonal skills, but that same administration presence also occurred in the form of visibility in the building and classroom, further impacting job satisfaction. In many instances, visibility aided in attending to and resolving behavior issues.

Behavior concerns were described as having an impact on job satisfaction in each school. The importance of an administrator's presence for assistance in behaviors was stated by each participant, to varying degrees. Specifically, the participants spoke to the significance of administration quickly responding when issues arose in the classroom. In the urban school setting, it was vital to Foster that when he called for administrative support, that the response was

immediate due to the presence of potential violence amongst students. Foster described many scenarios in which he needed immediate attention from his administrators, but did not fault them if they were "putting out other fires." In a suburban school, Vivian reported the importance of having, "[s]omebody who supports your disciplinary decisions and takes it from there, helps you with that next step." In the rural setting, Emerson reported needing assistance, but behavior did not arise as a significant issue in her setting.

Vivian and Emerson described the importance of an administrator making the effort to not only attend programs but to be actively visible, and in Emerson's case, assisting with the set up and tear down of materials for the performance. To these educators, administration attendance at performances demonstrated that their jobs were just as important as other educators.

Summary

The findings of this study showed that the themes of interpersonal relationships and autonomy had influence over job satisfaction and professional growth in regards to administrative support. A third theme, visibility, impacted job satisfaction but had no influence on professional growth.

The subject of job satisfaction provided the most data, particularly so in regards to administrative support. Conversations with participants brought forth the importance of interpersonal relationships. It was important to all that there be a feeling of trust, respect and the sense of being valued from their administration. Each participant also described how a positive relationship with their administrator, in turn, affected collegial and student relationships. The participants each referenced the importance of autonomy and how support from the administration impacted that freedom. They mentioned the importance of an administrator's visibility. Each participant had their own-interpretation of the meaning of visibility, ranging from

attendance at music performances to assistance with student behavioral concerns. Professional growth was identified as the need to be innovative in the music classroom and with the program, and to have an administrator who supported the trial and error nature of innovation. Each participant also discussed the element of taking risks, one that was essential to innovation. Overall, the participants reported a host of factors that contributed positively to job satisfaction and professional growth, with only a few described as negative.

CHAPTER FIVE

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it related to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers. The data from the interviews with participants revealed the themes of interpersonal relationships, autonomy, and visibility, which demonstrated both commonalities and differences in findings. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings, followed by conclusions and implications for future research.

Discussion

Interpersonal relationships. Participants experienced positive interpersonal relationships with their administration, at the building level in particular. Communication and understanding fortified these relationships (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Scheib, 2003). Interpersonal experiences were often described as feelings as the participants shared a plethora of examples of how their administration made them feel. It seemed that while there were overlapping similarities, feeling was a personal experience. Indeed, what was seen as supportive to one, may not have been as impactful for another. Emerson reiterated the importance of the verbal praise that she was doing well as an educator, while Foster spoke to his experience, not necessarily requiring verbal approval from his administrator. Although there was overlap, all three participants spoke to feeling supported when their administration was available, whether being available to address a concern or attend music programs. Minckler (2014) described this interaction as building social capital with staff. This might be a matter of perception, one that was personal and different for each participant. Perhaps each one focused on a particular way the administration supported them, noting that the 'feeling' was both positive and unique.

Another area that affected interpersonal relationships was value; similar results were reported by Davis and Wilson (2000). Value was described as the need to be an essential component to the school community, and the motivation to be more than just a music teacher, that is needing respect from administration. Value was tied to respect for the participants' content area and the desire for viewing music as essential to students' learning as tested subject areas (Gardener, 2010; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). The presence of respect and understanding positively impacted job satisfaction for the participants, which was in line with the work of Price (2000). Perhaps the idea that all faculty brought value to the students' education, without any reservations towards music, might underpin interpersonal relationships. Whether or not the administration had command of music content and curriculum did not seem to matter. Therefore, the interpersonal relationships appeared to be important to both the participants and the administration.

