

CONDITIONS FACILITATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
TEACHER TRUST AND COLLABORATION IN POST-SOVIET VERSUS U.S.
SCHOOL CONTEXTS

By

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative case study aimed to identify school principals' early leadership actions in building teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet Georgia (vertical organization) and U.S. (more egalitarian organization) school settings. The study was organized around the following research questions:

1. How do school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S. develop teacher trust and collaboration?
 - a. What leadership orientations and behaviors do they draw on?
 - b. What challenges do they describe?
 - c. What do they identify as the most important first steps in developing a collaborative school culture? What organizational conditions do they focus on?
2. How do Georgian and U.S. teachers describe teacher trust and collaboration in their school? What principal supports for trust and collaboration do they point out?
3. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers compare?
4. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers inform the development of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet and other traditionally vertical school structures and cultures?

The qualitative case study involved school principals, assistant principals and teachers in one K-12 capital city school in Tbilisi, Georgia, and two suburban schools in Michigan (one

middle, one high school). Overall, seventeen participants in Georgia and twenty-one in Michigan schools were interviewed. Alongside interviews, the study examined documents and observed teacher meetings to better understand how teachers collaborate and what support they get from their peers and school leaders. The data suggest some fundamental leadership behaviors were common to leader efforts to initiate or extend teacher trust and collaboration in both school contexts. All three cases show that principals put great emphases on key transactional behaviors such as being present and responsive, listening, following through on concerns and agreements, building open and transparent relations, and offering individual consideration. Transformational behaviors: encouraging community, encouraging professional learning, voice, and leadership were also observed. Levels of trust and collaboration in the two environments differed. Teachers in Michigan schools were more familiar with the role of trust and collaboration and had higher expectations for these working conditions and supports. In Tbilisi's, a new school principal used these behaviors to overcome a history of toxic distrust and no traditions of collaboration to introduce trust and collaboration in small stages amongst groups of interested and willing teachers. Implications are drawn, most specifically for suggested steps in developing trust and collaboration in post-Soviet schools with histories and vertical education organizations similar to those of Georgia.

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Dedicated with love and gratitude to the memory of my beloved parents, Asif Hajiyeu and Raya Akbarova, who always supported me in every single step in my educational journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Questions	8
Definitions of the Key Terms.....	9
Principal Leadership.....	9
Trust	9
Teacher Collaboration.....	9
Vertical School Structure	10
Soviet Mindset	10
Toxic School Culture	10
Egalitarian School Context	11
The Anglo-American Approach or Western Experiences to Education	11
The Significance of the Study	11
Chapter Summary	12
Organization of the Dissertation	13
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	14
Part I. Conceptions of Effective School Leadership	14
Managerial Leadership	14
The Effective School Era of School Leadership	15
The Emergence and Development of Instructional Leaders	16
Modern Understandings of Instructional School Leadership	17
From Transactional to Transformational Leadership	19
Transactional leadership	20
Transformational leadership	22
<i>Principal transformational leadership</i>	25
Summary	27
Part II. Developing Norms of Collaboration in Schools	28
Trust as a Foundation to Collaboration	28
Why Trust Matters to Teacher Collaboration and Learning	29
The Definitions of Trust in Different Educational Studies	29
How and Why Trust Helps Teachers Collaborate and Learn	30
Empirical Findings on the Importance of Trust in Schools	31
The Role of School Principals in Fostering Teacher Trust.....	33
Summary	35
Part III. The Importance of Teacher Collaboration	35
Teacher Collaboration and Collective Learning	36
Forms of Collaboration	38

How and Why Collaboration Leads to Teacher Learning	40
Empirical Findings on the Importance of Teacher Collaboration in Schools	43
Studies on the Importance of PLCs on Teachers' Instruction and Students' Achievement.....	48
School Principals' Support for Teacher Collaboration.....	52
Challenges to Collaboration	54
Some Limitations of Research on Collaboration and PLCs	55
Conceptual Framework	56
Conclusion	57
 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	59
Research Paradigm and Design	59
Sampling	62
Principal Selection	62
Teacher Selection	62
Sample Bias	63
Data Collection Process	66
Sources of Data	67
Semi-Structured Interviews	68
Instrument Testing	70
Observations	70
Document Examination.....	71
Data Analysis and Interpretations	71
A Descriptive Case for Each School in Two Countries.....	73
A Comparative Analysis of School Contexts	73
Validity	73
Participant Relationships	74
Positionality and Reflexivity	75
Ethical Considerations	77
Study Limitations	78
Summary	78
 CHAPTER 4: PRINCIPAL GELASHVILI'S CASE	80
Education Reforms in post-Soviet Georgia	81
The Key Policy Reforms.....	81
Changes to the Teaching Profession	82
Changes to School Leadership	83
New Belief School	84
The School Administration of New Belief School	86
Principal Gelashvili.....	86
Assistant Principals	89
The Current Level of Trust in New Belief School.....	89
Being Appointed as a School Principal to The Urban School in Tbilisi with Toxic Culture	93
Principal Gelashvili's Views on Building Trust	93
Assistant Principals' Views on Building Trust	94

Teachers' Views on Building Trust	95
Trust Themes at New Belief School	95
Theme 1: Being Present and Responsive.....	96
Being visible and having constant communications	96
Theme 2: Following Through	96
A good listener	96
Keeping the promises: restoring the previous status of the new belief school	97
Keeping the promises: fixed the water leak in the school basement	98
Theme 3: Building Open and Transparent Relationships	98
Finding time/being available	98
Theme 4: Considering Teachers' Voices.....	99
Validating teachers' work	99
Theme 5: Individual Consideration.....	100
Promoting professional development	100
Being interested in teachers' personal lives.....	101
Summary.....	101
Teacher Collaboration in New Belief School	102
Types of Collaboration Reported by New School Administration and Teachers.....	103
Theme 1: Collaboration Focused on Civil and Collegial Relations.....	104
Sharing teaching materials with the colleagues	104
Collaboration built on positive relations.....	105
Theme 2: Collaboration Focused on Joint Work	105
Writing a lesson plan together	105
Dividing and sharing tasks.....	106
Theme 3: Collaboration Focused on Learning from Each Other.....	106
Observing each other's classes	106
Collaboration through integrated projects and classes	107
Summary	108
CHAPTER 5: PRINCIPAL WHITE'S CASE.....	109
Victory Middle School	110
The School Administration	112
Principal White	112
The Assistant Principal	112
The Current Level of Trust in Victory Middle School.....	113
Principal White's Views on Building Trust.....	115
The Assistant Principal's Views on Building Trust.....	116
Teachers' Views on Building Trust	116
Trust Themes at Victory Middle School.....	117
Theme 1: Being Present and Responsive.....	117
Being visible and available to teachers/finding time	117
Being responsive to teachers' emails	118
Theme 2: Getting to know teachers	118
A good listener.....	118
Spending more time with the staff beyond the school walls.....	119

Theme 3: Building Relationships.....	120
Building bonds between teachers and the new assistant principal	120
Transparent relationships	120
Dependability/reliability	121
Treating fairly and as a respected professional.....	121
Supportive	122
Being thoughtful	122
Theme 4: Considering Teachers' Voices.....	123
Giving teachers autonomy and considering their voices	123
Theme 5: Being A Role Model.....	123
Being interested in teachers' personal and professional lives	123
Giving skilled feedback	124
Summary	125
Types of Collaboration Observed in Victory Middle School	123
Types of Collaboration Reported by Victory Middle School Administration and Teachers.....	126
Formal and Informal Setting of Collaboration	127
Teacher Collaborations in Formal Settings	127
Teacher Collaborations in Informal Settings	130
Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Victory Middle School	131
Responding to Resisting Teachers in Victory Middle School.....	133
Summary	134
CHAPTER 6: PRINCIPAL LOUIS' CASE	136
Liberty High School.....	136
The School Administration	138
Principal Louis.....	138
Assistant Principals	139
The Current Level of Trust in Liberty High School	140
Principal Louis' Views on Building Trust	143
Assistant Principals' Views on Building Trust.....	144
Teachers' Views on Building Trust.....	145
Trust Themes at Liberty High School.....	145
Theme 1: Being Present and Responsive	146
Being visible	146
Having constant and open communications	146
Face-to-face talkers	147
Theme 2: Building Relationships	148
Being genuine, honest, and open	148
Respect	148
Transparent relationships.....	149
Treating fairly and as a respected	149
Being vulnerable	149
Validating.....	150
Caring	150
Theme 3: Considering Teachers' Voices.....	151

Giving teachers space to make the decision	151
Being supportive	151
Personal invitation	152
Summary	152
Towards the Learning Community: Focusing on Teacher Collaboration.....	153
Types of Collaboration Reported by Liberty High School Administration and Teachers	154
Formal and Informal Settings of Collaboration	155
Formal Teacher Collaboration Settings	156
Teacher Collaborations in Informal Settings	159
Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School.....	160
Barriers to Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School.....	162
Summary	164
 CHAPTER 7: CROSS-CASE ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION.....	166
Individual Characteristics of the three Principals	166
Context Characteristics	167
The New Belief School/Georgian Context	167
The Michigan Schools' Context	169
Cross-Case Patterns in Reports on Trust	171
Trust between leaders and teachers	171
Trust Among Teachers.....	172
Common Leader Actions to Build Trust.....	173
Building Relationships.....	175
Some Particular Leader Actions to Build Trust.....	177
Principal Gelashvili: Creating New and Different spaces.....	178
Principal White: Team-Building Activities.....	179
Principal Louis: Building Conditional trust.....	179
How Principals Supported Collaboration	181
How Principals Supported Civil and Collegial Relations	184
How Principals Supported Joint Work and Collaboration for Learning	185
Strategies for Responding to Challenges and difficulties	187
Understanding Principal Support for Trust and Collaboration Through the Lens of Transactional and Transformational Leadership.....	189
Discussion: Overlapping Leadership for Trust and Collaboration	193
Instructional Leadership.....	194
Chapter Summary.....	196
 CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION.....	199
Summary Findings.....	200
RQ 1: Principal Leadership Orientations and Actions to building Trust and Collaboration.....	200
Transactional actions.....	200
Transformational actions	202
Actions to support collaboration.....	203

RQ 2: How do Georgian and U.S. Teachers Describe Teacher Trust and Collaboration?.....	204
Being visible and available	205
Detecting responding to teacher concerns and interests	205
Taking a personal interest	206
Being treated fairly and as a respected professional	207
Validating teachers' knowledge and skills.....	208
RQ 3: How do the Accounts of Georgian and U.S. Principals and Teachers Compare?	209
Implications	210
Understanding School Principals as Leaders and Change Agents	212
School Leaders as Change Agents.....	212
The Importance of Teacher Trust and Collaboration	213
Implications for Practice	213
A New School Leadership Program	213
A Conceptual Map of Leadership Learning	214
Trust as a Foundation for Teacher Collaboration.....	215
Towards a Collaborative Learning Environment.....	216
Supporting Teacher Collaboration	218
School Principal Coaching Program.....	219
Some Challenges that might be Seen While Implementing the School Leadership Program	220
Implications for Future Research	220
Conclusion	221
APPENDICES	224
APPENDIX A Interview Protocol.....	225
APPENDIX B Invitation to Participate.....	231
APPENDIX C Research Participant Information and Consent Form.....	233
REFERENCES.....	235

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1. The Number of Participants Involved in Georgian School, Tbilisi	63
Table 3.2. The Number of Participants Involved in Middle School, Michigan.....	64
Table 3.3. The Number of Participants Involved in High School, Michigan	65
Table 3. 4. Examples of Codes, Themes, and Subcategories.....	72
Table 4.1. The Student Body of New Belief School, Georgia.....	85
Table 4.2. The Organization of Teachers by Their Status	85
Table 4.3. The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Between the Administrative Team and Teachers in New Belief School, Georgia.....	91
Table 4.4. The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Among Teachers in New Belief School, Georgia	91
Table 4.5. Different Types of Collaboration Reported by New Belief School Administrators, Georgia.....	103
Table 4.6. Different Types of Collaboration Reported by New Belief School Teachers, Georgia	104
Table 5.1. The Student Body of Victory Middle School, Michigan	110
Table 5.2. The Organization of Teachers by Subject Departments, Michigan.....	111
Table 5.3. Reports of Trust Levels Between the Administrative Team and Teachers in Victory Middle School, Michigan	113
Table 5.4. Teachers' Reports of Trust Levels Among Teachers in Victory Middle School, Michigan	114
Table 5.5. Different Types of Collaboration Observed in Victory Middle School Reported by the Administrators, Michigan.....	126
Table 5.6. Different Types of Collaboration Observed in Victory Middle School Reported by Teachers, Michigan	126
Table 5.7. The Summary of Teacher Collaborations in Victory Middle School, Michigan.....	127

Table 5.8. Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Victory Middle School, Michigan.....	131
Table 5.9. Responding to Resisting Teachers in Victory Middle School, Michigan.....	133
Table 6.1. The Student Body of Liberty High School, Michigan.....	137
Table 6.2. The Organization of Teachers by Subject Departments, Michigan.....	138
Table 6.3. The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Between the Administrative Team and Teachers in Liberty High School, Michigan.....	141
Table 6.4. The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Among Teachers in Liberty High School, Michigan.....	142
Table 6.5. Different Types of Collaboration Reported by Liberty High School Administrators, Michigan.....	154
Table 6.6. Different Types of Collaboration Reported by Liberty High School Teachers, Michigan.....	154
Table 6.7. Teacher Collaboration Settings in Liberty High School, Michigan	155
Table 6.8. Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School, Michigan.....	161
Table 6.9. Barriers in Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School, Michigan	163
Table 7.1. Reports of Relational Trust Levels Between Administrative Team and Teachers	172
Table 7.2. Reports of Relational Trust Levels Among Teachers.....	173
Table 7.3. The Interview Questions Asked to Identify the Types of Teacher Collaboration	181
Table 7.4. Ways Principals and Administrative Teams Supported Collaboration in Each School.....	182

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework	57
Figure 7.1. The Venn Diagram Representing Similarities and Differences of School Principals' Leadership Behaviors Building Teacher Trust.....	180
Figure 7.2. Principal Gelashvili's Leadership Behaviors and Actions in Building Teacher Trust and Collaboration.....	191
Figure 7.3. Principal White's Leadership Behaviors and Actions in Building Teacher Trust and Collaboration.....	192
Figure 7.4. Principal Louis' Leadership Behaviors and Actions in Building Teacher Trust and Collaboration.....	192
Figure 8.1. First Steps Model for Building Trust.....	215
Figure 8.2. Full Development Model for Building Trust and Teacher Collaboration	217

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In their 1995 article on Policies That Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin argued that traditional norms of teacher autonomy and isolation needed to change in favor of more collaborative norms that could support teachers' professional development. They stated that teachers needed to work together and share knowledge and experiences to better their teaching practices (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Since then, research has confirmed their argument that working in isolation limits teacher learning and development (Darling-Hammond, 2009; DuFour, 2015; Fullan, 2005, 2012). Research has established that teachers' collaborative learning, described as a process in which teachers share their knowledge and experiences to improve their teaching practices, is one of the most effective ways to improve both teachers' and students' learning (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010; Cordingley, Bell, Rundell, & Evans, 2003; Mullen & Huting, 2008; Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009; Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015).

There is also a broad consensus that principals have a crucial role in developing teacher collaboration (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Murphy et al., 2009). Research has identified specific leadership practices promoting teacher collaboration (Levine & Marcus, 2010; Levin, & Rock, 2003; Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006; Strahan, 2003). Among other practices, research advocates that leaders provide opportunities for teachers to work together in self-managing teams to improve their instruction (DuFour, 2007; Schmoker, 2005), support teachers to publicly share their practices and analyze data (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2013) and share leadership and decision-making with teachers (Murphy et al., 2009; Printy & Marks, 2006).

School leaders also play a crucial role in establishing a wider collaborative school culture (Copland, 2003; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Huffman, 2003). They can build trust among teachers and motivate them to achieve the desired goals (Avolio, 2011; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Leaders that develop supportive and positive relationships inspire and motivate teachers to engage in a continuous cycle of improvement in which they reflect, adjust, and improve their practices to increase students' academic success. In a shared and collaborative school culture, teacher's voices are heard when solving students' learning problems and exploring new practices for students' academic success (DuFour, 2015; Hord & Sommers, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Developing teacher collaborative learning is now an important goal for many post-Soviet countries, but they face a number of challenges. One is that the literature on teacher trust and collaboration largely reflects Anglo-American school contexts with strong democratic and egalitarian traditions that differ from post-Soviet contexts (Fullan, 2001, 2005; Møller, Eggen, Fuglestad, Langfeldt, Presthus, Skrøvset, & Vedøy, 2005; Jenlink & Jenlink, 2008). The downfall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s has had a significant impact on the education systems of most post-Soviet countries, including Azerbaijan (Kutsyuruba, 2013; Magno, 2009; Silova & Kazimzade, 2006). To improve their education systems, many formerly Soviet countries have adopted many U.S. and European reform strategies, including governance and curricular reforms (Magno, 2009). For example, in 2006, Azerbaijan instituted a new national curriculum framework and professional development program to move teachers away from heavily didactic teaching to more student-centered approaches that press for critical thinking skills (Mikayilova & Kazimzade, 2016). In some Azerbaijani schools, teachers are involved in a

collaboration to cope with the challenges of adapting teaching practices they never experienced. However, Azerbaijani teachers and principals are not very aware of U.S. or European practices (Dyczok, 2000). A few recent studies of Azerbaijani schools show significant discrepancies between reform expectations and actual practices (Magno, 2009). So, while many teachers have been encouraged to collaborate, researchers find little evidence of professional learning or growth. Some have linked these discrepancies with economic hardships and the deteriorating status of teaching in the post-Soviet context (De Young, Reeves, & Valyaeva, 2006; Niyozov, 2008; Niyozov & Shamatov, 2010; Silova, 2009). Inadequate salaries are also said to discourage teachers from being involved in professional development (De Young et al., 2006; Niyozov & Shamatov, 2010; Silova, 2009).

An added possibility and perspective may be that, because Azerbaijani schools have more vertical managerial traditions, the development of collaboration is a greater challenge than in Anglo-American contexts, and general encouragement is not enough. To better understand the challenges regarding the adoption of Anglo-American approaches to collaboration, consider the following conditions of Azerbaijani teachers' work:

At the beginning of each school year, Azerbaijani teachers are usually provided with the teaching hours leading them to be assigned to their classrooms. Not all teachers have the same hours or schedules; they may be at school at different times and on different days. Teachers follow the centralized national curriculum, which now reflects (on paper) a more student-centered approach. The national curriculum consists of teaching standards and goals, leaving teachers to decide how many goals or standards can be taught, in which class, depending on the students' levels. Teachers cannot change or adapt this curriculum but can be flexible in considering the students' levels.

Moreover, Azerbaijani teachers usually work in isolation, and they are not often engaged in collaborative work. While teachers are not aware of the term collaboration, they do usually share innovations in teaching through informal conversations during their short breaks from the classes. But they do not formally collaborate. For example, once a week, teachers with fewer teaching hours are given time to work on their teaching plans or related issues. However, most prefer not to come to school, but rather stay at home. That is one insight on how Azerbaijani leaders and teachers are not aware of the value of collaboration and the importance of using available time for it.

School principals are the main driving force to support teacher collaborations, but Azerbaijani principals have a more managerial orientation focused on issues such as documentation. Many teachers and principals are now involved in short-term school leadership training courses; they take a three-month course in which they are taught the basic principles of management. To be specific, they are trained to be transactional leaders who detect problems as well as to solve them. They are informed about important documentation tasks they are to deal with, for example, how to report students' grades, teacher evaluation, and record students' enrollment and teachers' recruitment.

This school principal training process suggests that Azerbaijani principals are not yet responsible for teacher professional development. They can provide teachers with some information regarding teaching practices, and they can inform teachers about professional development courses that take place out of school settings, but it is usually tricky for teachers, or they are unwilling to join those courses. On the one hand, teachers are overloaded with the teaching hours, creating difficulties for them to attend after class activities. On the other hand, because of low salaries, it generates a lack of motivation for them (Kazimzade & Silova, 2007).

Working as managerial leaders leads to several challenges. For example, principals rarely interact with teachers, causing the school culture to be even more fragmented. Also, being busy with documentation reduces principals' time to interact and build trust accordingly. The school culture in Azerbaijani schools is more vertical rather than egalitarian, which diminishes the importance of teacher trust and collaboration. All these challenges reflect a more formal, vertical school environment that can lead to mistrust in the community overall.

To illustrate the challenges mentioned above, consider the following vignettes of school leaders wanting to support teacher trust and collaboration:

The first story takes place in Michigan where Amy (a pseudonym) is a newly appointed elementary school principal. When Amy was a teacher, she was a member of a grade-level team that was expected to collaborate on lesson planning, teaching strategies, and assessment. The team also studied student work and data together. Now, as a new principal, Amy works to apply knowledge and understandings of effective school leadership from her school administrator preparation program she has recently graduated from. Relying on both her teaching experiences and her received knowledge, Amy sees the importance of teacher trust and collaboration to students' learning outcomes. She is working to establish a collaborative school culture that encourages teachers to share their knowledge and experiences. Through transformational leadership skills, Amy initiates activities to motivate teachers to collaborate. For example, she creates outdoor events such as having picnics, celebrating colleagues' success, or book clubs for teachers to promote social interactions that help build positive relationships and trust in the community. She hopes these activities will help teachers know each other better and create a sense of community. Teachers in her school are members of teams. These teams regularly meet to plan their work, share ideas, and divide up tasks. Amy interacts with teachers and teams to

discuss concerns regarding their practices. She often observes their classes and gives constructive feedback on their instruction. She also assists novice teachers by matching them with experienced ones. In addition, Amy shares materials from her preparation program to keep her teachers updated about innovations that can support their teaching. However, Amy still struggles to involve some resisting teachers in team collaborations. In her opinion, making them interact is not a good idea, as she believes collaboration should happen on a voluntary, teacher-initiated basis. However, she still intends to work out some strategies that motivate those teachers to collaborate and be a part of the school community.

The second story takes place in post-Soviet Baku, Azerbaijan. The school principal, Maya, (a pseudonym) has worked as a principal at the same school for over 20 years. When Maya was a teacher, she was not a member of any teacher teams and not involved in collaboration with other teachers, as the school culture was not focused on collaborative learning. There were no school leadership development programs for new principals. When she started as a school principal, Maya used the strategies of the very top-down Soviet educational system. For example, she saw herself and behaved as a manager who dealt with centralized rules and documents. Also, she observed teachers' performances more formally, and it was followed by critical evaluation rather than instructional improvement. These types of observation discouraged teachers and gave little guidance on how to improve their performances. Moreover, in Maya's school, as in all Azerbaijani schools, the teachers were given a day off once a week to work on their teaching plans or other issues related to their teaching and classes. However, the teachers, as well as the principal, do not understand the importance of the provided time, and teachers prefer to stay at home; many share that they do housework. Also, Maya and her teachers were engaged in student data, but it was not for the students' improvement. Instead, it was for

reporting about their grades to the central office. Therefore, neither the school principal nor the teachers were involved in how to improve the students' academic success who lagged.

Following the dissolution of USSR and new reforms, Maya is now expected to help teachers use strategies from Anglo-American educational reforms. For example, to help teachers deliver more student-centered instruction, she is expected to give more attention to teachers' professional development and encourage them to meet new instructional challenges with their peers. Maya is aware of the concept of teacher collaboration and its importance in school improvement. However, she sees formal meetings with teachers held two or three times a year as the time and strategy for teacher collaboration. Maya thinks that during these meetings, teachers can share their instructional concerns and help solve each other's problems. Maya also has some ideas about transformational leadership behaviors that can help establish a collaborative community, but she is very unsure of how to apply them as she has no past experiences or models to reference. Working from the bottom up is a new process for her, and Maya does not know where or how to begin. Having spent more time with rules and documents than interacting with teachers, she does not know how to act on her desire to promote a collaborative learning culture.

These two vignettes illustrate my research interests. I am interested in how principals support teacher trust and collaboration overall; I am particularly interested in understanding differences in how principals may do this in Anglo-American versus post-Soviet contexts. Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in two different settings. I wish to use these understandings to identify what the early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration may look like in post-Soviet contexts seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices.

School principals in Azerbaijan, are perceived as being middle managers in a top-down system (Magno, 2009). They are not trained to focus on collaboration, instructional improvement, shared leadership, and greater equity; therefore, Azerbaijani teachers have a lack of experience and knowledge on how it is vital for their teaching practices to get more student learning outcomes. Moreover, teachers are not aware of how to collaborate and what forms of collaboration exist. Also, working mostly in isolation and following the centrally prescribed curriculum and instruction manuals make Azerbaijani teachers closed off to sharing their experiences and knowledge with their colleagues, causing distrust among the community. This suggests why developing trust and collaboration in these contexts involves different starting positions than those assumed in the leading literature.

Little research has been done on how principals in post-Soviet contexts are developing teacher trust and collaboration and what important first steps look like. As observed by Niyozov (2004) “long subjected to top-down approaches where their knowledge and wisdom are largely ignored” school principals in these countries have limited training or preparation on how to build trust and collaboration in their schools (p. 57). Principals do not have much guidance or support on how to extend their leadership behaviors from managerial to more transformational actions that support organizational change (Magno, 2009; Mikayilova & Kazimzade, 2016).

Research Questions

The study is organized around the following research questions:

1. How do school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S. develop teacher trust and collaboration?
 - a. What leadership orientations and behaviors do they draw on?
 - b. What challenges do they describe?

- c. What do they identify as the most important first steps in developing a collaborative school culture? What organizational conditions do they focus on?
2. How do Georgian and U.S. teachers describe teacher trust and collaboration in their school? What principal supports for trust and collaboration do they point out?
3. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers compare?
4. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers inform the development of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet and other traditionally vertical school structures and cultures?

Definitions of the Key Terms

The study employs the following key terms to guide a reader better. The study defines them in a way how they are understood and presented in this study:

Principal Leadership

Principal leadership is a set of specific behaviors that can lead to teachers' instructional improvement through teacher trust and collaboration.

Trust

Trust is accomplished between school principals and teachers by establishing respect, reliability, honesty, and openness. This definition combines elements of Bryk and Schneider's (2002) and Tschannen-Moran's (2014) definitions of trust.

Teacher Collaboration

Activities engaging teachers in sharing their teaching experiences and knowledge to achieve shared values and beliefs as well as to develop practices that improve students' achievements.

Vertical School Structure

A school organizational context, common to post-Soviet countries, where hierarchical authority and managerial leadership dominates. The structure of the school organization is more centralized, resulting in several drawbacks. Being on the top of a vertical school structure can leave the school principal much less visible and connected to other members of the community. Having fixed layers between the administration, teachers, students, and parents can lead to miscommunication as in “broken telephone game.” In addition to miscommunication, the layered school context fosters weaker and less transparent relationships between leaders and teachers and members of the school generally.

Soviet Mindset

By the Soviet mindset, the study captures several psychological characteristics associated with living under the Soviet system (Cengel, 2016; Ghedrovici & Ostapenko, 2013). These include feeling persistently scrutinized, judged, or criticized, feeling unsafe from accusation, and not trusting people in authority. In the case of teachers, this can mean feeling observed and judged, feeling snitched on, feeling defensive and not trusting others. It can lead to a school culture that is toxic with fear and distrust.

Toxic School Culture

The study defines the toxic culture as a school culture where there is a high level of fear and distrust among the school community and a fragmented environment where teachers are not willing to share their knowledge with colleagues. There may also be resistant to new ideas and innovative teaching practices to improve instruction. In addition to a fragmented school environment, the toxic culture might have some community members who act against colleagues by spying on them or speaking ill of them to their leaders.

Egalitarian School Context

A school organizational context that is formally hierarchical but has strong egalitarian norms of professional respect and equality that flattened the school organization. School leaders are more collegial and inclusive with other members (i.e., teachers, students, and parents) of the school. As leaders, they work more through relationships than formal authority. Principals are visible and have more open and honest communications with school members. They seek the views of teachers and others in the decision-making process.

The Anglo-American Approach or Western Experiences to Education

It delineates a set of features to grasp its meaning in this study better. For example, having a more egalitarian level of school organization, sharing more power among the community members, involving teachers in decision-making, having student-centered classes focused on more developing critical thinking in students, and also, establishing a teacher collaborative learning community to gain more student learning outcomes.

The Significance of the Study

To manage the challenges of innovative teaching practices, research demonstrates that teachers need opportunities to interact with peers to share experiences and ideas (Leithwood, & Seashore-Louis, 2011). DuFour and Mattos (2013) emphasize school principals' crucial role in establishing a collaborative learning environment and state that school principals who develop a collaborative community are more likely to have positive school cultures, higher student engagement and higher student test scores (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Many educational reforms in Azerbaijan and other post-Soviet countries now consider teacher professional development and collaboration to be vital (Karimova, Kazimzade, & Silova, 2014; Niyozov, 2004; Silova, 2010).

The study aims to describe and understand school principals' actions to develop teacher trust and collaboration with specific attention to early steps and organizational conditions. It studies principals in two countries: the U.S. and post-Soviet Georgia, as a way to identify differences between school principals' actions and contexts with more democratic, egalitarian and bottom-up conditions versus more bureaucratic, vertical and top-down conditions. Georgia's education system is similar in the background as Azerbaijan but has established a U.S. developed educational leadership department in one of its prestigious universities. Alumni who have become school principals are now working to apply knowledge about teacher trust and collaboration in their schools.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the importance of teacher trust and collaboration to influence teachers' practices and students' achievements. Also, the chapter introduced school principals' crucial roles in establishing a collaborative school culture. Further, two different vignettes were presented to reflect an understanding of how different school contexts, more specifically egalitarian versus vertical, influence the establishment of teacher trust and collaboration. The chapter presented the purpose of the study, which was focused on describing and interpreting how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in two different contexts. These understandings can shed light on early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration that might look like in post-Soviet Azerbaijan seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices. The study also defined key terms to guide a reader through the research better.

Organization of the Dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation is organized into the following chapters: *Chapter 2* presents a review of the literature on the importance of school leadership, trust and collaborative learning in schools; *Chapter 3* delineates the study's design, sample, and methodology; *Chapters 4-6* describes findings from the Georgia school, the Michigan middle school, and the Michigan high school, respectively. *Chapter 7* offers a cross-case analysis and discussion, and *Chapter 8* offers summary conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature shares an understanding of the importance of teacher trust and collaboration for better teacher instruction to reach learning outcomes. The chapter starts with a discussion of evolving conceptions of effective school leadership and other school leadership roles. The first part of the chapter presents research findings on how leadership roles have an impact on school effectiveness through teachers' practices supporting students' achievements. Then, it turns to the importance of trust in schools. Various research findings suggest that trust is crucial for promoting teachers' professional development through sharing of their practices and experiences. Next, I extend the discussion into thinking about the vital role of teacher collaboration, its forms, how and why collaboration leads to teacher learning and research findings on the importance of teacher collaboration. Further, the section details how school leaders support teacher collaboration and what challenges they can face while promoting it. I conclude this section with some limitations of teacher collaborations and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Finally, I propose a simple conceptual model of how school principals may work and learn to support teacher trust and collaboration.

Part I. Conceptions of Effective School Leadership

Managerial Leadership

Before the 1980s, the predominant role of school principals was managerial, and the political nature of schooling led them to maintain the status quo (Hallinger, 1992) mostly. The managerial view of school leadership expected principals to be responsible for daily operations such as decision-making, supervision, hiring and firing staff, and student discipline (Glassman, 1984; Myers & Murphy, 1995). School principals were assertive disciplinarians involved in school safety (Eberts & Stone, 1988), providing the schoolwide schedule, monitoring teachers,

and doing paperwork (Rosenblatt & Somech, 1998). The literature suggests that if school principals fulfilled their managerial tasks with competence, then principals were considered effective (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

The Effective School Era of School Leadership

Modern understanding of the importance of principal leadership is often linked to the “effective schools” period over the 1970 and 1980s. Researchers started to compare “effective schools” that were successful in educating all students regardless of their socioeconomic status or family background, and “ineffective” schools that were not (Lezotte, 2001). The key idea behind school effectiveness was that schools mattered and made a difference in student development (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Reynolds & Creemers, 1990). Studies related to the effective schools’ movement noted that there was never weak leadership in these schools, suggesting the importance of principal leadership (Sammons, Thomas, & Mortimore, 1997). In a review of effective schools research, Lezotte (2001) presented several essential components of effective schools.

First, the primary purpose of these schools was to accomplish schoolwide instruction. Therefore, the principal acted as an instructional leader to communicate the schoolwide mission to staff, parents, and students. Also, the principal understood and applied the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program. Second, in effective schools, there was a clearly described mission providing the staff with a clear understanding of the school’s goals and accountability. Third, effective schools were responsible for providing a safe and orderly environment for both teaching and learning. Fourth, a climate of high expectations leads to the belief that all students can learn. Next, students’ progress was frequently monitored and measured to improve curriculum and student performances. Sixth,

parent-school relationships, in which parents demonstrated their understanding and supported the school to achieve its mission, were considered positive and vital. Finally, effective schools provided students with opportunities to learn within sufficient time. In the provided time, students were supposed to be actively engaged in the learning process, creating conditions for mastering the objectives of the curriculum.

The Emergence and Development of Instructional Leadership

Looking at the list of characteristics of effective schools above, one can see school principals presented as “instructional managers.” The early literature has a lack of agreement on the definition of instructional managers or leaders, as many studies delineated various behaviors performed by effective school principals (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger, 2005; Sammons et al., 1997). For example, Tyack and Hansot (1982) described instructional leaders as more focused on teaching rather than bureaucratic tasks. Principals were presented as working directly with teachers to help them improve and guide instruction and curriculum (Cuban, 1983; Hallinger, 2005). Principals were also described as being responsible for defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and creating a positive school climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). For example, in their study of *The Instructional Management Role of the Principal*, Bossert et al. (1982) found that the involvement of school principals in classroom management was necessary for school improvement. They characterized the school principal as actively involved in supporting teachers with discipline problems and buffering the instructional core from disruptions. According to the authors (Bossert et al., 1982), effective school principals were strong instructional managers who were aware of learning problems in the classroom and were responsible for allocating resources effectively. Bossert et al. (1982) described effective principals as providing support to instructional programs, defining instructional goals, frequently

visiting classrooms, setting high academic expectations, and being involved in creating incentives for students' learning.

Despite a lack of a common definition of “instructional leadership” among early studies, one can observe some general findings on this type of effective school leadership. First, with its emergence (Edmonds, 1979), instructional leadership was conceived as a role carried out by the school principal (Dwyer, 1986; Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). This role of the school leader focused primarily on the improvement of student academic outcomes and also, successful adoption of school reforms (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990; Leitner, 1994). Moreover, instructional leaders presented a goal-oriented mindset, defining a clear direction for the school, and motivating others. Also, they used strong instructional leadership skills to align the strategies and activities of the school with the school's academic mission. In addition, they were viewed as culture builders seeking to foster high expectations and standards for students, as well as for teachers (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Thus, instructional leaders were focused not only on leading teachers and instruction but also on managerial tasks including coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing a curriculum (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Dwyer, 1986; Hallinger et al., 1996; Heck, 1993).

Modern Understandings of Instructional School Leadership

The more recent research literature also presents a number of definitions and characteristics pointing to the importance of instructional school leadership role in promoting effective teaching and student learning. For example, Hallinger (2003) proposes a framework of instructional school leadership that includes a) defining the school's mission (framing and

communicating the school's goals), b) managing the instructional program (the coordination and control of instruction and curriculum), and c) promoting a positive school-learning climate (protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and student learning) (Hallinger, 2003, p. 332).

Robinson (2010) has added some key leadership capabilities to the definition of instructional leadership. They are: using in-depth leadership content knowledge, solving complex school-based problems, and building relational trust with staff, parents, and students. She sees these as interrelated with each other to support, directly or indirectly, students' outcomes (p.5).

Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) also presented three factors defining effective instructional leaders. The first factor of an instructional leader is the one who focuses on the mission and goals of the organization. The second factor is how school principals encourage teachers to collaborate and build trust in the school community. The third factor defines effective instructional leaders as actively supporting schoolwide instructional improvement (p. 34-35).

Those above and many other studies were developed in response to new accountability policies, pressing schools to reduce the achievement gap. These studies also sought to find connections between principal leadership and student achievement. Pivotal research sponsored by the Wallace Foundation suggested: "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 3). Findings on school principals' influence on student learning suggest that they have a direct impact on teachers' instruction and thus, an indirect impact on student learning outcomes. The literature also indicates that the central attention of school principals should be supporting teachers' instruction through establishing teacher trust and collaboration (Bryk et al., 2010; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011; Louis, Leithwood,

Wahistrom, Anderson, Michlin, & Mascal, 2010; Moye, Henkin, & Egley, 2005; Slegers, Bolhuis, & Geijssels, 2005; Wallace, 2007; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Over the past decade, the focus of instructional school leadership has shifted from being top-down to being more shared with teachers (Hallinger, 2003; Spillane, Hallett, & Diamond, 2003). Specifically, school principals are encouraged to engage in leadership that shares and distributes responsibilities for setting goals and leading the instructional program with teachers (Bryk et al., 2010; Gunter & Ribbins, 2003). Shared leadership operates in a decentralized structure, giving school principals a formal role in guiding and distributing the responsibilities among teachers (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Louis et al., 2010; Supovitz et al., 2010). Studies show that shared leadership has a considerable impact on reducing teacher isolation (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008), which leads to professional discussions on shared instructional practices among teachers (Copeland, 2003; Spillane, 2003). Research also suggests that increased teacher participation has a significant and positive effect on school improvement (Mayrowetz, Murphy, Seashore-Louis, & Smylie, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Studies based on this perspective have also found shared instructional leadership to have the most significant effect on students' achievement (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Marks & Printy, 2003; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

From Transactional to Transformational Leadership

Literature also suggests transactional and transformational leadership types that contribute immensely to the general wellbeing of organizations (Koontz & Weihrich, 2012; Robbins & Coulter, 2007). Different in concept and practice, transactional and transformational leadership influences their followers to achieve organizational goals in various ways (Avolio,

2011; Koontz & Weihrich, 2012; Robbins & Coulter, 2007). The next section discusses the differences between these two types of leadership styles to understand better their roles in achieving organizational goals.

Transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is a set of behaviors (i.e., negotiating, organizing, coordinating, or monitoring) that work through formal and informal reward systems (Urlick, 2016). Transactions between leaders and followers occur when a leader rewards a follower for his or her performance or behavior by offering a contingent reward. A contingent reward transaction appears when “a leader assigns or secures agreements on what needs to be done and promises rewards, or rewards others, in exchange for satisfactorily carrying out the assignment” (Avolio, 2011, p. 63). Another reward type is management-by-exception, which can be passive-unless a problem arises and rewards are given for stability, or active, where a leader is actively involved in detecting errors and arranging the necessary steps to overcome the existing challenges.

Transactional leaders motivate their followers by putting their self-interests first (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). They are less engaged in changing the organizations and more concerned with maintaining a stable culture that avoids risk (Bass, 1985). A great example of transactional leadership is described in Gawande’s (2007) book *Better*. The author introduces two friends, a microbiologist, and an infectious diseases specialist. As a team, they worked hard on minimizing the spread of diseases in the hospital. According to Gawande (2007), each year, two million people catch an infection while they are in the hospital. The team found that infections were often spread by doctors who did not wash their hands as often as necessary. Getting only minimal compliance with some incentives, the doctors were asked to wash their hands more frequently. As a result, hand cleaners were installed in many places in the hospital to

make available for doctors and save their time. The provided example shows how the team took the transactional leadership initiatives through the active form of management-by-exception, as the doctors were able to detect and solve the problem that the hospital was facing for a long time. As a hypothetical example, another story takes place in a school setting in which a school principal also takes a transactional leadership role. Being in his mid-career as a school leader, Andrew often has individual meetings with the staff to get to know their concerns. Through those meetings, Andrew was able to detect some teachers' challenges who were new to the school and did not have any teaching experiences. Taking the passive form of transactional leadership helped Andrew build trust between him and the teachers leading him to identify that the teachers had a hard time to plan effective lessons to engage the students. After detecting the problem, he takes the active form to respond to their concerns in a meaningful way. So, building on the novice teachers' concerns, Andrew decided to pair them with more experienced teachers through involving them in collaboration, and also, he provided them with a certain amount of time to help them get some experience in designing effective lessons. The example illustrates that there is a transaction between the school principal and teachers by providing time for collaboration in exchange they produce joint work.

The above hypothetical example shows that a transactional leader can establish trust through the creation of mutual agreements between a leader and followers. To be specific, the transactional leader tends to acquire "conditional" trust (Bass, 1985; Meyerson, Weick, & Kramer, 1996), which is built through the process of rewarding the followers in exchange for their performances. A transactional leader motivates and provides appropriate rewards to be conditionally trusted by their followers. In this case, the transactional leaders do not concentrate on establishing a deep sense of trust and commitment to the follower. They need trust only for

motivating the followers to do their job to avoid the punishments (Bass, 1985). In doing so, transactional leaders work with their followers to meet their current needs as in Andrew's case (i.e., hypothetical example). Consequently, transactional leadership is not involved in the leader's commitment to followers' personal development, the establishment of higher levels of trust between the followers, or between the transactional leader and their followers (Podsakof, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).

In sum, one can see some strengths and limitations of transactional leaders. For example, transactional leaders promote compliance by considering the followers' needs. In doing so, they establish clear standards to get their job done. Also, to motivate followers and involve them achieving the aim, transactional leaders build a basic level of trust through reliably executing the tasks (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Alongside with the strengths, transactional leadership role has its limitations. For example, as in Andrew's case (i.e., hypothetical example), he is not involved in creating more leaders; he is concerned with followers understanding the vertical structure of the organization. Also, as previously mentioned, transactional leadership is more involved in building a conditional trust depending on the followers' current needs assisting them to perform the job well (Avolio, 2011). Consequently, transactional leaders never inspire the followers, never challenge them, and never build the highest level of trust among the followers (Avolio, 2011), leading one to think about another type of leadership.

Transformational leadership. Transactional leadership provides a basis for developing transformational leadership, which seeks new opportunities and ways of working in the face of risk (Avolio, 2011).

Transformational leadership is a prominent approach that emerged in response to a dramatic set of conditions requiring organizations to radically reinvent themselves (Dansereau,

Yammarino, & Markham, 1995). Avolio (2011) describes a transformational leader who values the organization and members over self. Transformational leaders aim to change the organizational culture by implementing new strategies, engaging their followers, and focusing on their intrinsic needs to achieve goals (Hay, 2012). In addition, transformational leaders involve their employees in achieving goals through higher ideals and moral values.

