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High School Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices to Reduce School Violence

Linda Hunt

Walden University

College of Education

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Linda Hunt

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

High School Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices to Reduce School Violence

by

Linda Hunt

MA, Northcentral University, 2016

BA, Clark College, 1979

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Administrative/Leadership

Walden University

October 2020

Abstract

With the constant increase of school violence, there is a need to prepare leaders how to best protect the school. However, high school principals may be inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices that have been shown to reduce school violence. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine how high school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The conceptual framework was Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that people can learn by observing the behavior of others, and Hallinger's and Murphy's theory of instructional leadership regarding andragogy. A purposive sampling was used to select 10 high school principals for data collection via interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes. The findings were that high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through: (a) communication with teachers and students during school assemblies, staff meetings, classroom visits, and individually, (b) principals use but may need more professional development on strategies used to reduce violent incidents at school, and (c) principals would like more funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence. These findings support school principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The implications for positive social change of this dissertation include strategies for high school principals to reduce school violence.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father who transitioned before the completion of this project. To my sister Jackie, who has supported me throughout this process and has motivated and believed in me throughout the entire process and never gave up hope. I dedicate to work to my Pastor, Overseer Latonya Heyward, you for all your love and support; there are not enough words for me to express my love and gratitude for you. To the JaBeaz's Prayer line and Elect Lady Willie Gray for bathing this project in prayer. To All the prayer warriors at DaBar Tabernacle. To my son, grandson and daughter in law Harry and Noel, and Christina whom I do everything in my life for and want to set the best example for. To Tristan, Ethan, Jonathan and Caitlyn for all your hugs and the smiles and words of encouragement that I can make it. I especially want to dedicate this work to my aunts, Betty and Barbara for all their prayers. To every one of the young men and women in our family line, I want you to always pursue your goals and passions; do not let anything stop you. Finally, I would like to thank my God for the strength and encouragement I needed throughout the process and the love and grace you have always shown me.

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I would like to thank my doctoral chairpersons Drs. Jerry D. Collins and Peter Kiriakidis who guided me throughout the entire process and was eager and ready to provide feedback, guidance, and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Students in the United States come from every background and corner of the globe (Fisher et al., 2017). With the growing number of violence in the schools and at home, about eight out of 10 students are in special education and have special learning needs (Department of Education, 2019). The state in which this study took place was located in the Eastern United States, serving more than 4 million students in over 3,000 schools (Department of Education, 2019). Ten percent of students at the research site qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (Department of Education, 2019).

With the constant increase of school violence, there is a need to prepare leaders on how to adequately protect the school but high school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to understand the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. The results may help high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. Implications for positive social change include strategies for high school principals to use in order to implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence and to help students graduate. The significant sections of Chapter 1 are the background of the study, the program statement, purpose statement, the research question, the conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, the significance of the study, and the summary.

Background

High school principals, community leaders, state officials, national lawmakers, and public data agencies all agree that school violence is a growing issue that must be addressed (Klien, 2019). To address this issue, Soto (2020) stated that principals' instructional leadership practices matter. However, according to Sprague (2018), the majority of United States school district administrators allocate money to address school violence. School administrators are continually faced with the challenge of providing rigorous instruction in a safe, nurturing environment (Campbell, 2019). For example, over 150,000 cases of gun violence happen per academic year (Cox, 2018). In Chapter 2, I review the literature and present the conceptual framework, leadership styles, and instructional leadership practices of school principals in depth.

Problem Statement

At the research site, there was a need to prepare leaders on how to protect the school adequately. School principals reported to senior district administrators that they needed support with school violence (senior district administrator, personal communication, Sept. 9, 2019). School principals also reported that they were not trained to know how to reduce school violence (school principal, personal communication, Sept. 18, 2019). School violence had increased at all high schools within the study site by 25% in the past 5 consecutive academic years (district superintendent, personal communication, Sept. 29, 2019). The problem for this study was that high school principals may be inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices that have been shown to reduce school violence.

Research in the past 5 years revealed that there is a problem with understanding why violence exists. According to Erzzani (2019), school violence is a problem in the education system. School principals are concerned about school violence and how to prevent it (Lenhardt, 2017). Ravitch et al. (2016) stated that school violence is on the rise in all states. The literature revealed that many principals are not prepared for school violence and how to implement the ideas discussed in training (Kano & Bourque, 2017). School principals need to be adequately prepared for school violence (Khan et al., 2020; Kano & Bourque, 2017). Kalman (2016) found that principals need help regarding school violence in their schools.

Purpose of the Study

Cox (2018) stated that school principals affect student safety. United States Committee on Homeland Security (2018) stated that school principals need to apply instructional leadership practices regarding school violence. However, lack of applying instructional leadership practices regarding school violence continues to be a problem for school principals (Bellibas, 2018). The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to understand the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence.