Abril and Gault (2006) found that administration shaped the work environment for music educators, and participants in this study confirmed this. Furthermore, at the center of each participant's experiences with interpersonal relationships was being valued by an administrator, ultimately affecting not only job satisfaction, but also relationships with colleagues. For participants, being seen as legitimate by administration had a trickle-down effect on how they, and their curriculum, were perceived by staff (Minckler, 2014; Pelletier & Sharp, 2009; Van Maele & Houtte, 2012). It seems that being seen and treated as a legitimate component of a student's learning by a building leader might cause other staff to have similar positive perceptions of music educators. As a building leader, staff may look to their principal for indicators of inherent value in others, and when respect and esteem are given to a music educator by their principal, it signals to others in the building that their craft is an important part of a

student's education. This, in turn, might have impact on interpersonal relationships in the affirmative.

It does not seem surprising that the significance of student relationships would be a positive impact on job satisfaction for elementary music educators, but it was intriguing that participants described how administration could impact their effectiveness with student relationships. Emerson, in particular, felt substantial support from her administration when it came to building relationships with her students as well as encouraging students to build relationships amongst themselves. The support from administration ranged from assistance when field trip plans went awry to the significance of student contact time (Price, 2012). Perhaps the building principal creates an environment that is either conducive or inconducive to building and maintaining student relationships, thus setting the tone for interpersonal relationships between faculty and students. As a result of this influence, it would seem that the building principal has a tremendous impact on this aspect of a music educator's job satisfaction.

Interpersonal relationships had a significant impact on the job satisfaction of the participants, especially in terms of daily interactions paired with aspects of support that require longevity and trust such as value and esteem. Kelly and Kutch (2017) described this support as a culture of caring. Additionally, these aspects of interpersonal relationships needed to be present in order for the participants to feel as though they could grow as professionals. Indeed, interpersonal relationships also fostered success for educators in the areas of autonomy and risk-taking, both in regards to job satisfaction and professional growth.

Autonomy. There was a fine line between an administration who was actively involved in a program and one who was seen as a micromanager. Indeed, a place somewhere in the middle of this continuum seemed to be ideal in relation to autonomy. Autonomy was described by the

participants as trust to exercise what they deemed best practice for students (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Mazyck, 2012; Price, 2012). Autonomy also included the ability to experiment with new lessons in the classroom, as well as create innovative plans that would encourage learning for all students. Thus, there was freedom to make choices for their curricula and their students which might have been a result of the administration's acknowledgment that participants were capable and trustworthy music educators.

Autonomy was particularly important when it came to professional growth for music educators. Although this was not described outright by the participants, each one of them intimated how they sought professional growth opportunities (Allen, 2014; Bowles, 2002; Conway, 2008; Hesterman, 2011; Riddle, 1958). Similar to the findings of Hammel (2007), Hesterman (2012), and Sindberg (2005), participants were inherently autonomous in finding growth opportunities, but often needed the support of their administration to attend or fund those opportunities. Thus, administration was required to trust and encourage their educators to pursue professional development beyond what could be provided at the building level regularly.

The presence of both interpersonal relationships and autonomy led to the ability to be innovative and take risks in the classroom. Risk-taking was an essential aspect for the participants due to their desire to grow as educators which, in turn, affected their job satisfaction. This is in line with the work of Davis and Wilson (2000) who found that an important aspect of job satisfaction for teachers was empowering them to take risks in the classroom.

With limited music-specific professional growth opportunities at the building level, the participants were required to seek out professional development (Bowles, 2002; Hammel, 2007; Hesterman, 2012; Riddle, 1958; Sindberg, 2005). It seemed this was a reflection of the participants' eagerness to find new learning opportunities for students, as the participants were

not satisfied with doing the same lessons day in and day out and actively sought out ways to be creative and innovative. In order for this creative outlet to be effective, the participants acknowledged the need for their administration to support change and growth in their classrooms, even if that meant the possibility of mistakes. Eisner (2002) described the idea of a community that shared the responsibility of learning and growth for educators. Indeed, participants felt that their administration would support them even if lessons did not go smoothly and changes needed to be made. Similarly, this feeling of support via the safety to take risks was described in a study by Wahlstrom and Louis (2008). The fact that educators felt safe to try new things in the classroom while also being emboldened to seek out innovative practices on their own was an indicator that there was support for risk-taking by the music educators' building principals.