According to Bass and Avolio (1993), organizational reinvention processes can be implemented through transformational leadership behaviors known as four I's: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio, 2011). *Idealized influence* is a way for transformational leaders to be role models for their followers. They are admired and respected. Also, transformational leaders *intellectually stimulate* their followers and support their efforts to be innovative and creative while confronting the problems. "Followers, in turn, stimulate the leader to reconsider tried-and-true assumptions, helping leader and organization avoid going over cliffs" (Avolio 2011, p. 61). Next, transformational leaders display enthusiasm and optimism to *motivate and inspire* followers who are involved in various future states. Finally, transformational leaders offer individual consideration; they pay special attention to each individual's needs and accomplishments through being a coach, mentor, or facilitator (Avolio, 2011).

A significant expansion from transactional leadership, transformational leadership is one step ahead, involved in motivating others and raising levels of identification and moral maturity. Over time, transformational leaders seek to develop followers into leaders (Avolio, 2011). Avolio (2011) underscores that transactional and transformational leadership types have many connections and correlations. Transactions clearly form the base for more mature interactions

between leaders and followers over time. For example, without transactional support, expectations, and directions are often unclear, and goals are ambiguous.

Transformational leadership is argued to be a more effective leadership approach than a transactional one (Avolio, 2011). In their research, Steinwart and Ziegler (2014) explored the former Apple CEO, Steve Jobs, as a leader who inspired and motivated his followers to achieve higher organizational goals by demonstrating transformational leadership behaviors. The authors (Steinwart & Ziegler, 2014) compare the practical remembrances of Jobs at the time of his passing to the theoretical discourse of transformational leadership. The researchers found that Jobs demonstrated transformational leadership behaviors through being creative, passionate, innovative, and visionary. However, they pointed out that some interpersonal characteristics, such as empowering and interacting with employees, were missing from his leadership behaviors. Providing this example, the researchers emphasized the importance of involving followers in achieving organizational goals but noted how transformational leaders could have some missing characteristics. For Steinwart and Ziegler (2014), the transformational leader is described as a leader who motivates his followers by demonstrating some personal traits. However, Walumbwa and Hartnell (2011) study the correlation between transformational leadership behaviors and self-efficacy of their followers. They found that transformational leaders could inspire and motivate followers by developing supervisor-employee relationships, leading to employee's self-efficacy and improving their job performances.

Another example comes from Kovjanic, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke and Van Dick (2012). Their findings proposed that transformational leadership could shape employee's attitudes and behaviors through three basic psychological needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The authors state that the three basic needs are necessary for the employee's job

satisfaction as well as successful work outcomes. Kovjanic et al. (2012) note that employee's need for competence is enhanced through transformational leadership and self-efficacy.

Employee's need for relatedness is fulfilled through the link between transformational leadership and commitment to the leader. As for the need for autonomy, the researchers point out that there is a link between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and autonomy. Taken together, this study shows how transformational leadership can be integrated with self-determination theory (Kovjanic et al., 2012) to fulfill the employee's needs to achieve organizational goals. One of the strengths of this study is that it presents some key ideas of how leadership-training programs consider strategic planning to cultivate influential transformational leaders.

Principal transformational leadership. Having had a powerful impact on the restructuring process of organizations, transformational leadership was soon explored in the context of school restructuring reforms during the 1990s (Hallinger, 2003; Louis & Marks, 1998). Principals who are transformational leaders offer teachers a climate for professional growth and a sense of community by encouraging them to interact and collaborate. Also, principals tend to frequently communicate missions and provide opportunities for innovation and change (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Moolenaar, Daly, & Slegers, 2010). Additionally, transformational school leaders are involved in shared leadership (Koh, 1992; Ling, Simsek, Lubatkin, & Veiga, 2008; Moriano, Molero, Topa, & Mangin, 2014; Zacharatos, Barling, & Kelloway, 2000). This type of leadership in education has also been shown to have a more positive impact on the levels of trust than transactional leadership (Koh, 1992), which is one of the vital indicators to make effective organizational changes (Ling et al., 2008; Moriano et al., 2014; Zacharatos et al., 2000).

A number of empirical studies have examined the impact of transformational leadership in education. For instance, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) carried out a large-scale quantitative study involving 655 primary schools. This study substantially adapted Bass' (1985) transformational leadership construct into the educational environment. Their research examined the effects of transformational leadership practices on organizational conditions and students' engagement in school. They found that transformational school leadership had a significant impact on teachers' collaboration and motivated stronger teachers to interact with weaker teachers. These findings were similar to other large-scale studies of principal leadership effects. However, the research did not find a significant effect on student engagement.

In addition, Marks and Printy (2003) considered an integrated model of school leadership that accepts both transformational and instructional roles to improve curriculum and instruction. The quantitative study examined how collaboration between school principals and teachers can improve teacher instruction, leading to raising the quality of teaching and student success. The study conducted in twenty-four nationally selected restructured schools (i.e., eight elementary, eight middle, and eight high schools). The findings present the importance of transformational leadership; however, this leadership does not solely support teacher instruction. Given that, the study finds the integrative role of transformational and shared instructional leadership, which considerably influences both teaching and student learning.

In their meta-analytic review, Leithwood and Sun (2012) synthesized the results of seventy-nine studies to find out the impact of a transformational leadership role on school organization, teachers, and students. The synthesis was accomplished by comparing results with earlier systematic reviews of published transformational school leadership research. They looked at eleven leadership practices such: as developing widely shared visions and goals, holding high-

performance expectations, providing individualized support, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, strengthening school culture, building collaborative structures, providing a community focus, focusing on instructional development, and offering rewards. The findings of the study suggested that these TSL practices have moderately strong and positive effects on teachers' behaviors and internal states. Transformational leadership practices also had a small but significant positive impact on student achievements.

Further, in his meta-analysis, Chin (2007) also suggested that transformational school leadership has a positive impact on school effectiveness. Using meta-analysis, the researcher synthesized twenty-eight independent studies to explore the relationship between transformational school leadership and teacher job satisfaction, school effectiveness, and student achievement. The results of the analyses indicated that transformational school leadership has positive effects on all three.

Summary

Educational research, described above, on school leadership, presents a set of shifting school leader roles moving from managerial to more instructional and transformational approaches focused on increased student learning and achievements. Early research showed that managerial school leaders were decision-makers, responsible for hiring and firing staff, supervision, and student discipline (Glassman, 1984; Myers & Murphy, 1995).

Also, the research findings show how the effective schools' movement changed school leader roles towards being more instructional. Principals were responsible for defining instructional goals, setting high academic expectations, providing support to instructional programs, frequently visiting classrooms, and creating incentives for students' learning (Bossert et al., 1982). These principals focused on instructional management tasks such as controlling,

supervising and developing curriculum and instruction (Bossert et al., 1982; Dwyer, 1986).

The roles of instructional leaders, however, have been shifted due to educational reforms, making school leadership a shared responsibility among teachers (Hallinger, 2003; Spillane et al., 2003). The modern instructional leader is engaged in leading schools through shared leadership to meet school goals, (Bryk et al., 2010; Gunter & Ribbins, 2003), and they are viewed as having the significant effect on student achievements and teacher instruction.

Apart from managerial and instructional school leadership, the research findings present other types of school leadership known as transactional and transformational. These leaders contribute immensely to the general wellbeing of organizations (Robbins & Coulter, 2007). Transactional leaders are more managerial by influencing and motivating their followers through rewards and punishments (Urlick, 2016). On the contrary, transformational leaders, which are one step ahead from transactional ones for their effectiveness, are responsible for changing the organizations' culture through their behaviors are known as four I's (i.e., idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) (Avolio, 2011).

Part II. Developing Norms of Collaboration in Schools

Trust as a Foundation to Collaboration

Earlier in *Chapter I*, the study presented the purpose of this research, which was to find out how school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S. develop teacher trust and collaboration. Specifically, the study aimed at describing and interpreting how school leaders build teacher trust and collaboration in two different contexts: vertical and egalitarian. The understandings will be used to identify what the early stages of leadership support for teacher

trust and collaboration may look like in post-Soviet contexts, seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices.

Why Trust Matters to Teacher Collaboration and Learning

Several early attempts to implement a collaborative decision-making process in schools had disappointing results (Bartunek & Keys, 1979; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). Teachers and parents complained that they were not given any real influence over school decisions (Bartunek & Keys, 1979; Bacharach, Bauer, & Shedd, 1988; Conway, 1984; Duke, Showers, & Imber, 1980). Based on these studies, principals seemed not to trust teachers or parents and decided not to involve them in the decision-making process. Having a low level of trust in a school community leads to teacher resentment, as their influence is limited over decisions (Bartunek & Keys, 1979; Duke et al., 1980). Therefore, a number of researchers in their longitudinal analysis of successfully restructuring schools considered human resources such as trust and respect among four other factors critical to the development of collaboration in a school's organization. These other four factors are teacher knowledge, teacher skills, supportive leadership, and openness to improvement (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Newmann, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; 2004).

The Definitions of Trust in Different Educational Studies

Seeing the importance of trust in school organizations, many educational researchers presented various definitions of it in the literature (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hayward, 2011; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). For example, Bryk and Schneider (2002) described a set of criteria such as respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity to define relational trust (p. 102). The authors emphasize the importance of social respect among teachers, parents, and school leaders as vital in school reform. They consider that respectful exchanges happen

when people in the same community can listen to each other even when there is a disagreement. In doing so, the community members value each other's opinions leading to social exchanges that foster relational trust. However, Bryk and Schneider (2002) state that when community members feel stability and safety, their involvement in conversations may not be reflective or professional. Therefore, stability and safety may inhibit innovative activity by keeping individuals satisfied with their current situation (Smylie & Hart, 1999). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) also viewed trust as a multi-faceted construct, which has different phases, such as benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. In their studies, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) and Tschannen-Moran (2001, 2004) found that the five facets of trust have been shown between principals, teachers, students, and parents, contributing to the development of positive interpersonal relationships, creating conditions for students to learn. In his study, Hayward (2011) also identified respect as a critical factor for establishing trust within schools. For the researcher, when there is a respectful relationship among teachers in the school community, it leads to the establishment of trustful connections among the members and also, to listening to each other, though there is a lack of consensus among the parties. Building on the concept of respect, trust can be promoted among all the community members; for example, to build a trustworthy community, trust between student and teacher, teacher and parent, teacher and school administration (Bryk & Schneider, 1996).

How and Why Trust Helps Teachers Collaborate and Learn

Several studies have positively related trust to school effectiveness as well as a healthy climate among colleagues resulting in increased student test scores (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Tarter, 1995; Uline, Miller, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). Based on these studies, openness in the work climate, healthy interpersonal relationships, honest

communications tend to foster a trustworthy culture for all (Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996; Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994; Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989). Accordingly, healthy interpersonal relationships lead to more sharing and decision-making participation in schools and trusting mutual relationships (Sabo, Barnes, & Hoy, 1996). Trust in relationships may strengthen teacher collaboration, reduce conflicts and increase organizational commitments among all school personnel, and have a positive impact on the levels of confidence on teachers (Larson, Larson & LaFasto, 1989; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Empirical Findings on the Importance of Trust in Schools

A series of studies confirm the importance of trust in schools (Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Cosner, 2009; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). Goddard et al. (2009) conducted a quantitative study across 150 public schools in Michigan and found trust as a key predictor for schools' structure, and climate, teacher professionalism, and collaboration. The researchers tested the relationships between the levels of trust and student achievement as measured by state math and reading assessments. The findings suggest that when schools are characterized by having high levels of trust, teachers feel more responsible for their teaching practice, leading to gains in student academic achievement in elementary schools.

In her quantitative study, Tschannen-Moran (2001) also hypothesized a positive relationship between collaboration and trust across forty-five elementary schools within one large urban district. She (Tschannen-Moran, 2001) developed and used a trust and collaboration survey to measure collaboration and trust in three groups: 1) collaboration with the principal and trust in principals, 2) collaboration with colleagues and trust in colleagues, and 3) collaboration with parents and trust in parents. The results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between collaboration and trust among school community members (e.g., principals, teachers,

parents). Conversely, community members are reluctant to work closely when there is a lack of trust, making collaboration difficult. Cosner (2009) took the issue of trust and studied its impact on principals' capacity building.

Cosner (2009) examined the relationship between trust and capacity building among the principals across eleven high schools. Cosner (2009) conducted interviews with principals and collected school documents over eighteen months as part of their qualitative study. The study indicated that principals considered trust as a crucial element in the school community, and they were engaged in building school-wide trust. Principals were also involved in setting and enforcing the norms of interaction. To reinforce the norms for interaction, principals were focused on three main actions to promote the collegial trust in the school community. As one action, principals intended to increase interaction through department meetings, staff meetings, and site-based professional development. Also, principals initiated new interaction forums to increase interaction time through mentoring programs, teacher leadership, problem-solving groups, book clubs, and social events. Finally, principals were engaged in increasing collegial trust through interactive contexts such as strengthening staff responses to interpersonal conflict. Other interactive contexts included: introducing interdependent tasks into interactive settings, enhancing the leadership and facilitation skills within interactive environments, introducing risk into collective problem-solving tasks and establishing and communicating transparent processes and parameters for mutual decision making in advance of decision events (Cosner, 2009, p. 275). Another study conducted by Van Maele and Van Houtte (2009) saw trust as a crucial element among teachers.

In their quantitative study, Van Maele and Van Houtte (2009) aimed to find out the level of trust among teachers at the same school. Individual teachers' trust was measured with a five-

point scale and measured a general willingness to risk vulnerability as well as five facets (benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness) of trust developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999). The study covered eighty-four secondary schools in Denmark. The findings suggest that there is trust among teachers and students, teachers and parents, teachers with their colleagues, and teachers with their principals. More broadly, the study presents the evidence that teachers at their schools share a level of trust in their students, parents, colleagues, and principals, which signifies that teachers who work at the same schools share the equal level of trust with those four groups (i.e., teachers and students, teachers and parents, teachers with their colleagues, and teachers with their principals). Also, the current school culture, size, and composition affect the level of trust in schools. Therefore, the researchers see the characteristics as mentioned above, being influential in changing trust in schools.

The Role of School Principals in Fostering Teacher Trust

Several studies have indicated that principals are the main actors who positively influence and change the level of trust in schools (Bryk et al., 2010; Moye et al., 2005). More specifically, school principals' behaviors are the key indicators for teacher motivation, teacher job satisfaction, teacher learning, and teacher collaboration linked to their ability to building trust in the school community (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The studies suggest trust between a principal and a teacher positively impacts teachers' trust in their colleagues (Hoy, 1992; Kochanek, 2005). In turn, trust in colleagues can have a positive impact on students' academic achievements (Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011).

In her quantitative study, Tschannen-Moran (2009) found that the level of teacher trust is related to principal professionalism. Consequently, trust between a teacher and a principal's professionalism leads to trust among faculty, principals, parents, and students. The research

measured teachers' professionalism, principals' professional orientations, and faculty trust across eighty middle schools in a mid-Atlantic state. In this study, the professionalism of teacher was measured with a subscale of the School Climate Index, including four variables: the professional orientation of principals and the trust of faculty in principals, their colleagues, and their parents and students. The professional orientation of principals was assessed with the Enabling Structure Scale, and faculty trust was evaluated using the Faculty Trust Scales. The findings showed that teachers' perceptions of their colleagues' professionalism were strongly related to school administrators' professional orientation as well as trust in principals.

Using a naturalistic inquiry approach, Cranston (2011) examines how principals describe the nature of relationships and the presence or absence of relational trust among teachers and between a school administrator and teachers in a professional learning community. Participants were twelve school principals from urban, suburban, and rural communities in Manitoba, Canada. Based on the analysis, the relational trust appears to have the effect of promoting a willingness to collaborate and grow professionally. Also, the findings indicate that principals' knowledge, expertise, and determination to encourage PLCs will fail if the relational trust is not built in the school community (Cranston, 2011). Therefore, Cranston (2011) sees the importance of principals' work in nurturing trust, and he states that this is a continuous process that takes time and commitment.

In her 3-year qualitative study, Louis (2007) examined the centrality of trust that impacts teachers' desire to work with innovations introduced by the central office. The data were collected through individual interviews and focus groups in five schools. Initially, trust was not included in the study; rather, during the data collection; trust emerged as an unanticipated theme in most of the interviews. Therefore, the study revealed the importance of trust. The findings

indicated that principals' behaviors affect trust and their willingness to share leadership responsibilities (Louis, 2007). Also, schools with high levels of trust demonstrated more collective decision-making and improvements in student learning (Louis, 2007).

Summary

The early attempts to implement a collaborative decision-making process had disappointing results leading to mistrust among a school community (i.e., a school principal, teachers, and parents) (Bartunek & Keys, 1979; Malen et al., 1990). Having low-level of trust led teachers to be resentful as their decisions were limited (Bartunek & Keys, 1979). A great number of educational researchers, seeing the importance of trust, defined trust in different ways as a multi-faceted construct (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). For example, Bryk and Schneider (2002) described trust as involving respect, competence, and personal regard for others as well as integrity. Another definition comes from Tschannen-Moran (2004), who also viewed trust as a multi-faced construct. For the researcher, trust is understood through benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness.

A series of studies confirmed the importance of trust in a school community (Cosner, 2009; Goddard et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; 2009; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). These studies have found that trust positively impacts teacher collaboration leading to student achievements. Further, reviews see the vital role of school leaders in building a certain level of trust changing in a school community (Bryk et al., 2010; Cranston, 2011; Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; 2009).

Part III. The Importance of Teacher Collaboration

Throughout the decades, studies focused on school effectiveness made it clear that the positive and professional relationships among the staff foster both teachers' and students'

learning (Barth, 2006; Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). The research also revealed an increasing pressure on teacher collaboration by school principals and central offices since collaboration had a positive effect on teachers' professional development and student learning (Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). Studies on teacher collaboration present a number of reasons for the importance of building a collaborative environment in schools. The foremost reason is that collaboration helps to successfully improve teaching practices, implement innovative methods to teaching, and focus on more student-centered instruction (Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche, & Gijbels, 2003; Meirink, 2007; Shipley, 2009; Slavit, Kennedy, Lean, Nelson, & Deuel, 2011). Based on the results from The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013, schools that promote teacher collaboration are using more innovative teaching practices through different forms of collaboration such as working in small groups or teams, Critical Friends Groups, and also, these teachers demonstrate more teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy. According to TALIS (2013) results, Finland has high performance in education because of its high level of teacher collaboration in schools. Establishing a collaborative school culture assist teachers to acquire collaborative skills that help them develop personal responsibilities, effective interpersonal skills, and teamwork skills. Students also benefit from observing teacher collaboration as they prepare to enter the labor market (Coke, 2005; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010).

Teacher Collaboration and Collective Learning

Collaboration also influences teachers' collective learning. Argyris and Schön (1978) were the first who focused on the importance of collective inquiry to know how organizational members learn through an iterative process or reflection. They developed a series of influential

theories on the collective learning process: espoused theories of action, theories-in-use, single, and double-loop learning. Espoused theories of action are about the routines and practices that represent collective knowledge and the beliefs of members guiding organizational behavior. Theories-in-use is implicit sets of logics and assumptions among organizational members about how things occur. For example, adding more time is a common theory-in-use by teachers in response to weak student learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Schein, 1993). Argyris and Schön (1978) describe single-loop learning as a behavioral change, and it is used to correct errors within an organization, which does not impact an organization's beliefs, values, or policies guiding the organization. Therefore, in many cases, schools engage in single-loop learning. However, in double-loop learning, the learning process covers the entire organization and affects its core. Also, double-loop learning highlights the idea of learning that can enhance the collective learning, bringing about more positive change.

Educational practitioners have explored both single- and double-loop learning theories by Argyris and Schön to get a deep insight into how the two learning theories foster continuous collective learning. The concept of double-loop learning is specifically identified to actively support effective instructional practices in the entire school system (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2010). Shared commitment and schoolwide collaborative activity are crucial to enhance collective learning (Marks & Louis, 1999). Silins and Mulford (2002) also contend that a trusted collaborative school environment promotes collective learning for continual improvement. In their study on creating professional communities through collective learning, Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) argued that double-loop learning was a vital element to fostering and sustaining a professional and collaborative community. The findings of a two-year qualitative case study demonstrate that double-loop learning as a theory leads to the integration

and dissemination of new and expert knowledge; therefore, the authors argue that double-loop learning is invaluable if professional communities and collaborative learning are continuously engaged in learning (Scribner et al., 1999).

Forms of Collaboration

The reviewed literature shows that there is no common definition for collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2015), and very often these studies confuse the terms: collaboration, cooperation, and collegiality (Crow & Pounder, 2000; Fulton & Britton, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2006). To give an example, the term collaboration is characterized as working together towards job-related purposes (James, Dunning, Connolly, & Elliott, 2007). However, in cooperation, partners divide the same work, and after completing it, they combine the results into the final version (Sawyer, 2006). Cooperation means that there is not collaboration and shared knowledge while doing the work. Also, different studies present the difference between collaboration and collegiality (Crow & Pounder, 2000; Fulton & Britton, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2006). Collaboration, as it has been mentioned earlier, is more about co-operative actions between partners, whereas collegiality is focused on having mutual sympathy in relationships and solidarity on dividing the work equally among colleagues (Bovbjerg, 2006; Datnow, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2006).

Building on the above, collaboration is about joint and shared work, in which everyone is involved to perform joint work for the same purposes and outcomes. A series of studies present various types of teacher collaboration demonstrating that it has no unique form (Crow & Pounder, 2000; Fulton & Britton, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2006; Vangrieken et al., 2015). For example, professional learning communities (PLCs) are described as the communities in which a group of teachers is concerned with professional endeavors together. Also, perceived as a school-

level construct, teachers come together to learn from their colleagues (Birenbaum, Kimron, & Shilton, 2011). PLCs can be divided into a community of practices or teams in which teachers share their ideas and knowledge through collaboration instead of working isolated (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Rone, 2009).

Another form of teacher collaboration is called communities of practice (CoP). The term first defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). Brouwer, Brekelmans, Nieuwenhuis, and Simons (2012) also defined CoPs as a teacher community in which “ a group of teachers who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision making, and share and build knowledge with a group identity, shared domain, goals and interactional repertoire” (p. 320). There are three dimensions to CoPs. They are mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1999). Mutual engagement creates relationships among community members, leading to sharing practices. As for a joint enterprise, it is more a collective process of negotiation rather than a shared sense of believing the same or agreeing with everything. The shared repertoire is a part of a community of practice that creates resources for negotiating tools, ways of doing things, actions, or concepts. In their definition of CoPs, Brouwer et al. (2012) refer to group identity as mutual engagement that involves members coming together. The shared domain is referred to as a joint enterprise, and shared interactional repertoire refers to shared practices.

A team is also considered a form of teacher collaboration. The term “team” is described and defined in a series of literature; for example, Katzenbach and Smith (2015) described a team as having a shared commitment and mutual accountability. In most cases, within the educational practice, teams are viewed as teaching staff whether they collaborate or not. Salas, Burke, and

Cannon-Bowers (2000) added one more characteristic of a team as an interaction focusing on a shared vision, which is crucial for collaborative school culture. Simply put, teams are viewed within school settings as a collection of individual teachers who interact to achieve the same goals and share the same responsibilities, although not all teams collaborate.

Another form of teacher collaboration is a group referring to a collection of individuals sharing a common social identity (Raes, Kyndt, Decuyper, Van den Bossche, & Dochy, 2015). Very often, the terms “team” and “group” were used interchangeably as they almost share the same characteristics (Main, 2007). However, the literature provides a slight difference in meaning between the two terms. For example, a team is more about common commitment and mutual responsibility, whereas the results of a group depend on the individual’s goals and accountabilities (Katzenbach & Smith, 2015).

The last form of teacher collaboration presented in this chapter is Critical Friends Groups (CFG), a structured, relaxed, and protocol guided conversation among teachers about teaching and learning. Teachers meet monthly to examine and discuss artifacts of classroom practice as a form of teacher-driven instructional management. The discussions around classroom practices help teachers reflect on their teaching practices and design professional development experiences that impact student learning (Curry, 2008; Kuh, 2016). The philosophical orientation of CFGs is that classrooms should be the center of school reform efforts, and teachers should lead to educational change (Curry, 2008).

How and Why Collaboration Leads to Teacher Learning

A growing body of research confirms that teacher collaboration has a positive impact on teaching and students’ academic success (Bertrand, Roberts, & Buchanan, 2006; Egodawatte, McDougall, & Stoilescu, 2011; Levine & Marcus, 2010; Slavit et al., 2011; Vescio et al., 2008,

Yisrael, 2008). The positive outcomes of collaboration may occur because of the developed shared norms, values, practices towards colleagues and students (Achinstein, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). A series of studies show that teachers who were involved in teacher collaboration demonstrate high levels of commitment to teaching to all students, high levels of motivation, and high levels of using innovative methods (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Teachers can be engaged in doing different things together while collaborating (Levine & Marcus, 2010). So, why and how do these collaborations lead to teacher learning? These questions were explored in many studies to better understand the importance of teacher collaboration in educators' professional growth and student achievement. Teachers learn in various ways depending on the form of collaboration of those mentioned earlier. For example, the findings from the case study by Levine & Marcus (2010) suggest that in communities of practice teachers engage in a shared activity or task over time, and the critical mechanism is to get an opportunity to observe, to discuss, and participate in shared practices. These communities of practice best work for novice teachers who have a chance to get support from experienced ones (Levine & Marcus, 2010). Also, the findings from Levine and Marcus (2010) suggest that teachers can improve their practice if there is more and transparent access to their colleagues' classes. Having transparency and frequent access to colleagues' classes lead to de-privatization of teaching practices, which is essential in the collaborative culture. In her study, Little (2002) also presented that peer observations, peer teaching, students' work examinations or even designing lesson plans help teachers learn and improve their teaching practices having an impact on students' learning. Also, the findings of the case study suggest that conversations regarding teaching practices should be ongoing, and if these conversations are focused on one particular aspect of teaching, for example, assessment, then after its improvement teachers can shift their

focus to something different that needs improvement. In doing so, teachers can modify their collaborative activity to address emerging needs (Levine & Marcus, 2010).

Moreover, Levine and Marcus (2010) state that to maximize the impact of teacher collaboration, teachers should consider whether to be involved in multiple forms of collaboration simultaneously or one kind of it. The authors emphasize that being engaged only in one type of collaboration may help teachers improve some aspect of teaching while leaving others totally unaddressed. However, being involved in various forms of collaboration, such as structured workshops or meetings, can be better for the improvement of teaching practices. Also, Levine and Marcus (2010) note that letting teachers develop comfort and capacity for a limited number of tools and approaches to instruction simultaneously is more advantageous.

In addition, teacher collaboration helps motivate teachers, decrease workload, have a positive impact on teacher morale, higher efficiency, increased communication, improved technological skills, reduced personal isolation, and more focus on student-centered instruction (Bertrand et al., 2006; Egodawatte et al., 2011; Slavit et al., 2011; Yisrael, 2008). Going back to the description of collaboration, one can see it as purposefully built interpersonal relationships and healthy interdependence, leading to giving and receiving help without forfeiting teachers' own accountability (Kelchtermans, 2006). When teachers come together around a shared vision to exchange information, resources, ideas, and expertise, teacher learning becomes more accessible. The following ideas come from different studies on how and why collaboration helps teachers learning, bringing to the fore the importance and effectiveness of establishing a collaborative culture in schools.

- ***Less Teacher Isolation:*** Having the opportunity to share ideas and information combats professional loneliness and frustration, which improves staff morale and professional satisfaction.
- ***Increased Academic Effort:*** Since teachers who collaborate on instruction are all on the same page, they can increase the level of academic rigor to match the core competencies they want students to meet.
- ***More effective or creative instruction:*** When teachers communicate and share ideas, they also share an enlarged repertoire of instructional strategies that encourage effective instruction. Colleagues may be influenced to try different approaches or have opportunities to help a peer with a new approach.
- ***Increased understanding of student outcomes:*** Teachers who collaborate are better equipped to make meaning of student learning outcomes and other data and more able to implement matched solutions.
- Teachers who collaborate have a sense of shared responsibility for celebrating success and analyzing failure (Cosner, 2011; Ermeling & Gallimore, 2013; Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013; Goddard et al., 2007).

Empirical Findings on the Importance of Teacher Collaboration in Schools

Most studies on teacher collaboration confirm that schools engaged in teacher collaboration have a positive school culture that everyone is involved in teaching and learning. These studies also indicate that teacher collaboration supports positive change in teachers' practices as well as in students' learning (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Sellinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Wayman, 2005).

The quantitative study by Supovitz (2002) demonstrated the importance of teacher collaboration on students' academic achievement. The study was conducted in seventy-nine schools (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools) in Cincinnati and Philadelphia where the reform efforts were focused on increasing students' academic success through the improvement of teachers' instructional practices. Supovitz (2002) compared the data between team-based and non-team-based teachers' instructional practices. The results were statistically different only in middle and high school teachers' instruction. The findings show that the students made more significant gains on tests with team-based teachers from compared to non-team-based teachers. Also, the teachers who were collaborating were more involved in school-related decisions, and there were high levels of collaboration with their peers than non-team based teachers. The author concluded that the teachers who were given the power to make decisions regarding their learning process played a crucial role in students' learning outcomes (Supovitz, 2002).

The next example comes from Strahan's (2003) 3-year case study conducted from 1997 to 2002 in three elementary schools and focused on improving low-income and minority student achievement. The study was aimed to explore the professional culture in three elementary schools. These schools focused on educational reform, requiring schools to focus on teachers' instructional improvements, which could result in students' academic success. Therefore, these elementary schools' target was to improve schoolwide instruction through teacher collaboration or professional communities. The research focused on collecting demographic and interviewing teachers, administrators, and observing classes and meetings at each elementary school. The findings show that the biggest and the most crucial change over these years was teachers' focus on what students can do academically, more specifically, what caused students to make progress. The results also showed that students became more confident since they could achieve more

compared to previous results. Moreover, the results demonstrated that each school accomplished reform in slightly different ways. For example, in one of the schools, teachers started their focus on increasing teacher collaboration to develop their literacy instruction. In the second school, teachers developed their schoolwide approach to teaching to improve students' literacy. In the third school, teachers created a professional learning community based on the national reform that helped participants improve their instruction. Though these schools were focused on different approaches to enhance their teaching, all the decisions regarding instruction were mainly based on collaboration and interaction with colleagues. By doing so, in all the three schools, teachers had grade-level meetings that were helpful to identify students' needs, and teachers were involved in developing strategies for instructional improvement. Finally, the results of the study suggested that teachers had a great sense of collective efficacy, and also, achievement tests results rose from 50% to 75%, demonstrating the improvement in teachers' instructional practices.

Another research comes from Phillips (2003), who conducted the case study in one of the urban middle schools funded to support significant school reform initiatives. To be specific, the funding was focused on the establishment of high-quality professional development. Being engaged in their learning, teachers focused on creating innovative curriculum programs to increase low-achievers or underachievers' results. The findings suggest an increase in students' test results during the five-year reform effort. Also, the results of the study present five key themes: high-quality professional development, research-based literature, shared leadership, collaborative processes, and context. All these key themes interchangeably related to each other represent the learning community.

Research by Dunne, Nave, and Lewis (2000) focused on a two-year qualitative study that

examined the impact of critical friends groups on teachers' practices. These groups were formed to engage teachers to work collaboratively to improve their instruction. The researchers used interview and observation data to compare the teaching practices between those who were not in CFGs and those who were involved in those groups. The results of the study suggest that the teaching practices of participants collaborating in CFGs are more student-centered, and also, observations demonstrate that participants became very flexible in using teaching techniques. For example, they were able to make changes in the pace of instruction to accommodate various levels of student content mastery. However, the researchers did not provide data about how teachers' practices were at the beginning of the study to compare the improvement in their instruction.

Goddard et al. (2007) quantitative study was among the first large-scale studies that purposed to find out the link between teacher collaboration and student achievement. The data were obtained from forty-seven public elementary schools through a survey assessing teacher collaboration and student data was obtained from the central administrative office. Overall, 452 teachers and 2,536 fourth-grade students were involved in participating. The empirical evidence indicates that fourth-grade students have higher achievements both in math and reading, where the schools are highly involved in teacher collaboration. The authors conclude that to improve students' success, teachers should be supported with opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues on issues related to curriculum, instruction, and professional development (Goddard et al., 2007).

In their two-year quantitative research, Ronfeldt et al. (2015) investigated the kinds of collaborations existing in instructional teams across 336 public schools in Miami-Dade County. The researchers intended to find out what types and what levels of teacher collaborations predict

students' achievement. In doing so, they presented high-quality collaboration as a construct that has de-privatization practice and shared norms and values (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996). The study is based on 9000 teachers' survey and students' administrative data. During 2010-2012, the researchers identified the following kinds of collaborations: general, instructional, students, and assessment. The two-year results show that schools having instructional teams engaged in better collaboration and had higher levels of students' achievement in both reading and math. The evidence suggests that instructional collaborations have positive effects on students' academic success. Also, findings indicate that 84% of all respondents identified as being a part of a team engaged in working and improving instruction, and 90 % of all respondents replied that these teams are helpful in their learning and improving instruction. Besides, it was found that average collaboration quality is related to student achievement, and finally, the results show that teachers engaged in high-quality collaboration were able to improve their instruction at higher rates (Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

In their study, Penuel, Riel, Krause, and Frank (2009) propose a social capital theory to analyze the role of formal and informal teacher interactions that can impact instructional improvement. The researchers used survey and interview methods to conduct the explanatory case study in two elementary schools in California, where the principals were willing to implement collaborative teacher learning to improve literacy instruction. The social capital theory puts forward the idea that social networks are connected with valuable resources and expertise, helping to make effective changes in teaching. By social networks, the authors mean meetings, staff rooms, hallways, and classrooms (Penuel et al., 2009). The teachers' community was presented in this study as a network in which the resources and expertise were, more or less, led to school improvement. Also, the research suggests that school leadership is vital in valuing

teachers' expertise, distributing resources, routines, and artifacts that facilitate teacher collaboration (Penuel et al., 2009).

Studies on the Importance of PLCs on Teachers' Instruction and Students' Achievement

PLCs are considered the most popular form of teacher collaboration in U.S. education. Therefore, U.S. k-12 schools are working towards creating strong and sustainable professional learning communities to increase students' achievement through improved teacher instruction (Thomson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Many educational researchers have proved the effectiveness of PLCs in teaching and learning (Vescio et al., 2008; Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Spillane, Shirrell, & Hopkins, 2016).

For example, Vescio et al. (2008) described PLCs as communities where knowledge was situated in teachers' daily experiences and through their critical reflections with others. This study is based on a review of ten American and one English research that presented evidence of PLCs on teacher instructional improvement and students' academic success. The findings of the reviewed literature showed that PLCs have a positive impact on teaching and students' learning. For example, teachers' intense participation in PLCs impacts teaching practices, and their instruction becomes more student-centered. Also, being involved in well-developed learning communities provided teachers with more authority, empowerment, and continuous learning opportunities. Another study by Berry et al. (2005) explored the effectiveness of PLCs in teachers' instructional improvement.

The four-year research in a rural elementary school by Berry et al. (2005) studied how teachers advanced the quality of their teaching by developing instructional strategies that lead to students' learning. Through a collaborative PLC structure, teachers were sharing their lessons, were using protocols to make teaching decisions, and were taking systemic notes to inform their

colleagues about their work. Also, through getting consultant support (i.e., a teacher trainer), teachers were involved in professional learning teams to solve and analyze problems from reading the school data. Moreover, the researchers observed how participants were watching a video presentation to get some ideas on different reading instruction strategies and were discussing their own experiences. The findings indicate that professional discussions and conversations led to the development of high levels of trust among the community members and constructed a culture of collaboration replacing traditional staff meetings in which teachers were only listening and were not empowered in any decisions to improve their instruction. Also, the teachers were given extra time for planning their classes, which helped them learn from one another. The researchers also observed that teachers were engaged in critical friends by inviting their colleagues to observe each other's classes, provide constructive feedback, analyze student work, and critique professional literature. Berry et al. (2005) concluded that during these years, student performance improved rapidly, moving from 50% performing at or above grade-level standards to more than 80%. The increased students' test scores suggested the importance of professional learning communities in teachers' professional development.

Within their comparative case study design, Coburn and Russell (2008) also show the importance of PLCs in supporting teachers' learning resulting in students' academic success. The authors state that both PLCs and coaching programs create conditions for teachers to interact with their peers to learn and implement more effective strategies. However, the study shared that not all collaborations and coaching programs were effective for teachers' learning. For example, the findings presented only high-quality collaborative learning and coaching initiatives could bring positive instructional changes. By high-quality interaction and coaching, the authors mean "interactions focused on the pedagogical principles underlying instructional approaches, the

nature of students' mathematical thinking, and an understanding of mathematical concepts" (p.

2). According to the researchers, teachers should be engaged in conversations about how students learn and what teachers can do to help them learn to ensure that coaching and PLCs support instructional improvement. Based on comparative case studies of two district schools, the research shows that the efficacy of coaching initiatives depends on how they are well-trained to provide the needed help for teachers. Finally, the study supports the importance of school leaders' roles in involving teachers in high depth conversations and also, identifying if the interactions are consistent with reform aims.

In their mixed-methods study that covered the 2012-2013 educational year, Spillane et al. (2016) analyzed survey and interview data to understand better how local educational policymakers redesigned the organizational structure of 14 elementary schools to support teacher collaboration. Initially, the school structures were more formal and vertical inhibiting the establishment of teacher collaboration (Spillane et al., 2016). After introducing the idea of PLCs to the fourteen elementary schools, school policymakers needed to reconsider a more informal and horizontal approach to school structure that worked better for PLCs (Spillane et al., 2016). More broadly, the researchers intended to explore the deployment of PLCs that were designed to support teachers' learning in a more bureaucratic school context. The findings show that being a member of PLC could help teachers structure the way of sharing their knowledge and experience with teaching mathematics. The researchers also discovered how two different structures, such as vertical and informal, could work in tandem to monitor the work of PLC. The evidence suggests that the close interaction of participants is associated with instructional changes in school culture. To be more specific, the researchers identified that teachers interacted with their colleagues daily to get advice about math; for example, they were getting some ideas about essential rationales for

curricular and instructional decisions. These interactions among the colleagues promoted the norms of de-privatization of instructional practice. The examination revealed that transparency in instructional practice evidenced how vertical structure fostered collegial arrangements supporting teachers' learning about mathematics instruction.

The reviewed literature also presents numerous studies on the main characteristics of PLCs, providing a better picture of how strong and effective learning communities can be established. For example, according to Kruse et al. (1994), the important hallmarks of well-developed professional learning communities aim to develop the collective reflection, standards and expectations, and formulations of plans. The study suggests that teachers feel support from their colleagues if the professional learning communities are strong in those schools. Based on the collected data, the authors concluded that five critical elements are conditions for sustainable and robust PLCs. They are reflective dialogue, deprivatization of practice, collective focus on student learning, collaboration, and shared norms and values (p. 160). Through reflective dialogue, teachers are involved in professional conversations about teaching strategies, students' learning, and development as well as curriculum. Also, teachers benefit from sharing or observing each other's instructions through peer coaching making their practices more transparent. Besides, PLCs are strong when teachers focus on student learning, and sustainable PLCs require teachers to be involved in mutual obligation to help students learn. Moreover, strong PLCs encourage teachers to work in close collaboration to get a deep insight into the shared understandings of students' learning, curriculum, and instructional policy helping to produce new approaches to teachers' professional development. Finally, teachers who join in PLCs should consider shared norms and values. These norms and values can be about students' ability to learn, time for collaboration, the roles of other actors such as parents, teachers, and

administrators in students' learning. Though the research does not mention why PLCs should consider the shared norms and values, one can imagine that sharing norms and values is crucial for effectively organizing PLCs.

School Principals' Support for Teacher Collaboration

In most studies, school principals are viewed as creating conditions for collective learning (Hargreaves, 1994; Kuh et al., 2011; Louis et al., 2010; Slegers et al., 2005; Wynn et al., 2007; Wallace, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), and the central task of school leadership is to establish and sustain effective learning in teachers and students (Borko, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fullan, 2002; Law & Glover, 2000; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008) through a set of leadership practices.

In their quantitative study, Silins, Mulford, and Zarins (2002) examine the nature of organizational learning and how leadership practices foster the learning process in Australian high schools. The project lasted from 1997 to 1999 and extended from 2000 to 2001 by the Australian Research Council. Ninety-six secondary schools were included in the project. The researchers' hypothesized that organizational learning provides the conditions to support school improvement, and these conditions are positively related to the level of total leadership that exists in the organization. The findings show that organizational learning occurs in schools when the staff is involved in increasing their knowledge and improving their skills as well as are provided with sufficient resources and time to develop professionally. Moreover, the results indicate that principals' transformational leadership practices both directly or indirectly influence every school in the study confirming school leaders' crucial role in restructuring schools and promoting organizational learning.

In her quantitative research, Demir (2008) investigated the direct relationship of

transformational leadership practices with collective teacher efficacy and also, the indirect relationship of the same type of leadership with collective teacher efficacy mediated by the self-efficacy of teachers and collaborative school culture. Survey data were collected from 66 elementary schools in Turkey. Overall, 218 teachers participated in the study. The findings show that the school principals' transformational leadership behaviors had a moderate relationship to collective teacher efficacy, the self-efficacy of teachers, and also, collaborative school culture. The study results support the previous studies findings confirming that transformational leadership had a strong positive influence on collective teacher efficacy, teachers' self-efficacy, and collaborative school culture.

In their 2-year quantitative research, Goddard, Goddard, Kim, and Miller (2015) hypothesize to what extent principals' instructional leadership may support teachers' instruction, and also, how school leadership and teacher collaboration may contribute to student learning through strengthening collective efficacy among teachers. The sample for this research includes ninety-three elementary schools in rural and high-poverty areas of a Midwestern state. The results of the study confirm the central hypothesis of the study. The researchers found that principals' instructional leadership strongly predicted the degree to which teachers collaborate to improve instruction. Based on the data, schools in which principals were involved in frequently monitoring instruction and providing strong instructional guidance were characterized by high levels of collective work. On the contrary, schools in which there were low-levels of instructional leadership were involved in the least frequent formal collaboration around instructional improvement. The results support the finding that school principal leadership had a significant and direct effect on teacher collaboration. Also, the results show that school principal leadership and teacher collaboration predicted collective beliefs of efficacy. Finally, the findings

suggest that strong instructional leadership can create conditions to facilitate teachers' work to strengthen organizational belief systems leading to student learning.

Challenges to Collaboration

The previous sections have reviewed the importance of teacher collaboration in teachers' and students' learning and also, essential factors for developing strong collaboration and effective PLCs. A closer look at the literature reveals, however, several challenges in teacher collaboration.