Research Question

Any act of school violence is unacceptable (Forman, 2020). Bandura (2016) stated that instructional leadership practices affect professional learning. Educational leaders should have the ability to influence and guide followers of any organization (Weinstein et al., 2020). Thus, the research question that guided this research was:

How are high school principals implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is Bandura's (2016) theory of social learning and Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership. I used this theory and model as the conceptual framework to understand the instructional leadership practices of high school principals regarding school violence. Bandura's social learning theory and Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership model were also used to create the interview questions.

Bandura's theory has been used extensively in many areas of higher education (Sprague, 2018). Hallinger and Murphy (2019) stated that Bandura's theory asserts that there are three necessary conditions for effective modeling: retention, reproduction, and motivation. The instructional leadership model focuses on 10 functions required for administrators. I have selected three of those 10 functions on which to focus: school goals and objectives, promoting and supporting instructional improvement, and creating a productive work environment (Murphy, Hallinger, Weil, & Mitman, 2019). The functions of the instructional leadership model should be applied by school principals to demonstrate, critique, teach, create, and sustain a professional and productive relationship with teachers (Murphy et al., 2019).

Nature of the Study

Qualitative research emphasizes the existence of both education and policy, and how the existence or absence of these can shape an environment (Guis, 2017). The

primary qualitative research design is used when one is examining the specific nature and

characteristics of behaviors, managerial processes, relationships, and performances

(Forman, 2018). Qualitative methodology is used to understand the maturation of

processes within an industry, the people who work within these environments, and how

decisions are structured around a desire to learn (Yin, 2015). A qualitative methodology

can also demonstrate significant explanations and generalizations across similar

environments (Yin, 2015).

A basic qualitative research design helps to understand a specific phenomenon

(Yin, 2015). I chose a basic qualitative research design because I want to understand the

leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. This research

was conducted in an urban school district in the Eastern United States and high school

principals from one school district participated in interviews. Using a basic qualitative

research design, I conducted interviews to understand the instructional leadership

practices of high school principals regarding the reduction of school violence.

Semistructured face-to-face one-on-one interviews were conducted. I audio-recorded the

interviews with the permission of the participants.

Definitions of Key Terms

Instructional leadership: Instructional leadership has been defined as setting clear

goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources, and

evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth. Quality of

instruction is the top priority for the instructional principal. Instructional leadership is

committed to the core business of teaching, learning, and knowledge, with staff members

meeting regularly to discuss how to do their jobs better and ultimately help students learn more effectively (Bellibas, 2018).

Instructional leadership practices: Instructional leadership practices are leadership that focuses on fostering change by inspiring and motivating individuals and organizations toward a shared vision or goal (Ganon, 2019).

School violence: School violence is an act or harm in a facility where multiple people are assembled, and harm happens to them (Lenhardt, 2017).

Assumptions

There were several assumptions associated with this qualitative research. The first assumption was that the small sample of urban principals from one district was sufficient. I assumed that the research methodology was appropriate to examine how high school principals implement their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. I also assumed that the participants provided me with open and honest responses during the interviews regarding their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. I also assumed that the interview questions helped me collect enough data answer the research question.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this research was one public school district in the Eastern United States. The sample of urban high school principals was from one school district. A delimitation of this study was the selection criteria to select the participants. For this research study, I invited only high school principals. The findings may not be transferable

to similar school districts. Another delimitation is the limited research about instructional leadership practices of school principals and the reduction of school violence.

Transferability

Instead of looking to generalize findings, qualitative researchers should consider if the findings are transferable to other situations (Yin, 2015). Yin (2015) reported that transferability signifies the level at which the study outcomes can be useful to different frameworks, including future research.

Limitations

Determining a reasonable sample size in qualitative research is based upon the design method or preexisting research (Creswell, 2013). A limitation was the small geographic area of the school district. Another limitation was the sample of high school principals within one public school district. Due to this sample size, the results may not be generalizable to other high school principals or other school districts in the United States. Limitations account for research data not transferable into larger populations in qualitative research (Yin, 2015). High school principals were selected to participate in the interviews. Internal validity is a strength of qualitative research (Yin, 2015).

Significance

Based on recent research, the role of the principal as an instructional leader practice with regards to school violence is becoming increasingly important as it relates to school safety. The results of this dissertation may help school district administrators to support high school principals to reduce school violence. The results also may help high school principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices to reduce school

violence. Implications for positive social change include findings that help high school principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence.

Summary

The problem was that high school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. The conceptual framework was Bandura's (2016) theory of social learning and Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership. These theories were the framework for this qualitative research. The results of this study help high school principals to better implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. Implications for positive social change include strategies for high school principals to reduce school violence and to help students graduate from school. In Chapter 2, I describe the review of literature. I include a description of the influences of principals' leadership practices on school violence, and the challenges facing schools and leaders. In Chapter 2, I also describe the literature search strategy, search terms, and the databases used for the search of key terms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem was that high school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. To address this problem, the purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. The research question was how high school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. In Chapter 2, I describe the review of the literature regarding the topic of this qualitative research. I detail my literature search strategy, including search terms. I then present research related to high school principals' instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The major topics of the literature review are leadership, instructional leadership, violence, school climate, school goals, principals, and leadership practices.