Collaboration was also an essential component of risk-taking although it seemed counterintuitive to the idea of autonomy. However, these two worked in tandem as collaboration gave the participants the tools and ideas to be innovative, while autonomy allowed them to utilize those tools in their classrooms. Thus, collaboration was a means which allowed the participants to be creative and thrive with the help of colleagues and peers (Sindberg, 2011); however, each participant needed freedom to use their professional judgment to decide what would be best practice for their students and their program. Ultimately, collaboration impacted risk-taking and its positive effect on job satisfaction as well as professional growth (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Sindberg, 2011; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008).

Visibility. Visibility was an important factor in job satisfaction. Without administrative presence, the participants felt that disruptions in their classrooms would interfere with their ability to teach students. Visibility for disciplinary reasons was more prevalent at the urban and

suburban schools than the rural, yet it remained a factor nonetheless. Both Foster and Vivian described how essential it was that when they needed administrative help, there was an immediate response. Studies by McKerrow (1996) and Scheib (2003) concurred with this finding.

One participant noted that administrative presence did not go unnoticed by students or staff and she stated that visibility impacted support across the school community, similar to results reported by Minckler (2014) and Price (2012). Another participant spoke to how her principal assisting with concert space preparation significantly affected her job satisfaction. It seemed that visibility of an administrator showed the participants that they were valued and respected members of the school community, similarly described in the interpersonal skills category (Minckler, 2014; Pelletier & Sharp, 2009; Van Maele & Houtte, 2012).

Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it related to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers. The findings showed that the areas of job satisfaction and professional growth were impacted by interpersonal skills and autonomy, while visibility only seemed to affect job satisfaction. It also appeared that job satisfaction and professional growth were closely linked and impacted by administrative support. The participants essentially concurred that the attitudes of the administration towards them, their means of verbal and physical support, and their attention to and assistance with student issues were essential to their job satisfaction. Professional growth, on the other hand, appeared to be an area in which the participants had freedom to make choices, but sought the support of their administration to do so, with less involvement by them.

The implications of this research are that music educators cannot solely depend on administration to carry the burden of creating positive interpersonal relationships, but must contribute to these as well. It appears that the maintenance of interpersonal relationships is a two-way street, with each party influencing the status of the relationship. If the administration perceives that the music educators are attending to their jobs, doing quality work, and making good decisions, these relationships are positive. All of this affects job satisfaction, which might then create a cycle of positive relationships and job satisfaction contributing to each other. For professional growth, it seems that the relationships affect the teachers' ability to argue for experiences that benefit them, but depend on the administration's blessing to move forward to find those experiences. Overall, job satisfaction and professional growth appear to be connected.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could consider investigating a larger population of music educators, as the current study provided a very small sample size. A greater sample size could provide more insight into support for elementary music educators. Within that larger sample population, it would benefit researchers to include a wider variety of teaching years from participants in order to investigate how experience might impact the need for support of elementary music educators.

The researcher also suggests that future research could isolate how administrative support impacts interpersonal relationships. In this study, it appeared to be an area that had a vast array of responses, providing a broad picture of support. But a study focused on this topic might offer more specific information, especially in relation to people's needs for themselves as educators, for their programs, and for their classrooms.

The area of administrative support is a topic that would benefit from further research because there is a noticeable lack of studies on this topic. The current study provided insight into

how elementary music educators perceived support and how it impacted job satisfaction and

professional growth, a contribution to the profession.

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Appendix A
Approval of Protocol

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
KANSAS
Research

Date: December 17, 2018

TO: Katherine Staton, (kstolten@ku.edu)

FROM: Jocelyn Isley, MS, CIP, IRB Administrator (785-864-7385, irb@ku.edu)

RE: **Approval of Initial Study**

The IRB reviewed the submission referenced below on 12/17/2018. The IRB approved the protocol, effective 12/17/2018.