For example, it is widely recognized that providing time for teachers to collaborate and share their expertise effectively is critical. However, limited time minimizes having a sustainable teacher collaboration causing them to work in isolation (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2010; Hall & Hord, 2001; Vescio et al., 2008).

Teachers working in isolation and resisting to change is another critical factor inhibiting the work of collaborative learning. DuFour (2015) states, "The fact that American educators work in isolation rather than in collaborative teams has consistently been cited as a primary obstacle to improving student achievement since the 1970s" (p.9). Working in isolation and not willing to change mainly depends on educators' background, and if their instructional practices are teacher-centered and void of feedback or input from peers or students (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Hargreaves, 1994, 2000, 2003). Therefore, considering the learning as a continuous process taking place in people's minds can lead them to be defensive in most cases and being resistant to learn and change (Claxton, 1996).

Moreover, Andrews and Lewis (2007) state the importance of shared values and vision for the establishment of PLCs and collaborative learning in schools. However, more often teachers' preference is individual autonomy hindering a high level of collaboration (Gajda &

Koliba, 2008; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Somech, 2008). School principals need to consider individual autonomy as a sensitive issue for teachers, and to handle it; principals need to provide teachers with the feeling that they have the autonomy to make decisions or account for students' individuality (Hopkins, 2013). The sensitivity by school principals to teachers' autonomy will help manage and coordinate collaborative learning in schools.

Another major factor is a lack of resources for the development of PLCs, for example, in her research, Lohman (2006) reported that limited access to computer technology, the Internet and professional publications hindered teachers' informal learning. Therefore, a school principal should facilitate access to technology to support teachers to read professional publications they need in their professional development.

Having a lack of teaming skills also hinders teacher collaboration. In many cases, it is because of the limited experience of working in teams (Main, 2007). Thus, very often, it is problematic for teachers to collaborate without an understanding of how to work in teams and acquire new practices. In his study, Main (2007) could identify a list of skills necessary for teachers to work in teams and effectively collaborate. For example, process skills (team meeting protocols, decision-making skills, assigning team roles, setting team goals, setting team rules, setting team expectations, and evaluation of team process) and individual skills (commitment to the team, accountability, problem solving, communication skills, interpersonal skills, conflict management skills and self-evaluation skills) (p. 80).

Some Limitations of Research on Collaboration and PLCs

Studies on teacher collaboration are clear on the importance of building a collaborative environment in schools that improve teachers' instruction and results in increased student

academic success (Meirink, 2007; Shipley, 2009; Slavit et al., 2011). The findings of these studies show that the schools involved in teacher collaboration are using more innovative teaching practices through different forms of collaboration (Coke, 2005; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010).

As mentioned previously, the review literature demonstrates the importance of teacher collaboration, but less on how teachers grew and developed over time (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Dunne et al., 2000; Strahan, 2003; Supovitz, 2002; Supovitz & Christman, 2003). Therefore, one cannot see specific changes over time.

Moreover, the reviewed literature shows that different authors define teacher collaboration forms in various ways lacking common characteristics (Crow & Pounder, 2000; Fulton & Britton, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2006). Thus, having a lack of typical features of teacher teams leads one to think of how they are different from other organizational teams.

Finally, there is a lack of empirical studies about school principals' initial steps to establish teacher collaboration in schools where there is little experience with collaborative learning.

Conceptual Framework

Given the importance of teacher trust and collaboration, the study presents a basic conceptual framework with a focus on understanding initial steps taken by school principals in vertical and egalitarian school settings (i.e., post-Soviet and U.S. school contexts). This framework will develop understandings that assist leadership learning and actions for teacher trust and collaboration in Azerbaijan and similar post-Soviet contexts. The data collection and analyses have added details to this framework to carefully identify first steps that facilitate teacher collaboration and more collaborative school culture (*Chapter 7*). Empirical evidence

from this research may then support the design of principal learning and professional development opportunities for Azerbaijani principals. It may also arouse policymakers' interests in the importance of collaborative school culture.

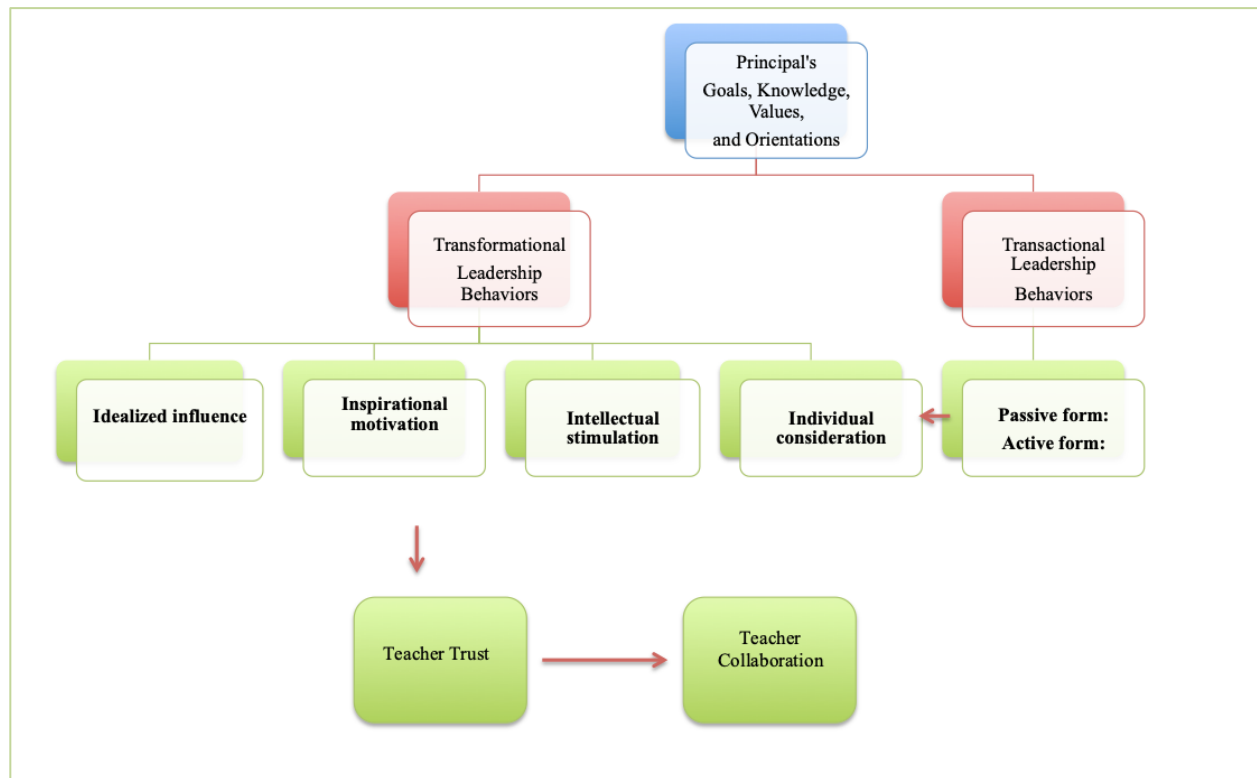


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework

Note. The conceptual framework represents how leadership orientations are critical in building teacher trust and collaboration. Specifically, transactional and transformational leadership behaviors and activities that aimed to establish or promote teacher trust for a collaborative learning environment.

Conclusion

The reviewed literature is based on various school leadership concepts evolved from being top-down to more bottom-up leading schools to being egalitarian where everyone is trusted, and there is an established collaborative learning environment. Drawing important critical issues from the above literature, one can see a series of studies focused on defining trust and its importance in promoting positive relationships among the community members. It is also

evident that previous research has extensively presented some critical perspectives on teacher collaboration showing its positive influence on teacher practices, which in turn leads to students' academic success.

The aforementioned reviewed literature on various school leadership roles and their influence on school effectiveness, and also, the studies regarding teacher trust and collaboration are diverse in its breadth and depths. However, there have not been found any studies exploring how school principals are engaged in establishing teacher trust and collaboration in schools, in which vertical context exceeds. More broadly, no extant research has explored conditions facilitating the establishment of teacher trust and collaboration in vertical school contexts. The existing gap in the literature justifies the need for this dissertation to examine teacher trust and collaboration in a vertical school context. Giving the knowledge gap, the study has the potential to aid schools with vertical settings, which are interested in establishing teacher trust and collaboration.

Chapter 3 includes the research methods used in the study, and also, how the data based on interviews, observations, and document examination were collected and analyzed in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the design and methods of the study. First, it presents the research paradigm then describes the study sample and sources of data. It also addresses validity issues, including researcher trustworthiness, positionality and reflexivity, and ethical issues.

Research Paradigm and Design

The purpose of this study was to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet and U.S. school contexts. The study intended to use the understandings to identify what early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration might have looked like in post-Soviet contexts seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices. Given that, the following research questions used as guidance throughout the study.

1. How do school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S. develop teacher trust and collaboration?
 - a. What leadership orientations and behaviors do they draw on?
 - b. What challenges do they describe?
 - c. What do they identify as the most important first steps in developing a collaborative school culture? What organizational conditions do they focus on?
2. How do Georgian and U.S. teachers describe teacher trust and collaboration in their school? What principal supports for trust and collaboration do they point out?
3. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers compare?
4. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers inform the development of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet and other traditionally vertical school structures and cultures?

In this study, the philosophical stance was post-positivistic through constructing the understandings with qualitative research. As the purpose of this study was to explore how school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S. developed teacher trust and collaboration in their schools, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documents guided important themes and insights. The study was interested in building a story through description and comparison of two cases.

In a qualitative study, researchers obtain richer and more comprehensive descriptions of participants' experiences to understand how, in this case, principals make sense of their work (Hatch, 2002). The naturalistic paradigm provided the opportunity to observe, understand, and interpret the school contexts in post-Soviet Georgia and U.S. through interviews, observations, and document examinations. Concerned with descriptions, comparisons, and understandings rather than predictions (Maxwell, 2013), the naturalistic approach supported seeing people's perceptions and interpretations and their influence on their school contexts. Given that, the used approach guided a better understanding of how school principals could establish teacher trust and collaboration in Georgian (with more vertical traditions) and the U.S. schools (with more egalitarian traditions). The study focused on the knowledge and experiences of school principals and teachers in their real settings and on the early leadership actions supporting teacher trust and collaboration. In addition, it was aimed to find out how leadership actions were different from as well as similar to each other in the two school contexts. This was to hear participants' personal thoughts and words regarding teacher trust and collaboration and aimed to understand their logics and meanings.

The study design also reflected a descriptive and comparative case study allowing a focus on real-life situations and multiple perspectives (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin & Davis, 2007) coming

from the data. Anderson, Crabtree, Steele, and McDaniel (2005) and Schramm (1971) see case studies as effective for learning how and why things happen. Furthermore, case studies allow events to speak for themselves rather than to be widely described and evaluated by the researcher (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 290). Building on the features mentioned above of case studies, the study initially purposed to develop memos for each school studied, in this case, three schools (one in post-Soviet Georgia and two schools in Michigan). Then, based on the memos, cases were developed on post-Soviet Georgia and U.S. schools. The cases highlighted participants' experiences to picture patterns and themes within each context (Yin, 2003). Comparisons then allowed consideration of similarities and differences of each school context through the first actions taken by school principals to establish teacher trust and collaboration.

The quantitative research design was not chosen for this study, as this approach would not provide the extensive descriptions and understandings, but numbers with restrictive interpretations. Simply put, as the quantitative research design includes methods such as experiments, questionnaires, and surveys, the study would result in a numeric set of data. According to Creswell (2003), the statistical data will remove human beings' perceptions, which were central to this study.

Though the purpose of the study was to present school leaders' first actions in building teacher trust and collaboration through comparisons of leadership activities, the study did not want to use the grounded theory. This approach delineates constant and intensive comparisons by maximizing the similarities and differences of the data (Creswell, 2003; Hatch, 2002). An interpretive paradigm was a better fit for the purposes and size of this study.

Sampling

The study design involved a purposive sampling strategy (Maxwell, 2013) to target participants with experiences relevant to the questions and goals of the study (Ball, 2012). The study involved schools in post-Soviet Georgia and Michigan. The study was, in total, conducted in three schools. One school was in Tbilisi, Georgia and was an urban, public school serving grades k-12, which is common in post-Soviet countries. In Michigan, two schools (one middle and one high) were selected. Both were suburban public schools.

Principal Selection

Principals were a primary sampling target. Principals were contacted and informed about the purpose of the study via email and Georgian and MSU contacts. The Georgian principal was a graduate of a master's degree program in educational leadership established in cooperation with UCLA. Choosing a graduate of that program served study purposes, as the candidate would be exposed to research and practice on effective school leadership and more aware of teacher trust and collaboration. It was expected that graduates of this program would be relatively new principals. However, the Georgian principal who agreed to participate was an experienced principal. In Michigan, new principals were also an early target, but the search for principals willing to participate also resulted in a set of experienced principals.

Teacher Selection

In selecting teachers, teacher leaders' and/or department chairs selection, the study sought different levels of collaboration and teaching experiences. Final samples reflected a mix of teachers, but these reflected principal recommendations, participant willingness, and sometimes snowball sampling from one teacher to another. In the Georgian school, teachers across elementary, middle, and high school classes participated. In the Michigan schools,

teachers were from the grades served by middle and high schools. All were interviewed about their perceptions of building teacher trust and collaboration. Some teacher meetings were observed to get a better understanding of how teachers collaborated and what types of collaborations they were involved in. *Tables 3.1-3.3* show the interview participants, the information regarding their positions, the subject they teach, and their years of experience.

Sample Bias

The study was not able to establish a representative teacher sample in the schools, and the sample sizes varied. The strongest overall teacher sample came from the Georgian school and the smallest and least representative from the Michigan High School. Because the interviews were voluntary, and a strict sampling design was not used, it is assumed that the teacher sample is likely a more positive sample in terms of the views and experiences on trust and collaboration. Because the focus on the research was their descriptions of leader support for trust, this bias did not invalidate study data, but it may restrict the validity of findings to the views of more engaged or more positive teachers.

Table 3.1

The Number of Participants Involved in Georgian School, Tbilisi

Participants Involved in the Interview Process	
School Administration (In total, one principal and two assistant principals)	<i>The principal (Gelashvili)</i>- It's her second as a school principal, but overall, she has 12 years of experience as a school principal. She used to be a physician and had a great experience as a doctor. She studied in the MA program in the k-12 educational administration program. <i>The assistant principal 1(Leya)</i>- Overall, she has five years of experience working at school and three of them as an assistant principal. She also graduated from the MA program in k-12 educational administration. <i>The assistant principal 2 (Sonia)</i>- It is her second year as an assistant principal in this school, but in total, 12 years working as a teacher.

Table 3.1 (cont'd)

Participants Involved in the Interview Process	
Teachers (In total, 14 teachers)	Veteran teachers: <i>Teacher 2</i> (18 years)- She has been teaching French. <i>Teacher 3</i> (28 years)- She has been teaching Russian. <i>Teacher 4</i> (30 years)- She has been teaching math. <i>Teacher 6</i> (Overall, 20 years of teaching experience, but two years in this school). She has been teaching French. <i>Teacher 7</i> (18 years)- She has been teaching Russian. <i>Teacher 8</i> (26 years)- She has been teaching physics. <i>Teacher 10</i> (31 years)- She has been teaching Geography. <i>Teacher 11</i> (40 years of teaching experience, but two years in this school)- She has been teaching math, Georgian, and science for elementary classes. <i>Teacher 14</i> (37 years)- She has been teaching math. Teachers in their mid-careers: <i>Teacher 1</i> (Overall, 14 years of teaching experience, but two years at this school)- She has been teaching the history of music at this school. <i>Teacher 5</i> (7 years)- She has been teaching English. <i>Teacher 9</i> (10 years)- She has been teaching English. <i>Teacher 12</i> (10 years)- She has been teaching PE. <i>Teacher 13</i> (15 years)- She has been teaching PE.

Table 3.2

The Number of Participants Involved in Middle School, Michigan

Participants Involved in the Interview Process	
School Administration (In total, one principal and one assistant principal)	<i>The principal (White)</i>- It is her fifth year as a school principal in Middle School. She used to be a teacher for eight years, and then she was an at-risk coordinator. Also, she worked as an assistant principal in middle school in other Michigan district. Moreover, she was the principal for three years in another Michigan district. <i>Assistant principal (Tom)</i>-It is his second year as an assistant principal in the Middle school. His administrative experience began in 2006. He worked as an interim assistant principal in the Lansing school district. Before that, he was a counselor within the Lansing school district. Then he worked the dean of students in Detroit.

Table 3.2 (cont'd)

Participants Involved in the Interview Process	
Teachers (In total, ten teachers)	Veteran teachers: <i>Teacher 1</i> (10 years) She has worked as a resource teacher. Currently, she has accepted a new position as an intervention coach. <i>Teacher 2</i> (20 years in total). She is a school social worker. <i>Teacher 4</i> (17 years in total). She is an eighth-grade math teacher and also, department chair. <i>Teacher 5</i> (10 years in total). He is a science and history teacher. <i>Teacher 8</i> (19 years in total). She is a science teacher. <i>Teacher 10</i> (19 years in total). She is a seventh-grade social studies teacher.
	Novice teachers: <i>Teacher 3</i> (1.5 years in total). She is a resource teacher.
	Teachers in their mid-career: <i>Teacher 6</i> (5 years in total). He is a science teacher. <i>Teacher 7</i> (1.5 years in this school, but overall, nine years). She is a seventh-grade math teacher. <i>Teacher 9</i> (five years in total). She is a seventh-grade math and science teacher.

Table 3.3

The Number of Participants Involved in High School, Michigan

Participants Involved in the Interview Process	
School Administration (the principal and two assistant principals)	<i>The principal (Louis)</i>- overall, she has 24 years of experience as a school leader in different school districts in Michigan. At this High School, it is her fifth year as a head principal. <i>Assistant principal 1 (Derek)</i>- 15 years of experience as an assistant principal in the same High School. <i>Assistant principal 2 (Jack)</i>- 5 years as an assistant principal in this High School.

Table 3.3 (cont'd)

Participants Involved in the Interview Process	
Teachers (In total, six teachers)	Veteran teachers: <i>Teacher 1</i> (12 years). She is a reading teacher. Currently, she has accepted a new position as an intervention coach. <i>Teacher 2</i> (25 years in total, 16 years in this High School). She is a math teacher and also a department chair. <i>Teacher 3</i> (16 years in total). She is a special ed. teacher and also a department chair. <i>Teacher 4</i> (16 years in total). She is an English teacher. <i>Teacher 5</i> (12 years in total). He is teaching government civics. The teacher in his mid-career: <i>Teacher 6</i> (5 years in total). He is a German teacher.

Data Collection Process

The research process consisted of two phases. The first phase began in October from 8th to 20th with data collection in Tbilisi, Georgia. The time for data collection was appropriate because school principals and teachers were more focused on leading and teaching rather than on school year preparation. The researcher spent two weeks in the Georgian school.

The researcher sent an invitation letter (*Appendix A*) to a Georgian school principal to share the purpose of the study and the significance of their participation in the understanding of the establishment of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet Georgian school. The letter was written in three languages (Georgian, Russian, and English) as some participants might not have spoken Russian. Also, the consent form was sent (*Appendix C*) to fully inform the school principal about the participants' rights and assure that neither their personal nor the identity of their school would be used in any report or documents.

The second phase started in the middle of January in Michigan, the U.S., with initial site

visits to a High school and the first two weeks of February to a Middle school to get to know the school environment and context. The researcher also sent the invitation letter (*Appendix B*) to Michigan schools to invite the participants and inform them about the purpose of the study and the consent form (*Appendix C*) to let the participants know about their rights.

The researcher spent two weeks in each school, and after the initial site visits, the data collection process started with interviewing the administrative team and teachers. During the visits, it was crucial to establish a positive rapport with participants for collecting rich data leading to the effectiveness of the study.

All the resources related to the data collection, such as field notes and transcripts, were stored electronically on a password-protected hard drive.

Sources of Data

A qualitative researcher should think about the following strategies to provide a big picture of the collected information:

- Using multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic;
- Conducting research in the natural setting;
- Building a rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study;
- Filtering data through a personal lens (Creswell, 2003, p. 181).

Building on Creswell's (2003) suggested techniques, the study initially, aimed to observe life in each school to get some sense of its overall climate. Before data collection, the researcher also intended to build a positive rapport with the participants, especially, with the school principals and their assistants through general conversations about their school settings. Building positive relationships with research participants is crucial tending them share their experiences with a researcher whom they have never seen before (Knapik, 2006). In this case, the positive

rapport between the school administrators and the researcher helped to build trust leading the participants to disclose their thoughts and experiences on how teacher trust and collaboration were built in their school community.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The data collection process started after two-day informal visits and went through one-on-one interviews to know the perceptions and perspectives of the school administrative teams as well as the teachers on how school principals' first actions could lead to the establishment of teacher trust and collaboration. To learn how teacher trust and collaboration were encouraged in schools with vertical and egalitarian contexts, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, which "have the nature of flexibility" (Longhurst, 2003, p. 144) (*Appendix A*). Being more "guided conversations rather than structured queries" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 469), semi-structured interviews created positive rapport between the researcher and participants, which was vital for research trustworthiness. In addition, some questions used during the interview process referred to a specific "critical incident." This is a technique, for learning about little-understood events or incidents (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005) and it is used to encourage participants to provide a more detailed description and reflection on the purpose of research. In this study, the research was interested in getting more detailed information about specific incidents or examples around the first steps taken by school principals to establish trust, overcome mistrust or resistance, and support productive collaboration. By using semi-structured interview questions referring to some critical incidents, the research was able to identify different perspectives and voices coming from either school leaders or teachers. Further, the research could explore what leadership actions were done to develop teacher trust and collaboration in their post-Soviet versus U.S. school contexts.

The study began with questions regarding their years of experience, why they chose to be a principal or a teacher, and about the rewarding part of their job, to create friendlier atmosphere and a positive rapport with the participants. After the general questioning, the interview process started with more in-depth questioning requiring the participants to provide more specific examples. The questions were closely related to the proposed framework and the research questions of the study. Here are some of them (*Appendix A*):

- Because specific examples help me learn more, I want to ask you to think of a specific time or instance when you dealt with a challenging teacher collaboration situation.
 - a. First, can you describe the incident to me?
 - b. Can you describe what you did to improve the situation?
- Again, can you think of a specific example when a teacher did not want to collaborate, and you motivated her/him to collaborate with her/his colleagues?
- Again, I am going to ask you to think of a specific incident where there was a problem of trust between and you and a teacher *or* a problem of trust between teachers.
 - a. First, can you describe the incident to me?
 - b. Can you describe what you did to improve the situation?
- How do you collaborate with your colleagues? I want you to think about if you helped another teacher learn. For example, if you looked at student data to improve his learning or instruction. Do you share information or any work with your colleagues to help each other? Do you observe each other's classes? Does it help you learn from each other? Can you tell the story considering all these?
- How does your principal motivate you to collaborate? I want you to think of any specific examples that your principal motivated you to collaborate with your colleagues.

- I am interested in any specific actions when the school principal has taken to build trust between you and him as well as among the teachers.

Face-to-face interviews with participants ranged from 35-60 minutes and were recorded using a digital recorder. Interviews were conducted in Russian in the Georgian school. Not all research participants knew Russian; therefore, the school principal involved some teachers who knew Russian as translators to help the researcher interview the participants. All the interviews were transcribed and later translated into English. To transcribe the Michigan school interviews, the researcher used the digital transcription software Temi. To protect each participant's confidentiality, the study used pseudonyms.

Instrument Testing

According to Maxwell (2013), qualitative researchers should anticipate how participants understand the interview instructions and questions. Building on that, he sees the importance of piloting interview questions and encourages researchers to put themselves in the position of the participants.

Accordingly, the researcher piloted the interview questions to validate and check for bias with two classmates (a teacher and an assistant principal) to see how the interview questions would work. The responses were not included in the final research study.

Observations

Alongside interviews, some teacher meetings such as department and staff meetings, and team collaborations were passively observed. A field note journal was kept to record descriptions of people, places, events, activities, and conversations (Glesne, 2011) to get insight into how they collaborate and what types of collaborations they were involved in.

Document Examinations

Further, the study examined some documents, for example, the meeting agendas, minutes, and protocols to get a better idea of how the teachers collaborate, what were their purposes, and how these collaborations supported the teachers' professional development and learning.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Qualitative researchers use different methods to analyze the data. According to Glesne (2006), "Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned" (p. 147). The collected data allowed the researcher to find stories while describing, creating explanations, or developing theories (Glesne, 2006). The analysis of data started immediately after their collection and transcription in each country. Responses from the interviews in Georgia and the U.S. were analyzed to identify the main themes and subcategories through coding each interview transcription, field notes from observations, and documents. The collected data were coded by hand. According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), coding helps to categorize respondents' information into specific ideas, concepts, and patterns. Thus, preliminary jottings (Saldana, 2015) were done while collecting all planned sources of data. Words or phrases were jotted down (Saldana, 2015) on the interview transcriptions, field notes, or documents to get some initial ideas on codes. Open coding, which is considered "the earliest form of coding ..." (Cohen et al., 2011) was used. In the first cycle, the researcher did paragraph-by-paragraph open coding to get develop initial tentative codes. Examples were: trust, collaboration, and transactional and transformational leadership. Open coding helped explore and narrow to themes and subcategories. The researcher focused on axial

coding in the second cycle of coding (Saldana, 2015). Examples of codes, themes, and subcategories are given in *Table 3.4*.

Table 3.4

Examples of Codes, Themes, and Subcategories

Codes	Themes/Subcategories
Trust	• Trust Building Activities ✓ Constant and open communication ✓ Being genuine and honest ✓ Face-to-face talkers ✓ Being genuine and honest • Factors Hindering Trust ✓ Spending little time in classrooms and meetings ✓ Poor communicators
Collaboration	• Formal collaboration ✓ Department meetings ✓ Mentoring program • Informal collaboration ✓ Peer collaboration
Transactional Leadership	• Passive Form ✓ Being visible • Active Form ✓ Providing resources and time
Transformational Leadership	• Idealized influence ✓ Constant and open communication with teachers ✓ Being genuine and honest • Inspirational motivation ✓ Being supportive ✓ Building positive relationships • Intellectual stimulation ✓ Encouraging teachers to collaborate by sharing other teachers' experiences • Individualized consideration ✓ Personal invitation

The codes from the interview transcriptions, the observation notes, and the document examination led to general themes such as the school leader's role in establishing teacher trust and collaboration. Digging deeper, a set of specific subcategories regarding the first steps in

establishing teacher trust and collaboration by the school principal as well as assistant principals both in a Georgian and U.S. school contexts, emerged.

To shape the study, a general picture of the data analysis through memo writing on each school was developed.

A Descriptive Case for Each School in Two Countries

After the data analysis, the researcher developed the descriptive memo for each country to see better and understand how school principals in each country established teacher trust and collaboration. The content of each case study was generally the same and emerged from the collected data and school memos.

A Comparative Analysis of School Contexts

To develop findings and interpretations, comparative analyses of the two cases to consider similarities, differences, and other patterns between or across the two contexts occurred. This process focused on how more and less vertical and egalitarian school and cultural contexts influenced principal leadership of trust and collaboration.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research refers to the credibility and trustworthiness of the data and the researcher's interpretations (Glesne, 2011). Steps were taken to protect validity by designing clear and aligned research questions and to use the participants' voices in the development of findings as much as possible in order to "present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, practitioners, and other researchers" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 238).

One particular validity challenge in this study was the use of translation. Interviews of leaders and teachers in the Georgian school were conducted in Russian and then translated to English. To check the accuracy of these translations, some sample segments were translated back

into Georgia to check the accuracy of key terms such as collaboration were not mixed with terms such as cooperation.

Lastly, research bias is always a concern in qualitative research. Researcher bias can occur when data collection or analysis are influenced by the researcher's purposes, values, or assumptions (Maxwell, 2013). To reduce bias, I have reviewed findings against interview transcripts and documents to assure that I was not drifting away from the available evidence. As explained below, I also kept in mind my position in relations to the individual I was interviewing and the questions I was asking.

Participant Relationships

As previously mentioned, an invitation letter (*Appendix B*) was sent to the Georgian school principal introducing the purpose of the study showing empathy towards participants' decisions and choices. The invitation letter introduced the importance of the study, in which the researcher carefully considered how the research participants could be helpful in this study. To be specific, the researcher let them know how their valuable experiences would contribute to the researcher's knowledge, and also, they would help find the answers to the posed research questions. Michigan schools went through the same procedure.

The researcher did not have any connections with any of the sites but felt perceived as an insider in some ways. For example, the researcher was a teacher in post-Soviet Azerbaijan; teachers in Georgia saw the researcher as having similar experiences and understandings of the changes and challenges they had. The researcher was perceived as an insider who was eager to learn how innovations borrowed from the Anglo-American research and practices were applied in their context and education system. In this case, the researcher was seen as a person valued their knowledge and experiences in building teacher trust and collaboration, which positively

contributed to the study. However, in some cases, the researcher felt being an outsider. For example, being not Georgian and having not taught in school for some time as well as coming from America led to being seen very disconnected to their work lives.

As for Michigan schools, the researcher was perceived to have a mix of insider and outsider status. As an international Ph.D. student, the researcher visited several Michigan schools to conduct observations and interviews with principals and teachers. In those schools, the researcher was always treated as an insider as a student who was involved in learning the U.S. education system. However, being a former teacher, the researcher was treated as an outsider interested in learning the U.S. K-12 education system and how practices might be brought back to the researcher's home country.

Knowing the school contexts in both countries informed the researcher to shape the interactions with the research participants. For example, while collecting data in Georgia, the researcher expected to see more formality, however, being much aware of Western experiences, the administrations built more informal relationships leading to more trustful relationships between the participants and the researcher. The same, less formal experience was observed in both Michigan schools, reflecting more informal egalitarian relationships.

Positionality and Reflexivity

The assumptions, beliefs, and views of the researcher were shaped through the experiences of being an educator in Azerbaijan and studying in a doctoral program (k-12 educational administration) in the U.S. The researcher started the study with over 14 years of professional experience in education through being a secondary school teacher, a teacher trainer of British Council Azerbaijan and a university-based educator. All these experiences made the researcher be aware of the educational problems in Azerbaijan. The researcher became

particularly concerned with how a school principal managerial role inhibits the development of teacher trust and collaboration. Moreover, knowing that some of the post-Soviet countries, including Azerbaijan, have already started employing the Anglo-American model, the researcher is eager to learn how the innovations have been applying in a more vertical school context. Thus, the researcher chose two different school contexts, vertical and egalitarian, to seek to understand how school principals were involved in establishing teacher trust and collaboration in their schools.

According to Goodall (2002), reflexivity is a process allowing researchers to personally and academically reflect on how their lived experiences reveal connections between their research topics and subjects (Hatch, 2002). It is necessary for qualitative researchers to know and understand participant concerns regarding the research process. Reflexivity, in this sense, was involved to critically seek explanations of the phenomenon being studied (Hatch, 2002). As previously mentioned, as an educator, the researcher is aware of the school challenges in Azerbaijan. For example, one can see fragmented school culture, a lack of awareness of the importance of teacher trust and collaboration as well as the increased school principals' roles as managers. This is mainly rooted in the Soviet educational approach whose focus was to prepare managers to better rule and lead the overall community misleading the schools. After the dissolution of USSR, most post-Soviet countries, including Azerbaijan, have adopted the Anglo-American approach to making the school structure different from the Soviet period. However, schools in Azerbaijan still struggle in applying some strategies regarding building teacher trust and collaboration in schools, as they need more guidance than short-term administrator preparation programs in this way. Seeing these challenges in Azerbaijani schools, the researcher decided to take a challenge and investigate what conditions of school leadership facilitated the

establishment of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet countries who have been applying the Anglo-American approach to better schools.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are vital in a research project for building a positive rapport as well as trust. Therefore, considering the ethics to build trust and a positive rapport with research participants, the researcher relied on the basic principles of the Belmont report to protect the participants' rights. By doing so, three principals were followed while conducting the study: beneficence, respect, and justice for persons (Department of Health, E., 2014). Thus, the participants of this study were treated ethically to secure their well-being and protect them from the harm. Also, the participants were respected by considering their autonomy. In addition to beneficence and respect, the participants were treated equally in the sense of justice. Furthermore, in qualitative research, ethical issues highlight concerns related to the relationship between the researcher and participants, in which the researcher should be friendly and empathetic, but remain neutral and uninvolved to avoid bias. Thus, establishing trust and rapport was essential to collect valid data (Glesne, 2011).

To make the study effective, the researcher maintained confidentiality and respected the privacy of the research participants, which is a cornerstone to the reliability and validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2011). The names of the participants were not disclosed according to the consent form (*Appendix C*) to secure their identity. Also, the research participants were given the right to refuse to answer any questions or discontinue participation in the study.

According to Howe and Moses (1999), the informed consent form is critical for ethical behavior by demonstrating respect for participants' rights. Also, it creates conditions for individuals to make decisions for themselves while being involved in by building positive

relationships between the researcher and participants. Consent forms (*Appendix B*) were sent to individuals prior to interviews.

Besides, interview questions (*Appendix A*) did not expose participants to any “stress, pain or invasion of privacy” (Cohen et al., 2011, p.77). It was incumbent for the researcher to avoid any risks while collecting the data.

Finally, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) # 00001472 approval was established.

Study Limitations

The purpose of this study was to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. contexts. The researcher intended to identify what early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration might look like in post-Soviet contexts seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices.

Limitations in the study are those common to qualitative studies. The sample is small and cannot represent all Michigan and Georgian teachers. It is also assumed that leaders and teachers who participated in the research study may be more positive and engaged educators than those who refuse participation. It is believed, that the stories and perceptions of these educators can offer valid insight and guidance to understanding the development of teacher trust and collaboration.

Summary

This chapter described the reason for selecting qualitative research methods to allow the researcher to describe, explore, understand, and interpret participants’ experiences and perceptions in their real settings. Through descriptive and comparative case studies, the researcher aimed to compare various first steps taken by school principals leading to building trust and collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. school contexts.

A purposeful sample was used through the data collection process in each country. For the study, the researcher used the semi-structured interview questions focused on specific incidents. It provided deeper understandings of school principals' initial steps taken to build teacher trust and collaboration in two different school contexts.

The researcher used preliminary jotting, open, and axial coding technique to analyze the data. The important themes and patterns came from the interview transcriptions, the observation field notes, and documents such as meeting agendas, minutes, and protocols.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the findings of Georgian and Michigan schools.

CHAPTER 4: PRINCIPAL GELASHVILI'S CASE

As already stated in the Introduction chapter, the purpose of this study was to describe and interpret how school principals develop teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. school contexts. To be specific, the research intends to find out similarities and differences between school principals' very first leadership behaviors and actions in post-Soviet Georgia versus Michigan. Given that, the study aims to bring key insights into what early stages of school leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration might look like in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, which seeks to transform school leadership roles and teaching practices.

Building on the purpose of the study, this chapter introduces a case of a school principal in post-Soviet Georgia. Data come from the administrative team and teacher interviews, teacher collaboration observations, and document examinations. At the outset, this case describes how post-Soviet Georgia has gone through educational reforms involving many European and American educational advisers and practices. This was one reason why Georgia was selected. The study seeks to understandings how a school principal in the post-Soviet country builds teacher trust and collaboration through Western ideas. Then the chapter presents some information regarding the background of the Georgian school and its demographics. Later in this chapter, the Principal Gelashvili's efforts are shown on rebuilding and supporting a trusting and collaborative learning community from what was described as a toxic school culture where almost everyone was stuck in the Soviet mindset. The administrative team began modeling leadership orientations and behaviors to change the existing culture. Given that, this case presents some general themes on trust and teacher collaboration with several subcategories demonstrating the school principal's very first leadership behaviors and actions in a vertical school setting.

Education Reforms in post-Soviet Georgia

Principal Gelashvili had had a successful career as a physician, and she had never thought about being a school principal. Her career as a principal had much to do with the turbulent times when Mikheil Saakashvili was elected president in 2004. Relying on more values and ideas such as social equality, secure environment, and employment, President Saakashvili made radical changes through the three principles in Georgia, including education (“We are proud of our education reform,” 2012). The significant educational improvements started in 2005, when the new educational law was adopted, including some levels of reforms: policy, changes to the teaching profession, and school leadership. The overall aim of the educational reforms was to make the Georgian education more competitive within Georgia and abroad and also, have bribe free educational institutions. Also, being more involved and aware of Western practices, Saakashvili was aimed at harmonizing the Georgian education system with European or American standards (Mekhuzla & Roche, 2009).

The Key Policy Reforms

The adopted educational law in 2005 covered a five-year plan. The government, initially, renamed the Ministry of Education as Ministry of Education and Science, which would be responsible for the quality of educational reforms. Alongside with the Ministry, some new public entities were also engaged in to make sure that the aimed reforms would have good quality. Then a series of changes introduced and adopted through the law. For example, the existing curriculum was changed to outcome-based one focusing on adoption of new standards. The new national curriculum paid particular attention to some mandatory and elective disciplines to develop critical thinking in students. The selected subjects were similar to the modern and international educational requirements, to be specific, European and the U.S. In addition to the new national

curriculum, the new national textbooks were developed and also, a new national assessment and examination were designed to better prepare students for the labor market. Further, the law established the implementation of a twelve-year school education program including the changes in the duration of studies, the rights of students, their parents as well as teachers and also, the changes in the number of students limiting to 25 in the class. Based on the adopted law, inclusive education was first introduced in the Georgian education. The 2005 Law also focused on introducing the Boards of Trustees, elections of the principal and students' self-governance.

Changes to the Teaching Profession

The 2005 education Law also introduced several reforms to define the status of a Georgian teacher. With that being said, the Ministry of Education and Science elaborated a concept of Teachers' Professional Training and Development determining the status of a teacher. The presented concept of "Teachers' Professional Schema" aimed at advancing the level of competency of teachers as well as their professional development leading to raising the quality of instruction in general education. Through this new teacher ladder strategy, teachers were involved in taking a certification exam as well as demonstrating demo lessons, which moved them up through four teacher status levels: a mentor, a leading teacher, a senior teacher, and a practitioner. These are the teacher categories from the highest to the lowest level in the status. Throughout the process, teachers also needed to be involved in at least seven professional activities such as participating in training programs, creating supplementary texts and material for teachers, or leading various educational projects, conferences, or seminars. All these activities were considered to motivate teachers and help their professional growth (Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, n.d.). To support teachers, the Ministry of Education and Science involved teachers in retraining sessions held by the U.S. Millennium Challenge

Corporation. The project aimed to strengthen the quality of Georgian education by promoting teachers' professional skills to contribute to the economic growth and development of the country (Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, n.d.).

Changes to School Leadership

One of the significant educational reforms was through re-assigning new school principals all over Georgia. The Ministry of Education and Science sought people who were willing to make valuable contributions to the well-being of independent Georgia, and Principal Gelashvili was among them. The selection process was different from the ones held in the previous years. To make the process more transparent and choose the right people to be school leaders, the selection went through two steps. Candidates initially took a test aimed at checking their knowledge on leadership and critical thinking. Then, they were interviewed by well-known Georgian educators with degrees and work experiences from Europe and the U.S. The candidates with the highest scores had a chance to select the schools they wanted to work at, and those who did not get the needed score were appointed to the schools through the raffle, and Principal Gelashvili was among them. The newly selected school principals were also engaged in the intensive training sessions held by the Millennium project. Through investing \$140 million, the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Georgian government wanted to provide the newly selected principals with the opportunity to get through professional development programs to ensure more efficient management of schools. Also, a joint master's program in Education Administration of the Ilia State University and the USAID "Education Administration Project" launched to provide training for modern managers of an education sector. The project was carried out in partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and it was aimed at contributing to the ongoing educational reforms. With UCLA's assistance, Ilia State

faculty developed 18 new courses covering four key areas: research skills, the application of theory in practice, the social and political context of education, and professional courses, which included leadership and management. The hallmark of the program was to focus on action research. Students collaborated with members of a partner school to study a specific real-time problem facing schools and find a solution. Students studied challenges that ranged from simplifying lesson planning for teachers to methods to improve student learning of writing.

New Belief School

New Belief School is a traditional public school in Tbilisi, Georgia, which serves grades K-12. The school offers, as most schools in post-Soviet countries, morning and afternoon shifts involving different age groups of children. The elementary (i.e., 1-6 grades) and high school students (i.e., 10-12 grades) are in the first shift, but the middle school students who are in 7-9 grades attend the second shift. It is a usual division of shifts in schools of most post-Soviet countries since these schools have a lack of classrooms for teaching. Classes in the morning shift start at 8 am and finish at 2 pm. The afternoon shift starts at 2:15 pm and finishes at 6 pm. Depending on the grades and students' level, students have five, six, or seven classes daily lasting forty-five minutes. Teachers' work depends on how many classes they have, and they do not have any common planning period, which is different from the Michigan school teachers. Overall, the school serves 1436 students, 760 of them are females. Most of the student body are Georgians, but a few students are from different countries. *Table 4.1* offers a display of student body in New Belief School.

Table 4.1

The Student Body of New Belief School, Georgia

The Student Body of New Belief School	
Georgian	1417
Egyptian	2
Jordanian	1
Iranian	5
Syrian	1
Lebanese	3
Pakistani	4
Russian	1
Ukranian	1
Lithuanian	1

The school employs 88 teachers (i.e., 81 are females). Teachers of New Belief School have different teaching experiences putting them into the categories: veteran teachers, teachers in their mid-career, and novice ones. Teachers also fall into the teacher ladder category described earlier in this chapter. *Table 4.2* displays the number of teachers divided by their status.

Table 4.2

The Organization of Teachers by Their Status

The Organization of Teachers by Their status	
Mentors	-
Leading teachers	4
Senior teachers	42
Practitioners	42

Moreover, teachers of New Belief School are full time certified teachers and are arranged by departments: Georgian language and literature, Math, Social sciences, natural sciences, information and communication technology, foreign languages, visual and applied arts. The school is inclusive, having four trained special education teachers.

Those above are short descriptive features of the school and community of New Belief School. The study also intends to provide a little background of New Belief School, which was the first school for women in Tbilisi. Later, it was the French language school, which recognized

as a language of the upper class in Caucasian countries, of the city and enrolled children from elite families. Constructed around 1873, it remains one of the architectural beauties of Tbilisi and has survived over one hundred years of turbulent history in Georgia. It is a four-storeyed building consisting of several classrooms on each floor. One of the classrooms on the fourth floor hosts a museum displaying the school's famous graduates who were and still are prominent politicians, actors, singers or scientists of Georgia. Tall ceilings with old chandeliers, doors made of oak and squeaky wooden floors remind teachers and students of the school's age and history. The following section provides some background of the New Belief School's administration experiences as school leaders.