Literature Search Strategy

In searching for peer-reviewed articles regarding school violence, I used the Walden Online Library and the Internet to access online databases such as EBSCO, ProQuest, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), and LexisNexis. Federal and state laws, books, and government reports were also searched. Key search terms included: *instructional leadership, instructional leadership practices, physical violence, violence in schools, school shootings, school goals and objectives, promoting and supporting instructional improvement,* and *qualitative research.*

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was Bandura's (2016) theory of social learning and Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. Bandura's social learning theory was used to examine how high school principals apply their instructional leadership practices regarding school violence. Bandura's theory of social learning has been used extensively in many areas of higher education (Jawas, 2017).

The instructional leadership model focuses on 10 functions. I have selected: framing school goals and objectives, promoting and supporting instructional improvement, and creating a productive work environment (Murphy, Hallinger, Weil, & Mitman, 1985). I used the instructional leadership model (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) to develop the interview questions. The three functions stated above include a set of practices principals use as goals and objectives to reduce school violence. Promoting and supporting instructional improvement help principals apply emerging models to reduce school violence. Creating a productive work environment allows all team players to trust each other more and be able to promote the school vision.

High School Principals

The principal performs management routine tasks like planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating. The roles of principals have changed (Cox, 2018). Ganon (2019) stated that school leaders encounter challenges because of a lack of knowledge of school violence. Morgan (2018) stated that the principals' role in defining the mission involves framing schoolwide goals and persistently communicating these goals to the

entire school community. Sanchez (2020) also stated that principals need to focus their attention on goals regarding school violence.

Instructional Leadership of High School Principals

Instructional leadership has become one of the most widely researched topics, yet school violence continues to grow. Instructional leadership is a type of leadership that is based on the principle of supporting teachers and allowing them to learn and grow to meet the different needs of students. The role of the principal, as an instructional leader, is someone who engages in the instruction process, observing teachers in classrooms and working with them to improve teaching and learning. Sanchez (2020) stated that principals are becoming leading learners who successfully nurture a learning community. The principal is an instructional leader who improves the learning provided to students.

Barriers to Instructional Leadership Practices of High School Principals

One of the significant barriers to implementing instructional leadership practices is setting goals for staff and students (Campbell 2019). Goals are essential for principals to effectively use and spend the majority of their time instructing and implementing various ideas about teamwork. The instructional leader has more and more tasks added daily to the responsibilities and workload (Benner, 2016). Instead of teaching that the school system is individualized, most leadership needs to be learned by many people to have sufficient preparation and training to bring the most to every school (Crawford, 2016). Day (2019) stated that with the many facets of instructional leadership and their role as managers and teachers, there is a quest to teach and train future leaders to be able to deal with a multiplicity of tasks outside of management and teaching in the classroom.

Bandura (2016) stated that the tenure of most instructional leaders in high schools is about 5 years.

Instructional leaders do not fully understand how to use a specific strategy for resourcing learning development programs for teachers and administrators to have an orderly and safe school climate in every district. Cornell (2018) concluded that there is a need to establish goals with their assistance, and to help these principals go through the necessary learning to successfully achieve their goals to function and concentrate on instruction and management. Shaikh (2020) stated that instructional leaders are required to be responsible beyond what they are trained to make the program work. Instead of working with the maximum amount of staff and administrators, they spend most of their time making sure that the environment is safe but not stronger academically

School Violence

There is a need for all schools to have guidelines that have been implemented and rehearsed by all staff. Any act of school violence is unacceptable (Robers, 2015). School administrators have the responsibility to be the first responders in safeguarding and securing, and peaceful schools (Morgan, 2018). Every school needs to be free from any type of destructive influence of violence in the school (Kolbe, 2020). School violence includes aggressive students' behaviors such as physical fights on campus, bullying (including online bullying or cyber-bullying), or other deliberate means of causing harm to the administrators, teachers, staff, and students (Soto, 2020). National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2020) argued that violence in the school includes more dysfunctional behaviors that increase fear and diminish control in the school

climate for everyone. Some of the fatal injuries at schools include weapon possession and

harassment (NASSP, 2020). In some communities, gangs recruit school-age students to

be members and contribute to violence in schools (National Center for Education

Statistics [NCES], 2019).

Incorporating school violence initiatives in the school, particularly with

principals, may help to reduce violence in the school. With school violence being a major

complex problem, there must be clear communication in leadership. Mestry (2017) stated

that principals need to be professionally prepared for their roles as heads of schools and

to continually enhance their skills, attributes, and competencies through structured

preparation programs in instructional leadership. Sevigny (2019) stated that principals

set the tone of the school by becoming leaders for learning, providing both effective

leadership practices and professional management. One of the strategies that can be

applied is the school district must have resources and contacts for developing

professional materials that are comprehensive and deals specifically with school violence

prevention (Sanchez, 2019). There is a need for the principal to create a multifaceted plan

that can address all the issues dealing with school violence (Schleifstein, 2018).