IRB Action: APPROVED	Effective date: 12/17/2018	Expiration Date : 12/16/2023
STUDY DETAILS		
Investigator:	Katherine Staton	
IRB ID:	STUDY00143424	
Title of Study:	Perception of Administrative Support to Elementary Music Teachers and How it Impacts Their Professional Growth and Job Satisfaction	
Funding ID:	None	
REVIEW INFORMATION		
Review Type:	Initial Study	
Review Date:	12/17/2018	
Documents Reviewed:	• Human Research Protocol - K. Stoltenberg, • IRB Clarification Requests 12_14.docx, • Oral Consent Form - K. Stoltenberg, • Study Outline - K. Stoltenberg	
Exemption Determination:	• (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation	
Additional Information:		

Appendix B
Adult Consent Form

Oral Consent Form

As student in the University of Kansas's Department of Music Education, I am conducting a research project about Administrative Support for Elementary Music Educators. I would like to interview you to obtain your views on support and its impact on job satisfaction and professional growth. Your participation is expected to take about two one-hour sessions. You have no obligation to participate and you may discontinue your involvement at any time.

Your participation should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, the information obtained from the study will help us gain a better understanding of administrative support in regards to Music Education. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may hear your response.

**This interview will be recorded. Recording is required to participate. You may stop taping at any time. The recordings will be transcribed by me. Only I, and/or the faculty supervisor will have access to recordings which will be stored digitally and in hard-copy and will be destroyed in once the project is complete.*

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Music Education at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of administrative support, at the school and district levels, in order to identify how it relates to professional growth and job satisfaction of elementary music teachers.

PROCEDURES

Each participant will be asked to take part in two separate interview sessions with the researcher. Interviews will be recorded with a digital recorder as well as video-taped for ease and accuracy of the transcription.

RISKS

The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects.

BENEFITS

The benefit of this study is a better understanding of how administrative support impacts the job satisfaction and professional development for elementary music educators. It can provide insight into ways administration is perceived to be supportive in regards to music educators.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

To protect your anonymity, your name, school, and district will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher will use a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By agreeing to participate in these interviews, you are giving your consent to be a part of this study.

Participation in the interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask me or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Debra Hedden at the Department of Music Education. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Research Protection Program at (785) 864-7429 or email irb@ku.edu.

Katherine Stoltenberg	Dr. Debra Hedden
Principal Investigator	Faculty Supervisor
Music Education Graduate Student	School of Music
University of Kansas	448 J Murphy Hall
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785-819-6570	785-864-963

Appendix C
Interview Questions

Interview Protocol

Personal, local immediate
1. Tell me about yourself and your program. How long have you been teaching elementary general music?
2. What does administrative support mean to you as a music educator? What are examples of support you do or do not receive?
3. Are there other factors that impact support in your position? Tell me more about them.
4. Describe particular means of support that you want as a music educator.
5. What does job satisfaction mean to you? How do you attain job satisfaction as an elementary music educator? What examples might you note?
6. How would you describe professional growth for you as a music educator? What kind of opportunities do you have to grow professionally?

Building level
1. Do you feel that your building administrator supports you? What are some examples of why or why not?
2. How does administrative support affect your job satisfaction?
3. Do you feel that your building administrator supports professional growth for you? What are some examples of why or why not?
4. How does administrative support affect your professional growth?
5. How has administrative support been helpful to you in your job?
6. What supports are in place at your building that contributes to your job satisfaction?
7. How do you know that you are supported by the building administrator?
8. What measures are taken at the building level to provide job satisfaction for you as an elementary music educator? What measures are taken at the building level to provide professional growth for you as an elementary music educator?

District Level
1. Describe the supports in place at the district level to assist you as a music educator.
2. What are the kinds of support you receive from the district level? How do these impact your job satisfaction?
3. If you could speak frankly to school district administrators, what would you say in regards to support for you as a music educator?
4. What measures are taken at the district level to provide job satisfaction for you as an elementary music educator? What measures are taken at the district level to provide professional growth for you as an elementary music educator?

At the end of the interview:
     Is there anything else you want to share about your situation in terms of administrative support, job satisfaction, or professional growth?