The School Administration of New Belief School

Principal Gelashvili

As already stated earlier, before becoming a school principal, Principal Gelashvili was a physician and had some experience working at the hospital. Her school leadership career started during Michael Saakashvili's presidency. Given that, selected as a school leader, Principal Gelashvili's educational journey began in one of the suburban schools in Tbilisi with a small staff of teachers. The old school building was two-storeyed needed to be repaired, as many schools in Georgia. Also, the classrooms had a lack of facilities such as blackboards or technology to make more productive classes. Therefore, the poor condition of the school, to some extent, demotivated the teachers to produce more effective classes. However, the school's poor condition did not discourage Principal Gelashvili. She shared:

It was my first school. It was a fascinating period of our history that everyone was determined to make profound changes in every sphere of our country. I aimed to do the same. I wanted to make the school a better place for everyone. I wanted teachers to avoid the traditional methods of teaching. ... But most of all, I wanted everyone to believe in me.

In Principal Gelashvili's mind, strong relationships between the administrators and teachers, as well as among teachers, were crucial. Trusted relations, to her view, would have helped her invite teachers to accept new ideas in teaching through Western practices. She stated:

Trust, this is what I needed to build in my first school. I wanted teachers to believe in me. I wanted them to know that I was there for them to help get through educational reforms. I wanted my teachers to understand that these reforms would help us change our vision in education to have better learning outcomes and better citizens. I think I could build strong bonds in my first school.

Principal Gelashvili wanted everyone to be a part of the school community. Therefore, she and her administrative team were involved in taking some steps to build strong bonds in a new environment for her. She was inviting her team to reflect on every decision and action they were taking. To her perspective, the reflection of every single activity would have helped them better think of further steps. So, one of the initiatives to build strong relations in the school community was to involve everyone to participate in a project called "Rating" that Principal Gelashvili came up with. It was one of her creative ideas by promoting a positive environment in her first school. Through the project, seventh-through eleventh-grade students were involved as well as their parents and class teachers. Consisting of several stages and activities, the project was running throughout a year. The activities varied in their purposes and should be educative and competitive. For example, a team (i.e., a class of students, their parents, and an assigned teacher) was involved in searching a treasure around the school area and in finding that treasure, the team was supposed to solve some math problems to find the hints. Also, to support their kinds and gain extra points, parents were involved in different sporting activities. Moreover, students were invited to teaching the weak

students who were in the lower grades, or another group of students was gathering some paper or the old books to get them recycled. The idea of “Rating” was to invite everyone to be a part of the school community and work together. Principal Gelashvili believed that the goodwill projects would build strong relationships among the school community, and her efforts worked well in her first school.

Moreover, Principal Gelashvili was closely interested in understanding her teachers’ challenges and problems. She began to hold weekly individual meetings with her teachers. Those meetings helped her know better each teacher, and also, she was closely working with her administrative team in finding solutions. For example, most of the teachers’ concerns were to improve their instruction by implementing new teaching methods. She shared:

In the first two years of my school leadership career, I encountered several challenges. Some teachers, especially, veteran ones, were resisting to accept the new teaching methods. At that time, it was hard for me to explain the effectiveness of the new teaching practices, as I had a lack of experience as a leader and educator. However, a number of training sessions helped me have a better insight into the new teaching approach. Also, I tried to pair less experienced teachers with experienced ones who were willing to share their knowledge, and it helped me promote collaboration among them.

Being interested in teachers’ concerns and trying to solve them with her administrative team as well as promoting strong relationships among the school community were some of Principal Gelashvili’s first experiences developing teacher trust and collaboration. Overall, she led her first school for ten years. Throughout these years, she gained knowledge and experiences from working as a principal but also from being involved in various training sessions, sponsored by the Millenium grant program and including the master’s program for educational leaders described earlier.

Assistant Principals

Principal Gelashvili had two newly appointed assistant principals who were also the graduates of the master's program in k-12 educational administration established in corporation with UCLA. One of the assistant principals, Leya, had five years of working experience at school, three of them she worked as an assistant principal. The most rewarding part of Leya's job, as she thinks, is contributing the gained knowledge from the master's program to the well-being of Georgian education.

The second assistant principal, Sonia, also graduated from the same master's program and had fourteen years of working experience at school, two of which she was working as an assistant principal in New Belief School. She loves trying new things and sharing her knowledge; however, she believes that it is possible through the position. In her thinking, the position matters in Georgia.

The provided background above draws a bigger picture of how school leaders benefit from the gained knowledge and experiences in their new career ladder and what starting points they have considered in their new school environment. Building on that, the next section describes the current level of trust in New Belief School, and the views of school administration and teachers in building trust at school, which was of vital importance.

The Current Level of Trust in New Belief School

As already stated earlier in this chapter, the study aimed to describe and interpret how school principals develop trust and teacher collaboration in post-Soviet Georgia versus U.S. school contexts. Specifically, the research is focused on early school principals' leadership behaviors and actions in building trust and teacher collaboration in vertical versus egalitarian school settings.

Building on the purpose of the research, to identify the current level of trust in New Belief School, the study used the continuum (*Appendix A*) to measure the level of trust in New Belief School. During interviews, participants were asked to describe the level of trust between school administrators and teachers (*Table 4.3*) and among teachers (*Table 4.4*) at New Belief School using a three-level (i.e., basic, mixed, and strong relational trust) trust measure (in the right column).

By basic level of trust between the administrative team and teachers (*Table 4.3*), the study implies respectful and cordial relations without having any adverse situations. However, there might be some distrust between the parties based on what the administrative team is doing for the best of the school (*Appendix A*). The study also defines the mixed level of trust between the administrative team and teachers as being different across some teachers and groups. There are open interactions with some of them about their work and teaching. Teachers share with the administrative team their thoughts and trust the administrative team to do the right thing. However, trust with some teachers is more basic and cordial (*Appendix A*). The study also presents strong relational trust, which is generally very strong between the administrative team and most teachers. They trust each other to be helpful to one another and to be doing what is best for the school. They share their knowledge and ideas, they talk about their work, and they trust each other with problems and uncertainties about their practices (*Appendix A*).

Table 4.3 demonstrates the level of trust between the new administrative team and teachers in New Belief School, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Table 4.3

The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Between the Administrative Team and Teachers in New Belief School, Georgia

The Levels of Trust	The Results of The Administrative Team's (Principal and Two Assistant Principals) Responses	The Results of Teachers' Responses
Basic Trust		
Mixed Trust	100 % (3 of them)	29 % (4 teachers out of 14)
Strong Relational Trust		71 % (10 teachers out of 14)

The defined levels of trust above helped identify the current level of trust between the administrative team and teachers in New Belief School. The majority of responses (i.e., seventy-one percent of participants) show that the level of trust between the administrative team and teachers is built on strong relational trust (*Table 4.3*). Seeing the efforts of rebuilding the school culture, most of the teachers began to trust the new administrative team. Teachers were thinking that the new school administration is doing their best to make positive changes. While the administrative team (i.e., three of them) believes that the level of trust is still mixed (*Table 4.3*) because of the Soviet mindset (i.e., having a fear of being judged, scrutinized, or criticized by the administration) that some teachers had. *Table 4.4* displays the level of trust among teachers in New Belief School, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Table 4.4

The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Among Teachers in New Belief School, Georgia

The Levels of Trust	The Results of The Administrative Team's (Principal and Two Assistant Principals) Responses	The Results of Teachers' Responses
Basic Trust	67 % (Principal Gelashvili and Sonia)	14 % (2 out of 14) – in the community; 14 % (2 out of 14) – in the department;

Table 4.4 (cont'd)

The Levels of Trust	The Results of The Administrative Team's (Principal and Two Assistant Principals) Responses	The Results of Teachers' Responses
Mixed Trust	50 % (Leya)	43 % (6 out of 14) – in the community;
Strong Relational Trust		14 % (2 out of 14) – in the community; 50 % (7 out of 14) – in the department;

The study also aimed to identify the level of trust among teachers. *Table 4.4* describes the current level of trust among teachers. Building on the definitions of trust levels displayed in the continuum (*Appendix A*), the study defines basic trust as having respectful and cordial relationships among teachers. Generally, teachers do not conflict. Still, some teachers do not always trust each other to do what is right for the school, and there are sometimes frictions. Overall, teachers are friendly but mostly work by themselves (*Appendix A*). The study also describes the mixed level of trust as having different trust level among some groups of teachers. Some teachers have open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share and trust each other to do the right thing for the schools. With others, their trust is still more basic and cordial; they are friendly to others, but they mostly work alone (*Appendix A*). Further, the study gives the importance of strong relational trust by defining it as being generally very strong between most all of the teachers. They trust each other to be helpful and to be doing what is good for the school. They have a sense of working together rather than alone. They seek new ideas and advice from each other. They trust each other with their teaching problems and challenges (*Appendix A*).

Building on the above-defined trust levels among teachers, the trust level is basic based on the administrative team's responses (i.e., a school principal and assistant principal). The data

indicate that there is respect among teachers, however, since the school was experiencing the huge distrust, still there are some frictions among teachers, leading to the basic level of trust (*Table 4.4*). Whereas, the majority teacher responses (i.e., fifty percent) show that the trust level is built on strong relations within the departments, but the level of trust is different in the entire community, which is more mixed (i.e., forty-three percent of responses). Some teachers replied that as the school community is pretty large, it is challenging to build trusted relationships with the entire school community (*Table 4.4*).

The following sections provide a full overview of school leadership behaviors and actions in building trust between the administrative team and teachers as well as among teachers in New Belief School.

Being Appointed as a School Principal to The Urban School in Tbilisi with Toxic Culture

On one of the sunny May days of 2018, Principal Gelashvili was invited to be a school principal of a prominent school in the city center of Tbilisi. Appointed as a new school principal was a new challenge in her leadership career, and she believed that her leadership experience would allow her to bring up respectable and successful citizens of Georgia, which was her aim as an educational leader. Principal Gelashvili was thinking that it is possible only by reaching out to more student learning.

Principal Gelashvili's Views on Building Trust

For many years, the status of the school and student enrollment was in decline. Principal Gelashvili's predecessor was more focused on daily operational problems, such as recording students' absences or dealing with the reporting and documentation leaving essential things behind such as keeping school culture positive and trusting and also, supporting collaboration among teachers. There were also many problems with the school building that demoralized

people. For instance, for many years, the basement of the school was full of water creating risks for the old school, the staff, and students. Besides, the school did not have outside space for sporting events. Further, during the previous principalship, the school also lost its status as a French language school, concerning both teachers and parents. Therefore, the school culture was described as toxic full of distrust among teachers. Principal Gelashvili shared:

I have heard that one of the teachers was writing everything happening at school. For example, who went to the restroom during the class period. Or, while she was involved in observing the class, she was engaged in criticizing the teacher's instruction rather than giving constructive feedback. That is one of the examples I would like to provide indicating the low level of trust in this school when I became a principal.

Assistant Principals' Views on Building Trust

The assistant principals also shared their general views on trust in New Belief School. Leya stated that the school was experiencing a huge distrust among teachers. For many years, having a toxic culture at school made some teachers be isolated and work alone. A group of teachers was thinking that their colleagues were snitching on them, and also, they were thinking that some of their colleagues were gossiping behind them. These unpleasant relations among teachers created an untrusted school environment.

Sonia also confirmed her colleagues' perspectives on trust among teachers in New Belief School. Then she added that some teachers have internal fears of being judged. When Sonia intended to observe some teachers' classes at the beginning of the school year, there was some resistance since they did not want anyone in their classroom. Moreover, Sonia mentioned that when she was providing constructive feedback, some teachers became defensive, and they did not want to accept the provided feedback.

Teachers' Views on Building Trust

Teachers' views on trust were not different from the perspectives mentioned above. Some of the teachers shared that before the new administrative team started their responsibilities at New Belief School; there were untrusted relations among teachers as well as between the school administration and teachers. The previous school principal and her assistants were not so interested in either teachers' professional development or their instruction. Therefore, some teachers were often missing their classes for no reason. It affected students' enrollment, and parents were complaining about some of the teachers who were missing the classes, and they were concerned about their kids. Moreover, some teacher participants viewed the school culture more toxic as they were having the feeling of being snitched by their colleagues to the new administration. However, when Principal Gelashvili had individual meetings, she made clear that she did not want any teacher to snitch on their colleagues since the new principal was much aware of some teachers who were involved in snitching on their colleagues.

Trust Themes at New Belief School

The above mentioned various views from the administrative team and teachers gave the whole picture of the school culture in New Belief School. The school community was fragmented, consisting of small groups that were unwilling to collaborate. Also, the new administrative team found that teachers were not open to new ideas in teaching, and a few of them had stormy relationships with parents. Therefore, Principal Gelashvili and her new team focused on a series of actions to rebuild trust among teachers and also, between the administrative team and teachers. The following section presents a set of trust themes with several subcategories demonstrating very first school leadership behaviors and actions taken to rebuild trust in New Belief School.

Theme 1: Being Present and Responsive

Being visible and having constant communications. As described earlier, there was a huge distrust in New Belief School. Interested in school principals' early leadership behaviors and actions in building trust, the study revealed some necessary themes during the interviews. Given that, Principal Gelashvili, in comparison with her predecessor, was more involved in being among teachers or students. Being in education for ten years, she was much aware that principals spend more time behind the closed doors, creating some barriers between teachers and the administration. Moreover, in her perspectives, being more distant leads to more formal relations between the two parties. Therefore, to avoid formality and break the barriers, Principal Gelashvili considered the importance of being present or visible and having constant communications with teachers to know them better. In doing so, she could build a less formal environment, to some extent, in New Belief School. Principal Gelashvili shared:

I think that communication and being visible are the best things that school leaders need to consider while establishing trust in school. I spend all my time in the hallways or the teachers' room. I want to see what's happening at school. Also, I like talking to teachers, students, and their parents. Through those communications, I can learn their concerns, and what they want me to do to solve their problems. These conversations, I would say, are informal, which creates trust between us.

Theme 2: Following Through

A good listener. Besides, being visible and having constant communications with teachers, the findings suggest that Principal Gelashvili was a good listener. Built on her previous leadership experience, described earlier, Principal Gelashvili was holding individual meetings with teachers in New Belief School. Her intention as a school principal was to know her teachers' concerns and solve them. In her previous school, meeting initiations worked well, and in her mind, it helped her build some levels of trust between her and teachers. Given that, Principal Gelashvili was carefully engaged in listening and noting each teacher's problem, and a

series of teacher concerns were revealed: restoring the previous status of the school, fixing the water leak in the basement, and also, helping teachers design more effective classes using the innovative teaching methods to pass the teacher evaluation process successfully. One of the teachers shared:

You know when she started working as our new school principal, she met with us to get to know our concerns. She was writing our concerns, and she promised to keep them confidential. So, I asked her to restore our school's previous status.

Given the importance of individual meetings, the new administrative team was actively engaged in keeping promises through solving teachers' concerns.

Keeping the promises: restoring the previous status of new belief school. As stated above, Principal Gelashvili took teachers' concerns seriously. At the outset, the principal was involved in restoring the previous status of the school (i.e., having the French language as the primary foreign language at school). By doing so, Principal Gelashvili and her team needed to show that the school had competent and professional French language teachers, and also, the school needed to be involved in a series of activities held by the Embassy of France. Throughout their first year, the administrative team invited the French department to collaborate with the school administration and involve them in various events or competitions in which both teachers and students were the main actors. Principal Gelashvili said:

Do you remember the event I invited you? So, that event was a closing ceremony of a year-long project we carried out. It was an essay contest engaged a number of students all over Georgia. The students needed to go through several steps to get to a final stage. Though our school did not gain one of the first three places, we were nominated as the best school, which could organize overall the competition process and also, the grand closing event. So, as the best school, we were invited, to be specific, the administrative team, the teachers who were involved in the contest and their students, to visit one of the picturesque places of Georgia with other winners. It was the embassy's gift for our school.

One of the teachers also shared that when Principal Gelashvili was appointed as a new school principal, she organized individual meetings with teachers. The teacher mentioned that through those meetings, the principal was interested in their concerns, and interestingly, most of the shared problems were solved by the new administration, specifically by Principal Gelashvili. The teacher said:

We wanted her to restore our school's previous status to make French the main foreign language. You know our school is very famous in Georgia. A lot of famous people finished this school. So, the principal could restore the status involving important people in education. It inspired us as teachers. The support that she provided us was the basis for trust.

Keeping the promises: fixed the water leak in the school basement. Through individual meetings, Principal Gelashvili also detected some building problems. Several teachers mentioned that there was a water leak in the basement, and for many years, the previous school principal was avoiding the problem, causing some threats for its residents. The interview data show that when Principal Gelashvili started her position in New Belief School, she spent some internal funding to fix the water leak in the basement. The taken action could help build trust between her and teachers. One of the teachers shared:

She has done a lot since she became our school principal. I mean, besides implementing various projects, she tries to fix some problems regarding the school building. For many years, there had been much water in the basement. Our previous principals had not done anything to fix it. So, our new principal involved workers in solving that problem, and now, she is thinking about building a new stadium for students. She promised to do that, and I know for sure that if she promises, she will do that. This is how she presented herself.

Theme 3: Building Open and Transparent Relationships

Finding time/being available. The findings also indicate that Principal Gelashvili was building transparent relationships with the school community (i.e., teachers, students, and parents). Given that, her doors were always open for teachers, students, and their parents.

Everyone was allowed to come in and meet the principal, and also, visitors were much involved in sharing their concerns regarding different school-related issues. One of the teachers shared that Principal Gelashvili was often available, and one could see her involvement in solving teachers' or students' problems. Specifically, in the teacher's observations, the principal was often trying to resolve some teacher-teacher, student-teacher, or student-student conflicts. The notable leadership behavior was that the principal was trying to restore the friendly relations between the parties, and she never supported an individual who was responsible for the problematic situation. In doing so, Principal Gelashvili was trying to be honest and open in every single decision she was making, leading to more transparent and open relations between the two parties (i.e., the principal-teacher or the principal-student). This suggested that Principal Gelashvili intended to build trusted relations with the school community (i.e., teachers, students, and their parents). The teacher stated:

I remember when Principal Gelashvili was trying to solve the problem between my son and his classmate. My son was responsive to that conflicting situation. I was expecting that the principal would support my son; however, she took that boy's side. I was upset, but, after a while, seeing her honest decisions and more transparent relations with other teachers and students made me changed my view, and I started to trust her.

Theme 4: Considering Teachers' Voices

Validating teachers' work. Besides building transparent and open relationships, Principal Gelashvili and her team were seen as school leaders who were considering teachers' decisions by validating their work. The data show that very often, the new administrative team was involving teachers to attend various projects. One of the projects was "Rating" described above. Principal Gelashvili was implementing this project in her previous school for many years, and it worked well for building positive relations with the school community (i.e., teachers, students, and their parents). The so-called project "Rating" involves several small in scale

activities or events. Given that, teachers were invited to share their ideas and perspectives on how to make the activities more educative or enjoyable for students and parents who were supporting their kids by earning extra points. One of the teachers shared that most of the ideas were welcomed and appreciated by the new administrative team, which extrinsically motivated teachers to be a part the decision-making process and have trusted relations with the school administration. The teacher said:

... our ideas are important for them. Last year, all of us, I mean our department [indicating physical education department], was thinking about how to design exciting sports events to involve the project participants in the so-called project “Rating.” We needed to create more educative competitions to help students learn and have fun. With the whole department, we could come up with some interesting ideas, and the team appreciated our thoughts, which encouraged our department to corporate with the school administration further.

Theme 5: Individual Consideration

Promoting professional development. Previously in this chapter, it was mentioned that during Saakashvili’s presidency, a “Teachers’ Schema” or teachers’ ladder was developed by the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science, in which teachers had to go through the evaluation and promotion process. In order to qualify for the highest category, teachers needed to have a series of demo lessons in which they needed to effectively apply innovative teaching practices, such as how to make the classes more student-oriented or more interactive to help students learn. This was one of the detected challenges through individual meetings mentioned above. Building on teachers’ concerns the school administration was actively involved in supporting each individual teacher’s professional development. By providing this kind of assistance, the administrative team was inviting teachers to collaborate with them, and in doing so, they were creating conditions for the establishment of trust. On the other side, teachers had a chance to grow for better instruction professionally. Leya shared:

We try to help them get some points they need for their professional growth by helping them design their demo lessons. Then we are supposed to observe those lessons and provide them with some feedback. The feedback that we provide always starts with positive thoughts about their lessons. Also, we tell them what should be improved in the next demo lesson. Seeing our efforts to help them, I might say some of the teachers have changed their views towards us.

Being interested in teachers' personal lives. Principal Gelashvili took a further step as a leader who was also interested in her teachers' personal lives through having constant and open communications with them. The principal was often interested in her teachers' kids' educations or her teachers' health problems if they had. Principal Gelashvili considered each teacher, which helped the principal know them well, as well as build trust between them. One of the veteran teachers shared that after she got operated, Principal Gelashvili was often calling her to know her health condition. Even, the principal informed her she would start her duties whenever she was ready. The teacher said that it made her feel important, which encouraged her to start her work as soon as she got recovered. The teacher stated:

It was that moment when you need to see the people around you. I got operated. It was not something complicated, but still, I needed to stay at home for a while until I got recovered. I remember Principal Gelashvili was calling me to know my health condition, and she was so friendly and honest. I have heard that our new principal is interested in everyone here. These things helped me trust her and rely on her. You know I cannot provide an example of a failure of trust between our school principal and me.

Summary

Overall, the findings show that the actions, mainly, the initial steps taken by the administrative team created the conditions for the establishment of trust between them and teachers in New Belief School. The data show that the new administrative team, specifically, Principal Gelashvili initiated a set of leadership activities that helped her build a mixed level of trust between her and teachers (*Table 4.3*). However, seventy-one percent of teacher participants thought that the level of trust was built on strong relations. Given that, the findings revealed five

key themes throughout the study: being present and responsive, following through, building open and transparent relationships, considering teachers' voices, and individual consideration. Each of these themes consists of several subcategories indicating to school principal's leadership behaviors and actions in rebuilding trust in New Belief School.

Moreover, the analysis shows that trust was of vital importance for the new administrative team since New Belief School was experiencing a huge distrust among teachers, and also, between the previous administration and teachers. The school community was more fragmented where teachers were not willing to share their knowledge with colleagues, indicating to more isolation, and there was also a resistance to accept innovative teaching practices to improve the instruction. All these made the new administration to consider trust as a crucial factor in rebuilding the school culture and establishing a collaborative learning environment, where everyone would involve from learning each other to reach out to students, which is the new mission of New Belief School. The following section deals with how the new school administration was actively involved in promoting teacher collaboration in New Belief School.

Teacher Collaboration in New Belief School

Collaboration comes in many forms and levels. To understand different forms of collaboration in the studied schools, a continuum was developed and used as a prompt during interviews. The main categories of the continuum were collaboration focused on learning, on civil and collegial relations, and collaboration focused on joint work (*Appendix A*). The first category described in the continuum is a civil type of teacher collaboration focused on building positive relations through showing regard to each other by being polite, being respectful to each other's perspectives, being sensitive, or providing positive feedback to each other. The second category is collegiality focused on general peer support. This type of teacher collaboration

promotes ideas such as being helpful, sharing resources, having informal meetings, willing to observe each other's classes. Then, the continuum includes teacher collaboration focused on accomplishing tasks or work. By joint work, the study implies writing a lesson plan together, dividing and sharing tasks, organizing a variety of teacher resources, or discussing what works or joint problem-solving. The continuum concludes with the description of teacher collaboration that focused on learning from each other. Given that, the study describes this type of collaboration as having open doors and practice, sharing practice, peer coaching, being vulnerable, or reflecting (*Appendix A*).

Building on the above teacher collaboration types, the study identified the levels of collaboration in New Belief School. The findings show the defined types of collaborations based on the school administration's and teachers' responses, which differ. In the following sections, detailed descriptions are provided.

Types of Collaboration Reported by New Belief School Administration and Teachers

As an overview, *Table 4.5* display data on types of collaboration reported by the school administrators in New Belief School. The continuum on the types of collaboration (*Appendix A*) presents civil and collegial forms in separate columns; however, during the interviews, participants named them together while describing what forms of teacher collaboration they and their colleagues are involved in. Given that, *Table 4.5* and *Table 4.6* present them together in the same column.

Table 4.5

Different Types of Collaboration Reported by New Belief School Administrators, Georgia

Different Types of Collaboration	
The collaboration focused on learning	33 % (Leya)
The collaboration focused on civil and collegial relations	
The collaboration focused on joint work	67 % (Sonia and Principal Gelashvili)

The following *Table 4.6* offers New Belief School teachers' views on teacher collaboration types.

Table 4.6

Different Types of Collaboration Reported by New Belief School Teachers, Georgia

Different Types of Collaboration	
The collaboration focused on learning	86% (12 teachers out of 14)
The collaboration focused on civil and collegial relations	21 % (3 teachers out 14)
The collaboration focused on joint work	43 % (6 teachers out of 14)

Based on the school administrators' report (i.e., two of the administrators), teachers are involved in joint work (*Table 4.5*). Teachers' responses (i.e., eighty-six percent), however, were different, indicating to the collaboration form focused on learning from each other. Also, forty-three percent of teacher responses show that they are involved in joint work, and only twenty-one percent of teachers responded that they are collaborating through civil and collegial relations (*Table 4.6*). The following sections provide a better picture of teacher collaborations observed in New Belief School. The findings suggest a set of themes similar to the continuum (*Appendix A*) describing the type of teacher collaborations, and each of them has some subcategories.

Theme 1: Collaboration Focused on Civil and Collegial Relations

Sharing teaching materials with colleagues. The data show that teachers in New Belief School were engaged in sharing teaching materials with their colleagues. This collegial type of collaboration is seen across the departments. Teachers usually share with their colleagues the handouts they designed or found on teaching websites. Also, they share interesting ideas they got from the training sessions they attended. One of the French language teachers, who is also a chair of the department, shared that she attended several workshops or training sessions, and she thinks that it is her responsibility to share essential teaching innovations with her colleagues. In her perspective, sharing teaching materials help save time and even, come up with more interesting

teaching ideas. The teacher said that she has recently attended one of the training sessions abroad, and teachers were so excited about her experience. The teacher stated:

Two years ago, I was in France and attended a training session for language teachers. I learned a lot there, for example, how to design more effective activities for elementary students to improve the instruction [pointing to the collegiality]. I shared all the ideas with my colleagues I brought from the training sessions.

Collaboration built on positive relations. The study also aimed to observe some teacher collaborations. Principal Gelashvili kindly scheduled some department meetings, which were helpful to see a teacher collaboration process within the department. The French Language department was one of the positive and active departments where teachers were very positive and respectful of each other's perspectives. During the department meeting, teachers were sharing some ideas about rearranging the curriculum. Teachers were carefully considering each other's thoughts. Also, teachers were providing to each other some feedback on the tests they designed for each grade level. All teachers were showing some respect to each other's perspectives indicating positive relationships among them.

Theme 2: Collaboration Focused on Joint Work

Writing a lesson plan together. Besides, teachers were engaged in joint work as well. Here, the joint work was seen either among teachers or between one of the administrators and the teacher. To be specific, the data show that teachers collaborate or with one of the administrators on a lesson plan for their demo lessons. Earlier in this chapter, it was mentioned that the school administrators were supporting teachers in designing their lesson plans to go through the evaluation process successfully. One of the English teachers shared how she got some help from Sonia to create her first demo lesson. The teacher said that she got surprised when Sonia suggested her support. Then their collaboration led to more positive relations between them. She described:

First, we worked on finding out more interesting activities for students and how they would be helpful for students to learn. Then, Sonia helped me write the lesson plan based on the format we have [pointing to the joint work]. She explained every stage of the lesson. I would say the lesson was pretty successful. Now I am thinking about the second demo lesson.

Dividing and sharing tasks. Moreover, within the departments, sharing and dividing the tasks is common among teachers as joint work; especially, they split the tasks regarding designing the tests for students based on grade levels teachers teach. According to the Georgian national curriculum, students are supposed to take some tests designed by their teachers once a month and each semester (i.e., they have four semesters, including certain months). To make their work easier, teachers design and then divide the tests with their colleagues. This kind of sharing is common across all the departments based on the interview and observation data. One of the math teachers shared:

We have many teaching hours and to make our life much easier, we started to share the tests that we design for our students [pointing to the joint work]. This mostly happens at the beginning or in the middle of the teaching year.

Theme 3: Collaboration Focused on Learning from Each Other

Observing each other's classes. In addition to the joint and collegial/civil type of collaboration, the data show that New Belief School teachers are engaged in learning from each other through observing each other's instruction. The findings show that the open-door policy implemented since Principal Gelashvili became the new school principal in New Belief School, and this type of teacher collaboration is often seen in elementary classes. Teachers in elementary levels are more open to observe and share the teaching practices. One of the elementary teachers who have forty years of teaching experience shared:

One of my colleagues asked me to observe her class. She had some challenges that involve a few students in the learning process. I was happy to help her. So, it was the second-grade math class. While the observation, I noticed that three disruptive students were not willing to learn. After the class, I shared with her that those students were much

weaker, and the teacher's instruction was not for their level. So, she needed to focus on differentiating her instruction by designing special activities for those kids. We brainstormed some ideas on how to design those special activities [pointing to the learning from each other].

Collaboration through integrated projects and classes. Besides, teachers were invited to work with their colleagues from other departments. It was new for teachers of New Belief School. This type of teacher collaboration was either focused on designing the class or carrying out the educational project for students. The findings suggest that teachers from other departments often come together to work on the integrated lesson plans, and then, they teach it to their students. In doing so, Principal Gelashvili wanted her teachers to present the importance of each content area and how they are helpful in real life. One of the geography teachers shared that it was new for her to integrate her class with one of her colleagues. She described:

You know it was new to me, but I wanted to try. I asked one of my colleagues from the History department to work on the shared class. So, we designed a lesson on Abkhaz-Georgian war, and we needed to consider more interactivity among students, as we did not want to lecture through the presentation [pointing to the shared practice]. You know it was one of the bloodiest conflicts in our history. The battle was going in the Kodori Valley. My colleague and I were presenting how the war happened and why our country chose the Kodori Valley. It was my responsibility to explain the important geographical position of the valley. So, the upper part of the valley was more mountainous, providing more convenience to have the war there.

Moreover, Principal Gelashvili was inviting teachers to carry out educational and intellectual projects to involve students learn through having fun, which was also new to teachers and students. Projects could include more than two departments depending on the aim. One of the math teachers shared that her department carried out a project named “Rubiko in the world of geometric figures.” It was a kind of play involving students actively involved in helping a little girl, who was lost in the geometric world, to find her way home. The teacher shared that they involved some departments making the place more educative and appealing for students: English language, Geography, and Music. Each department had a task. She stated:

For example, the Music department was responsible for composing a piece of music, the English department was supposed to translate the play, Geography department was responsible for creating a map, and our department was responsible for providing math problems [pointing to the reciprocal relations]. Through her way home, Rubiko was supposed to find some hidden treasure through solving some math problems. The audience (i.e., students) was allowed to help that little girl. Overall, it was an exciting project for students and us.

Summary

Building on the above-described types of collaboration, the findings indicate that New Belief School is engaged in various forms of teacher collaboration. The data show that teachers were collaborating through sharing their teaching materials (i.e., collegial), they were dividing the tasks (joint work) to make their life much easier, for example, teachers were responsible for designing the tests for students and then share them with their colleagues. Also, the teacher collaboration observations within the department suggest that teachers have positive and respectful relations showing that their collaboration is built on civil relations.

In addition, the findings suggest that Principal Gelashvili was promoting a schoolwide teacher collaboration through integrated classes or projects. This was a new idea for New Belief School. By doing so, Principal Gelashvili intended to bring together teachers and help them work with each other and learn from each other by sharing their practices. Moreover, teachers were invited to observe each other's classes, which was also helpful for them to learn from their colleagues and bring new ideas to their classes. Given that, Principal Gelashvili was promoting peer collaboration in New Belief School.

However, the findings suggest that though Principal Gelashvili and her administrative team were promoting teacher collaboration, there was no evidence of how that collaboration was supported by the administrative team. *Chapter 7* will provide further description.

CHAPTER 5: PRINCIPAL WHITE'S CASE

As stated earlier, the purpose of the study is to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. school contexts. Specifically, the study is interested in identifying early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration in vertical and egalitarian school strictures. These understandings will support school principals' initial steps in building teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet Azerbaijan seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices. This chapter also presents a number of findings based on the administrative team and teachers' interviews, teacher collaboration observations, and document examination. Initially, the study provides some general overview of the visited middle school in Michigan. Then, the study presents the current level of trust at school to provide better how the school administration worked on building trusted relations at school. Further, the study delineates the leadership experiences of Victory Middle School principal and the assistant principal. Before revisiting the findings, school principal's, the assistant principal's, and teachers' views on building trust are presented to provide the general overview of trust-related issues and how the school administration took action to build trust. This chapter, then, presents the administrative team's efforts in developing and supporting teacher trust in more an egalitarian school context, Victory Middle School. The findings include a set of early leadership actions, which are broken down into specific themes and subcategories. The trust section concludes with a brief overview of the findings. The chapter also presents the findings on teacher collaboration. Initially, the general overview of types of collaboration was provided based on participants' reports. Then, the chapter present teacher collaboration forms observed at school. Moreover, this chapter offers how school principal supports teacher

collaboration in her school. Finally, the section shows how the school principal responds to resisting teachers.

Victory Middle School

The first visited school in Michigan is Victory Middle School. The school, as all U.S. schools, has its mission, which is all kids can perform to the expected level. Given that, the determined mission of Victory Middle School is organized around to develop a whole person through social, emotional, and academic learning to help them reach the expected level. Victory Middle School situated in the suburban area of Mid-Michigan. It is a single-story building and occupies approximately 54,000 squares area. The school serves 687 students (i.e., fifty-four percent of the student body is male, and forty-six percent is female) in grades seven and eight, including Montessori classes too. There are various ethnic student groups in Victory Middle School. *Table 5.1* offers a display of the student body at school.

Table 5.1

The Student Body of Victory Middle School, Michigan

The Student Body of Victory Middle School	
Asian	22.9 %
African American	6.0 %
Hispanic	6.6 %
White	58.7 %
Eligible for free lunch or reduced-price lunch	20.2 %

Occupying a large area, Victory Middle School is nicely designed and has the needed facilities for both teachers and students to have more productive classes. Student drawings line many of the hallways. Also, the school has a large cafeteria, a gym, and a library allowing the students to spend their time and perform various class-related tasks. The instruction provided at Victory Middle School demonstrates high student test results. In 2018, the school ranked as a better performing school than 96.2 % of middle schools in Michigan. Also, the test results of

disadvantaged students indicate that they are performing better than similar students in other Michigan schools.

Victory Middle School employs 46 teachers, 9 of them is male teachers. Teachers in the middle school are organized per their certification of highly qualified status and are assigned to a grade and team of teachers. To be specific, teachers work by grade level teams for student needs and as department teams for curricular alignment. Also, teachers attend formally scheduled staff meetings, PLCs, building planning meetings, and department meetings held on every month. Besides, Victory Middle School teachers are engaged in a number of meetings, depending on their needs and initiatives. Teachers are responsible for the overall content of the meetings. However, the building leader is legally helped via Law Services to support teacher collaboration meetings. The following *Table 5.2* displays the number of teachers by the subject departments.

Table 5.2

The Organization of Teachers by Subject Departments, Michigan

The Organization of Teachers by Subject Departments	
Band	3 teachers
Math	12 teachers
Science	9 teachers
Business	2 teachers
Fine Arts	2 teachers
Social studies	9 teachers
English	9 teachers

Classes at Victory Middle School run five days a week, lasting fifty minutes, and there are five minutes passing periods. Students start their classes at 8:00 am and finish at 2:45 pm. As for teachers, they have the same schedule every day. Some teachers' start their day with the appointed planning time, which is one class period. The common preparation time is usually before the classes start. During that time, teachers have an opportunity to collaborate with the same content area teachers to coordinate curriculum, teaching materials, or improve instruction.

The School Administration

Principal White

Principal White is highly experienced as a teacher and an administrator. As a teacher, she worked for about nine years. Principal White was involved in teaching sociology, psychology, health, and life skills. Having got the valuable knowledge from the educational leadership master's program and having been inspired by her mentor in her master's program helped Principal White step forward as an educational leader working in various school districts of Michigan. Given that, she started her leadership career as an assistant principal in one of the middle schools in Mid-Michigan. Gaining experience as an assistant principal for three years, Principal White continued her leadership career as a building principal in the middle school, in another district of Mid-Michigan. Her current destination is Victory Middle School, where she has been working as a principal for five years.

Throughout her leadership experience, Principal White was engaged in different training sessions by gaining broad knowledge and experiences to support her teachers' professional development. Through the programs, she learned how to provide more constructive feedback to support teachers' instruction. Besides, Principal White attended some sessions providing her with a better understanding of school leaders' support in developing teacher teams within the existing system, providing them with specific roles.

The Assistant Principal

Tom is a newly appointed assistant principal in Victory Middle School with a rich experience working as an administrator. His administrative experience began in 2006 with charter schools in Detroit as the dean of students. Moreover, Tom had worked as an interim assistant principal in the Lansing school district, and also, he had worked as a counselor within

the same school district. The rewarding part of his job, as he thinks, is to influence and reach out to more students learning through his position as an administrator.

The Current Level of Trust in Victory Middle School

One of the goals of this study, as already stated in *Chapter 1*, is to find out how school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and U.S. establish trust between the school administration and teachers as well as among teachers in vertical versus egalitarian school settings. The understandings of the study will help school principals in post-Soviet Azerbaijani schools to reconsider the first steps in building and supporting teacher trust and collaboration.

Building on the purpose of the study, to measure trust level, the study used a three-level trust measure continuum (*Appendix A*) defining different levels of trust: basic, mixed, and strong relational trust.

Table 5.3

Reports of Trust Levels Between the Administrative Team and Teachers in Victory Middle School, Michigan

The Level of Trust	The Results of The Administrative Team's (The Principal and Assistant Principal) Responses	The Results of 10 Teachers' Responses
Basic Trust		
Mixed Trust	100 % (2 of them)	30 % (3 teachers out of 10)
Strong Relational Trust		70 % (7 teachers out of 10)

By basic level of trust between the administrative team and teachers (*Table 5.3*), the study implies respectful and cordial relations without having any adverse situations. However, there might be some distrust between the parties based on what the administrative team is doing for the best of the school (*Appendix A*). The study also defines the mixed level of trust between the administrative team and teachers as being different across some teachers and groups. There are open interactions with some of them about their work and teaching. Teachers share with the

administrative team their thoughts and trust the administrative team to do the right thing. However, trust with some teachers is more basic and cordial (*Appendix A*). The study also presents strong relational trust, which is generally very strong between the administrative team and most teachers. They trust each other to be helpful to one another and to be doing what is best for the school. They share their knowledge and ideas, they talk about their work, and they trust each other with problems and uncertainties about their practices (*Appendix A*).

The findings suggest that trust between the administrators and teachers is built on strong relations based on teachers' reports (i.e., seventy percent of teacher responses). However, the administrative team and thirty percent of teachers still think that the level of trust is mixed (*Table 5.3*). Later in this chapter, a detailed description of each leadership behavior and action is described as a better picture of their early steps in building teacher trust and collaboration in Victory Middle School.

Table 5.4

Teachers' Reports of Trust Levels Among Teachers in Victory Middle School, Michigan

The Level of Trust	The Results of The Administrative Team's (The Principal and Assistant Principal) Responses	The Results of 10 Teachers' Responses
Basic Trust		
Mixed Trust	50 % (P)	80 % (8 out of 10) – in the community;
Strong Relational Trust	50 % (AP)	20 % (2 out of 10) – in the community; 70 % (7 out of 7; 3 of 10 did not respond); in the department.

The study also aimed to identify the level of trust among teachers. *Table 5.4* describes the current level of trust among teachers. Building on the definitions of trust levels displayed in the continuum (*Appendix A*), the study defines basic trust as having respectful and cordial relationships among teachers. Generally, teachers do not conflict. Still, some teachers do not

always trust each other to do what is right for the school, and there are sometimes frictions. Overall, teachers are friendly but mostly work by themselves (*Appendix A*). The study also describes the mixed level of trust as having different trust level among some groups of teachers. Some teachers have open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share and trust each other to do the right thing for the schools. With others, their trust is still more basic and cordial; they are friendly to others, but they mostly work alone (*Appendix A*). Further, the study gives the importance of strong relational trust by defining it as being generally very strong between most all of the teachers. They trust each other to be helpful and to be doing what is suitable for the school. They have a sense of working together rather than alone. They seek new ideas and advice from each other. They trust each other with their teaching problems and challenges (*Appendix A*).

Based on the provided definitions above, the data also indicated the trust level among teachers (*Table 5.4*). The responses are varying. Eighty percent of teachers think that the trust level is mixed in the entire school. Principal White also agrees with that the level of trust among all teachers is mixed. Yet, twenty percent of teachers believe that trust is based on strong relations in the school community. Seventy percent of teachers and the assistant principal think that the trust level is built on strong relations within departments. Later in this chapter, various leadership actions and behaviors in building teacher trust and collaboration by the school administrators are presented.

Principal White's Views on Building Trust

As already stated, Principal White has been working in Victory Middle School for five years, and also, she has a rich experience working as an administrator in other school districts of Michigan. While interviewing Principal White, it came out that Victory Middle School was not

experiencing any huge distrust as in two other cases (i.e., Principal Gelashvili and Principal Louis). The school has already had an established level of trust. Also, during the interviews, it was clear that Principal White was much aware of trust-building actions, which she used to build trusted relations between her and teachers as well as between the newly appointed assistant principal and teachers.

The Assistant Principal's Views on Building Trust

Tom, as a new assistant principal, also aimed at building trust between him and teachers. Because the school district was new to Tom, thus, he intended to get to know the school culture better and explore the school members (i.e., teachers) to get to know them well and build trusted relations with teachers. Given that, Tom wanted to be accepted by teachers; therefore, he was often engaged in some informal gatherings with teachers to get that trusted relations with them.

Tom shared:

Last week, one of the teachers invited me to watch a basketball game. Or the other day, I was invited to ... one of the teachers he has some hens in his yard. So, I went. I often try to accept the teachers' invitations. I think it helps to have some positive relations with these folks.

Teachers' Views on Building Trust

Teachers of Victory Middle School also shared their stories on how the school administration, especially Principal White, was trying to establish trust at school. One of the teachers stated that the school culture of Victory Middle School was always positive, and teachers were having trusted relations among them and with the previous school administrators. Teacher participants confirmed that Principal White takes a series of leadership actions to build trusted relations either between her and teachers or between the new assistant principal and teachers. The following section presents the early leadership behaviors and actions in building trusted relations between the school administration and teachers in Victory Middle School.