Addressing the social media platform, peer pressure, cultural influences will provide a

platform to understanding strategies that will stop school violence. However, this plan

has to be collaborative.

Under current federal legislation, principals should accept the responsibility to

manage personnel, funds, and strategic planning. Lynch (2020) reported that historically

principals serve as disciplinarians. Instructional leaders must implement staff

development by implementing partnerships in schools, communities and governmental agencies so that violence may be reduced (Vionea, 2019).

Violence Prevention Policies that Instructional Leaders Believe In

School administrators and crisis team members have the responsibility to be the first responders in safeguarding and securing, and peaceful schools (Sprague, 2018). Every school needs to be free from any type of destructive influence of violence in the school (Cox, 2018). Bacchini (2020) stated that violence in the school includes more dysfunctional students' behaviors. Administrators are called upon to be defenders in schools and to prevent school violence (Mestry, 2017). Lack of concrete information about students' misconduct and how it is addressed or whether the policies used by principals are working is a hinderance to making schools safe. Shaikh (2020) stated that while there are no effective ways to reduce violence in the schools without taking a systematic, scientific approach to understanding and evaluating the tools being used by the principals. Cornell (2020) stated that while principals believe in their leadership styles and practices, without data safety measures and policies will not be effective. Many schools have the belief that restorative justice is the best alternative to regain safety in schools. (Moon, 2020) stated the Brooklyn Community Foundation spends millions of dollars trying to offer program to redirect the negative energy of students to keep schools safe.

Instructional Leadership Practices of School Principals

School principals need to show a high commitment to developing teachers' capabilities and creates a positive relationship among teachers and the entire school

community to achieve high-quality learning for the students (Mestry, 2017). The instructional principal is considered auspicious as long as he can solve the problems that uniquely face the school and make decisions (Holland, 2018). Hallinger (2017) stated that the principal must follow models that support their practices. According to Murphy (2017), practices include goals and objectives.

The setting goal effectively means that the principal should be able to formulate the school objectives and can set specific goals that are easily understood and applied by the schoolteacher to achieve distinct learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2017). Communicating the school goals can be demonstrated in the principal's ability to deploy and connect school goals effectively to all members of the school community through meetings with teachers or through advertising banners that illustrate the importance of achieving quality learning and teaching (Hallinger, 2017). The principal must show the ability to achieve a high level of Involvement with students and teachers, through the exploitation of break times to talk with students, teachers and by visiting them in the classrooms (Hallinger, 2017).

Instructional Leadership Practices and School Shootings

The numbers of fatalities in schools and school-related events have increased since the 1960s and have risen even more in the past decade. (Guis, 2017) stated that the tools schools need to measure direct instruction, implementation, training, guided observation, and teacher review are not available or implemented with principals. Gawlik (2018) stated that there is a need for a revision on school safety plans for instructional leaders to be accountable.

Blad (2018) stated that for many decades, the principal has been used to perform management routine tasks like planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating. These tasks are evidenced in giving orders, dealing with the school budget, arranging classroom timetables, monitoring attendance, and the absence of teachers and students. The tasks listed above are considered necessary to achieving safe schools. With the advent of significant changes in education and how violence is handled and reported, the changing prospects for the graduates and a new need for the new economy, this view of the roles of the principals has changed (Fisher, 2017).

Newman (2018) stated that the government does not accurately face the challenges school leaders encounter because of a lack of knowledge and technological movements with school violence and not correctly understanding the role of instructional leaders and the many challenges to an active learning process. Eklund (2016) stated that instructional leadership has become one of the most widely researched topics, and yet school violence continues to grow. Instructional leadership has been connected to teacher growth and development, teacher job satisfaction, student achievement, and improving school climate in general. Instructional leadership is adding a new image to the work of the principals. Instructional leadership is a type of leadership that is based on the principle of supporting teachers and allowing them to learn and grow to meet the different needs of students.

Role of the Instructional Leader

The role of the school principal is continuously changing. The principal, as an instructional leader, is someone who engages in the instruction process, observing

teachers in classrooms, and working with them to improve teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is adding a new image to the work of the principals. Instructional leadership is a type of leadership that is based on the principle of supporting teachers and allowing them to learn and grow to meet the different needs of students. Rigby (2018) stated that great teachers and principals make kids feel welcomed. Hefferman (2018) stated that principals are administrative managers in the school setting. These managers have many different roles that functioned on tasks and behaviors that lead to the effective operation of a school. The primary function of school principals is to make decisions about the day-to-day operations of schools, students, classes, and management of the building (Hansen et al., 2018).

The role of the principal is to facilitate instruction to increase academic achievement, explore possible ways to deal with school administrators, staff, students, and maintain a safe environment. The principal creates a vision of what a school should look like in the future. The principal plans goals to achieve the vision and organize people, materials, and other resources together to attain the objectives (Newman, 2020). School principals must be willing to operate within roles to effectively manage a school and have a positive impact on student reading achievement (Zhang et al., 2015). This school leader must be courageous, positive, caring, insightful, and an excellent communicator. According to Farrell (2019), principals need to possess an understanding of curriculum and instruction and that leaders feel will best enhance their schools and students. The role of the school principal is continually changing.