Trust Themes at Victory Middle School

As already stated, there was not a huge distrust in Victory Middle School, and relations between the school administration and teachers and also, among teachers were always positive. The findings indicate that when Principal White was appointed as a new principal, she was building trusted relations between her and teachers demonstrating a number of leadership behaviors and actions. Also, the data show that Principal White was feeling responsible, as a school leader, for building trusted relations between her new assistant and teachers through a variety of leadership actions. The following section demonstrates some trust-building themes and also, some subcategories indicating the school administrator's very first steps in building strong relations.

Theme 1: Being Present and Responsive

Being visible and available to teachers/finding the time. As stated earlier, the school environment was built on strong and positive relations before Principal White was appointed as a school leader. When Principal White became a principal, she was demonstrating some leadership behaviors to build trust between her and teachers. In doing so, for five years, Principal White established a mixed level of trust (*Table 5.3*). Based on the data, Principal White is usually visible and available for her teachers. The findings indicate that the principal would never say that she does not have time, or she is busy. Also, the principal does not interfere with any workflow, acting as a manager. She might be seen checking on her teachers in their classrooms, and she might greet teachers or students in the hallways. One of the teachers describes Principal White's daily leadership behaviors and how these behaviors help build positive and strong relations between her and teachers. She said:

Ms. White will come down and check to see how things are coming. She's out in the hallway; she's stopping by. She's talking to you. She's asking how you are. Um, she's

involved with our students. She knows our students. She wants to be part of problem-solving. She puts herself out there and available for all of our kids.

Being responsive to teachers' emails. Besides, Principal White considers being responsive as crucial in building strong relations. Tom (i.e., the new assistant principal) shared that Principal White has an established system to respond to teachers' emails promptly, which helps build strong bonds between them. Given that, when teachers send emails to the administration, they get the notification, or if the administration responds, they can see it in the system providing the school administration with an opportunity not to miss any emails. Throughout the day or the week, they can get a great number of emails from teachers. Thus, the administrative team either responds to those emails or has face-to-face meetings with individuals who sent the emails. Tom believes that it increased the level of trust drastically between teachers and the school administration. He shared:

Two days ago, a teacher wrote a referral, you know, "this student is misbehaving when I had a sub and I want them to have this, this and this as a consequence." And so I replied to the teacher, one replied right away to the teacher, let her know I, you know, I received her referral to. Then I just gave him feedback that we are in that process. I said, "well, you know, but I will support, you know, support what you are asking."

Theme 2: Getting to Know Teachers

A good listener. The data indicate that Principal White is a good listener. Through listening, she is passively involved in getting to know her teachers. Mostly, listening happens during team meetings, where teachers come together as a group and work on particular topics: helping struggling students or discussing some challenges related to their teaching process. Principal White is usually involved in listening to her teachers, and she would never interrupt the discussion process. In one of the teacher's observations, Principal White gets to know her teachers and how they work well or interact with each other. The teacher shared:

She did a lot of listening. She did something called team meetings where we would meet to talk about kids who are struggling with the whole team that worked with those kids because our kids are divided amongst teams. But really she was trying to get to know all of us at the same time and how we worked and how we interacted with each other.

Spending more time with the staff beyond the school walls. The findings also revealed that Principal White spends more time with the staff beyond the school walls. She considers having time with teachers in a less formal environment leads to building trusted relations between teachers and the principal. Principal White also believes that spending time with the staff outside the school building helps know each better. Principal White shared that her leadership experience during these years helped come up with this idea, and promoting friendly relations with teachers works well, in terms of building strong bonds. Principal White said:

You've got to spend time with people in order for them to trust you. Even the people that are going to challenge you, you need to spend more time with them. And it doesn't mean that they're wrong or I'm wrong or I'm right in there, right. Just understanding where each other are coming from and the why were where I was coming that way, um, is very important. So over the years, um, I've grown in that.

One of the teachers also confirmed that Principal White has long been seen as a leader who builds relationships in a less formal environment, to be specific, out of the school building. The teacher shared that they often meet outside the building, and their families have also become friends. In the teacher's perspective, Principal White considers the importance of extending positive relations beyond the school building and having friendly relations with teachers can have a positive impact on their work at school. The teacher then added:

Well, I mean, we don't have a billing that just only connects inside the building. We connect outside of the building as well. And so she, she ain't, now, she'll ask "how things are going" or about the kids, and we have kids about the same age. So, yeah, just different things like that.

Theme 3: Building Relationships

Building bonds between teachers and the new assistant principal. Stated earlier, Principal White was also actively involved in building bonds between teachers and Tom (i.e., the new assistant principal). She believed that it was crucial to coach her new assistant principal through guiding him in a new school environment where culture was different from the school environment he used to work. Principal White had morning meetings with Tom, and they could be engaged in solving some situations together. This might have been some student behavioral issues or how to talk to or collaborate with parents. Principal White wanted her assistant principal to know that the climate in Victory Middle School was different from the one he used to work, and as a leader, they need to consider the school culture to better come up with the solution. Also, Principal White wanted her teachers to know that she trusted her new assistant principal, and he only needed some guidance and support in his new school. In doing so, Principal White was creating conditions for the establishment of trust between the newly appointed assistant principal and teachers. Given that, the data show that Principal White could build strong relational trust between teachers and Tom (*Table 5.3*). She shared:

Last year, my assistant principal was new ... to our district. He's new to the system. You know, role in this type of community. He has been more in urban city schools. ... Um, some staff members were very critical of his decision making. Um, and some don't want him to return. ... They're starting to trust his process, but I felt it was very pivotal for them to know that I trusted him in order for them to ever eventually trust him.

Transparent relationships. Besides, Principal White considers that transparent relationships are necessary for building trust between teachers and her. By transparency, she means teachers need to know what the school principal thinks about a specific school-related issue, or how the school leader is going to solve that situation. Simply put, in Principal White's

perspective, teachers should be informed in every decision made in school, letting teachers know that they are also a part of that school-related situation. Principal White stated:

So, you know, providing trust, also, I think about trust the teachers need to know, your transparency, what you're thinking and your decisions.

Dependability/reliability. Principal White, who recognizes the value in building trusted relations with teachers, considers dependability and reliability as a crucial element in bonding strong ties between her and teachers. The findings suggest that Principal White was following whatever she was saying, or she would keep whatever information she was shared with. This leadership behavior was describing Principal White as a trusted leader. Principal White said:

Dependability. If I, if I would have to say they need one thing, they need dependability. Um, in order to trust the decisions that we make. They need to know that, um, or in the trenches with them to trust.

Treating fairly and as a respected professional. The data also show that Principal White treats her teachers as her equals. One of the novice teachers shared that when she just started her job in Victory Middle School, the first leadership behavior she observed in Principal White was treating the new teacher as her equal making the teacher feel comfortable. She would often visit the teacher's classroom and ask if she needs anything from her. Then the teacher shared that she saw Principal White treating at same manner her other colleagues too. In the teacher's perspective, Principal White's behaviors make teachers feel on the same level as their principal, creating a more respected and trusted environment in Victory Middle School. She stated:

She's not that dictator personality, right? She's, I felt like we were coming in as equals button. I understood that I was her equal. Do you know what I mean? Just the way she talked to me initially. She made me feel very comfortable and that I could go to her, and I felt like we had some things in common.

Supportive. The findings, further, suggest that Principal White is a leader who always supports her teachers. Given that, one of the new teachers shared that since she started working in Victory Middle School, Principal White was trying to help her. Principal's support could be seen in different ways: anything for teaching or any assistance in making hard decisions. The teacher mentioned that she appreciated any support from the administrators as it was the very first year of her teaching career. Also, the teacher shared Principal White's constant visits and desire to have meetings with a teacher made her feel special and supported by the principal, leading her to have more open and trusted relations. The teacher stated:

I could trust her to help me make the right decisions because there were some really hard decisions I had to make this year. And I didn't know if I was making the right one or there was a couple of times where I was second-guessing. Maybe I didn't choose the right career field because it was a hard year this year. She was a big reason that I, I made it through some really hard times this year with teaching.

Being thoughtful. The data also describe Principal White as a thoughtful leader who is involved in considering her teachers' needs and feelings. Principal White would have been seen in the hallways talking to her teachers to know their concerns, showing her compassion towards them. Moreover, Principal White would consider her teachers' interests' first, rather thinking about herself. The teacher, in her mid-teaching career, expecting her baby shared that Principal White was always interested in her health. The teacher said that Principal White would stop by her classroom and spend some time with her. In doing so, Principal White was described as a leader who was genuinely caring for her teachers. The teacher shared that once she was not able to teach one of her classes because of her health, and Principal White was informed about that. Knowing her teacher's health problem, Principal White putting aside her leadership duties spent quite a long time with the teacher, trying to comfort and support the teacher by listening to her concerns. The teacher stated:

So, when I feel like I need to share something with her, it's very minimal. Um, but yet she's understanding and is like, "do what you need to do to take care of you and your family" and whatnot.

Theme 4: Considering Teachers' Voices

Giving teachers autonomy and considering their voices. The findings, further, indicate that Principal White gives autonomy to her teachers in making important decisions in terms of their students and teaching. In doing so, the principal would demonstrate how it is crucial to her teachers' thoughts and decisions. Very often, teachers share their ideas with Principal White on how to work with struggling students when they have team meetings the principal. During the meetings, teachers are mostly engaged in discussions about various interventions. Principal White appears as a good listener and tries to give more autonomy to her teachers to come to the right decisions, and also, she would have seen as a leader who empowers her teachers. Alternatively, individual teachers would come up with some ideas on how to make the instruction more effective. One of the teachers shared:

We didn't have a program in place to teach kids social emotional skills. So immediately as I entered, she empowered me to start looking into programs. And she's really just said like, "take the wheel, you've got this." And that's crazy. Sometimes when I stop and think about it, like in year three, you know, "do what you can do." And I'm like, "Ah, okay, we'll see." So, she's definitely put a lot of trust in me and then vice versa. I feel like if I go to her with a concern or a request, she's going to have my back and trust that I am doing what's best for me and for my kids too. So, yeah. Yeah, she's great. A great principal to have!

Theme 5: Being a Role Model

Being interested in teachers' personal and professional lives. The data also show that Principal White was also seen as a school leader who was interested in her teachers' personal and professional lives. As already stated, Principal White is always visible and available to teachers. She is still involved in asking some questions about her teachers' families and kids or their

teaching and students. By doing so, Principal White demonstrates how her teachers are valuable for her and builds trusted relations with them. One of the teachers said:

... she keeps asking me questions professionally, personally, and I keep asking her questions, um, professionally, personally. And I think it just kind of goes from there.

Giving skilled feedback. As already stated, Principal White is interested in her teachers' professional life, and as a part of her job is to observe teachers' classes. In one of the interviews, the teacher shared that Principal White would provide more positive and skilled feedback. In the post-observation process, Principal White would listen, and the teacher mentioned the principal is a good listener, and while listening, she would try to absorb the whole teacher reflection to provide better and skilled feedback. The teacher said through the observations that Principal White helped her be reflective of her own instruction. She stated:

She almost always ends with some kind of a probing question no matter how, like no matter "how that lesson with, in a way be like, how might that have gone differently had you tried this?" And it's never taken as a negative was never delivered as a negative. Like you should have done this, but that's so great. "Did you think about this or what, what might you do next time if that were to occur?" Just like a probing question and it's a really positive way that she has of getting us to just kind of keep wanting to push ourselves. Reflection is a big piece.

Summary

Principal White's case shows that Victory Middle School was not experiencing a huge distrust among teachers or between the administrative team and teachers. However, as a new school leader, Principal White was determined to build strong bonds between her and teachers. The above-mentioned trust-related themes indicate that Principal White was involved in building trusted relations between her and teachers, and also, between her newly appointed assistant principal and teachers. By doing so, Principal White was demonstrating a set of leadership behaviors and actions, which helped the principal build strong relational trust between her and teachers based on the majority of responses (i.e., seventy percent of teacher responses). The

findings show the following five key themes related to trust building-leadership behaviors and actions: Being present and responsive, getting to know teachers, building relationships, considering teachers' voices, being a role model. Each of the themes as in the previous case has some subcategories, indicating specific leadership behaviors and actions taken to build trusted relations.

Types of Collaboration Observed in Victory Middle School

The findings also expose the types of teacher collaborations in Victory Middle School. To identify the type of collaboration at school, the study used the continuum (*Appendix A*) as in two cases (i.e., Principal Gelashvili and Principal Louis). The continuum defines the following main categories: collaboration focused on civil relations, collegiality, a collaboration focused on joint work and learning from each other. The first category described in the continuum is a civil type of teacher collaboration focused on building positive relations through showing regard to each other by being polite, being respectful to each other's perspectives, being sensitive, or providing positive feedback to each other. The second category is collegiality focused on general peer support. This type of teacher collaboration promotes ideas such as being helpful, sharing resources, having informal meetings, willing to observe each other's classes. Then, the continuum includes teacher collaboration focused on accomplishing tasks or work. By joint work, the study implies writing a lesson plan together, dividing and sharing tasks, organizing a variety of teacher resources, or discussing what works or joint problem-solving. The continuum concludes with the description of teacher collaboration that focused on learning from each other. Given that, the study describes this type of collaboration as having open doors and practice, sharing practice, peer coaching, being vulnerable, or reflecting (*Appendix A*).

The continuum (*Appendix A*) used in the study helped identify the type of collaboration in Victory Middle School. The findings present the defined types of collaborations based on the school administration's and teachers' responses. In the following sections, detailed descriptions are provided.

Types of Collaboration Reported by Victory Middle School Administration and Teachers

As in the previous chapter (i.e., Principal Gelashvili's case), this chapter initially provides an overview of types of collaboration reported by participants. *Table 5.5* displays data on types of collaboration reported Victory Middle School administrators.

Table 5.5

Different Types of Collaboration Observed in Victory Middle School Reported by the Administrators, Michigan

Different Types of Collaboration	
The collaboration focused on civil relations	100% (Principal White and Tom)
The collaboration focused on collegial relations	100% (Principal White and Tom)
The collaboration focused on joint work	100% (Principal White and Tom)
The collaboration focused on learning	100% (Principal White and Tom)

The following *Table 5.6* offers Victory Middle School teachers' responses to teacher collaboration types.

Table 5.6

Different Types of Collaboration Observed in Victory Middle School Reported by Teachers, Michigan

Different Types of Collaboration	
The collaboration focused on civil relations	50 % (5 participants out of 10)
The collaboration focused on collegial relations	50 % (5 participants out of 10)
The collaboration focused on joint work	80 % (8 participants out of 10)
The collaboration focused on learning	80 % (8 participants out of 10)

The findings suggest that Victory Middle School teachers are engaged in various types of collaboration. For example, based on the school administrators' responses, teachers are involved in all the types of teacher collaborations: focused on civil relations, collegiality, joint work, and

learning from each other (*Table 5.5*). However, teachers' responses are different. Most of the teacher responses are focused on the collaboration on joint work and learning from each other (i.e., the same teacher has chosen more than one answer). Yet, some teacher responses indicate that the observed teacher collaboration is focused on civil and collegial relations (i.e., the same teacher has chosen more than one answer) (*Table 5.6*). The detailed descriptions of teacher collaboration are provided below.

Formal and Informal Setting of Collaboration

As already stated in *Chapter 3*, the study aimed to collect the data by interviewing participants, observing some teacher collaboration meetings, and examining some document regarding teacher collaboration. The data show that teacher collaboration in Victory Middle School is seen in two different settings: formal and informal settings of collaboration.

Table 5.7 summarizes the findings based on formal and informal teacher collaboration settings in the Victory Middle School.

Table 5.7

The Summary of Teacher Collaborations in Victory Middle School, Michigan

Teacher collaborations in the Victory Middle School	
Formal Teacher Collaborations	Informal Teacher collaborations
PLC groups	Informal observations
Department meetings	Peer collaboration
Staff meetings	Hallway meetings
Mentoring program	Sharing materials via software
Co-teaching	

Teacher Collaborations in Formal Settings

The study defines formal teacher collaborations as teacher meetings reflected the structured time and teacher's contract requirements. Building on that, this section presents some teacher collaborations happening in formal settings, which fit the forms of collaborations described in the continuum (*Appendix A*).

The findings suggest a number of formal teacher collaboration settings taken place in Victory Middle School. *Table 5.7* presents some of them mentioned during the interviews: Department and staff meetings, mentoring and co-teaching programs, and problem-solving meetings. The data show that these formal teacher collaboration settings have structured time and reflected in a teacher contract requiring teachers to come together in a predetermined time. Moreover, the findings suggest that during these teacher meetings, they are involved in professional development by sharing their general concerns on their students, how to adapt the curriculum or other school-related issues through formal gatherings. Principal White shared:

... we have our PLCs, which are professional learning communities, where they get to meet with their group. So, they work on this component of the cooperation, the joint work together quite a bit.

Principal White also added that teachers through department meetings are engaged in looping content knowledge. To be precise, teachers across the departments have their scheduled time to come together and work on integrated thematic themes. Principal White shared that language arts and social studies instructors, currently, work together on the “holocaust” topic. The social studies instructor will teach the history, and the language arts instructor will work on the writing component. Then Principal White added:

You know they’ll do it through a historical lens. They’ll read a biography in social studies, and then language arts will do writing. Right. So, they do cross-curricular [pointing to the joint work]. So that does take a lot of collaboration.

Teachers of Victory Middle School also meet at staff meetings once a month in a predetermined time. The findings suggest that teachers collaborate by discussing specific topics that can be related to their teaching and student-related issues. The data show that Principal White usually sends teachers some articles beforehand. Teachers are supposed to read the articles before staff meetings and then discuss with their colleagues during the meeting. In doing so,

Principal White tries to keep her teachers on the topic and help them grow professionally. One of the English teachers described one of the staff meetings.

In staff meetings, we do different activities that would incorporate trust and working [pointing to the building positive relations or civil relations]. Well, you might have like a trust activity. Like we've gotten up and just having to kind of share our thoughts and opinions about different things like about the culture and to be able to talk about different people's cultures and thoughts [pointing to the learning community]. And the other day, you were also there, one of our colleagues presented the differences between micro aggressions and macroaggressions. She attended the training, and she just shared it in that meeting [pointing to the learning community]. So different stuff.

Moreover, the data indicate that through formal teacher collaboration settings, some teachers are engaged in a mentoring program in which one of the teachers is a mentor another one is a mentee (i.e., a teacher who is new to the school or district, and even, who has just started the teaching career). The program lasts for two or three years for teachers who have just started their teaching career, and a year for the ones who are new to the district, but with some teaching experience. In general, through the first year, the novice teachers, presumably younger, meet their mentors a couple of times a week and talk about how to enter the attendance, enter grades, use the copy machines, how to talk to parents when there is a disagreement, or how to resolve conflict with the classroom. Then towards the end of the first year, it is more about professional learning. One of the math teachers who is mentoring the novice teacher shared:

So while it starts out very dry about how the school building operates normally into the end of the first year and beyond, your conversations become more student success focused and more collaborative in terms of the academics [pointing to the focus on learning]. I can share some teaching materials to help the teacher, and if she finds something interesting, can also share back [pointing to the collegiality]. It depends.

The data shared above show that teachers in Victory Middle School come together within formal settings involving teacher collaboration types described in the continuum: focus on the joint work, learning community, building positive relations and collegiality (*Appendix A*). Given that, based on the interview, observation, and document examination data, teachers through

formal collaboration settings build positive relations (i.e., civil type), share resources (i.e., collegiality), do some cross-curricular classes through which they work on the integrated thematic themes (i.e., joint work), and also, a mentoring program involving, specifically, novices to learn from their mentors or sharing new information to teachers in staff meetings (i.e., learning community). The next section of this chapter presents teacher collaborations in informal settings.

Teacher Collaborations in Informal Settings

Alongside with formal collaborations settings, teachers in Victory Middle School are informally engaged in collaboration. The data show that teachers can share their practices in the hallways, lunchtime, or during their preparation time. Defined as self-initiated teacher collaborations, teachers can be involved in informally observing each other, without any formal observation sheet. The data show that teachers intend to see another teacher's approach to the same topic. Also, through informal settings, teachers share some teaching materials via software or work on writing lesson plans. One of the social studies teachers shared:

I share, I find things quite frequently. I'm a researcher and anytime I find something that I want to try in my class, I push it out to others. Oftentimes, I'll find things that I won't use in class, but I'll still share with someone [pointing to the collegiality] else cause they might use it in class. ... I use these HyperDocs or playlists, and it's really changed how I teach.

Another teacher, who teaches math, shared that he often collaborates with his colleague, and they work together on their weekly lesson plans, share some experiences on how specific tasks went well or did not work well. The teacher said that they often come together during their preparation time, which is more suitable for their collaboration. Also, the same teacher shared that they can observe each other's classes see how particular tasks work with different students and what needs to consider adding or changing for the next time. The teacher thinks that peer

collaboration is quite effective, as it helps learn from others and know how to combine different opinions and bring them to the class. The teacher stated:

I have informal meetings with my colleague daily. We work on the lesson plans [pointing to the joint work]. We are in the same grade level. We ask each other questions, figuring out where we can put a kid if they have areas they need help with [pointing to the learning community].

The data described above present how teacher collaborations in informal settings happen in Victory Middle School. Also, based on the data, informal teacher collaboration settings, which are more teacher self-initiated involve the following categories described in the continuum (*Appendix A*): sharing teaching materials via software (i.e., collegiality), peer collaboration and informal teacher observations (i.e., learning community).

Building on those mentioned above, formal and informal teacher collaboration settings, the study presents how teachers of Victory Middle School come together. The study also aimed to find how school principals support teacher collaborations in their schools. The next section provides some findings on how Principal White supports her teachers' collaboration.

Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Victory Middle School

This section presents the interview and observation based findings on how Victory Middle School administrators are engaged in supporting teacher collaboration (*Table 5.8*).

Table 5.8

Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Victory Middle School, Michigan

Supporting Teacher Collaboration	
Support from the School Administration	Examples
Providing time	Having informal observations or teacher collaboration meetings during the school day
Organizing the same preparation or lunchtime for teachers	Teachers come together during the same preparation time. The teachers who do not have the same preparation time can meet their colleagues during lunchtime.

Table 5.8 indicates that the school administration supports teacher collaboration by providing them with a structured time, which was not seen in New Belief School (i.e., Principal Gelashvili's case). Later in the cross-case analysis chapter, detailed similarities and differences will be displayed. The findings suggest that teachers indicate the crucial role of provided time for their collaboration, and the most important is this structured time is given during the school day. When teachers are provided with the needed time during the school day, the school administration hires substitute teachers to cover teachers' classes who are engaged in collaboration. Principal White shared:

First of all, it's gotta be structured time, without the structured time, they wouldn't do it on their own. But that provides a purpose for the group, ..., was that purposes is like structured.

Moreover, to support teacher collaboration, the administrative team organized the teaching schedule so that to help the teachers of the same grade level or the same subject matter come together at the same planning hour. The data revealed that the same planning hour supports teacher collaboration, and also, teachers have a chance to contribute to each other's lesson plans.

One of the teachers stated:

... we have planning times, um, so the fourth hour, like four resource teachers example, all there're three resource teachers. All three had the same planning hour. We all have the fourth hour to plan, which is nice because it gives me the opportunity to collaborate with other resource teachers. "hey, we're, I'm struggling with this kid." Like we need, we need to figure out what am I, are you seeing the same thing in language arts?

The data show that not all teachers come together at the same planning time. Some teacher participants mentioned that the school administrations purposefully organized the lunchtime so that teachers who cannot meet during the preparation time, they would have an opportunity to meet at lunch. The data indicate that during the lunchtime, teachers talk and share some basic teaching practices or experiences. One of the teachers shared that the meeting during

lunch is a good chance for teachers to come together and know each other better and build better relationships. She said:

So all the eighth-grade teachers have the same lunch and all the seventh grade teachers have the same lunch. And then of the three resource teachers, I have eighth grade lunch and the other two have seven. So I don't have an, I don't have the same lunches with my other two resource teachers. But it's nice because again, it's about going down to the lunchroom and building those relationships with the other staff members.

In this section, the study presented some principal support observed in Victory Middle School. The following section describes the findings on how Principal White responds to the resisting teachers who are not so involved in teacher collaboration.

Responding to Resisting Teachers in Victory Middle School

In addition to the identified types of teacher collaborations and how school administration supports them, the study also revealed some teacher resistance against teacher collaboration in Victory Middle School. Principal White shared that the teachers who are not willing to collaborate do not understand the importance of teacher collaboration. In her perspective, time matters, and the principal tries to involve resistant teachers by pushing them towards their colleagues to collaborate and letting them understand the crucial role of collaboration. *Table 5.9* summarizes how Principal White responds to resistings teachers.

Table 5.9

Responding to Resistings Teachers in Victory Middle School, Michigan

Responding to Resisting Teachers	
The team's response to resistance	Examples
Keeping them personally on the topic	... they are unsure of someones else's "Why". ...they don't know why they're doing this. They're guessing and they're making their own assumptions.

Table 5.9 (cont'd)

Responding to Resisting Teachers	
The team's response to resistance	Examples
Pushing teachers to collaborate	"ask, go ask them, go talk to them. You are a professional colleague, they research this." "I need you on the team." You have to get on the bus and you need to play the game with us. Um, everybody else's here, but you and you put little pressure, I've allowed you to explore and learn. Now you need to play"

Summary

In general, this section provides some findings of how Victory Middle School teachers are engaged in different types of teacher collaborations through some categories described in the continuum: civil, collegiality, joint work, and learning community (*Appendix A*). The data show that these collaboration categories fall into formal and informal teacher collaboration settings. Also, the findings suggest how school administration supports teacher collaboration: providing time and organizing the same preparation or lunchtime for teachers. The study identified that the school administration support for teacher collaboration occurs mainly in formal settings. As already mentioned, formal teacher collaborations reflected the structured time and teachers' contract, therefore, it is a direct school administration's responsibility to provide the needed support for teachers to collaborate. As for informal teacher collaboration settings, they are more self-initiated in several ways. Teachers share some teaching resources via software. Also, teachers may share some teaching practices when they meet their colleagues in the hallways, lunchtime, or during their preparation time. Moreover, the findings suggest that teachers collaborate with their peers, and usually, they are involved in informal teacher observations. Finally, the data show how Principal White responds to resisting teachers. The findings suggest that Principal White keeps teachers on the topic, trying to present the importance of teacher

collaboration in their professional growth. The data also show that the principal pushes resisting teachers to collaborate.

CHAPTER 6: PRINCIPAL LOUIS' CASE

This chapter also presents a number of findings based on the administrative team and teachers' interviews, teacher collaboration observations, and document examination. Initially, the study provides some general overview of the visited high school in Michigan. Then, the study presents the current level of trust at school to provide better how the school administration worked on building trusted relations at school. Further, the study delineates the leadership experiences of Liberty High School principal and assistant principals. Before revisiting the findings, school principal's, assistant principals', and teachers' views on building trust are presented to provide the general overview of trust-related issues and how the school administration took action to build trust. This chapter, then, presents the administrative team's efforts in developing and supporting teacher trust in more an egalitarian school context, Liberty High School. The findings include a set of early leadership actions, which are broken down into specific themes and subcategories. The trust section concludes with a brief overview of the findings. The chapter also presents the findings on teacher collaboration. Initially, the general overview of types of collaboration was provided based on participants' reports. Then, the chapter present teacher collaboration forms observed at school. Moreover, this chapter offers how school principal supports teacher collaboration in her school and also, some barrier observed in Liberty High School.

Liberty High School

It is believed that all students are capable of learning. This strong statement forms the mission of Liberty High School, where everyone is involved in educating students. Liberty High School is one of the public schools, occupying approximately 120 squares area, serves a mixed suburban-rural community in Mid-Michigan. The district serves about 5,300 students, with 1,716

(forty-eight percent of students are females) at Liberty High School. *Table 6.1* offers a display of the student body.

Table 6.1

The Student Body of Liberty High School, Michigan

The Student Body of Liberty High School	
American Indians	0.2 %
Asian	2 %
Black	6 %
Hispanic	7 %
White	83 %
Two or more races	1 %
Hawaiian Native	0.2 %
Eligible for free lunch	17 %
Reduced-price lunch	6 %
Economically disadvantaged	23 %

Liberty High School is one of the well-equipped public schools have several classrooms with modern technology providing excellent opportunities for getting superior student learning outcomes, a vast library, and a canteen for students. Also, there is a lounge for teachers where they have an opportunity to come together with their colleagues to have lunch or talk during their breaks. Along the hallways, one can see the school's mascot and some inspiring words forming the mission of the school. The exemplary instruction provided by Liberty High School shows that the school is rated as above the average in school quality compared to other public schools in Michigan for the 2017-2018 educational year. Also, students have above average college readiness, which is making above average academic improvement over the years.

Having pretty large school community, Liberty High School employs 83, 12 of which are special education teachers, full time certified teachers who are spread over different departments: Band, Math, Science, Business, Fine Arts, Social studies, and English departments. Organized by subject departments, teachers of Liberty High School are responsible for coordinating curriculum, materials, and instruction. Moreover, having some multi-grade level courses allows a

team of teachers to come together to design the classes. Also, some teacher groups are working on particular issues such as a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), positive behavior interventions, and support (PBIS) or schoolwide literacy teams. Later in this chapter, the findings will provide a detailed overview of teacher collaboration forms.

The following *Table 6.2* displays the number and organization of teachers by subject departments.

Table 6.2

The Organization of Teachers by Subject Departments, Michigan

The Organization of Teachers by Subject Departments	
Band	2 teachers
Math	15 teachers
Science	13 teachers
Business	4 teachers
Fine Arts	3 teachers
Social studies	10 teachers
English	24 teachers

Classes at Liberty High School start at 7:55 am and finishes at 2:45 pm lasting 70 minutes each. However, teachers' work is organized around 7:40 am – 3:10 pm daily with five periods and the same schedule every day. Teachers of Liberty High School typically have one planning period daily, allowing them not to have students assigned to their classrooms. Sometimes, teachers choose to have another class instead of a planning period to get extra money stipend.

The School Administration

Principal Louis

Before revisiting the findings, the study aims to present each school administrator to provide a better sense of their leadership experience. Given that, Principal Louis was a special

education teacher for ten years before becoming an administrator. Her leadership career started with an appointment as a middle school assistant principal. After that, she was a middle school principal for five years. Her administrative journey continued as an assistant principal for three years in Liberty High School and then as an elementary school principal for three years. Currently, Principal Louis is a building principal in Liberty High School.

Inspired by her father, who was a school principal for many years, Principal Louis considered the same profession to change students' lives and prepare them for the future. She thinks that keeping students in school as an essential part of her leadership career. She is actively involved in training sessions, which help her recognize what is best for students. She is also aware of how her role as a principal influences teachers' professional development and instruction. She stated that her involvement as a school leader is rooted in various training sessions as well as her experiences as a building principal in different levels of schools that she worked. Principal Louis is closely working with her two assistant principals that form the administrative team of Liberty High School.

Assistant Principals

As already stated, Principal Louis has two assistant principals. One of them is Derek who has been working as an assistant principal in Liberty High School for 15 years. Before being an administrator, he had worked as a special education teacher in the same school. He chose to be in education because of his family. All his family members are either teachers, principals, or superintendents. He stated that the most rewarding part of his job is building relationships with students and teachers. Derek's leadership views have developed through his work experiences and professional learning. For example, his MA program has engaged him in leader learning to improve classroom instruction and teacher growth.

Another assistant principal, Jack has had an experience of working as an administrator in Liberty High School with an experience of knowledge he got from the MA program for educational leaders. For Jack, it has always been interesting how to improve education to help students remain in schools. The most rewarding part of his job is building positive relationships with teachers as he thinks that teachers have direct effect in helping students. Recent professional development (i.e., Ed.D. program) has provided Jack with new knowledge to evaluate teachers' instruction using a new evaluation tool effectively. Also, Jack considers the importance of the establishment of trust between the administration and teachers. He thinks that in a trustworthy community, it is much easier to involve teachers to collaborate with the administrators and also, involve teachers to work with each other.

The Current Level of Trust in Liberty High School

As already stated in *Chapter 1*, the purpose of this study is to describe and interpret how school principals develop trust and teacher collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. school contexts. Specifically, the research is focused on early school principals' leadership behaviors and actions in building trust and teacher collaboration in vertical and egalitarian school contexts. The key insights of the study will shed light on early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration that might look like in post-Soviet Azerbaijan seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices.

Given the importance of trust and teacher collaboration, the study used the continuum to measure the level of trust in Liberty High School. During interviews, participants were asked to describe levels of trust between administrators and teachers (*Table 6.3*) and among teachers (*Table 6.4*) at Liberty High School using a three-level trust measure: basic, mixed, and strong relational trust (in the right column).

Table 6.3

The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Between the Administrative Team and Teachers in Liberty High School, Michigan

The Level of Trust	The Results of the Administrative Team's (The Head Principal and two Assistant Principals)	The Results of Six Teachers' Responses
Basic Trust		
Mixed Trust	33 % (1 out of 3)	33 % (2 out of 6)
Strong Relational Trust	67 % (2 out of 3)	67 % (4 out of 6)

By basic level of trust between the administrative team and teachers (*Table 6.3*), the study implies respectful and cordial relations without having any adverse situations. However, there might be some distrust between the parties based on what the administrative team is doing for the best of the school (*Appendix A*). The study also defines the mixed level of trust between the administrative team and teachers as being different across some teachers and groups. There are open interactions with some of them about their work and teaching. Teachers share with the administrative team their thoughts and trust the administrative team to do the right thing. However, trust with some teachers is more basic and cordial (*Appendix A*). The study also presents strong relational trust, which is generally very strong between the administrative team and most teachers. They trust each other to be helpful to one another and to be doing what is best for the school. They share their knowledge and ideas, they talk about their work, and they trust each other with problems and uncertainties about their practices (*Appendix A*).

The definitions above on each level of trust helped to identify the level of trust between the administrative team and teachers in Liberty High School. The majority of responses (i.e., sixty-seven percent of participants) show that the level of trust between the administrative team and teachers is built on strong relational trust (*Table 6.3*).

Table 6.4

The Results of Responses on the Level of Trust Among Teachers in Liberty High School, Michigan

The Level of Trust	The Results of the Administrative Team's (The Head Principal and two Assistant Principals)	The Results of Six Teachers' Responses
Basic Trust		17 % (1 out of 6)
Mixed Trust	100 % (3 of them)	33 % (2 out of 6) – in the community;
Strong Relational Trust		67 % (4 out of 6) – in the department;

The study also aimed to identify the level of trust among teachers. *Table 6.4* describes the current level of trust among teachers. Building on the definitions of trust levels displayed in the continuum (*Appendix A*), the study defines basic trust as having respectful and cordial relationships among teachers. Generally, teachers do not conflict. Still, some teachers do not always trust each other to do what is right for the school, and there are sometimes frictions. Overall, teachers are friendly but mostly work by themselves (*Appendix A*). The study also describes the mixed level of trust as having different trust level among some groups of teachers. Some teachers have open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share and trust each other to do the right thing for the schools. With others, their trust is still more basic and cordial; they are friendly to others, but they mostly work alone (*Appendix A*). Further, the study gives the importance of strong relational trust by defining it as being generally very strong between most all of the teachers. They trust each other to be helpful and to be doing what is suitable for the school. They have a sense of working together rather than alone. They seek new ideas and advice from each other. They trust each other with their teaching problems and challenges (*Appendix A*).

The interview data revealed that the trust level among teachers is mixed based on the administrative team's responses (i.e., one hundred percent). Seventeen percent of teachers identified the level of trust among teachers as being basic. Sixty-seven percent of the interviewed teachers identified the level of trust as being mixed in the entire school, and the rest of the teachers (i.e., sixty-seven percent) described the level of trust built on strong relations within their departments (*Table 6.4*).

Later in this chapter, the findings of this study will provide a detailed description of Principal Louis', and her administrative team's leadership behaviors and actions focused on building trust in Liberty High School.

Principal Louis' Views on Building Trust

As already stated, Liberty High School was not a new environment for Principal Louis since she had been working at this school as an assistant principal for three years. Given that, she was much aware of the school community and culture in comparison with her other two colleagues in New Belief School (i.e., Georgia) and Victory Middle School (i.e., Michigan), as both of the school principals were new to their schools. Thus, being much aware of Liberty High School, Principal Louis was well informed about distrust between the central office administrators and teachers. The poor relations were formed around the teacher contract causing serious disagreements between the two parties. The findings show that teachers were working without a teacher contract for a long time since the central office and teachers did not conclude some points of the contract. It took a long run before the central office, and teachers finalized the agreement leaving behind untrusted relations between them. Because there was distrust between teachers and the central office administrators, it affected the school administrations' relations with teachers too. Building on the school's experience of distrusted relationships between the

two parties, Principal Louis was already foreseen her leadership actions and behaviors before becoming a Liberty High School principal. To be clear, she was determined to build trust with her teachers. Principal Louis shared the current level of trust between her and teachers and what leadership actions were taken to build that level of trust:

This is one of the things we have a strong relational trust and that is because it's been built on many years or years together and constant communication. ... The had been, they'd been through some rough times, no contract, a lot of mistrust between central office and the building staff. And based on my past relationships with these folks and my desire for open communication, my respect for all people, all the under any circumstances, even the most adverse circumstances, even when somebody, somebody leaves their dignity on the line, you, they, they, they are still need to be respected.

Assistant Principals' Views on Building Trust

Both of the assistant principals also shared the rough times they have gone through while having negotiations around the teacher contract. Derek described that unfavorable situation, which involved many disagreements between the central office and teachers. Specifically, the primary dispute occurred between the two parties was about the time for teacher preparation and professional development (PD). Teachers wanted to have planning and PD times during the school period. He also stated that there was distrust among teachers since some of the teachers were the members of the Teacher Union. The members of the Teacher Union were closely working with the central office, and teachers who were not the members were thinking that their colleagues did not support their rights. Jack also confirmed the same disagreement on teacher contract and how it affected their relationships with teachers. Liberty High School teachers were thinking that the school administration did not support them arousing strong prejudice against the school and central office administrators. Jack shared how conversations with teachers were taking place to build trust between them and teachers:

... tough times when we spent enough time to talk to teachers and explain what was happening and we were trying to explain that the central office was going to fix the problem. It was the hardest time for Liberty High School.

Teachers' Views on Trust

Teachers' stories of trust were not so different from the descriptions mentioned earlier. The very first thing they said was the process of negotiating the teacher contract. Almost all teacher participants described that hard time making teachers of Liberty High School be divided into two big groups: those who were the members of the Teacher Union and the ones who were not. Some of the participants were not the members of the Teacher Union, and they shared that they would have wanted their colleagues to be open and honest with them. Specifically, they were thinking that their colleagues did not support their rights when they were negotiating the teacher contract with the central office administrators. Further, the same teacher participants wanted to have more face-to-face conversations with the school administration that were also involved in negotiating the agreement. In their perspective, these open and face-to-face conversations would have helped them a lot in terms of clarifying some critical points of the teacher contract, and they could have felt more supported by their school administrators. The following section presents the very first steps of the school administrators, particularly, Principals Louis' leadership behaviors and actions in rebuilding trust in Liberty High School.

Trust Themes at Liberty High School

As mentioned earlier, Liberty High School went through tough times to rebuild the trusted relations between teachers and the administrators. A lot of disagreements and arguments made the school culture more untrustworthy and unfriendly. The untrusted culture existed quite a long time before Principal Louis was appointed as a principal in Liberty High School. She was much aware of the problem the school confronted since she used to work as an assistant principal

at Liberty High School for three years and had some connections. Thus, when she became a principal, Principal Louis was determined to rebuild trust through her new position. The following sections will draw a better picture of what school leadership behaviors and actions were taken to restore trust. Each section represents a separate theme regarding trust-building activities, and each of the themes has some subcategories providing a detailed view of the school administrators' leadership behaviors and actions in building trust in Liberty High School.

Theme 1: Being Present and Responsive

Being visible. Given the description of the untrusted school culture that Liberty High School was experiencing for a long time, the findings suggest that the school administration took several leadership actions to rebuild trust. For example, the school administration was often seen in the hallways, classrooms, teachers' lounge, or students' cafeteria, making their presence more visible for teachers and students. Through their presence, the school administration had a chance to meet teachers and students daily and be more approachable for them (i.e., teachers and students). Derek considers that being distant inhibits building trust, and for him, visibility is more crucial. He stated:

So the more visible you can be, um, the more time you had kind of have that, uh, the pulse of the building, the pulse of the school, the pulse the students building in, building strategies that you are either a meeting with students, meeting with staff, um, open-door policies, but really the heavy time for your staff and students.

Having constant and open communications. Besides visibility, the findings revealed that having constant and open communication helped to build trust between the school administration and teachers. This school leadership activity was mainly built on the school's experience when there was a huge distrust in Liberty High School. Determined to build trust and avoid any miscommunication, Principal Louis was often having constant and open communication with teachers regarding any news coming from the central office. Given that,

Principal Louis could detect that the constant and open communications worked well, and teachers started to believe in her as a leader leading to more trusted relations between them.

Principal Louis shared:

This is one of the things we have a strong relational trust and that is because it's been built on many years or years together and constant communication. ... And based on my past relationships with these folks and my desire for open communication.

Face-to-face talkers. Besides having constant and open communications with teachers, the data indicate that Principal Louis was aware of the importance of having face-to-face conversations with teachers since these conversations helped her build trust between her and teachers. During the interviews, Principal Louis described herself as a bridge between the central office and teachers, and very often, she has to do what the central office has dictated her.

Bridging the relationships causes some difficulties because it is a school principal's responsibility to let teachers know how things should be done or handled. Therefore, she has chosen to have more face-to-face conversations with teachers since it also worked well to some extent to build trust between her and teachers. Principal Louis said:

I recognize that it's my job as a, as a, as a building leader to create an environment of trust and a culture of trust between this high school and this district. Even when I have to sometimes deliver news that privately I may not support. So that's a challenge for me. Yes, yes. And again, I go back to the communication and the face to face contact with people.

One of the teachers confirms that the school administration often communicates with teachers through face-to-face conversations. The teacher shared that either a school principal or the assistant principals prefer to have face-to-face conversations rather than sending emails. It often happens when there is something wrong and when they get some news from the central office. She also mentioned that having these conversations make her feel supported and secured

by her school administrations and that communication piece is critical in building trust between her and the school administration. She stated:

Like if they feel like something's happened or they feel that they need to talk to us about something, they just come to our classroom and they have an open conversation about it. And to me that builds trust that it's not like I'm going to send you an email and maybe you'll have to read between the lines.