Principals are administrative managers. These managers have many different roles that function on tasks, and behaviors that lead to the effective operation of a school to a school leader who concentrates on the managerial functions but also dedicates a great deal of time and attention to organization and coordination of a structured learning environment. The primary purpose of school principals is to make decisions about the day-to-day operations of schools, students' classes, and management of the building (Farrell, 2018). Kolbe (2020) stated that violence has continually increased, and no new remedy has been created to deal with this complicated, challenging problem. Presently, principals must try to make individual differences, role differences, and institutional differences without the aid of other leaders (Farrell, 2020). Research indicated that the differences these principals share these differences dictate how the state or federal education policy may be very different from someone's style and practice (Sanchez, 2019). The primary role of the high school principal is to protect the resources, enforce school policy, supervise the staff, and effectively communicate with all stakeholders (Newman, 2019). Principals are focused on what is needed for school improvement to serve the community better and become more effective in creating a positive learning and school environment. Another role of the instructional leader is to ensure school safety teacher growth and student achievement. Farrell (2018) pointed out that recent findings do not necessarily contradict the body of research, arguing principals as instructional leaders, would be stronger if the principal believes they can make an impact on student violence.

Principals' Leadership Practices and Students

A principal's day is challenged by standards, accountability, and many others.

Forces are impacting it (Newman, 2020). Newman further stated that the principal must

remain in the position to solve students and adults' disciplinary concerns, while always

mindful of safe schools, stretching limited budgets, and countless competing claims on

the principal's time all serve to affect instructional leadership, supervision negatively,

moreover, and professional development. Gawlik (2017) stated that many school

administrators experience challenges trying to implement new practices at school. The

principal's role has been redefined by the educational system on how to keep students'

safe and their understanding of how these practices should be applied (Sanchez, 2019).

The principals' role in implementing practices on school violence plays a critical role in

not only meeting the needs of stakeholders, governmental offices, but also students and

their families (Ganon, 2019). Students now worry if they will be safe walking down

school corridors or even going into bathrooms. Kaur (2017) stated that the operation of a

school could bring significant challenges for leaders who are experienced and have poor

assessment practices. School violence does not only affect staff but students also.

Understanding the instructional leadership and time management will improve the

Quality of teaching and learning outcomes on school violence. Furthermore, it enhances

the attainment of educational goals and objectives.

Violence in the school is a primary concern for educators, stakeholders, teachers,

and parents because student achievement declines when the student cannot focus (Cox,

2018). When the school climate is chaotic, students, staff, and everyone are afraid to

move or teach. In a violent situation, the school day is interrupted for staff and students,
and many are sent home or a safe place until parents or guardians can come and pick
them up (Hansen, 2018). Kaur (2019) said that violence in schools is pervasive, highly
emotive, and, above all, global problems. Violence and its negative social consequences
are of perennial concern, while the media regularly highlights incidences of violence
within the school. School violence by students manifests in numerous ways, commencing
from what someone has said or simple revenge. Ravitch (2019) reported that there is
growing statistical evidence that low levels of performing high schools or insignificant
forms of violence unchecked will have a profound effect on the learning environment of
the school.

Leadership Practices on Violence and Parents

Khan et al. (2020) stated that leadership, including parents, is challenging.
Findley (2018) revealed that leadership expects parents to have accountability to the
vision, which is another characteristic of instructional leaders. Khan et al. (2020) also
stated that parents want to feel included in the rules, goals made for their children, and
the school where they trust to educate their children. Fisher (2017) demonstrated that
50% of parents think that leadership must consist of motivation, excellent
communicators, and have a great understanding that everyone is a leader. Findley (2018)
believed that leadership of the principal and parenting is like managing a team with
thousands of personalities. In business, the leader is the manager of the organization.
Khan (2020) further stated, it is essential to set goals, establish rules and boundaries as a
parent. Center for Disease Control, CDC Cornell (2020) stated that the principal feel that

it is essential to engage parents in school programs would impede the progress of school achievement. National Education Association (NEA). Farrell (2020) demonstrated that 65% percent of the literature has shown that parental involvement has increasingly been mandated as a critical component of school reform and school-community relations. Despite the mandates, the role of school leaders engaging parents is still underdeveloped in the literature and preparation programs.

Crawford (2016) stated that often leaders do envision parent engagement and construct their role in promoting ways to deal with school violence and how to educate other parents to become involved in keeping our schools safe. Crawford further stated that leaders are calling for parents to collaborate with other families and leaders in the community to deal with the rising problem of school violence. Fisher (2020) said that in many school districts, the principal is primarily known for their commitment to the vision, community, staff teachers, parents, and student involvement. Soto (2020) reported that learning and understanding the leadership style of the principal would be a move in the right direction to change how leadership is perceived and how to curve school violence and create safe learning. Sanchez (2017) stated that parent involvement in schools is essential.

Leadership Theories and Leadership Practices

A conclusion can be drawn that it is easier to write the practices on paper rather than trying to find a way to implement then into the school policies. Eklund (2018) stated that leadership theories and leadership practices regarding school violence are fundamental due to the rise in violence. Despite the lack of implementation of the

methods in schools, stakeholders and teachers continue to meet with new plans of dealing with this problem (Ganon, 2019). Bandura and Hallingers (2015) theories were chosen as the lens through which this research is anchored. Banduras' theory talks about social learning and Hallingers' opinion of leadership management. Using both of these theories will allow the researcher to see how outstanding knowing and understanding leadership and how important it is to any organization. Rigby et al. (2018) believed that leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena in schools and other organizations. Whether it the workforce, financial resources, teacher quality, or policymaking groups, everything hinges on leadership (Cornell, 2018).

Shaikh (2020) stated that leadership practices of the leader are challenging to be implemented because of miscommunication or no communication amongst the leader and staff. Having all team members on the same page and sharing the same vision strengthens the leader and their leadership style. Hallinger and Murphy (2015) claimed that every successful school leader possesses a repertoire of four core leadership practices, namely, building a vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the teaching and learning program. Khan et al. (2020) stated that when the vision of the organization is on one accord, the practices regarding school violence have room to be successful and work. Setting directions for administrators, principals, Stakeholders, teachers, and parents agree that strong instructional leadership must be in place and respected (Kaur, 2019).

Leadership Practices and Stakeholders Goals

Principals who collaboratively focus on instructional leadership is that they are less likely to burn out dealing with violence and school improvement. Setting goals and giving clear directions, embracing the vision are essential elements in dealing with violence and school improvement. Williamson (2018) stated that all principals and stakeholders' goals that are attainable and sustainable in order to maintain control within the school climate. Rigby (2018) indicated that stakeholders are very influential in the school with parents and teachers. Lenhardt et al. (2017) showed that improved instruction, better learning, and enhanced school effectiveness or organizational efficiency are the most commonly cited reasons for implementing stakeholders in the staff at schools that want to change the schools' climate. Paradice (2017) reported that there's nothing more demoralizing than a leader who cannot clearly articulate the vision and goals. One of the primary practices of instructional leadership is vision. The practice of view attracts and affects every employee who is engaged in living this set of actions, beliefs, values, and goals (Interlandi, 2018).

Setting Goals, Mission, and Management in Schools

Effective schools and principals prioritize set goals, clarify the mission and speak an exuberant amount of time of managing teachers and other leaders to gain a better understanding of the primary goals to be accomplished regarding school violence (Kalman et al., 2016). Kano et al. (2017) reported that goal setting is not natural, what is written on paper may or may not work for the group but must be modified to make it work for the organization and the people involved. Benner (2016), revealed that over

85% of principals admit that there is a lack of professional training on school violence in the school or community.

The disparity of knowledge to community leaders has led to a higher rate of school violence in the schools. Campbell (2019) stated that there needs to be more responsibilities with stakeholders, community affairs, principals, and other staff to plan for better communication and ways to implement practices regarding school violence strategically. National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) showed that 75% of stakeholders stated that actual Involvement could often be deterred because there are higher demands of time and planning.

Social learning and its potential to reveal insights into principals' gaining mastery of the instructional leadership role could be the cornerstone for how school principals judge their capacity in providing instructional supports at their school site (Zhang, 2015). Instructional leaders are often said to have a vision of what the school should be trying to accomplish (DiRenzo, 2016). This research is concerned with the framing of school goals. The specific goal is to practice on school violence and how to make the school environment healthy. Framing school goals refers to a principal's role in determining the areas on which the school staff will focus their attention and resources during a given school year (Bacchini, 2020). The principal's role in defining the mission involves framing schoolwide goals and persistently communicating these goals to the entire school community so that everyone is clear about where the school and leadership stand on violence in the school (Cornell, 2020).

Framing these goals should be realistic and manageable, along with what can work best for the school. The goals should incorporate data on past and current statistical reports that are measurable on the increase and decrease of violence in the school. To be an effective leader for change, framing school goals should involve staff and teachers because their experiences will be created as a foundation for determining school goals (Cornell, 2020). Clear goals, transparency, and framing the vision are positive keys to closing the gap in practice.