Theme 2: Building Relationships

The data also revealed that Liberty High School administrators were involved in building relationships through several leadership behaviors and actions. The findings suggest that these leadership activities could help build trust between the school administration and teachers. The following subcategories will better present each leadership behavior and action.

Being genuine, honest, and open. Through building relationships with teachers, the findings show that the school administration was genuine, honest, and open towards teachers creating conditions for building trust between them. During the interviews, Principal Louis described the crucial role of this leadership behavior and how teachers themselves were striving for honest and open relations with the administration. Teachers thought that genuine ties between the school administration and them would help be supported. Therefore, Principal Louis considers that these genuine, honest, and open relations worked well in building trust with teachers. Principal Louis said, “you have to be genuine. And they know what if you're not genuine, if you're not genuine, that erodes the trust too. So, um, you have to be genuine, and you have to be real, and they have to know that at all times in order for that trust to stay healthy.”

Respect. Another subcategory that came out from the data was respect that helped to build relationships between the school administration and teachers. Principal Louis described this crucial element being important in building trusted relations that Liberty High School needed. She also stated that respect should be shown under any circumstances, which is vital in

promoting relationships. Then she added: “somebody leaves their dignity on the line, you, they still need to be respected.”

Transparent relationships. The findings suggest that Liberty High School administrators, specifically, Principal Louis was promoting transparent relationships between her and teachers. These open relationships led to a more trusted environment in Liberty High School. One of the teachers remembers when Principal Louis just started her position in Liberty High School, the principal shared that she had health problems, and she wanted to be understood and supported by her teachers. In the teacher’s view, it was an exemplary behavior demonstrated by the school principal promoting trusted relations between Principal Louis and the teacher. Then the teacher added: “I appreciate it she was willing to be transparent because sometimes teachers also need some consideration for health or family matters.”

Treating fairly and as a respected professional. The data also indicate that Liberty High School administration was treating equally with teachers creating the opportunity to build relationships between the school administration and teachers. One of the participant teachers shared that for her, it was crucial to feel that equality and see herself on the same level as the school administration. The teacher stated that having equality between them made her be more open and share with them her troubles or successes regarding her classes and instruction. The teacher said, “I feel like I could go to any of my administrators and talk about situations in my class and talk about, um, whether it be curricular behavior-wise and I feel like they're going to treat me as an equal and I feel like they're going to like talk to me about things.”

Being vulnerable. The findings also presented Principal Louis as a leader of vulnerability who did not have any problems to confess her weakness. One of the teacher participants described Principal Louis vulnerability that helped him to believe in her and trust.

He shared that Principal Louis is authentic, and she would confess about the things that she does not know, or she was wrong. She would be more honest with you. He said, “Well, Principal Louis is a leader of vulnerability. She will listen to you. She would be honest with you about the things. ... She will be vulnerable.” Then the teacher added that Principal Louis’ behavior created respectful relationships between them, leading to trust.

Validating. Moreover, the data show that school administrators often validate teachers. For example, one of the teacher participants shared how Principal Louis’ leadership behaviors and actions make one feel validated. The teacher described that on Valentine’s Day, Principal Louis brought some cookies, and the treats were in the office or teachers’ lounge for everyone. The teacher shared that Principal Louis wanted them to feel special and how their work is valuable in reaching out to students. Then the teacher added that sometimes the little things done by the administrators create trusted relations between them. She said, “Since Principal Louis has come, um, building back that trust has been her goal. So like little things she thanked like today. She has Valentine treats in the office or the teacher’s lounge. She emailed us on that day, informing about the treats.”

Caring. The findings also describe Principal Louis as a person who genuinely cares about her teachers. Her leadership behaviors such as asking about teachers’ classroom instruction, what they need for their classes, or even, personal questions make them be close and feel supported and cared by the principal. The teacher shared that this care helped her respect her principal as an administrator and as an individual. Also, the teacher mentioned these caring relations between them transfer to the entire school. In the teacher’s view, the school, now, is more supportive, teachers work together and care about each other more. She said, “She genuinely cared. Not that the prior administrator didn’t care; it was just a whole different cheat

came around the building. She, she involved herself in caring us like what was going on, you know?”

Theme 3: Considering Teachers’ Voices

Giving teachers space to make the decision. Besides, the findings show that Principal Louis was giving some space for her teachers to make their own decisions leading to more trusted relations between them. One of the teachers shared that he had a tough time with his students, and Principal Louis was aware of that. Initially, Principal Louis wanted to interrupt the incident by calling the parents. However, the teacher asked Principal Louis not to call the parents, as it would damage the relationships with his students. Principal Louis considered it as the right decision. Also, the principal let the teacher know that she would trust his every decision regarding the student incident. In doing so, Principal Louis created some space for the teacher to decide to solve the problem. The teacher shared that it helped him believe in his decisions and also, be trusted by his principal. Then he added:

She came back to me a couple of days later said, “after thinking about it, I think this was the right approach.” So, I appreciated her allowing me the space to make a decision.

Being supportive. Further, the data indicate that the administrative team supports teachers’ decisions. One of the teachers described that all the three administrators are often visible and ready to help her with every single decision she comes up. The teacher shared that she usually has some disruptive students that sometimes it is hard to handle the situation. Building on that, she needs to inform her administrators about what she is planning to do to confront the situation and needs their support. The teacher mentioned that the school administration often supports her decisions, creating more trusted relations between them. She said, “And there isn't a day that all three of them aren't right there. But I also, and it's really important, I mean for me it goes back to communication. You've got to be able to open the door,

talk to him, talk to him “what you're going to do” and get that little bit of feedback that you know you're on the right path.”

Personal invitation. Besides, the data indicate that personal invitation is also a piece of leadership action that brings to the fore the trusted relations between teachers and the school administration. By personal invitation, the teacher means inviting teachers to make crucial decisions or be a part of that decision-making process. He shared that it keeps him motivated and helpful for the school. Also, for the teacher, personal invitation helps to raise his self-esteem as a teacher who can contribute to the well-being of his school. He stated, “I think that’s how they’re motivated is just a personal invitation. You, please be part of this discussion when that happens is highly motivated.”

Summary

The analysis of the data indicates that Liberty High School administrators worked on rebuilding trust between them and teachers as well as between the central office and teachers. To build trust, the administrative team has taken a set of leadership actions and demonstrated some leadership behaviors that helped them build strong relational trust between them and teachers. The findings revealed three key themes throughout the study: Being present and responsive, building relationships, and considering teachers’ voices. Each of the themes has several subcategories providing a detailed picture of school leadership behaviors and actions taken by the school administrators, expressly, by Principal Louis.

Also, the analysis shows that the trusted relations were necessary for the administrative team, as they were trying to bridge the relationships between the central office administrators and teachers. Because the central office often dictates important school-related decisions or reforms they need to implement, it is the school principal’s direct responsibility to share the

provided information with teachers. Given that, the school principal is more directive and do not want to confront the teacher resistance in accepting the news coming from the central office. Therefore, in Principal Louis' Case, it is essential to build trust with teachers to meet less resistance and work in corporation with the school administration. Building on the description, one can think about "conditional" trust (Bass, 1985; Meyerson et al., 1996) described earlier in *Chapter 2*. This type of trust is built through the process of rewarding the followers; in this case, teachers in exchange for their performance. To be specific, Principal Louis was working with her teachers to meet the central office's needs (Podsakof et al., 1990). Further analysis of the trust data is shared in the cross-case analysis chapter.

Towards the Learning Community: Focusing on Teacher Collaboration

As already stated in previous chapters, to identify the level of collaboration, the study also used the continuum (*Appendix A*). The continuum includes the following main categories: collaboration focused on civil relations, collegiality, a collaboration focused on joint work and learning from each other. The first category described in the continuum is a civil type of teacher collaboration focused on building positive relations through showing regard to each other by being polite, being respectful to each other's perspectives, being sensitive, or providing positive feedback to each other. The second category is collegiality focused on general peer support. This type of teacher collaboration promotes ideas such as being helpful, sharing resources, having informal meetings, willing to observe each other's classes. Then, the continuum includes teacher collaboration focused on accomplishing tasks or work. By joint work, the study implies writing a lesson plan together, dividing and sharing tasks, organizing a variety of teacher resources, or discussing what works or joint problem-solving. The continuum concludes with the description of teacher collaboration that focused on learning from each other. Given that, the study describes

this type of collaboration as having open doors and practice, sharing practice, peer coaching, being vulnerable, or reflecting (*Appendix A*).

Building on the above teacher collaboration types, the study defined the levels of collaboration in Liberty High School. The findings present the identified types of collaborations based on the school administration's and teachers' responses, which differ. In the following sections, detailed descriptions are provided.

Types of Collaboration Reported by Liberty High School Administration and Teachers

As in the other two cases (i.e., Principal Gelashvili's and Principal White's cases), this chapter also provides an overview of types of collaboration reported by participants. *Table 6.5* displays data on types of collaboration reported by Liberty High School administrators.

Table 6.5

Different Types of Collaboration Reported by Liberty High School Administrators, Michigan

Different Types of Collaboration	
The collaboration focused on civil relations	
The collaboration focused on collegial relations	
The collaboration focused on joint work	33% (Jack)
The collaboration focused on learning	67 % (Principal Louis and Derek)

The following *Table 6.6* offers Liberty High School teachers' views on teacher collaboration types.

Table 6.6

Different Types of Collaboration Reported by Liberty High School Teachers, Michigan

Different Types of Collaboration	
The collaboration focused on civil relations	29 % (2 participants out of 6)
The collaboration focused on collegial relations	71 % (5 participants out of 6)
The collaboration focused on joint work	50 % (3 participants out of 6)
The collaboration focused on learning	17 % (1 participant out of 6)

According to school the administrator’s report (i.e., two of the administrators), the school community is going towards the learning environment. Based on their responses, teachers are mainly working together to learn from each other (*Table 6.5*). Teachers’ responses, however, vary indicating that they are more (i.e., seventy-one percent) involved in a collegial type of collaboration, and also, fifty percent of responses indicate that teachers are collaborating through the joint work. Moreover, the findings (i.e., twenty-nine percent of teacher responses) present that there are positive relationships among teachers, which allow them to be polite to each other, be respectful, or provide positive feedback to each other. Only seventeen percent of teacher participants replied that they are learning from each other (*Table 6.6*). The detailed descriptions are provided below.

Formal and Informal Settings of Collaboration

Based on the interviews and teacher collaboration meeting observations, teacher collaborations in Liberty High School occur in formal and informal settings. *Table 6.7* displays formal and informal teacher collaboration settings to better define the two different settings of collaboration in Liberty High School.

Table 6.7

Teacher Collaboration Settings in Liberty High School, Michigan

Liberty Teacher Collaborations in Formal and Informal Settings	
Formal Settings	Informal Settings
MTSS meetings	Peer collaboration
Schoolwide literacy meetings	Hallway meetings
Department meetings	Collaboration through emails
Staff meetings	
PBIS meetings	
Mentoring program	
Instructional Rounds	

Formal Teacher Collaboration Settings

Based on the interview and observation data, the study defines formal teacher collaborations like the ones reflected structured time and teacher's contract requirements. Given that, this section presents some teacher collaborations happening in formal settings, which fit the forms of collaborations described in the continuum (*Appendix A*).

The findings suggest that teachers of Liberty High School are engaged in various teacher collaborations, which have structured time and reflect the teacher contract requirements. The teacher contract requires teachers to come together once a month for professional development. Through these meetings, teachers focus on their instruction or school-related issues. One of those teacher collaborations is department meetings that take place once a month at a predetermined time. One of the English teachers describes the department meetings in which teachers share teaching resources or write lesson plans together, indicating cooperation within the department. The teacher feels that the school is going towards a learning environment where teacher practices and experiences are shared. The teacher said:

... we definitely work together to write lesson plans and do all these things here [pointing to the joint work category] We have,.. in terms of .. I guess we could say we even have a learning community in that sense. We have our meetings where we tried to share things that are best practice and that type [pointing to the learning from each other]. Other than that, I mean, there's not like you have... a set time to just do this. It's more like part of your job. If you see something needs some attention, you do it. It's not like. Yeah. It's not just set separate.

In addition, through formal teacher collaborations, once a month, when teachers have their department meetings, they look at student data or adjust the curriculum. One of the math teachers, the chair of the department, shared that within their department, besides sharing assignments, tests, and quizzes, they are working together to support their students. She described the department meetings:

We look at our trimester data, like how students are doing in terms of their grades and that type of data. And you know, maybe there's something we can adjust in our curriculum to support students to do a better job being able to understand the material. Sometimes it's more us and maybe we're teaching in a different way. We do share that in our department meetings [pointing to learning from each other].

The same math teacher who is also involved in the math intervention center to help students who are at risk then added that she sees all these students that come from each classroom where they have received the similar instruction. However, not all students do well. Thus, working with colleagues of the same department helps to come to better ideas. She described that teachers have different views and teaching practices, and department meetings allow them to access to various ideas, which are helpful in terms of improving the instruction and better support students. The teacher explained that reciprocal relationships lead to learning from each other. She shared:

But of course, every teacher puts her own little spin on things that they, teachers think students would use to understand the material. So I see that and then I see things that work really some teachers using and I'm like, oh, this is really great. And then I ask them to share that with their colleagues [pointing to learning from each other], more like to talk about and not just not send an email and I'll have that conversation about why it works. And so there's that kind of collaboration, but it's not really like looking at numbers. We do that and at the end of the trimester, but we are more mindful of actual content as we're teaching it.

In addition to department meetings, the data show that teachers are engaged in staff meetings, which are also formal teacher collaboration settings. The whole staff meets once a month in Liberty High School at a prescheduled time. This type of teacher collaboration is also one of the requirements of a teacher contract. Through staff meetings, teachers might share a variety of things related to their teaching or any new ideas they have learned from the training sessions they attended. Based on Principal Louis' description, this type of professional development meetings fit more to learning from each other. The principal described one of the staff meetings in which one of the teachers shared the knowledge that he gained from one of the

training sessions he attended. The course was about cultural awareness and diversity. Principal Louis said:

Last Friday, it was the greatest day ever. We had a session on, um, by taught by one of our teachers on cultural awareness and diversity. And then for the rest of the afternoon, we broke into, um, breakout sessions and all of those breakout sessions had our teachers doing the instruction [pointing out to the learning from each other]. So we are now to the point where we're very proud of the fact that we're moving right into this learning community because it hasn't been there. It hasn't always been there [pointing to the learning from each other]. So we're very excited about this. We're just about; I wouldn't call a solid yet.

Apart from department and staff meetings, the interview data and document examination showed that a group of teachers voluntarily involved in MTSS meetings, in which they work together to support struggling students, particularly, to help students who have behavioral and academic issues. Because this type of teacher collaboration occurs at a predetermined time, the study includes it to the formal teacher collaboration settings. One of the English teachers shared that she is actively involved in MTSS meetings, and the team members meet consistently during the school day. The teacher mentioned that for them to meet during the school day is crucial otherwise to bring teachers together after school is impossible since the majority of them have some family-related duties. She described MTSS meetings:

We meet the second hour every week. So the consistency and the during the school day I think really has helped us to ... build trust and do really good work. Within that team, I'd say definitely all of these things we like divide tasks really well and tons of problems solving [pointing to the joint work]. Um, we give feedback to each other well [pointing to the civil relations].

Moreover, within formal collaboration settings, teachers were invited to observe each other's classes and share their practices by doing instructional rounds. By visiting each other's classes within a short period, teachers are given particular forms to fill out for providing constructive feedback to each other, which helps to improve the instruction. The data show that

teachers are not allowed to critique each other in order not to discourage the observed teacher.

The German language teacher described his experience on those rounds:

Sometimes conversations about how to do things differently, maybe not better but differently. And I found in some of those post-visit discussions they're more relaxed and teachers and colleagues are willing and ready to hear different advice or to share, um, experiences and maybe materials. I would say that to instructional rounds that you do each year might be another half an hour or some of the work [pointing to the learning from each other].

The data shared above show that teacher collaborations within formal settings involve more the described categories of the continuum: focus on building positive relationships, collegiality, focus accomplishing tasks, and focus on learning (*Appendix A*). Given that, based on the interview, observation, and document data teachers are mainly involved in providing positive feedback (i.e., civil type), sharing resources (i.e., collegiality), dividing tasks or planning lessons (i.e., joint work), and sharing practices or having open-door policies (i.e., learning community). The next section of this chapter describes teacher collaborations in informal settings.

Teacher Collaborations in Informal Settings

Besides to formal teacher collaboration settings described above, Liberty High School teachers are engaged in self-initiated collaborations, which are not the part of teacher requirements. Some collaborations were happening in the hallways, where teachers might discuss some points of their lessons, or some might work with their peers to learn from each other. Also, the findings show that teachers share some resources with their colleagues within departments via emails. One of the social studies teachers shared his experience working with his peer and how they were working on student data and share some teaching materials. He said:

I had one teacher that him and I, we collaborated really well, and you know, we'd schedule little meetings. We could informally show up and, and chat. We were both data-driven. We both loved collecting data. And I, you know, looking at data and share with our observations and we flowed back and forth, both of us [pointing to the learning from

each other]. I, I'm sure he would agree, which we challenged him and I, um, challenged each other and each other's practices and quite frankly but he's since left.

Within informal settings, teachers are willing to share some teaching resources via emails to help each other. It usually happens within departments. Based on the interview data, sharing the resources via emails save teachers' time. One of the English teachers said that he typically sends some resources to his colleagues. If teachers have some questions regarding the resources, they might meet for a short time to discuss the teaching materials. Then the teacher added, "We might have some online meetings using Google doc. We chat there if we come up with some concerns" [pointing to the collegiality].

The data given above shared how teacher collaborations happen in informal settings in Liberty High School. Informal teacher collaboration settings, which are more self-initiated, also involve some categories of the continuum: collegiality and focus on learning (*Appendix A*). Given that, based on the interview data teachers are mainly engaged in sharing resources (i.e., collegiality), discussing the points of the lesson, sharing practices, or working on student data (i.e., learning community). The data above provided a clear picture of how teachers of Liberty High School collaborate. As already stated, the study also intended to find out how school principals support teacher collaboration in their schools. The next section of this chapter describes the school administrator's support for teacher collaborations in Liberty High School.

Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School

This section presents the findings of how Liberty School administrators support teacher collaboration. *Table 6.8* displays the data on how school administration is involved in supporting teacher collaboration offering various ways in Liberty High School.

Table 6.8

Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School, Michigan

Supporting Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School	
Support from the School Administration	Examples
Setting collaboration rules (expectations)	Setting the rules of respect, responsibility, and interaction by the administrative team (through a specific protocol)
Providing time	Providing time during the school day
Being visible and validating teacher collaboration meetings	Some teachers feel encouraged and motivated when one of the administrators attends teacher collaboration meetings. Teachers want their work to be validated by the administrators.
Encouraging through certain assignments	Working on the failure data and report back to the administrative team
Encouraging teachers to observe other teachers' classes	Sharing teachers' classes to others to help them collaborate

The table given above presents some administrative support for teacher collaboration. The data indicate some similarities presented in the previous case (i.e., Principal White's Case). Later in the cross-case analysis chapter, detailed similarities and differences will be displayed. Based on the findings, this section will provide some data on how Liberty High School administration is involved in supporting teacher collaboration. One of the supports provided by the administrative team is encouraging teachers to collaborate through a set of rules and expectations. These rules invite teachers to work more positively and build positive relations helping teachers feel responsibility and have mutual respect. This support better describes one of the categories in the continuum (*Appendix A*), which are promoting civil relations among teachers. Principal Louis shared:

Well, we give them the opportunity to collaborate. We give them the opportunity to, to communicate. We set rules about that collaboration and communication, rules of respect, responsibility and interaction. And, our folks are very, very good about that. But for the most part is it's creating the desire to collaborate. It's creating the desire to open the door, open your door, and be a part of a team. It's, it's opening the door for people to understand that they can learn a tremendous amount from their colleagues and their colleagues' practices if they have an open mind.

Moreover, the findings suggest that the school administration provides teachers with time to collaborate during the school day since not all the teachers are willing to stay or have time due to family issues after school. Given that, the school administration supports teachers with the time as in Principal White's case. In doing so, the school administration hires some substitute teachers to cover the teachers' classes who have the meetings. Derek shared that time is one of the most significant support for teachers:

Uh, a lot of it is, again, I guess it would be kind of with the students too, is seeking to understand what do they need and then providing those resources and time. Um, I think some of my actions that I have, I've hoped that motivates some of the teachers, mmm. When they are, when teachers are looking to do. A big piece for us is the teacher's time. I would say in providing that time. Is that during the school day? Is that afterschool hours? Is that through PDs and allowing them to have that time to interact?

Though the findings indicate that the school administrations support teacher collaboration, the data show that there are some barriers to teacher collaboration. The next section presents some barriers to teacher collaboration at Liberty High School.

Barriers to Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School

In the previous section, the findings suggested some supports for teacher collaboration: setting the expectations to collaborate, providing teachers with the time, validating teachers' work by attending some teacher collaboration meetings, or encouraging teachers to collaborate by specific assignments and encouraging them to observe other teachers' instruction. Still, the data show that there are some barriers to teacher collaboration. *Table 6.9* offers a general overview of teacher collaboration barriers in Liberty High School.

Table 6.9

Barriers in Teacher Collaboration in Liberty High School, Michigan

Barriers in Teacher Collaboration in High School	
Barriers	Examples from participants
Financial problems regarding substitute teachers	Well, it's complicated because in order for a group of teachers to go up, like if there were four of us that went to observe another teacher, those four teachers have to have somebody covering their classrooms. So there's a sub cost.
Not enough time to collaborate after school	... when you want a team of people to work extra hours, it's hard to coordinate.
Not being open to new ideas and not willing to collaborate due to their fears or not being vulnerable	... presenting new ideas and wanting to do things differently is sometimes threatening to teachers. Not all teachers are comfortable when another teacher looks at their students' data.

One of the foremost barriers is a financial problem regarding sub costs. As stated earlier, very often, teachers attend some professional development training sessions, and teachers are willing to share the gained knowledge with their colleagues. Sometimes, it creates some financial problems for the school administration to hire several substitute teachers at a time to cover a group of teachers' classes who intend to do some learning walks to their colleagues' classes. During the interview, one of the reading teachers shared that she and some of her colleagues attended a professional development session last year. They learned how to do learning walks and use a particular observation sheet: things that an observer was looking for. Then an observer and observee could come together after the class to discuss some points of the lesson or provide feedback. Primarily, this walk-in focused on learning from each other. However, the teacher shared that it never happened because of financial costs:

Um, but when we came back from the training, there wasn't a lot of support for setting it up. Well, it's complicated because, in order for like a group of teachers to go up, like if

there were four of us that went to observe another teacher, those four teachers have to have somebody covering their classrooms. So there's a sub cost.

The data also suggest that some teachers have fears to be vulnerable, leading to not being open to new ideas and not willing to collaborate. Moreover, these teachers are not open to sharing their students' data with their colleagues. Being not open and vulnerable to new ideas create barriers to collaborate. One of the English teachers shared:

... um, I think presenting new ideas and wanting to do things differently is sometimes threatening to teachers. Like they don't, they get defensive, and they want to do things the way that they've always done them. Um, so that has definitely been a challenge.

Summary

Overall, this section provides some findings of how Liberty High School teachers are engaged in different types of collaboration through some categories described in the continuum: civil, collegiality, joint work, and learning community (*Appendix A*). The data show that these collaboration categories fall into formal and informal teacher collaboration settings, which are almost similar to the findings of Victory Middle School. Also, the findings suggest how school administration supports teacher collaboration: setting collaboration rules or expectations, providing time, being visible and validating teacher collaboration meetings, encouraging through certain assignments, and encouraging teachers to observe other teachers' classes. The study identified that the school administration support for teacher collaboration occurs mainly in formal settings. As already mentioned, formal teacher collaborations reflected the structured time and teachers' contract, therefore, it is a direct school administration's responsibility to provide the needed support for teachers to collaborate. As for informal teacher collaboration settings, they are more self-initiated in several ways. Teachers share some teaching resources via emails to their colleagues within the same department. Also, teachers may share some teaching practices

when they meet their colleagues in the hallways or with their peer colleagues who teach the same content area.

CHAPTER 7: CROSS-CASE ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examines similarities and differences in school principals' actions to develop teacher trust and collaboration in the studied Georgian and Michigan schools. It considers patterns in actions to develop trust and collaboration to provide insights on their interactions. A reminder of the teacher samples is important here. First, the sample sizes in each of the schools are not the same as a number or a percentage. The teachers' sample from New Belief School is the strongest; while the sample from Liberty High School is the weakest in terms of sample size. Second, it is likely (and assumed) that the teachers who agreed to be interviewed were more likely to feel a sense of trust with the leaders and peers and also more likely to be active collaborators. The data reflect their views and experiences and are probably not representative of all teachers in that school. Still, for the purpose of the study, their data were useful for understanding how leaders develop collaboration in their schools, and what was perceived as important by these teachers.

Individual Characteristics of the Three Principals

One of the foremost similarities between the three principals was that all were “builders” rather than merely being managers. As builders, each was determined to build a positive and professional culture in their schools. This reflected the awareness they all had of the importance of trust in schools and trust as a foundation for collaboration. They shared how they came to these understandings. For example, Principal Gelashvili shared that her knowledge and experience on trust, and teacher collaboration was partly rooted in the special UCLA designed master's program she participated in. As part of that program, students worked in small teams to collaborate on assignments. As teams, the students had more open and trusting relations; this allowed them to come up with effective solutions to ideas, challenges and problem-solving tasks

they were given in the program. She described those collaborations as very productive. Moreover, the program presented students with many U.S. and European texts and research studies on the importance of trust and teacher collaboration. Principal Gelashvili's master's thesis was about collaborative teacher learning environments. She also had a self-identity as a successful professional and as a bold reformer. All of these characteristics carried into her practices as a school principal.

In the case of Principal White and Principal Louis; their practices also reflected participation in educational leadership programs. Both shared that they were familiar with literature presenting trust as a critical element that motivates teachers to collaborate and learn; their leadership development programs also emphasized the importance of instructional leadership. They had identities as modern educational leaders whose work was to improve student learning experiences by developing teachers and confronting inequality (Louis et al., 2010; Wallace, 2007). Unlike Gelashvili, they worked in environments that developed these expectations and understandings on an ongoing basis.

Contexts Characteristics

While there seemed to be some important individual characteristics and orientations common to the principals, they worked in significantly different contexts.

The New Belief School/Georgian Context

Principal Gelashvili was leading in much different school traditions and much different social, cultural environments overall. She and her team were in a relatively small group of educators exposed to Anglo-American research literature and reforms; they worked in a school system that did not reflect these ideas in structure or expectations. They were on the leading edge of these ideas in Georgia and faced more risks in their actions. They did not easily gain new

ideas and supports from their environment.

Georgian teachers were not familiar with literature on trust and teacher collaboration. They were not exposed to these ideas and relationships in their teacher training or professional development programs and had not worked in collaborative settings. Similarly, the structure and culture of New Belief School were rooted in historical legacies of Georgia as a Soviet country where teachers worked alone in their classroom with a “Soviet mindset.” Moreover, the school had developed a culture described as toxic, with reports of teacher spying and snitching. Teachers worked in isolation; they stayed behind closed doors and were unwilling or nervous to share work or ideas. Principal Gelashvili faced levels of distrust between teachers that were significantly deeper than any situation in the Michigan schools. For example, this English teacher who came to the school only to find that none of her departmental colleagues were supportive:

I remember when I just started my teaching career in this school, and I asked some of my colleagues to help me with some teaching resources or how to design a lesson. The response I got from them was, “we learned everything ourselves, and no one helped us.” Since then, I am working alone, and mostly, from the teaching websites. However, you know when I find some interesting teaching activities, I share with them.

Many New Belief teachers had difficulties trusting Gelashvili and the administrative team. They feared being scrutinized and judged. Teachers were defensive and protective of their instruction. In their thinking, if members of the administrative team wanted to observe a class, it was to criticize their way of teaching.

Thus, Principal Gelashvili and her administrative team have a fundamentally different starting point to their work on trust and collaboration, with many more skeptical and resistant teachers to work with than the Michigan principals and more fears and sensitivities to consider. First, they had to change some of the default interpretations and negative mindset in teachers.

Principal Gelashvili had to consider how her words and actions might set teachers thinking she had ulterior motives or to consider teachers who might be easily upset or concerned not to be included in her projects. Praise from Gelashvili may have been more critical to her steps to initiate trust and collaboration among her teachers.

Georgian teachers expected to follow principal decisions and did not expect to be brought into discussions or decisions. They did not expect to be treated as equals in terms of their professional ideas, knowledge, or judgments. They did not expect to have a voice in the school; or to voice ideas or make demands of their principals. Principal Gelashvili had to model these orientations and to work one-to-one with teachers to begin to shift these expectations. Not surprisingly, teacher reflections on Principal Gelashvili and the administrative team were full of the words “new” and “different.”

Lastly, there were no structural supports for teacher collaboration at New Belief School- teachers did not have uniform work schedules, the concept of common planning periods did not exist, and teachers were not funded to collaborate outside the school day in any way. Most efforts at collaboration came voluntarily from teachers willing to stay after school. All of these conditions presented challenges to Gelashvili that were distinct from those faced by the Michigan Principals.

The Michigan Schools’ Context

In comparison, the Michigan principals worked in contexts where teacher trust and collaboration were more widely recognized as important to school climate and performance at both the school and system level. Michigan teachers and administrators were exposed to research and advocacy on these ideas in their training and degree programs and in various professional development opportunities. As significantly, expectations for collaboration was more built into

the structure of their organization and their work routines, even their work contracts. Teachers in the Michigan schools all worked on the same core schedule and were in the building during the same hours. Common planning time was sought as often as possible. Sometimes, there were stipends to support teachers who collaborated after school.

At the individual schools, Principal White did not have to deal with a legacy of distrust in her school. Her work was to extend and deepen what was reported as a fairly healthy culture of trust when she arrived. She had teachers who liked to work alone but most expected to work in teams and to collaborate for parts of the work.

At Liberty High School, Principal Louis faced a school with a recent history of conflict between teachers and administrators and among the union and non-union teachers. These sources of distrust created a more fragmented environment, and she had to work deliberately to rebuild trust. But this rebuilding work was distinct from that of Gelashvili. In the Georgian context, distrust was often rooted in fears of being negatively judged or treated unfairly. In the Liberty High School, distrust was also about fairness-but over pay and working conditions. For Principal Louis, there was a more established legacy and expectation of trust and collaboration in the school that she could draw on. She could emphasize honest communication and the resolved teachers' contract.

This also meant that White and Louis worked with different teacher expectations and patterns. Teachers in the Michigan schools expected to be consulted on many school decisions and to have a voice in school improvement work. They expected to be respected as equals in terms of their professional ideas, knowledge, or judgments. Also, they wanted to be paid to work after school. Principal White and Louis had to manage these demands (and positive interests) with the realities that not all teachers felt this way. They still had to deal with teachers who did

not trust others and did not wish to collaborate. They had challenges at both ends of the spectrum.

Cross-Case Patterns in Reports on Trust

Trust Between Leaders and Teachers

Across all of the schools, about two-thirds of teachers described their school as having strong relational trust between teachers and administrators, with the other third reporting mixed trust (*Table 7.1*). Administrators were more cautious about assessing teacher trust, with most reporting it as mixed. Both of these trust measure (Mixed and Strong) are largely positive but to different degrees. To recall, the study described the level of mixed trust as being different across teachers and groups. The administration and some teachers might have very open interactions about their work and their teaching. These teachers share with the administration their thoughts and trust them to do the right thing. But with others trust level is more basic and cordial (*Appendix A*). As for the strong relational trust, the level of trust is generally strong between teachers and the administration. They trust each other to be helpful to one another and to be doing what is best for the school. They share their knowledge and ideas, they talk about their work, and they trust each other with problems and uncertainties about their practices (*Appendix A*).

Administrators from New Belief and Victory Middle School were more conservative in their trust assessments than many of their teachers, though the two groups matched closely at the Liberty High School. The data may suggest that no school leader or leadership team can ever create a school where all teachers have strong trust, perhaps as no leader can make every worker happy all the time. But, having a strong base of trust is critical, and the core behaviors shared by the three principals seem key to a strong foundation of trust.

Table 7.1

Reports of Relational Trust Levels Between Administrative Team and Teachers

Reports of Relational Trust Levels Between Administrative Team and Teachers			
	Basic Trust	Mixed Trust	Strong Trust
New Belief Administrators		100% (3/3 administrators)	
New Belief Teachers		29% (4/14 teachers)	71% (10/14 teachers)
Victory Middle School Administrators		100% (2/2 administrators)	
Victory Middle School Teachers		30% (3/10 teachers)	70% (7/10 teachers)
Liberty High School Administrators		33% (1/3 administrators)	67% (2/3 administrators)
Liberty High School Teachers		33% (2/6 teachers)	67% (4/6 teachers)

Trust Among Teachers

Trust literature often focuses on trust between leaders/administrators and teachers. But, developing trust *between* teachers may be a more complex challenge. Reports on trust between teachers were much more variable, reflecting different perspectives and work spaces (*Table 7.2*). At New Belief school, where trust was fragmented and developing, teachers reported stronger schoolwide teacher-teacher trust than administrators, perhaps a reflection of Gelashvili's arrival. But, only half of the teachers reported strong trust within their department. This matches descriptions and perceptions of the school overall.

At Victory Middle School, where trust was described as quite strong overall, teachers reported lower levels of school-wide trust than administrators, but quite high trust within grade teams. Data from Liberty High School was mixed overall, with both teachers and administrators reporting mixed trust school-wide. But, again, teachers reported fairly high trust levels within their departments.

Higher levels of departmental trust at the two Michigan schools may associate with their stronger norms and routines for group work and collaboration. The results recall research on the

effects of organizational size on trust. Many research studies show that when schools become large, the personal relations tend to be weaker (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Lee & Loeb, 2000; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009; Patchen, 2004). The strongest overall reports of trust are from Victory Middle School, the smallest school in the sample. But the data are also a reminder that trust for teachers may be a layered experience. For school leaders, building trust in a school may mean developing trust across departments with distinct trust challenges.

Table 7.2

Reports of Relational Trust Levels Among Teachers

Reports of Relational Trust Levels Among Teachers			
	Basic Trust	Mixed Trust	Strong Trust
New Belief Administrators	67 % (2/3) In the entire school	33 % (1/3) In the entire school	
New Belief Teachers	14 % (2/14) In the entire school	71 % (10/14) In the entire school	14 % (2/14) In the entire school
	14 % (2/14) In the department	36% (5/14) In the department	50 % (7/14) In the department
Victory Administrators		50 % (P) In the entire school	50 % (AP) In the entire school
Victory Teachers		80 % (8 /10) In the entire school	20 % (2 /10) In the entire school
			70 % (7 /7; 3 did not respond) In the department
Liberty Administrators		100 % (3/30) In the entire school	
Liberty Teachers	17 % (1/6) In the entire school	33 % (2/6) In the entire school	67 % (4/6) In the department

Common Leader Actions to Build Trust

Across different contexts, the study found similar core leader behaviors to build trust. All three seemed to understand and demonstrate the fundamental importance of being visible and

having constant and open communications with their teachers and being active listeners.

Principal Louis shared of the importance of open and constant communications:

....We have a strong relational trust, and that is because it's been built on many years together and constant communication. ... [The teachers] had been through some rough times: no contract, a lot of mistrust between the central office and the building staff. And based on my past relationships with these folks, and my desire for open communication, my respect for all people, that under any circumstances--even the most adverse circumstances, even when somebody leaves their dignity on the line. . .they still need to be respected.

Principal Gelashvili also perceived the value of communication and being visible to build trust between her and teachers:

I think that communication and being visible are the best things that school leaders need to consider while establishing trust in school. I spend all my time in the hallways or the teachers' room. I want to see what's happening at school. Also, I like talking to teachers, students, and their parents. Through those communications, I can learn their concerns and what they want me to do to solve their problems. These conversations, I would say, are informal, which creates trust between us.

In addition, cross-case analysis indicates that the three principals were perceived by most of their teachers as being dependable; as being responsive to teachers' questions and concerns and following through on their promises. For example, one of the Georgian teachers stated that Principal Gelashvili presented herself as a trusted leader through keeping her promises: "She has done a lot since she became our school principal. I mean, besides implementing various projects, she tries to fix some problems regarding the school building. For many years, there had been much water in the basement. Our previous principals had not done anything to fix it. So, our new principal involved workers in solving that problem, and now, she is thinking about building a new stadium for students. She promised to do that, and I know for sure that if she promises, she will do that. This is how she presented herself."

Moreover, the principals developed trust by demonstrating dependability, responsiveness, and follow-through in their leadership behaviors. These behaviors are consistent with studies

showing the benefits of leaders who strive to build strong bonds with teachers (Barlow, 2001; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). For example, commitment to follow-through is important, and the principal is the key person who takes this responsibility, setting the stage for strong relations with teachers (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). In addition, many leadership studies suggest a crucial role for involving teachers in the decision-making process (Brouwer et al., 2012; Cosner, 2009; Hopkins, 2013; Main, 2007). Teachers and principals in the study all spoke of considering their teachers' voices and treating them as professionals with valuable insights (Blasé & Blasé, 2001).

Building Relationships

A lot of visibility and communication was intended to build relationships. Research has underscored the importance of relationship-building to trust and teacher collaboration (Larson, Larson, & LaFasto, 1989; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000), and this was also emphasized by all three principals. Principal Gelashvili, determined to transform toxic school culture, saw her visibility and communication as the start of relationship building. She explained:

I think that communication and being visible are the best things that school leaders need to consider while establishing trust in school. I spend all my time in the hallways or the teachers' room. I want to see what's happening at school. Also, I like talking to teachers, students, and their parents. Through those communications, I can learn their concerns, and what they want me to do to solve their problems. These conversations, I would say, are informal, which creates trust between us.

Principal Gelashvili also developed one-to-one and small group relationships with teachers open to her leadership and ideas. For example, she began working with the French department teachers in response to their concerns for the school's former reputation. She developed relationships with individual teachers, from different departments, who responded to her lesson planning and school community projects. She spent time developing relationships with teachers willing to partner with her in transforming the school culture. But she also spent

time with teachers who came to her to complain or share observations about other teachers. In these cases, she tried to alter the nature of their conversations responding little to the complaint but using the occasion to develop a different connection.

The New Belief case in *Chapter 4* also described ways that the administrative team developed helping relationships with teachers who wished to enter into the new teacher career ladder scheme, helping them develop their demo lessons and prepare for exams. One of the Assistant Principals from New Belief School shared the importance of these helping relationships to teachers trust:

The teachers started to trust us when they understood that we are here to support them. For example, there is a project, which is carried out by MOE called “Teachers’ Schema.” Building on this, we, as a team, try to help them get those points. We help them design their classes and help them better understand how the classes are designed to make the lessons more interactive and productive. Seeing our support, the teachers started to trust us.

All of these interactions and relationships were new and different to the school.

At Victory Middle School, teachers often indicated their individual relationships with Principal White when they described the time she gave to them in and outside of school. Working in a smaller school allowed Principal White to connect with teachers 1-1 or in small groups more regularly. Principal White also believed that spending time beyond the school walls with teachers created the conditions for strong relationship with teachers:

You've got to spend time with people in order for them to trust you. Even the people that are going to challenge you, you need to spend more time with them. And it doesn't mean that they're wrong or I'm wrong or I'm right in there, right. Just understanding where each other are coming from and the why were where I was coming that way, um, is very important. So over the years, um, I've grown in that.

She also emphasized the importance of beholding a strong 1-1 relationship with her new assistant principal.

Principal Louis, like Principal Gelashvili, worked in a large school that made regular 1-1 connections with teachers more difficult, but she and her administrative team worked hard to be accessible to teachers for face-to-face conversations. Louis spoke about the importance of the quality of her interpersonal behaviors. For example, showing individual care for teachers, asking teachers about their teaching practices, or what they needed for their classes. A teacher shared that these behaviors made her feel more supported and cared for. She added that these caring relations transferred out to the entire school.

These fundamental principal actions common across the three schools: being visible and available, being dependable, communicating openly and putting time and effort into building relationships may associate strongly with leader and teacher reports on trust in their schools. A number of studies have found these leadership actions to be crucial to building trust with teachers (Barlow, 2001; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). It was also the case that these principals took the initiative in many of these relationships. They were responsive to teachers approaching them, but they made efforts to put themselves out into hallways and to actively reach out to teachers. Barlow (2001) stated that if a leader takes the first step to be open, followers will take the same risk. Taking the first step is essential to building a trusted school culture.

Some Particular Leader Actions to Build Trust

Given their different contexts, the principals also used some particular strategies for building (New Belief School), rebuilding (Liberty High School) or enriching (Victory Middle School) trust.

Principal Gelashvili: Creating New and Different Spaces

Looking through the case of New Belief School, one can see Principal Gelashvili's attempts to build positive relations among teachers in part by creating new and different interaction spaces. One space was the project to write interdisciplinary lessons. Another space was created by the group of teachers preparing an application for the new teacher career ladder scheme. Other spaces were created by special projects, for example, the "Rating Project" that aimed to bring all school members (teachers, students, and parents) together through funny and educative competitions.

All of these were key collaboration spaces, but none were part of the core of teachers' responsibilities and schedules. They were distinct from department meetings or professional learning communities-the forums most often used for collaboration in the Michigan school. New Belief school did not have the same time and structures for collaboration as the Michigan schools. Creating these more voluntary spaces, detached from teachers' core teaching, may have been a safer way to introduce and support teacher trust and collaboration. Teachers worked together in new ways and were involved in making important decisions. For example, the leadership team invited teachers to share ideas on how to make that project more educative, as one teacher stated:

We needed to create more educative competitions to help students learn and have fun. With the whole department, we could come up with some interesting ideas, and the team appreciated our thoughts, which encouraged our department to corporate with the school administration further.

Another teacher shared that involvement in projects was stimulating teachers to raise new ideas in their departments. Creating special spaces seemed a strategy to begin a process towards trust and collaboration that might allow resistant teachers to become open to new teaching practices and more student-oriented instruction.

Principal White: Team-Building Activities

Compared to Principal Gelashvili and Principal Louis, Principal White did not face significant trust challenges amongst her staff. Her work with to further grow trust where it was somewhat weaker or more mixed. A strategy that she shared that grew trust was team-building activities, particularly when teachers have professional development days and at the start of the school year. One teacher shared that these activities created positivity among the staff:

. . . we do some team-building stuff at the beginning of the year. [Principal White] encourages us to talk about our lives in addition to just teaching, . . . like at the very beginning of the year, she will ask us to talk about our summers and what's the one thing you're going to miss the most about your summer. And because everybody comes in realizing that we're all gonna miss sitting and drinking coffee or we're going to miss spending time with our kids or whatever it is, um, I think that connection to the person then makes those school collaboration scenarios easier.

Principal Louis: Building Conditional Trust

Principal Louis faced a trust challenge based on distrust between teachers and central office leadership and decision-making. She had to mediate these strained relations and play a bridging role to regain teachers' trust. If teachers did not trust her, they would not trust any of her efforts to implement decisions made by central office leaders. She emphasized the importance of honest communication and as much face-to-face contact as possible:

I recognize that it's my job as a building leader to create an environment of trust and a culture of trust between this high school and this district. Even when I have to sometimes deliver news that privately I may not support. So that's a challenge for me. Yes, yes. And again, I go back to the communication and the face-to-face contact with people.

Rebuilding trust between teachers and the central office was necessary because the central office was introducing decisions and programs that the school would have to implement. Liberty High School leaders had to take actions that demonstrated to their teachers that they would take their concerns over these decisions seriously. For example, when the school was moved from a semester to a trimester schedule, the school leadership team created a space for

teachers to meet the demand. The assistant principal stated:

We tried not to push them to avoid teacher resistance. Instead, we gave them time to work on their curriculum and other stuff to get prepared to a new system.

Thus, leaders at Liberty had to work with an understanding that some of the teachers' trust was conditioned on evidence that they were responding to their concerns about central office decisions.

Overall, then, all three school principals were described by teachers as leaders actively engaged in building trust through a set of core behaviors: being visible and having constant communications, following through, building relationships, considering teachers' voices and offering individual consideration. In addition to these core leader behaviors, they had to add or modify some of their strategies to meet particular challenges in their contexts. *Figure 7.1* summarizes the school principals' leadership behaviors and actions aimed at building teacher trust and collaboration in the schools having different school settings (i.e., vertical and egalitarian).

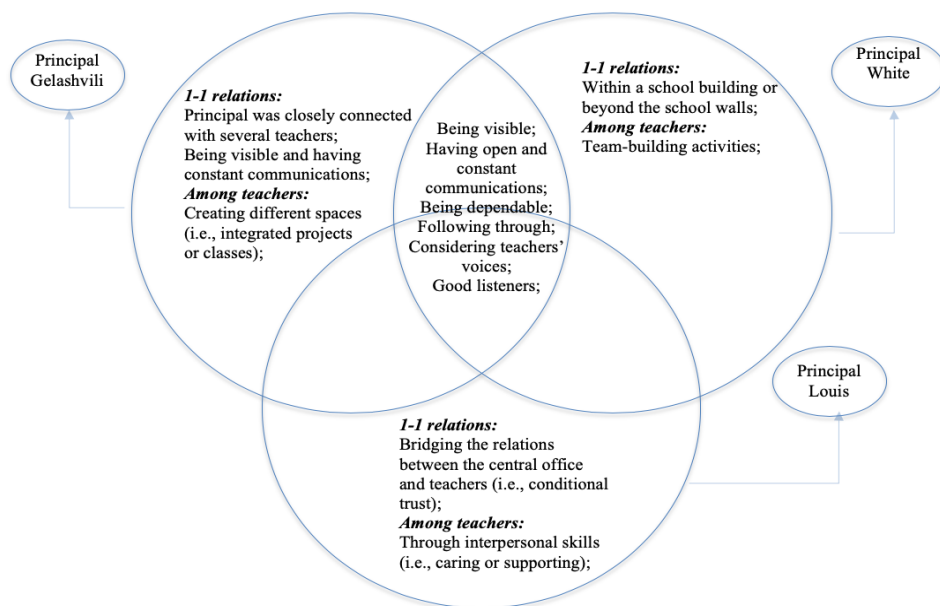


Figure 7.1. The Venn Diagram Representing Similarities and Differences of School Principals' Leadership Behaviors Building Teacher Trust

How Principals Supported Teacher Collaboration

In interviews, the school administration and teachers were asked to describe different types of collaboration using a prompt defining four different categories. To recall this, *Figure 7.3* displays the question and categories:

Table 7.3

The Interview Questions Asked to Identify the Types of Teacher Collaboration

As you know, I am interested in teacher collaboration in schools. There are many types of collaboration. Looking at these different types of collaboration, could you say which is most common among teachers here? Follow-up: Why do you think this is?			
Collaboration as Civil Relations	Collaboration as Collegial Relations	Collaboration Focused on Joint Work	Collaboration Focused on Learning
			
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
Showing regard to each other by being polite	Being helpful	Writing a lesson plan together	Open doors and practice
Being respectful of each other's perspectives	Sharing resources/stories	Dividing and sharing tasks	Shared practice, Reciprocal relations
Being sensitive to others	Having informal meetings	Organizing a variety of resources for teachers	Peer coaching
Positive feedback to each other	Willing to observe each other's classes	Discussing what works; joint problem solving	Being vulnerable/ Reflecting

The case chapters reviewed the different types of collaboration reported by teachers and leaders in each school. Victory Middle School leaders and teachers reported the most active collaboration profile, with activity in all categories. Surprisingly, teachers and leaders from New Belief School reported some of the highest rates of Collaboration for Teacher Learning, even though collaboration was a new concept. This likely reflects the study sample, which may have involved teachers who were leading the development of collaboration through new projects. They pointed to observing each other's classes and planning integrated lessons as their examples.

Liberty leaders and teachers reported the lowest rates of Collaboration for Learning, describing more of their interaction as collegial or focused on joint work.

Table 7.4 displays how school leaders supported different types of teacher collaboration.

Table 7.4

Ways Principals and Administrative Teams Supported Collaboration in Each School

Ways Principals and Administrative Teams Supported Collaboration			
Types of Collaboration	Principal Gelashvili	Principal White	Principal Louis
Collaboration as civil relations	-Communicating often with teachers; -Modeling respect, dialogue and support; -Discouraging gossip;	-Communicating; -Being dependable; -Modeling respect, dialogue and support;	-Communicating; -Being genuine and honest; -Showing care for teachers; -Modeling respect, dialogue and support;
Collaboration as collegial relations	-Developing relationships; -Inviting teachers to share thoughts and ideas; -Encouraging teachers to observe each other; -Supporting teacher's professional ideas and goals;	-Building, deepening relationships; -Spending time with teachers (in and out of school); -Listening and giving valued feedback;	-Re-building positive relationships; -Participating in teacher meetings; -Listening and giving feedback; -Responding to different teacher opinions and judgments;
Collaboration focused on joint work	-Suggesting, facilitating teacher work pairs;	-Supporting teams and group work;	-Supporting special teacher teams and initiatives;
Collaboration focused on learning	-Introducing novel projects and collaborations; -Creating new work and professional learning contexts; -Assisting teacher ladder applications and demos; -Trusting teacher judgments and leadership;	-Creating time and opportunities for teachers to work as PLCs; -Supporting PD focused on collaborative work skills; -Trusting teacher judgments and leadership;	-Creating time and opportunities for teachers to work as teams and PLCs; -Supporting PD in skills for collaborative work; -Setting productive collaboration expectations; -Trusting teacher judgments and leadership;

For example, to build civil and positive relations, Principal Gelashvili was involved in creating different spaces or novel projects, encouraging teachers to collaborate and building positive relations among them. This leadership behavior might have set the basis for civil relations among teachers. Also, Principal Gelashvili was inviting teachers to share thoughts and ideas regarding new projects that the principal aimed to implement in New Belief School. In doing so, the leadership behavior might have encouraged collegiality among teachers through willingness share teaching resources or observing each other's classes.

As for Principal White, the principal was seen to model positive leadership behaviors by demonstrating dependability or reliability created. Moreover, the data show that Principal White was building positive relationships among teachers during staff meetings by involving them team-building activities. The findings indicate that these activities were, specifically, trust-driven. These behaviors might have created positive and civil relations among teachers. The analysis also shows that Principal White was often spending time with teachers in informal contexts (i.e., beyond the school walls). Spending time in a friendly environment might have created conditions for collegiality among teachers and encouraged them to have informal meetings with their colleagues: in hallways or lunchtime. Also, positive relations among teachers might have encouraged teachers to share the resources within the departments.

Principal Louis' leadership behaviors were not so different from her two other colleagues. The findings suggest that the principal intended to build positive relations among teachers by demonstrating genuine and honest care. This positive interpersonal behavior might have established positive civil ties among teachers. Also, Principal Louis was described as being supportive. The data indicate that this positive leadership behavior transferred to school culture, developing a more supportive environment in Liberty High School. This leadership behavior

might have created conditions for teachers to support each other by sharing teaching resources within departments.

The aforementioned leadership behaviors, developing civil and collegial relations, are seen both in formal and in informal contexts. For example, Principal Gelashvili's initiations of schoolwide projects or encouraging teachers to share their thoughts and ideas happening in formal settings. To be precise, the leadership behaviors that supported civil and positive relations were exhibited in the school setting. In Principal White's case, her leadership behaviors promoting civil and collegial relations were happening both in formal and in informal contexts. As stated earlier, Principal White involved teachers in team-building activities during staff meetings (i.e., formal setting) leading to building positive relations among them. Inviting teachers to spend time beyond the school walls was happening in informal settings. Similarly, Principal Louis' leadership behaviors were directed to building positive relations among teachers in a formal school context for more informal relations among teachers.

Besides, the analysis of the data shows that the above-mentioned leadership behaviors initiated a direct basis for teachers' joint work and learning from each other. To be specific, the study implies that civil and collegial relations could help teachers focus on accomplishing the joint work and learning from each other.

The next section presents leadership behaviors and actions taken by school principals were encouraging teachers' joint work and their learning from each other.

How Principals Supported Civil and Collegial Relations

Data from the study suggest that a core set of leader behaviors also helped to develop a climate of civil and collegial relations in the three schools. Behaviors that helped to establish these conditions had a lot in common with the conditions for developing trust; a set of similar

themes emerged. Communicating with teachers openly was perceived by teachers as a form of respect and care. The three principals were also conscious of the importance of modeling behaviors that affirmed expectations for listening and including all voices. They made themselves available to teachers, reached out to them, and emphasized building positive relationships. Collegial relations were encouraged by supporting teachers to share teaching recourses, ideas and tips, offer support and advice, and divide up routine tasks to ‘share the load.’ For Gelashvili, an important step was setting a new tone for the school, which included making clear that she was not interested in hearing gossip. She spent more time out in the school and began encouraging teachers to interact more and observe each other teach. Principal White emphasized giving her personal time and attention to teachers. She was quick to respond to concerns about the assistant principals, and visibly modeled respect for him. In the case of Liberty High School, Principal Louis recognized that need to mend recent divisions in her community. She emphasized more honest communication and candor and made efforts to be present in meetings as much as possible. She encouraged the same of her administrative team.

How Principals Supported Joint Work and Collaboration for Learning

Leadership behaviors that encouraged civil and collegial relations created a foundation for the development of joint work and collaboration for learning. For example, Principal Gelashvili began identifying and supporting teacher pairs who seemed ready and interested in joint work, often to develop lesson plans or to observe each other teach. She also created new collaboration spaces for projects that joined together with members of the community. For some teachers, their interactions began to reach some of the standards of professional learning- they shared their ideas and practices more openly, made themselves vulnerable, and reported positive learning experiences. Teachers were working together after the school day or during the breaks

(i.e., five minutes period between the classes) do work together, suggesting their motivations and commitments.

Principal White came to a school with strong collaboration norms. Teachers were organized into different teams and learning communities. Many were familiar with group work processes and protocols, which Principal White supported. Support for their work was more built into the structure of the school organization, as they had times during the week to meet and collaborate. Their collaborations were over core instructional issues: curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment. Teachers at Victory school also collaborated in small teams focused on individual students facing learning and behavior challenges. Principal White supported teams and PLCs by allowing them professional autonomy to lead their own work but also in providing feedback and support.

Leaders and teachers at Liberty High School both described their main collaboration challenge as moving from joint work towards more professional learning community. The data suggest many forms of joint work at the school: teachers often worked together on shared lessons and assignments, some worked in tight pairs, others worked together on responses to struggling students. Department teams divided up routine and special tasks. Some departments and some special teacher teams, for example, the MTSS team, were working more as learning communities-sharing ideas and seeking new practices. But many teachers and departments were still more comfortable with joint work that allowed for individual teacher autonomy over instruction. The administrative team sought a shift in this by turning over professional development to teachers to lead. They believed these sessions created a trust and interest in collaboration and learning community among many more teachers and hoped this would lead to

a shift towards collaborations that shared and explored teaching practices. But teachers wanted more support for a collaborative time during the school week, which was challenging progress. Across all cases, key supports for joint work and collaboration required more active and deliberate support from leaders. While some teachers were ready and skilled collaborators who sought out opportunities, others needed support and motivation. The support teachers most valued was time and opportunity to collaborate. Second, teachers valued opportunities to lead, to apply their professional knowledge and judgments to how they collaborated, and what they collaborated on. Teachers also appreciated opportunities to learn effective collaboration skills and protocols that might help their teams be more effective.

Strategies for Responding to Challenges and Difficulties

In their work, Brewster and Railsback (2003) argued, “Authentic relations are fostered by personal conversations, frequent dialogue, shared work, and shared responsibilities” (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, p.16). Data from the study suggested that all three leaders were taking these actions and seeing positive outcomes. But not all of their work was easy; they also faced different barriers and challenges to trust and collaboration and used different strategies to respond to them.

Principal Gelashvili had the challenges of a pioneer. She was leading a new educational leadership vision in her country and in a school that had become dysfunctional. An important step for her was developing a strong leadership team-including graduates of the UCLA master’s program she had been through. Having a strong team gave her a community of support. She and her team had to lead her school out of a period of toxic distrust. She did this by being actively visible, positive, and supportive. She emphasized progress and passively ignored and discouraged negative behaviors such as gossip. She presented herself as a leader who was more

focused on helping teachers to professionally grow as educators than judging or ranking them. As a new principal to the school, she spent her energies where she saw the highest promise for positive change. Principal Gelashvili was generally optimistic about the future of the school and was not yet facing specific demands and accountability measures, for example, for certain exam outcomes. Thus, at the time of the study, her response to resistant teachers was to model civil and collegial behavior but not challenge them to engage in new projects and ideas. Her strategy was to emphasize the positive to develop a base of trust and collaboration that she could draw resistant teachers in to over time. She used persistence to her advantage.

Principal White had the opposite challenge. She had teachers with very high expectations and demands for collaboration opportunities. These teachers also felt the pressures of Michigan accountability policies. She responded by making it clear that she was doing all she could. Since teachers pointed to examples where she did come up with funds to support them to work after school, she gained most teachers' trust that she was, in fact, doing as much as she could. For Principal White, responsiveness, not waiting, was a leading strategy for working with trust and collaboration challenges. In the specific challenge of teachers' skepticism and concern with the new assistant principal, Principal White actively responded by demonstrating greater attention and care to support this individual, spending time with him and offering guidance and mentoring in areas that raised teacher concerns on a daily basis. When she observed trust and collaboration challenges, mostly described as individual teacher challenges, Principal White did not ignore them. She emphasized spending time with troubled or resistant teachers to understand their views and feelings and to seek a way forward. She followed up on these conversations. She also offered help teams that might be struggling. Principal White also did not seek to solve all problems alone. She turned some challenges over to her teachers to resolve.

Principal Louis may have had the most pressing set of challenges in trust and collaboration. At the time of the study, some were beginning to resolve the finalization of a teachers' contract, but others remained. Similar to Gelashvili and White, Principal Louis and her team acted to highlight progress and positive developments. In her case, acknowledging teacher frustrations and sensitivities seemed important. In light of high teacher frustrations with the district, the administrative team avoided making outright demands of teachers and worked to be as responsive as possible to their concerns. A key strategy for Louis and her team appeared to be growing leadership opportunities among teachers and turning some of these challenges over to them. This communicated trust and respect for their professional knowledge and value, respects that teachers felt central office administrators had denied them. Liberty teachers and leaders described their day leading each other's professional development as a turning point for trust and collaboration in the school.

Understanding Principal Support for Trust and Collaboration Through the Lens of Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Earlier in *Chapter 2*, the study presented a simple conceptual framework guiding this study of leadership behaviors. The framework posited two leadership orientations and actions: transactional and transformational, which school principals drew on in building teacher trust and collaboration in different school contexts (i.e., vertical and egalitarian).

Important insights are gained by looking at study data through the lens of transactional and transformational leader behaviors. *Figures 7.2., 7.3., and 7.4* display leadership actions described by teachers as they reflected on leader supports for trust and collaboration in their schools. What stands out in the displays is their alignments to transactional and transformational leader behaviors.

Studies of transactional leadership point out that much of its value comes from the ways it builds trust and reliability into organizations (Bass et al., 2003; Podsakof et al., 1990). It makes sense that many behaviors associated with transactional leadership were mentioned by teachers discussing trust. For the Michigan teachers, most of the transactional behaviors (including those listed as elements of idealized influence in *Figures 7.3 and 7.4*) are an expected set of working conditions and relationships. They are embedded in the more egalitarian conditions and relationships of U.S. schools. At Liberty School, however, teachers described a recent period of distrust where they did not feel that district and school board leaders lived up to transactional leadership basics-they did not feel there had been open and honest communications from some leaders. In trying to repair conflicts between teachers and district and school board leaders, Liberty School's Principal s described an effort to restore trust through transactional behaviors such as more open and candid communications and efforts to negotiate with teachers concerns.

For the Georgian teachers, many transactional behaviors, such as being available, being responsive, and being a thoughtful listener, were not always expected. When Principal Gelashvili and her administrative team demonstrated these behaviors, it was clear to teachers that conditions in their school would be different from what they were used to. When data were collected at New Belief School, Principal Gelashvili was just starting her second year as principal, and she saw a long road ahead of her. Not all teachers trusted her, but her leadership, built on many core transactional leader behaviors, had changed the tone and feeling of the school, eliminating the most negative and toxic aspects. Teachers that *did* trust her and her team were voluntarily agreeing to new collaborations and seeking help advance their careers through a new teacher ladder program. In a single year, her transactional leadership had made a significant difference.

Leadership studies (Avolio, 2011) make clear that transactional leadership behaviors are necessary to transformational actions that introduce new ideas that bring risks and uncertainties. Drawing on Avolio's Four I's model of transformational leadership (Avolio, 2011), the alignment of leadership behaviors for trust and collaboration are displayed in *Figures 7.2., 7.3., and 7.4.* Where idealized influence included behaviors that seemed central to teacher's reflections on trust and civil, collegial relations, the other three I's: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, were central to teacher and leader descriptions of supports for joint work and learning community.

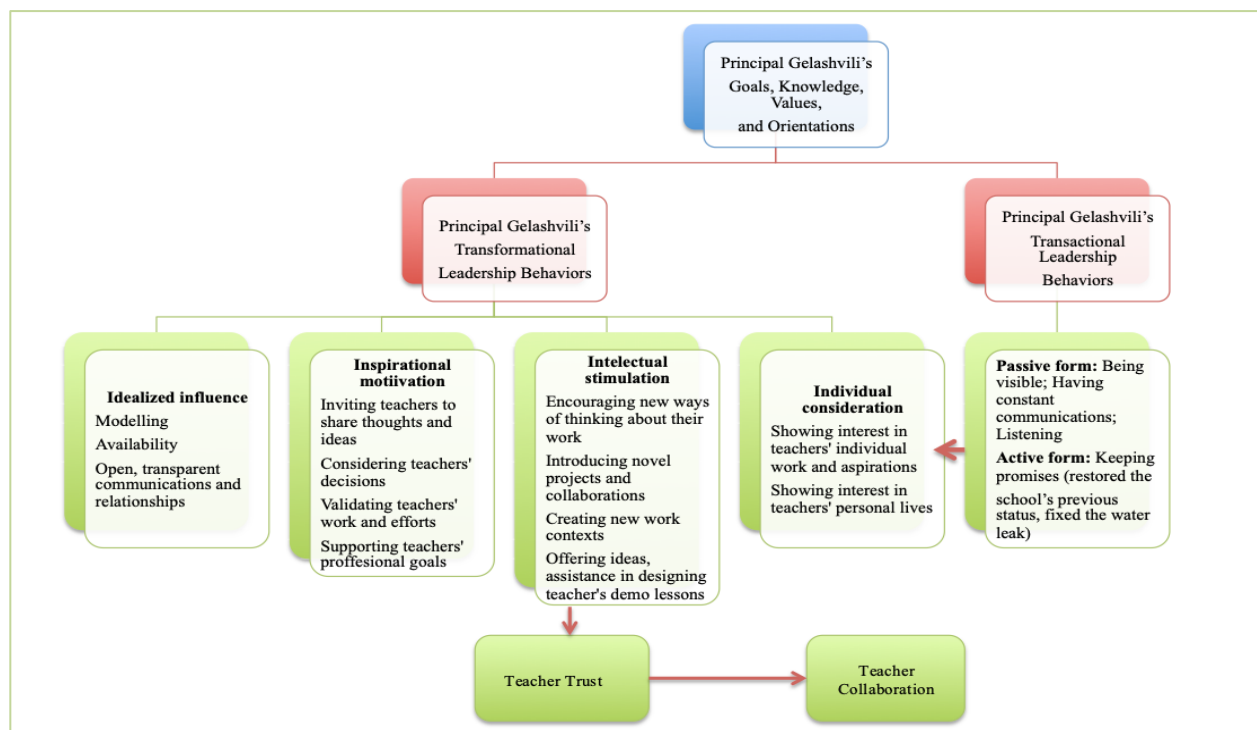


Figure 7.2. Principal Gelashvili's Leadership Behaviors and Actions in Building Teacher Trust and Collaboration

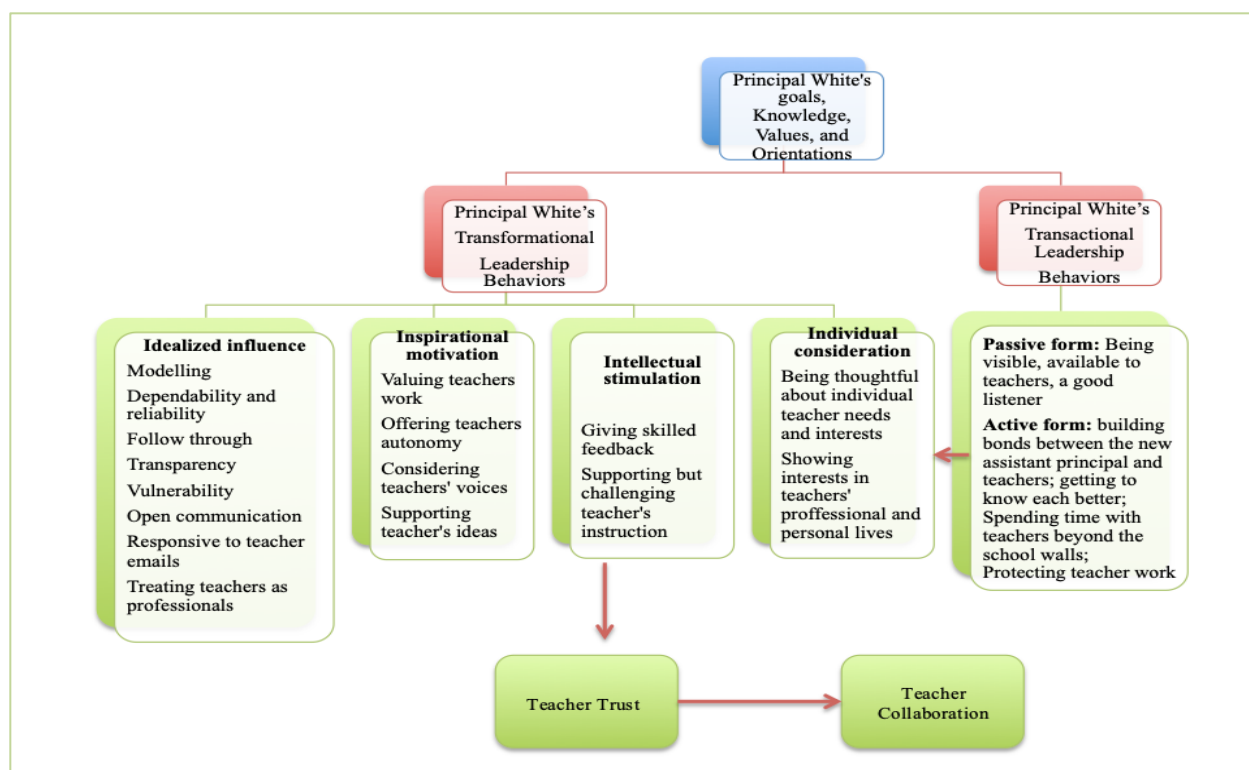


Figure 7.3. Principal White's Leadership Behaviors and Actions in Building Teacher Trust and Collaboration

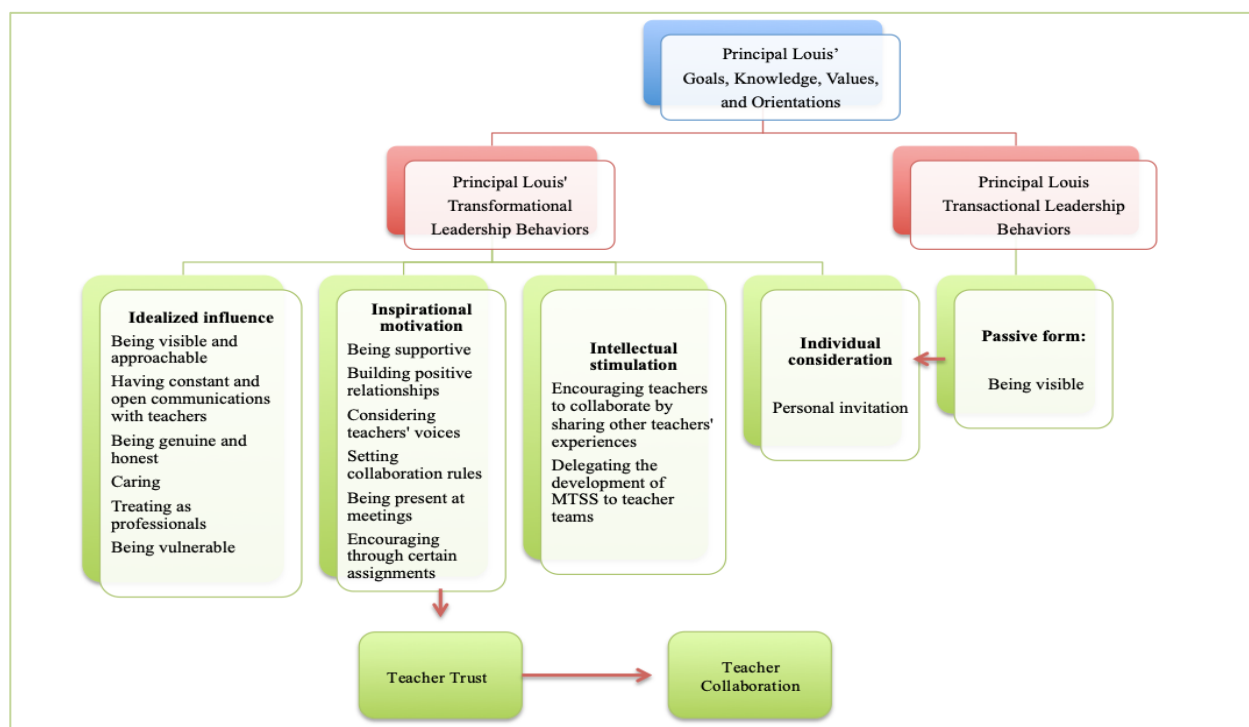


Figure 7.4. Principal Louis' Leadership Behaviors and Actions in Building Teacher Trust and Collaboration

A strong theme across *Figures 7.2., 7.3., and 7.4* is the importance of positive opportunities to talk about teaching; for example, to talk about lessons or assessments or student needs. In the reflections of Victory teachers, they saw clear supports for collaboration in Principal White's efforts to create time and opportunities for them to collaborate and in her respect, for their professional commitments and standards. They connected her skilled feedback to support and encouragement for their thoughts and ideas. Her leadership actions motivated their work.

For the New Belief teachers, Principal Gelashvili's effort to create interdisciplinary lesson groups and projects that brought teachers, parents, and students together were all transformational. Principal Gelashvili was a very positive and inspirational leader; her actions signaled belief in new ideas but also in the teacher's ability to learn and improve. Principal Gelashvili also spent a lot of time making individual 1-1 connections with teachers and cultivating small teacher partnership that she judged promising.

As for Liberty teachers, they also saw a set of leadership behaviors in Principal Louis that promoted caring and supportive relations among teachers through idealized influence. In teachers' reflections, Principal Louis was also motivating her teachers to collaborate by supporting them through setting rules, being present at meetings, or encouraging through certain assignments. Further, Principal Louis was seen intellectually stimulating her teachers, motivating teachers to come together and willing to collaborate.

Discussion: Overlapping Leaderships for Trust and Collaboration

Leadership behaviors are fluid and overlapping set of actions that can have many purposes and aims. This study has sought to understand leadership actions that supported trust and collaboration in two different school contexts: a post-Soviet context and a U.S. context.

A finding is that a set of core leadership actions seems common to the development of trust and also to civil and collegial relations in schools in both contexts. These behaviors align heavily to transactional leadership orientations and behaviors. Similarly, the study observed that many transformational leadership behaviors aligned to actions principals took to deepen trust and to cultivate joint work and learning community. School contexts presented very different conditions and challenges for trust and collaboration, influencing some of the leadership strategies used, but the study found many common behaviors.

Instructional Leadership

As the aim of teacher trust and collaboration is ultimately to improve teaching and learning, it is worth considering how the leadership behaviors identified to interact with research on instructional leadership. As defined in *Chapter 2*, instructional leadership focuses directly on teachers' instruction and learning (Hallinger, 2003; Murphy & Alexander, 2006; Supovitz et al., 2010) which, in turn, contributes to student learning (Donmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990). The actions of Principal White at Victory School may have the clearest and strongest overlap with instructional leadership. The trust she had developed with her teachers allowed her to closely interact with teachers over core questions of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She spent time with her teachers to know and understand them, but also to be in a position to provide feedback that could improve their teaching. Her support for teacher collaboration and teacher leadership intersected transformational leadership and instructional leadership in ways similar to those described by Printy and Marks (2006). Additionally, her school closely tracked student learning outcomes, organizing teams to address poor student learning outcomes (Goddard et al., 2015). These attentions are also a key feature of instructional leadership.

At Liberty, the size and mission of the high school shaped what instructional leadership looked like. Principal Louis could not be as individually involved with all of her teachers as Principal White. Striving to rebuild trust, she and her team sought to create opportunities for teacher collaboration that would renew teacher commitment and interest in developing their practice. A key example of an intersection of transformational and instructional leadership in her case was turning over leadership of professional development focused on instructional strategies to her teachers.

For Principal Gelashvili, the concept of instructional leadership was known and implicit in many of her goals. Her instructional leadership came in the form of care about teachers and teaching, her encouragement of new forms of joint work and her introduction of special projects that created new learning spaces for teachers. These actions hovered somewhat between transactional and transformational leadership-they were created and negotiated by Gelashvili but offered new ideas that stretched the teachers' understandings of what might be possible. But Gelashvili also behaved in ways aligned with intersections of transformational and instructional leadership, for example, when she worked with teachers to develop their teaching and their teaching demos to apply for the new teacher ladder program.

These are reflections on the individual behaviors of these three leaders. But again, the contexts of their leadership were influential. Principal White worked in a modest size middle school where many instructional leadership behaviors were more easily or directly enacted. Principal Louis was in a large high school, where studies of instructional leadership are complicated by the size and mission of the school organization. As transformational leaders, the task of principals is to create teacher leaders who are also instructional leaders. Principal Louis described herself and her school as on this pivot point. She saw new possibilities for engaging

teachers in a teacher learning community and instructional leadership (Fullan, 2002). In both these Michigan contexts, the principals and teachers worked in environments that motivated and stressed instructional leadership by pressing for improved student outcomes.

For Gelashvili, she and her team were not in a context that applied these types of pressures in the same way. Gelashvili was self-motivated as an instructional leader and was helped to learn more through her master's degree. But strong principal interest in their teaching and their classrooms was more novel of teachers at the New Belief School. They were in early stages of matching transactional, transformational, and instructional leadership (Hargreaves, 1994).

Chapter Summary

The cross-case analysis identified many central and common leadership behaviors to build trust and collaboration. All three school principals were described by teachers as leaders actively engaged in building trust through a set of core behaviors: being visible and having constant communications, following through, building relationships, considering teachers' voices and offering individual consideration. The analysis also identified strong parallels and alignments between these behaviors and transactional leadership. Research has associated transactional leadership behaviors with the development of trust in organizations (Avolio, 2011).

Many leader behaviors supporting teacher trust also supported basic forms of collaboration: civil relations and collegiality. Additionally, leadership behaviors that supported civil and collegial relations created the basis for teachers' joint work and learning from each other. To support more significant forms of collaboration: joint work and teacher learning community, leader strove to create as many opportunities for teacher interactions and collaboration as possible. They also sought to turn leadership for collaboration over to teachers.

These behaviors aligned extensively with transformational leader behaviors: idealized influence, inspirational motivations, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Here too, many research studies have described the effectiveness of transformational leadership on teacher collaboration and continuous learning (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998; Bryk et al., 2010).

While the study found many similar leadership behaviors across the Georgian and Michigan contexts, these contexts significantly influenced leadership work and challenges. Michigan principals worked in contexts where teacher trust and collaboration were more widely recognized as important. Expectations for collaboration was more built into the structure of school organization and teacher working conditions, with common planning time that support collaboration sought as often as possible. Additionally, there were sometimes stipends to support teachers to collaborate after school. Principals White and Louis also worked with different teacher expectations and patterns. Teachers in the Michigan schools expected to have a voice in school improvement work. They expected to be respected as equals in terms of their professional ideas, knowledge, or judgments. And, they wanted to be paid to work after school. Principals White and Louis had to manage these challenges and demands.

Principal Gelashvili was leading in much different school traditions and much different social, cultural environments overall. Georgian teachers were not familiar with literature on trust and teacher collaboration. They were not exposed to these ideas and relationships in their teacher training or professional development programs and had not worked in collaborative settings. Teachers worked in isolation; they stayed behind closed doors and were unwilling or nervous to share work or ideas. Principal Gelashvili also faced high levels of distrust in her school.

Principal Gelashvili and her administrative team have a fundamentally different starting point to their work on trust and collaboration. In addition to serious trust issues, Georgian did not

expect to be brought into discussions or decisions. They did not expect to have a voice in the school. Principal Gelashvili had to model these orientations and to work 1-1 with teachers to begin to shift these expectations. Lastly, there were no structural supports for teacher collaboration at New Belief School- teachers did not have uniform work schedules, the concept of common planning periods did not exist, and teachers were not funded to collaborate outside the school day in any way. Most efforts at collaboration came voluntarily from teachers willing to stay after school. All of these conditions presented challenges to Gelashvili that were distinct from those faced by the Michigan Principals.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research started with a single goal of getting a deep insight into how school leaders build teacher trust and collaboration and what some important early steps are. A more specific purpose was to identify the first steps to developing teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. school contexts. The understandings from this study will help identify what early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration may look like in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, seeking to transform leadership and teaching practices.

Building on this purpose, the study's research questions were:

1. How do school principals in post-Soviet Georgia and the U.S. develop teacher trust and collaboration?
 - a. What leadership orientations and behaviors do they draw on?
 - b. What challenges do they describe?
 - c. What do they identify as the most important first steps in developing a collaborative school culture? What organizational conditions do they focus on?
2. How do Georgian and U.S. teachers describe teacher trust and collaboration in their school? What principal supports for trust and collaboration do they point out?
3. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers compare?
4. How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers inform the development of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet and other traditionally vertical school structures and cultures?

This chapter summarizes findings from the study, offers some discussion and implications.

Summary of Findings

RQ1: Principal Leadership Orientations and Actions to Building Trust and Collaboration

Fieldwork and study data made clear that these three principals were very committed educators and leaders. They were not managers. They shared commitments to core values that foster trust: openness, reliability, and honesty. They were also not just doing a job; they seemed on a personal mission. Principal White reflected, "I think I've always felt the humanity piece of it, [of] our role and our jobs." Principal Louis explained: it is "my respect for all people, under any circumstances, even the most adverse circumstances, even when somebody leaves their dignity on the line..." Principal Gelashvili always brought positive energy and dedication to her work: "I like talking to teachers, students, and their parents!"

Overall, study analyses suggested that the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership behaviors (Avolio, 2011) offered a good map for understanding principal orientations and actions to building teacher trust and collaboration.

Transactional actions. Key transactional actions were evidenced in Principal Gelashvili's daily practices of being visible, having constant communications with her teachers, and gaining a reputation as a good listener. Hearing teachers' concerns, Principal Gelashvili also followed through on her promises: fixing leaks and working to restore the school's reputation. These behaviors-being available, listening, communicating, responding, and following through on promises, were core themes in all three cases. These orientations and actions may represent the base building blocks, key first steps, to leading for trust and collaboration.

Transactional behaviors were also central to developing positive relations among teachers. All three principals spoke of working to establish strong relations among teachers and between teachers and staff. An example from the Victory School was Principal White's attention

to teacher concerns with the new assistant principal and her actions to create positive opportunities to develop better relations between them. Data from Liberty High School suggested that Principal Louis made strong use of transparency and negotiation-as she was working to rebuild trust between teachers and district administration and also between the union and non-union teachers.

Crossing both transactional and transformational leader behaviors, another shared theme was the importance these principals put on knowing their teachers as individuals. The administrative team at New Belief School spent much more 1-1 time with teachers than common in Georgian schools, getting to know them and assessing their openness or resistance to new ideas. Indeed, the main purpose of many of the early projects Gelashvili created was to bring people (administrators, teachers, and parents) together so they could come to know each other.

Principal White spoke very directly about the importance of knowing her teachers: “You've got to spend time with people in order for them to trust you. Even the people that are going to challenge you ... it doesn't mean that they're wrong, or I'm wrong or I'm right or they're right. Just understanding where each other are coming from ... is very important. Principal White also shared that she made efforts to know her teachers by spending time with them beyond the school walls.

Liberty High School teachers and Principal Louis did not speak as much about 1-1 interactions in or out of school, but Louis was described as a “face-to-face talker” and emphasized “... we have a strong relational trust ... built on many years together and constant communication.”

The importance of these core transactional behaviors was spoken of by leaders and teachers again and again across the study.

Transformational actions. Common transformational leader actions in the data were the leader's invitation to teachers to share their ideas, their willingness to take teachers ideas seriously and to engage teachers as equals (i.e., being treated fairly and as a respected professional) in working on important issues and challenges.

Additionally, all three principals worked to motivate and stimulate their teachers by supporting their ideas and their professional judgments. For example, Principal Gelashvili encouraged teachers to share their views on how to make new, small projects more interesting and educational for their students. Principal White provided feedback to teachers that motivated them towards constant improvement. Recall the teacher who shared: "She almost always ends with some kind of a probing question ... and it's a really positive way ... to just kind of keep wanting to push ourselves." Similarly, Principal Louis had decided to turn professional development over to her staff, inviting them to design and lead it. Liberty teachers noted: what's important is "invitation-personal invitation! 'I want you to be part of this discussion' A teacher has to still receive that to be motivated. I think our administration-they make me feel like I can do it."

Vulnerability can be an important transformational action, and this was also a theme across the cases. These leaders made themselves vulnerable to help those around them. Principal Gelashvili took risks. To mentor and guide her new assistant principal, Principal White made clear her own trust in him "to demonstrate that he is one of us" and to model that trust before her teachers to encourage their trust also. Her Assistant Principal Tom came to share this orientation, sharing. 'Part of establishing trust is to show your vulnerabilities, ... that goes further than to present yourself as if you know it all. Cause if you know it all, then you're close-minded and [not] open to feedback. Similarly, a veteran teacher at the Liberty school appreciated that

Principal Louis was open to not knowing everything or to being wrong: “Principal Louis is a leader of vulnerability, you know, which I respect. ... She can be a politician, I'm sure. However, she has no problem saying, ‘I don't know.’ She has no problem saying, ‘I was wrong’” Lastly, transformational leadership was evident in these leader’s reflections on responding to resistant teachers. Individual consideration and patience were guiding orientations, with Principal Gelashvili creating opportunities for teachers expressing interest but giving space (at least in her first year) to teachers who were uncertain or resistant. She recognized the readiness of some departments to work in new ways, but in other cases, engaged individual teachers who were in less positive departments. Principals White and Louis also described their responses to teachers reluctant or resistant to collaboration with individual consideration, seeking to understand and clarify the “whys” from both sides.

Actions to support collaboration. The study conceptualized collaboration as a continuum of relations that occur in different contexts. This continuum began with civil relations and moved across collegial relations, joint work and collaborations for learning that might occur in informal or formal settings. Support for all forms of collaboration also involved a mix of transactional and transformational leader actions. For example, many of the foundational actions that supported trust: listening, responding, respect, were a way that leaders supported civil and collegial relations. The behaviors that leaders modeled were influential to civil, collegial relations.

Leadership actions to support joint work and collaboration for learning began in creating opportunities for teachers to work together. In Georgia, the administrative team began by developing small projects and partnership that drew on teacher strengths (for example, their disciplinary knowledge) but put teachers in new settings [pairs or interdisciplinary settings]. In

other examples, they created fun projects and competitions that brought together all members of the school. They created a different space for teachers to explore joint work, one that may have felt less risky because it was less tied to core classroom instruction.

In the Michigan schools, there were more traditions of collaboration and more expectations for leaders (and school contracts) to assure opportunities for joint work and learning community. After creating time, leaders supported these types of collaboration by trusting teachers' decisions about how to use collaborative time and encouraging their leadership. For example, Principal Louis described her school as recently moving from joint work to the learning community. Re-establishing trust was part of this development; with many more (but not all) teachers became more willing to collaborate and engage in the new curriculum and teaching challenges after contract settlements.

Victory Middle School seemed to have the most fully developed range of collaboration with more examples of a strong learning community, with the teacher working in different teams. It may not be a coincidence that these teachers had the most structured support through regularly scheduled time for collaboration. Still, many aspects of Principal White's leadership—her attention and listening, her trust and support for teachers to lead their teams and work to improve, her follow up on their requests and questions, contributed to the quality of these collaborations.

RQ2: How do Georgian and U.S. Teachers Describe Teacher Trust and Collaboration?