Promoting and Supporting Instructional Improvement

One way that physical structure affects students is that A child in a school with a poor physical environment attracts school violence. Fisher et al. (2019) stated that the physical condition of a school affects outcomes, attitudes, and community support. The principals must spend an excessive amount of resources to reproduce a building that can meet the needs of everyone to create a positive learning environment that clearly defines the guidelines for zero tolerance for school violence of any type. Cruellar (2018) stated that effective principals shape school buildings characterized by the basics. According to Farrell (2020), safety and orderliness are significant concerns, but also there must be a concern for staff and stakeholders where a learning atmosphere in which students feel supported. Newman (2020) reported that teachers and principals set the tone for the building, whether it is professionally ranked against violence or politically unsure about what they should do to stop school violence. Findley (2018) showed social learning goals of any school must be rooted and grounded in a correct understanding that unless teamwork and everyone is working collaboratively to improve academics and how to

apply the social goals so that everyone can benefit. Williams (2018) said principals spend long longs trying to brainstorm and prioritize collaboration and to get every administrator, stakeholder, staff, and student to address how they, as a single team, can build trust into strengthening the building and the people that work there.

Leaderships' Policy on School Violence

Creating safe, orderly, and welcoming learning environments is critical to educating and preparing all of our children and youth to achieve their highest potential and contribute to society (Klien 2019). Equipping schools to do violence education and crisis prevention to safeguard the building and students is a problem that continues to rise. Lack of funding, poorly trained principals on policies, school violence, and security, is a significant problem. Forman (2018) stated that research designs, funding, strategic planning on how to deal with any type of abuse in the school effectively are essential. Over the past year, 95% of leaders stated the reporting violence in the school was a priority and improving school safety and increasing access to mental health supports has become increasingly significant (Day, 2016). Stakeholders, community leaders, parents, and staff have all made efforts to improve school climate, safety, and learning, working together as a team against violence. Crawford (2016) reported that the principals must have funds for emergency preparedness and response, along with some type of recovery training program to safeguard the school building. Principals must have trained, adequate staffing, and stakeholders who are trained to infuse school safety. A height of security measures other than security guards, metal detectors, are needed to enhance the school (Day, 2019). Actions must be taken to prevent violence in America's schools and

communities (Clarke, 2017). Every school district must have in place proactive

instructional leaders who have a balance in training for homes and schools and is flexible

in upholding the vision and mission of the school.

Creating a Productive Work Environment

A positive work environment is one that is supportive and open. According to the

National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2020), about one-half of school

principals agree that the tasks of the instructional leader in an educational setting are to

create a productive work environment where students become academic achievers, and

the staff is motivated to come to the work and be productive. Hayes (2020) stated that the

school climate must be a place where trust is built, communication, and all accept

acceptance on the job. Creating a safe work environment means the potentials of every

staff is welcomed. Holland et al. (2018) stated by showing appreciation for everyone will

encourage them to work harder and be more productive. Hefferman (2018) stated that

knowing what constitutes right school leadership is one thing, putting it into practice is

another. The work environment must be one where each team player understands as their

role, and everyone is recognized as a leader.

Implementing Practices of Instructional Leadership

Implementing school violence practices to keep schools safe is a challenge. There

is a failure to get guidelines for administrators to follow. Failure to set guideline

implements crisis intervention tasks is a major crisis. Principals have the job to

implement practices to prevent violence in each school district and to build positive

schools(Moon, 2020). The problem increases because leaders do not effectively

communicate, staff that can not be transparent, and community leaders fail to agree on

how and who is responsible (Khan, 2020). The school team which make up the principal,

teachers, administrators and parents need help in trying to use their expertise in building

relationships and creating strategies to. Bacchini (2020) stated that there is a vital need

for instructional leaders to implement a variety of new practices that can prevent and

reduce the violence experienced in the schools daily. Recent research statistics showed

that over 75% of youth violence prevention in the schools continues to be neglected.

Doing the work of an instructional leader is a valuable asset to the community and group

if done productively. Instructional leadership practices allow the principal the opportunity

to be in the classroom and also in administration (Kelley, 2020). Schedules and planning

time are limited in the school day, staff members cannot meet regularly or implement

plans on emergency planning (Kaur, 2019). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC) stated that when family and parents implement and model community in the home

youth violence will decrease. Principals who are instructional leaders understand that

implementation of practices is the process of taking actions into put into a plan to bring

the desired result of reducing school violence (Cruellar, 2018).

Creativity of Instructional Leadership Practices on School Violence

Instructional leadership practices are an essential skill that is necessary for the

success of schools, leadership and role modeling. American schools are not impregnable

fortresses in spite of increasingly cutting- edge security measures and extensive staff

training to protect students (Bachinni, 2020). Data on school violence and leadership in

the United States are increasing daily due to a lack of no implementation of practices on

school violence. The 21st-century leader has to be creative in framing school goals and objectives for teaching in the classroom to management as the leader (Ganon, 2019). Change is needed to allow creativity in leadership.

The instructional leader must have a creative security plan for the work environment and the protection of students. The instructional leader and their practices must demonstrate clear creative thinking that is necessary to accomplish goals in our complex, interconnected world (Cornell, 2020). Recent research demonstrated the instructional leader and their practices must be creative in framing school goals and objectives, promoting and supporting their practices to understand leadership and violence in the school better.