Teacher reflections on supports for trust and collaboration were very similar across all three cases and echoed the orientations and actions summarized above. There were differences in context and expectations, which are discussed below. However, more central findings concern the leader orientations and behaviors most emphasized and valued by teachers. Five themes

stood out:

Being visible and available. Leadership literature emphasizes the importance of visibility and validation (Avolio, 2011; Heifetz, 2007; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), and teachers also did. In reflecting on leader support, teachers first spoke of their principal's an assistant principal's visibility and availability. A veteran teacher in Georgia shared that Principal Gelashvili was always at school: everyone saw her around teachers, students and parents: "I can approach and talk to her, and she is always open to listen to me," and she never said, "I don't have time." Teachers at Victory Middle School shared similar anecdotes on Principal White: "Ms. White will come down and check to see how things are coming. She's out in the hallway; she's stopping by. She's talking to you. She's asking how you are. "At Liberty School, which has a large, spread out campus, it was more difficult for teachers to see Principal Louis. But they mentioned the availability of the administrative team and the trust they developed by knowing they could get five minutes with them. Explained one teacher: "You've got to be able to open the door, talk to him [say] what you're going to do, and get that little bit of feedback that you know you're on the right path." Another teacher expressed this also: "... there isn't a day that I can't say, "Okay, I need your feedback. ... And then at the end of the conversation, I say, "I'm going to go do this; I just need you ... to support what I, we decided to do." And there isn't a day that all three of them aren't right there."

Detecting, responding to teacher concerns and interests. A second theme connected to trust was principals' willingness and ability to detect teacher concerns and respond to them. At New Belief School, teacher trust grew significantly when Principal Gelashvili met with them to ask of their concerns or recognized them in other ways. She grasped their feelings on the state of the building and for the lost reputation of the school and its French-language programs.

A teacher described the positive impact of these efforts to care about their concerns “and to keep them confidential.”

At Victory Middle School, Principal White detected teacher concerns about the new assistant principal. She modeled trust in him, but in response to teacher concerns also made clear that she was working with him closely. She continually circulated the school for quick check-ins with teachers to know their concerns. Moreover, Principal Louis recognized the tensions that existed across her staff. Her efforts to communicate honestly was part of her response to this-she knew teachers feared secrecy and district decision-making and responded by trying to communicate more, even if it was not always what teachers most wanted to hear.

Detecting what teachers wanted or were looking for was another form of this. At the Liberty High School, the administrative team realized that teachers wanted more voices and leadership of their professional development, so turned a PD day over to them. Principal Louis recognized that some of her teachers wanted to be seen more, wanted opportunities to share their ideas and teaching skills. Teachers who came to check out ideas with administrators at the Liberty High School left feeling understood.

Taking a personal interest. Teachers who spoke about trust mentioned the impact of leader efforts to know them personally. It was a steady theme across New Belief teachers’ reflections. A teacher new to the They spoke of how Principal Gelashvili was always communicating with them and asking about their families. A novice teacher emphasized the value of “her positive reinforcement and her constant support and her constant- “what do you need from me?” The teachers interested in new promotion opportunities spoke of how personally important the administrative team’s help to them was. In describing how Principal White built trust, a Victory teacher shared: “She did something called team meetings where we would meet

to talk about kids ... However, she was trying to get to know all of us at the same time and how we worked and how we interacted with each other.” Other teachers noted her positive response to personal requests without demanding explanations, only trust. “So, when I feel like I need to share something with her, it's very minimal. Yet, she's understanding, and is like, “Do what you need to do to take care of you and your family.” The same was seen in another teacher reflection: “I can trust her, I can share information with her, and I know it will be kept confidential. I know that if I ask her for help that she will find me resources or at least listened to me.”

Being treated fairly and as a respected professional. Being treated fairly is known to matter to all workers. Particularly in Georgia, where arbitrary insult and punishment were part of both a shared national past and recently toxic school culture, trust among teachers that they would be listened to and treated fairly was a significant development. Teachers trusted administrative team members to maintain confidences and saw Principal Gelasvili avoid and reject requests for favoritism. Hearing administrators ask for their ideas gave New Belief teachers a sense of professional standing and respect that they did not feel before. It was not yet in the culture for teachers to feel professionally equal to their leaders; many Michigan teachers might, but there were significant shifts from the past.

Michigan teachers did link trust with being treated as a professional equal as when a Liberty teacher shared “I feel like I could go to any of my administrators and talk about situations in my class and talk about whether it be curricular, behavior-wise, I feel like they're going to treat me as an equal.” Principal White was described as a leader who was “... not that dictator personality, right? ... I felt like we were coming in as equals; I understood that I was her equal. Do you know what I mean? Just the way she talked to me initially.” Another reasoned: “She may not agree with me. But we share ideas and knowledge back and forth. Her attitude made

me feel successful and made me feel like, “Okay, she's got my back, so I will continue to push for her.” Studies of effective leadership often describe leader vulnerability and humility as important (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2004; Ito & Bligh, 2016). One reason they become important maybe because they allow leaders to offer a sense of equal respect and standing to those around them.

Validating teachers’ knowledge and skills. Lastly, and closely associated, leader actions to validate the teacher’s knowledge and skills motivated their trust and collaboration. Principal Gelashvili re-engaged many of her teachers by encouraging teachers to observe each other’s classes and teaching practices, indicating that she believed they had valuable knowledge and skills to share. “I love sharing my knowledge with others and learning from my colleagues” emphasized on the teacher. It was not something New Belief teachers ever done in the past.

Michigan teachers spoke about the trust they felt when they were given autonomy and leadership opportunities. A Victory teacher explained: “I think [Principal White] and I have a pretty strong relational trust. And the reason I say that is because she's given me a lot of autonomy and leadership almost immediately when I came in as my third-year teaching. And she was like, "Yeah! You should do that. Go!"

At Liberty School, a teacher shared differences of opinion about how to respond to a student: “I thought that the relationship with my student would be damaged if we did [what she first proposed]. And she trusted me and my professional judgment to meet privately with the students and administrators. ... And she came back to me a couple of days later said, ‘After thinking about it, I think this was the right approach.’ So I appreciated her allowing me the space to make a decision.”

In all then, the importance of these five leadership behaviors in teacher reflections

suggest that actions like those described maybe some of the most important first steps leaders take to develop teacher trust and collaboration.

RQ3: How do the Accounts of Georgian and U.S. Principals and Teachers compare?

The three cases might be placed on a continuum of trust and collaboration, with the New Belief School just beginning their development, Liberty High School recovering from a period of distrust and stalled collaboration to stronger trust and more significant forms of collaboration and learning community, and the Victory Middle school perhaps the most strongly developed school where both trust and collaboration were concerned.

All three principals built trust from different starting points. Principal Gelashvili was dealing with a toxic environment with fragmented culture, teacher isolation, distrust, and external fear of being judged or snitched on by colleagues. In her first year, Principal Gelashvili put more emphasis on 1-1 relationships between herself and individual teachers, and collegial relationship between teacher pairs and small receptive groups. She involved teachers in different projects; creating special spaces for learning, for example, engaging teachers to design cross-curricular classes. Joint work was emerging as a practice, but findings indicated that the concept of a teacher learning community was not yet understood by teachers as it might be in the Michigan schools. Time for joint work and collaboration was not built into the school schedule or organization in any way.

The starting points of the Michigan principals were different. Principal White was not dealing with a culture of distrust in her school. She was deepening trust between her and teachers and laying the groundwork for trust between the new assistant principal and teachers. In her case, Principal Louis was working to *rebuild* trust in her school. To be precise, rebuilding trust between teachers and central administration and between the union and nonunion teachers.

Significantly, teachers in Michigan schools had many more expectations for more egalitarian relations and having a voice in the school. Compared to the Georgian teachers, they were much more aware and knowledgeable on forms of teacher collaboration and its importance to both teacher and student learning. The Michigan data show more examples and settings of teacher collaboration: grade level and department meetings, special team meetings (for example, MTSS and PBIS teams) schoolwide literacy meetings, mentoring meetings, and others. Michigan teachers also worked in school organizations that validated collaboration by provided with school and paid time for collaboration.

Implications

To give a little background is essential to shedding light into revisiting education reforms regarding the school principal development strategies in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. As with most post-Soviet countries, Azerbaijan has gone through a number of reforms since it proclaimed its independence in 1991. It was a huge leap for Azerbaijan to start over as a modern, democratic, independent country. It sought meaningful changes across many fields and relied on Western ideas and philosophy. Education was one of the fields where the new government began introducing ideas from the West. By Western ideology, I imply, among other shifts, effectively restructuring schools with more leadership empowerment and more student-centered classes, both requiring trust and the establishment of a collaborative learning environment. One reason to reject Soviet ideology was to focus on educating students to develop important skills that could be applied in real-life situations, as Soviet education was far more about educating students through learning facts (Silova & Kazimzade, 2006).

Profound educational reforms take a long time to implement, and Azerbaijan has confronted serious economic problems, such as a drastic decline of Gross Domestic Product

(Silova & Kazimzade, 2006, p. 17). Alongside economic decline, military conflicts with Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh occurred through the 1990s. Economic crisis and war delayed extensive education reforms in Azerbaijan until 2000, which led to a further decline in the quality of education (Silova & Kazimzade, 2006). These serious problems affected teachers' and school principals' willingness to work to their full potential to improve the education system in Azerbaijan.

The above-mentioned decline in education has involved some missteps along the way; for example, school principals were the same “micromanagers” (Longnecker, 2001) as they were before. Research suggests other school leadership roles far more effective than a managerial leadership role, which significantly contribute to the school restructuring or improvement processes (Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marks & Printy, 2003; Robinson et al., 2008). Also, though a significant change in the Azerbaijani national curriculum has occurred, requiring improving students' critical thinking and focusing more on student-centered approach, teachers are still lecturing, making students passive listeners (Mikayilova & Kazimzade, 2016). These shortcomings reflect some of the challenges of adopting new ideas and practices from the West.

I observed and studied these challenges over fourteen years of teaching experience: twelve as a secondary school teacher and ten as a trainer helping English language teachers bring more innovative teaching practices into their classes. My involvement in education and my doctoral studies at Michigan State University helped me form insights on what is missing in Azerbaijani education and what is needed to improve. For example, I came to think that more vertical organizational structures of Azerbaijani schools probably delay the transition to education ideas from the West, which reflects more egalitarian school contexts. Given all this, I

would like to draw some implications from this study for changes in education policy of Azerbaijan regarding the development of school principals who are “second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 3).

Understanding School Principals as Leaders and Change Agents

This section responds to the fourth research question of the study, which is: How do the accounts of Georgian and U.S. principals and teachers inform the development of teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet and other traditionally vertical school structures and cultures?

As already stated, school leadership is an issue that needs revisiting in Azerbaijani education policy and practice. This process is possible through changing school principals’ roles from managerial to more transformational, transactional, and instructional and to see them as change agents. I have drawn on my research to propose a more significant and promising set of learning objectives and pathways.

School Leaders as Change Agents

The new school leadership development should cover the vital school leadership theories to provide school principals or candidates with valuable information about different types of leadership roles, which are far more successful than managerial roles. To be specific, it is essential to let them know about instructional, transactional, and transformational leadership roles and their responsibilities, creating a new image of Azerbaijani school principals. Also, school principals or candidates should be informed about useful Western educational literature to help them get a deep insight into how various research studies developed. This knowledge is valuable in terms of how different and outstanding educational scientists have contributed to the research findings that are successfully used by educators and school leaders who are willing to

make crucial changes in their settings. Given that, school principals need to know how they are “second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 3). In doing so, they should get some understandings on how their roles are crucial in teacher’ professional development, which in turn has a direct influence on students learning.

The Importance of Teacher Trust and Collaboration

Building on school leaders’ roles and responsibilities, school principals or candidates should be informed about the essential themes in building trust and teacher collaboration. As already stated in this study, trust is needed in school organization to develop healthy interpersonal relationships among the school community (i.e., school administration, teachers, students, and parents), which in turn can lead to more sharing and decision-making participation in schools and trustful mutual relationships (Sabo et al., 1996). The trust in relationships may strengthen teacher collaboration, reduce conflicts and increase organizational commitments among all school personnel, and have a positive impact on the levels of confidence on teachers (Larson, Larson, & LaFasto, 1989; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Finally, school principals should give vast attention to the importance of teacher collaboration since through collaboration teachers have an opportunity to grow professionally to reach out to more students learning.

Implications for Practice

A New School Leadership Program

In this section, I present some recommendations for practical usage of implications stem from the findings generated from this study. Thinking of current roles of Azerbaijani school principals, which need to be reconsidered, I recommend a long-term school leadership program

to involve who seek to change the views of on micromanagers and become change agents to fully devote themselves to the school improvement process.

Currently, one of the educational reforms the Ministry of Education has been implementing is a program of training for school principals. The program is designed as a short (approximately, 2-3 months) program. Candidates engaged in the school administration program are mostly informed about education policy and typical, managerial tasks such as dealing with important school-related documents. After completion of the program, the certified candidates go through a two-step assessment process: a general test of knowledge and an oral interview. The successful candidates are selected and appointed to schools. Clearly, this will not fully develop these people as principals able to develop trust and teacher collaboration and to lead significant developments in teaching and learning.

Building on the above-described leadership program, the new school leadership program should be long-term (e.g., three-year program), giving candidates a chance to better grasp and apply the gained knowledge into practice. The practice should be an essential part of the program since the learning process is successful through practice (Friedrich, 2002; Hagger, Burn, & Mutton, 2008). By practice, I imply the following conceptual maps that can guide candidates' learning.

A Conceptual Map of Leadership Learning

I propose two basic conceptual maps for candidates who seek to transform their leadership roles to establish teacher collaboration to reach out to more students learning. The first map (*Figure 8.1.*) includes the first steps that leaders need to know while building trust in their schools. The leadership behaviors and actions reflected on the map are drawn from the studied school principals' cases since these trust-building themes are well-worked in the three

schools and could help build, to some extent, the strong relational trust between school principals and teachers. Given that, candidates will be informed about the crucial role of each leadership behavior in building trust and how these behaviors can change their leadership role from being micromanagers to being more transactional, transformational, and instructional.

Figure 8.1 presents the first steps that can be used to develop trust and teacher collaboration.

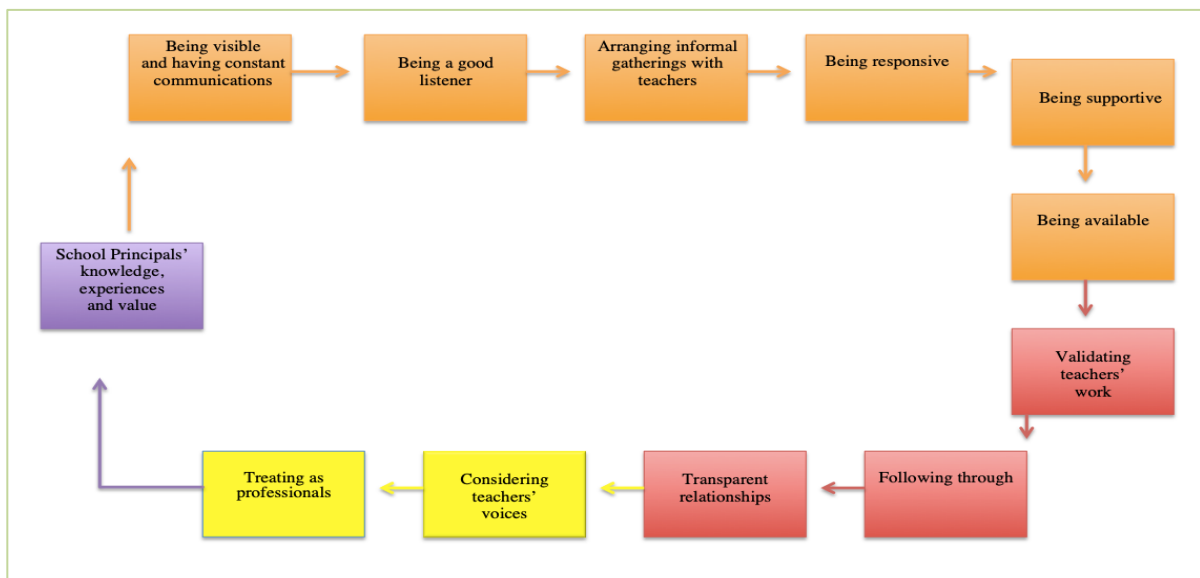


Figure 8.1. First Steps Model for Building Trust

Trust as a Foundation for Teacher Collaboration

The above presented a simple conceptual map (*Figure 8.1.*) reflects various leadership behaviors and actions. They are described in a sequence, helping candidates consider while building trust. For example, the first six steps (orange boxes) are regarded as the very first steps to start building trust. These leadership behaviors can be familiar to candidates; however, relying on my observations as an educator, not all school principals know their importance in developing trust. The next three steps in red indicate a kind of bridge between familiar and unfamiliar behaviors while building trust (i.e., relying on my observation). That being said, the last two steps in yellow are crucial, in terms of, building strong relational trust. The purpose why the two

steps are given as the last stage because these are not usual leadership behaviors observed in post-Soviet Azerbaijan because of the vertical school setting that we have. I anticipate some challenges, especially; candidates with more Soviet mindset would have some difficulties in applying these important leadership behaviors to build trust.

Given the importance of the first steps of trust-building leadership behaviors, candidates will be informed that this is a continuous and repeated process, and it will take sufficient time to establish strong relations in schools. Also, I am planning to introduce the three school principals' success stories on how they could build or rebuild trust in the schools, and how the demonstrated leadership behaviors helped them develop strong relational trust between them and teachers as well as among teachers. To conclude, the conceptual map considers the crucial role of school leader learning. Therefore, candidates will be informed about two influential learning theories: single-and double learning, which can support and bring essential insights into their learning.

Towards a Collaborative Learning Environment

Building on the knowledge and insights of the study, the leadership-learning program may further guide (i.e., as a second phase of the leadership program) candidates by expanding their knowledge and understandings. Given that, I propose the full development model for building trust and teacher collaboration and how school principals' knowledge and experiences can change along the way (*Figure 8.2.*).

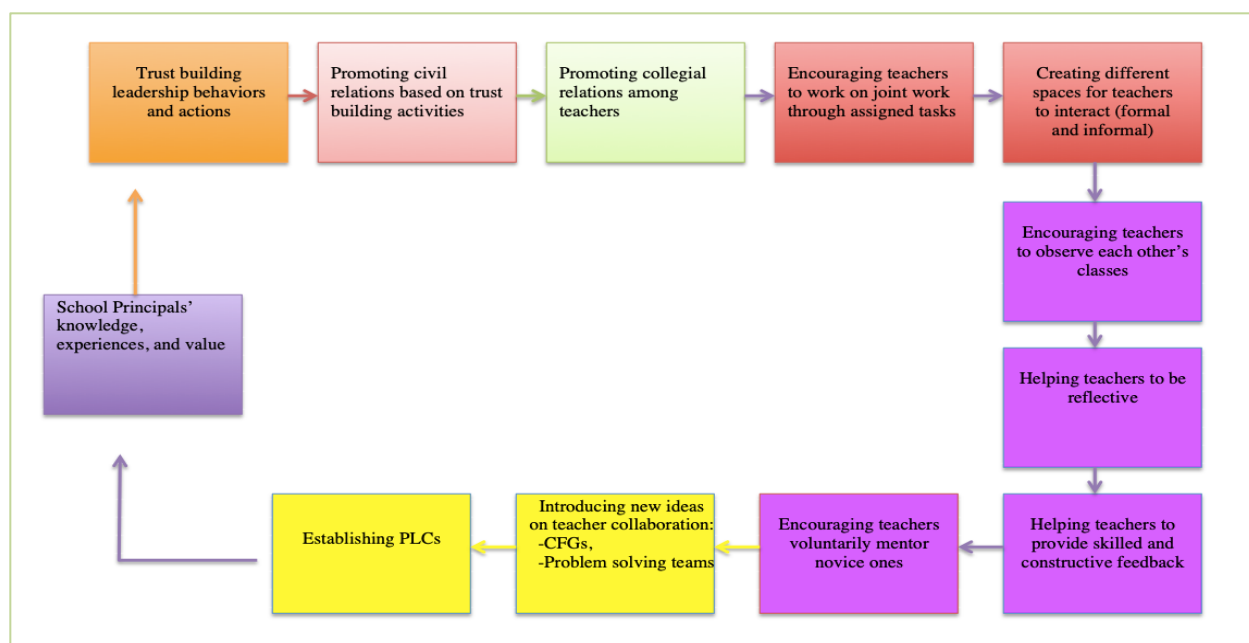


Figure 8.2. Full Development Model for Building Trust and Teacher Collaboration

In addition to building trust through the first leadership steps, candidates will be aware of the importance of teacher collaboration in reaching out to student learning, which is the goal of the education system. The provided full development model (*Figure 8.2.*) is also a map that can guide candidates to reconsider the vital role of trust between school principals and teachers as well as among teachers in developing a collaborative learning environment. This map also gives the importance to trust-building leadership behaviors since it is the foundation for collaborative learning (Goddard et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Cosner, 2009; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). As previously mentioned, candidates need to know that building trust is a continuous and repeated process. Besides, the map reflects some initial steps to help candidates develop teacher collaboration. For example, as already stated in cross-case analysis chapter, the most observed trust-building leadership behaviors could help build civil relations and collegiality among teachers in the three schools (i.e., New Belief School, Victory Middle, and Liberty High School). Thus, as an initial step, candidates should know about the terms of civil relations and collegiality, and what are important examples of these collaboration forms. Also, candidates will

be presented an idea of joint work through certain assigned tasks or different spaces (i.e., joint projects or lessons). Next, the map provides four steps (purple boxes), introducing teacher learning by encouraging teachers to observe each other's classes, helping teachers to be reflective, helping teachers provide constructive feedback, and inspiring teachers voluntarily mentor novice ones. The last two yellow boxes introduce new ideas to professional development through collaboration.

Moreover, school principals need to know about a variety of leadership roles, besides managerial. Therefore, the second model will also focus on leadership orientations (i.e., transactional, transformational, and instructional) to better guide candidates on how to build trusted and learning environment. The provided conceptual map (*Figure 8.2*) also carefully considers the study's findings.

Supporting Teacher Collaboration

It was quoted that “school leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 3). To be specific, findings on school principals suggest that they have a direct impact on teachers' instruction and thus, an indirect impact on student learning outcomes. Given the importance of the school principal's role in establishing and promoting the collaborative learning environment, the school leadership program should provide candidates with valuable knowledge on how to support teacher collaboration in schools:

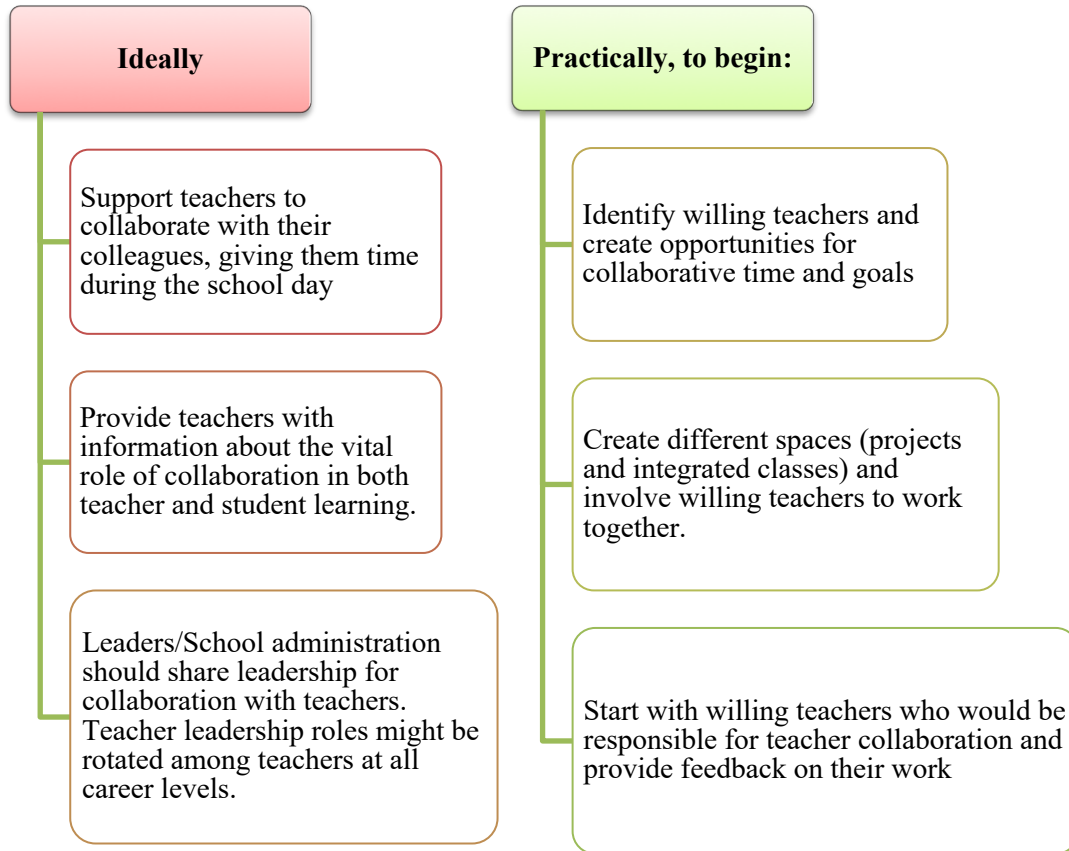


Figure 8.3. Supporting Teacher Collaboration

Note: Figure 8.3 describes some ideas on how to support teacher collaboration in schools. Considering that teacher collaboration is not so widely promoted in Azerbaijan, the figure presents some ideas on how to practically start first to encourage teachers to collaborate.

School Principal Coaching Program

In addition to the school leadership program, I would recommend developing a coaching program, which will help alumni or candidates in the school leadership program. To be specific, the program is aimed to help school principals who will be applying new school leadership ideas in the schools: being change agents or building a collaborative learning environment. Coaches involved in the program will have an opportunity to observe school principals and assess their work through the designed tool. The evaluation can help school principals to get constructive feedback to improve their work. The coaching program can be long-term as well (i.e., a three-year program).

Some Challenges that might be Seen While Implementing School Leadership Program

This section deals with several challenges that school principals might have. As Azerbaijan has been applying Western philosophy to education, there might be some challenges:

- For school principals who have much experience as school leaders will be difficult to accept new ideas (i.e., school leadership roles different from managerial, various trust-building activities, providing time for teachers to collaborate) leading to some resistance or they might not understand the whole idea behind the school leadership program.
- Moreover, there might be seen some resistance to be observed and assessed by coaches since it is not traditional for school principals to be observed.
- Finally, school principals might resist (e.g., most of the school principals are women in Azerbaijan. Very often, they deal with issues related to their families) attending the long-term program since this would be the first-ever long-term program developed for school principals.

Implications for Future Research

As already stated, this is small in scale study focused on learning school principals' early leadership actions in building trust and teacher collaboration in two different school contexts (i.e., vertical and egalitarian). For future consideration, a longitudinal research study might be carried out choosing Azerbaijani school leaders as participants to learn how the new leadership program could help them gain knowledge about teacher trust and collaboration. To be specific, the study will involve participants who were candidates of a new school leadership program. The study intends to focus on different school principals' cases (i.e., four cases based on school principals' leadership behaviors and actions), and the success of the study can be measured

through student achievements. Also, the study aims to involve principal participants in leadership networks that work together and apply the gained knowledge in their daily practices. As a final product of this longitudinal study can be a book of cases based on different school principals' first leadership activities in establishing teacher trust and collaboration, which can shed light on the importance of teacher trust and collaboration for school principals who are not much aware of their vital role.

The research can include the following research questions:

Research Questions:

- 1) How do school principals build teacher trust and collaboration in post-Soviet Azerbaijan based on Western knowledge and experiences?
 - a) How do school principals and teachers describe the first steps in building trust?
 - b) How do school principals and teachers describe the first steps in building teacher collaboration?
 - c) What challenges do they confront while introducing Western ideas into post-Soviet school systems?
 - d) How might school principals' network support their leadership practices?

Conclusion

This study investigated school principals' very first leadership behaviors in building teacher trust and collaboration in vertical and egalitarian school contexts (i.e., post-Soviet Georgia and U.S). Also, the study focused on finding out how school principals supported teacher trust and collaboration in their schools. The findings presented a set of leadership behaviors and actions that helped school principals build trusted relations with teachers and also, among teachers. The most common school leadership behaviors that viewed across the cases

were: being visible, having open and constant communications, being dependable, following through, considering teachers' voices, and being a good listener.

Further, the findings indicate that all school principals were engaged in supporting teacher collaboration by promoting civil and collegial relations among teachers and also, involving them in joint work and learning from each other. In doing so, all school principals were demonstrating various leadership behaviors, supporting the above-mentioned collaboration types. To illustrate, all principals initiated an informal environment for teachers, which promoted positive relations among them. Given that, there were some informal gatherings within and beyond the school walls. The findings show that teachers were helpful to each other or they were sharing some teaching materials with their colleagues. These leadership behaviors might have understood as direct actions to promote joint work and teacher learning.

Moreover, the findings indicate that school principals, while building trusted relations in their schools and promoting teacher collaboration, they were demonstrating transactional and transformational leadership behaviors. These leadership behaviors provided some understandings of how school leadership role different from managerial can play a vital role in developing teacher trust and collaboration.

Finally, the study presents some implications drawn from the study findings to propose a more significant and promising set of learning objectives and pathways in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, which seeks to transfer the school leadership learning that can help teachers' professional growth. Also, as a part of the recommendation, the study offers more influential school principal leadership program with more Western ideas and experiences, considering the vertical school structure of post-Soviet Azerbaijan.

This chapter provided a summary of the findings and the discussion of the findings. Also, the chapter presented some implications for researchers and policymakers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Introduction: The researcher will start the interview process by greeting the participants, and then, the researcher will provide them with personal background information. For example,

Purpose: The researcher then will share the purpose of the study, which is to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in more vertical (post-Soviet) and more egalitarian (U.S.) school contexts. The researcher will also explain that these understandings will assist early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration in Azerbaijan.

Procedures: The researcher will explain that the semi-structured interview questions will be asked from the participants. Also, the interview process will be audio-recorded with their consent, and then, all the collected data will be transcribed. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. In addition, the researcher will inform you that using pseudonyms will reserve the participants' confidentiality.

Consent: The researcher will also share that participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Participants will have the right to say no, and they may change their mind at any time and withdraw from the study. Moreover, research participants may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

The following questions have been used to interview school leaders and teachers:

Interviewing School Leaders

1. How long have you been a principal?
2. What made you decide on a school principal career?
3. What is the most rewarding part of your job?
4. When did you enroll in a school leadership certification or degree program?

If more than eight years ago ...

- ♦ What was the most recent leadership development experience you engaged in? Can you share with me what sorts of knowledge and skills it was focused on?

If less than eight years ago ...

- ♦ How did your leadership certification program define a good school leader?

Follow-ups:

- What kinds of knowledge and skills were central?
- Did you read about trust or collaboration in

schools and how principals support them?

5. Have you had other leadership PD or learning experiences that were significant for you?
6. How does that knowledge support you as a school leader?
7. As you know, I am interested in teacher collaboration in schools. There are many types of collaboration. Looking at these different types of collaboration, could you say which is most common among teachers here?

Follow up:

- Why do you think this is?

Collaboration as Civil Relations	Collaboration as Collegial Relations	Collaboration Focused on Joint Work	Collaboration Focused on Learning
			
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
Showing regard to each other by being polite	Being helpful	Writing a lesson plan together	Open doors and practice
Being respectful of each other's perspectives	Sharing resources/stories	Dividing and sharing tasks	Shared practice, Reciprocal relations
Being sensitive to others	Having informal meetings	Organizing a variety of resources for teachers	Peer coaching
Positive feedback to each other	Willing to observe each other's classes	Discussing what works; joint problem solving	Being vulnerable/ Reflecting

8. How do you, as a leader, motivate teachers to interact?
 9. How do you respond to uncertain or resistant teachers?
 10. Because specific examples help me learn more, please think of a specific time or instance when you dealt with a challenging teacher collaboration situation.
 - a. First, can you describe the incident to me?
 - b. Can you explain what you did to improve the situation?
 11. Again, can you think of a specific example when a teacher did not want to collaborate, and you motivated her/him to work with her/his colleagues?
 12. I am also interested in trust in schools. For example, openness in the climate, healthy interpersonal relationships, honest communications tend to foster a trustworthy climate for the entire school community. What have you learned about building trust?
- As you know, collaboration involves trust. Looking at this scale with some examples, how would you categorize levels of trust in this ...
- a. First, between you and the teachers?
 - b. Second, trust among teachers

TRUST BETWEEN YOU AND TEACHERS		
BASIC TRUST	MIXED TRUST	STRONG RELATIONAL TRUST
Trust between the teachers and me is basic. We have respectful, cordial relations and do not feel in conflict. But some do not always trust me, and I do not always trust some of them to be doing what is best for the school.	Trust is very different across different teachers and groups. With some, we have very open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share with me their thoughts and trust me to do the right thing. But with others, trust is more basic and cordial.	Trust is generally very strong between most teachers and me. We trust each other to be helpful to one another and to be doing what is best for the school. We share our knowledge and ideas, we talk about our work, and we trust each other with problems and uncertainties about our practices.

TRUST BETWEEN TEACHERS		
BASIC TRUST	MIXED TRUST	STRONG RELATIONAL TRUST
Trust between teachers is basic. They have respectful, cordial relations and do not feel in conflict. But some do not always trust each other to do what is right for the school, and there are sometimes frictions. They are friendly but mostly work by themselves.	Trust is very different between different groups of teachers. Some teachers have open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share and trust each other to do the right thing for the schools. With others, their trust is more basic and cordial; they are friendly to others, but they mostly work alone.	Trust is generally very strong between most all of the teachers. They trust each other to be helpful and to be doing what is suitable for the school. They have a sense of working together rather than alone. They seek new ideas and advice from each other. They trust each other with their teaching problems and challenges.

13. Again, I am going to ask you to think of a specific incident where there was a problem of trust between and you and a teacher *or* a problem of trust between teachers.
 - a. First, can you describe the incident to me?
 - b. Can you describe what you did to improve the situation?
14. Do you have a view of what is most important for leaders to do to establish trust in schools?
15. Do you have any additional thoughts or experiences with trust (or distrust) in schools?
 - Have your leadership orientations developed as a result of your efforts to support teacher trust and

So, a final question:

In my country, it is not common for teachers to collaborate. They are told to teach the national curriculum. There is also quite a bit of fear and distrust in our schools and society. But

now, educators are being told to collaborate. Yet, our school leaders are not trained to know about this. So, if you might imagine going to a school like this, what do you think are the most important first things to do to encourage trust and collaboration.

Interviewing School Teachers

1. How long have you been teaching at this school?
2. What made you decide on a teaching career?
3. What is the most rewarding part of your job?
4. As you know, I am interested in teacher collaboration in schools. There are many types of collaboration. Looking at these different types of collaboration, which is most common among teachers here?

Collaboration as Civil Relations	Collaboration as Collegial Relations	Collaboration Focused on Joint work	Collaboration Focused on Learning
			
Showing regard to each other by being polite	Being helpful	Writing a lesson plan together	Open doors and practice
Being respectful of each other's perspectives	Sharing resources/stories	Dividing and sharing tasks	Shared practice, Reciprocal relations
Being sensitive to others	Having informal meetings	Organizing a variety of resources for teachers	Peer coaching
Positive feedback to each other	Willing to observe each other's classes	Discussing what works; joint problem solving	Being vulnerable/ Reflecting

5. What type of collaboration are you involved in?
6. How do you collaborate with your colleagues? I want you to think about if you helped another teacher learn. For example, if you looked at student data to improve his learning or instruction. Do you share information or any work with your colleagues to help each other? Do you observe each other's classes? Does it help you learn from each other? Can you tell the story considering all these?
7. How does the leadership team support teacher collaboration at school?
8. How does your principal motivate you to collaborate? Please think of any specific examples that your principal motivated you to work with your colleagues.
9. Now, I am interested in a specific incident when you faced challenges while being involved in teacher collaboration.
10. What were your teaching practices before you started to collaborate with your colleagues?

11. How have your teaching practices changed over time? I want you to provide any specific examples of how your teaching practices have changed.
12. I am also interested in trust in schools. For instance, openness in the climate, healthy interpersonal relationships, honest communications tend to foster a trustworthy climate for the entire school community.

Looking at this scale with some examples of how you would categorize levels of trust ...

- a. First, between you and the principal?
- b. Second, trust with your colleagues?

TRUST BETWEEN YOU AND TEACHERS		
BASIC TRUST	MIXED TRUST	STRONG RELATIONAL TRUST
Trust between the teachers and me is basic. We have respectful, cordial relations and do not feel in conflict. But some do not always trust me, and I do not always trust some of them to be doing what is best for the school.	Trust is very different across different teachers and groups. With some, we have very open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share with me their thoughts and trust me to do the right thing. But with others, trust is more basic and cordial.	Trust is generally very strong between most teachers and me. We trust each other to be helpful to one another and to be doing what is best for the school. We share our knowledge and ideas, we talk about our work, and we trust each other with problems and uncertainties about our practices.

TRUST BETWEEN TEACHERS		
BASIC TRUST	MIXED TRUST	STRONG RELATIONAL TRUST
Trust between teachers is basic. They have respectful, cordial relations and do not feel in conflict. But some do not always trust each other to do what is right for the school, and there are sometimes frictions. They are friendly but mostly work by themselves.	Trust is very different between different groups of teachers. Some teachers have open interactions about their work and their teaching; they share and trust each other to do the right thing for the schools. With others, their trust is more basic and cordial; they are friendly to others, but they mostly work alone.	Trust is generally very strong between most all of the teachers. They trust each other to be helpful and to be doing what is suitable for the school. They have a sense of working together rather than alone. They seek new ideas and advice from each other. They trust each other with their teaching problems and challenges.

13. I am interested in any specific actions when the school principal has taken to build trust between you and him as well as among the teachers.

14. Now, please think about any specific incident when trust failed between you and the principal as well as teachers over time.
15. What do you need to see from your leader to build trust?

APPENDIX B

Invitation to Participate

Conditions Facilitating Teacher Trust and Collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S. School Contexts

Dear Participants,

I am Samira Hajiyevea from Azerbaijan. Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University and working on my dissertation. Being involved in education for a long time helped me identify the challenges that school principals face in Azerbaijan. The common problem they have is how to establish teacher trust and collaboration as they have lack of knowledge and experience, and they are not so much aware of Western theories and experiences.

The purpose of my doctoral research is to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in more vertical (post-Soviet) and more egalitarian (U.S.) contexts. I intend to use these understandings to theorize and assist early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration in my home country.

The study has been designed to gather and understand school leader perspectives on the specific actions they take to build teacher trust and collaboration as well as to respond to pockets of distrust, either between teachers and administrators or between teachers themselves.

Similarly, I wish to hear teachers' voices to learn how they have been encouraged to collaborate by school leaders and what challenges they have gone through. In doing so, I aim to get a better understanding of necessary, concrete steps that leaders use to establish trust and collaboration and can compare how leaders in different context approach it.

I am asking you to visit your school for one week. Prior to visiting, I strive to learn as much as I can about your school through online information sources. During my visit, I aim to engage in the activities sketched in the table below. All activities would, of course, be voluntary and would be arranged so that not to disturb the work schedule and obligations of staff. This work is supervised by my doctoral advisor, Dr. BetsAnn Smith, and the Institutional Research Review Board at Michigan State University.

GENERAL SITE VISIT PROTOCOL	
General school observations	At the start of my visit, I ask to spend time in routine school day activities: classes, events, library time, etc. to gain a sense of the school community. Doing so assists in the familiarities and understandings I can bring to interviews, etc.
Observation of teacher	Teachers collaborate in different settings and for different purposes. During the week of my visit, I would hope to observe a sample of teacher teams, committees,

collaboration	or PLCs. These observations are general; they are not intended to test any particular theory or challenge of collaboration, etc. Again, these observations will allow me to learn about the school and enable me to be a much more informed interviewer.
Leader Interviews	Principal Interviews: I ask to interview school principal once near the start of my visit and again, more briefly at the end. The second interview is very valuable, as it allows me to clarify understandings and follow up on questions. Assistant Principal Interviews: I also ask to interview assistant principals. They too play an important role in establishing trust and collaboration (One time).
Teacher Interviews	I ask to interview about 10 teachers. I like to speak to teachers with mixed levels of teaching experience. So, • 3 teachers new to teaching (1-3 years, in total) • 4 mid-career teachers (4- 8 years, in total) • 3 veteran teachers (more than 8 years, in total)
Examination of Relevant Documents	I also aim to examine some relevant documents such as the meeting agendas, minutes, and protocols to get a better idea of how the teachers collaborate, what are their purposes, and how these collaborations support the teachers' professional development and learning.

I think having a meeting with you will help me better describe my research interest and know your viewpoint on it.

Sincerely,
Samira Hajiyevea

APPENDIX C

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH and WHAT YOU WILL DO

You are being asked to participate in a research study entitled *Conditions Facilitating the Establishment of Teacher Trust and Collaboration in post-Soviet versus U.S School Contexts*. The purpose of my doctoral research is to describe and interpret how school leaders develop teacher trust and collaboration in two different contexts. For this study, I intend to use these understandings to identify what early stages of leadership support for teacher trust and collaboration may look like in post-Soviet contexts seeking to transform school leadership and teaching practices.

I am an educator from Azerbaijan, and my context is much in need of new forms of school leadership and collaborative learning culture. I would value an opportunity to hear principals' reflections on what specific actions they have taken to build teacher trust and collaboration and what they have learned along the way. Similarly, it will be helpful to hear teachers' voices as well to see how they have been encouraged to collaborate and what challenges they have gone through. In doing so, I can get a better understanding of important, concrete steps that leaders have taken, and I can compare principals' and teachers' reflections on teacher trust and collaboration.

Data will be collected through interviewing you, examining the relevant documents, and observing some meetings in which teachers are involved in collaborative learning. Each interview will run 45-60 minutes.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS or RISKS of PARTICIPATION

Potential benefits include an opportunity to share your perceptions and participate in a follow-up inquiry that develops accurate, useful, and thoughtful findings. We do not see any physical, legal, employment, psychological, social, economic, or reputation risks in participating in the interview and observation. The questions are not highly sensitive in nature and are unlikely to pose distress or discomfort.

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. Whether you want to participate or not will not affect your work process.

I will make every effort to maintain confidentiality. Data from the research will not be attributed to you and will not be available to principals, leaders, and colleagues in your school and district. This is an ethical requirement of any study conducted at MSU that may not be violated. Participants of the project will be encouraged to assist in these confidentiality requirements.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

You will be provided with compensations in the form of gift cards for being in this research study.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If you have concerns or questions about the process, please contact my advisor or me:

Samira Hajiyevea
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hajiyevea@msu.edu

Dr. BetsAnn Smith
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DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

Your signature indicates that you have decided to take part in this study, and you have read the above information.

Researcher: Samira Hajiyevea

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Permission to audiotape: _____ (Initial)

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