Bandura's Theory of Social Learning

Bandura (2016) refuted the theoretical perspective that behavior is impelled by inner forces in the form of needs, drives, and impulses that operate below the level of consciousness. Bandura criticized the simplified and broad psychodynamic theory that inner determinants drove behaviors. Bandura (2016) emphasized, "The inner determinants were typically inferred from the behavior that they supposedly caused, resulting in pseudo explanations" (p. 1). Bandura also criticized these theories on the basis that they ignored the real complexity of human responsiveness. Bandura felt that diverse social influences produce correspondingly different behaviors and that the inner cause implicated in the relationship cannot be less complex than its effects. Finally, Bandura (2016) clearly stated that these previous psychodynamic theories provided

intriguing interpretations of events that had already happened, but they lacked the power

to predict future human behavior in varied situations.

In writing his social learning theory, Bandura (2016) emphasized that theories

must demonstrate predictive power and identify causal factors, as shown by the fact that

varying the postulated determinants produces related changes in behavior. Bandura wrote

that developments in learning theory shifted the focus of causal analysis from

hypothesized fundamental determinants to a detailed examination of external influences

on responsiveness. When considering that which motivates individuals to perpetrate acts

of school violence, Bandura's view that man is a thinking organism that possesses the

tremendous capacity for the power of self-direction is relevant. Bandura's social theory of

aggression, later termed social cognitive theory, serves as a theoretical underpinning for

analyses of what factors contribute to a school shooter's propensity to carry out an act of

violence. Contrary to popular belief and perception, research on school violence suggests

that these are not impulsive actions and that school shooters' actions are premeditated.

One of their major findings was that school shootings are rarely impulsive. Instead, they

generally result from an often-discernible thought process (Sanchez, 2019).

Motivation and Instructional Leadership

The instructional leadership role may be connected to the ways in which

principals feel equipped to employ what current researchers are now calling the

principal's contemporary leadership. The instructional leadership model could lead to

greater school success with school violence, if the leaders were taught how to effectively

implement programs, that address school violence and its relationship with the home. The leader should have the ability to motivate and develop strong relationships in the schools.

The success of the school environment is significant because without a bond and trust with the people crumbles. There need to be a bond between principals' knowledge of their duties and a connection to school violence. The principals' belief and practice have to align with practices and policy of the principal and school. Although instructional leadership is one of the most popular leadership styles, that once brought success in the school is now not so popular now. Much of the recent research on student motivation has been centered on the classroom. Effective leadership focuses not only on classrooms but school climate also. When the atmosphere is on one accord, then the motivation to learn increases and school violence is reduced. There is a significant relationship between how the principal motivates the staff and students and environments that are positive. The leader may have knowledge of school violence but does not have the opportunity to implement it. The leaders' beliefs and practices are sometimes barriers to having safe schools. The literature that I reviewed indicated that instructional leaders are important for improving and promoting motivation in the classroom and school safety.

Leadership cannot be separated from motivation, and effective leadership is about durable motivation (Fisher 2017). When motivation is high school violence is low. Instructional leaders know that they may be great leaders in the classroom but poor administrators because they lack the ability to motivate and sustain the vision. Forman (2018) stated that motivation modeled by the leader can control school violence. When students feel safe, they enjoy the school environment. Students and staff work better

when they can talk to or have someone they can trust. DiRenzo (2016) stated that the

leader must give more than a general talk to staff and students, but the leader must be

able to establish higher levels of motivation.

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I included the literature review of peer-reviewed articles that helped

to defined principal leadership, leadership practices, leadership styles, and

implementation of these styles in the schools. Principals are being trained on what to do

in a school emergency. In Chapter 3, I include the research methods, research design and

rationale for recruitment of the participants, data collection and analysis, the role of the

researcher, participant selection, and instrumentation.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research methodology and rationale. The process for the selection of the participants and data collection and analysis are also presented. The credibility, dependability, and confirmability to establish trustworthiness, and ethical procedures to protect the confidentiality of the participants are described. The problem was that high school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. The research question that guided this research was:

How are high school principals implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence?

Research Design and Rationale

A basic qualitative research design was used to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. A basic qualitative research design was appropriate to engage participants in the interviews related to the research topic (see Merriam, 2009). I used interviews to collect qualitative data. I developed the interview protocol, which contains interview questions based on the conceptual framework.

According to Merriam (2009), data through interviews provide a rich illustration of the participants lived experiences. The phenomenon for this research was how high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence.

Because the purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence, a qualitative research study was selected for this research.

Role of the Researcher

I am a high school principal and have served in this position for the past 5 years. I am a novice researcher and applied knowledge from my research courses to establish a good working relationship with the participants who were high school principals at the research site. I was interested in the perceptions of high school principals regarding school violence. I had no supervisory role over the participants and was the only person to collect and analyze data from the interviews.

Methodology

Qualitative research allows researchers to see, engage with, and make meaning of the complexity of people's lives (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I collected interview data from high school principals. Studying the perceptions of high school principals regarding school violence required a research method for collecting data about specific experiences from the viewpoint of high school principals. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that qualitative research is used to understand the thoughts and feelings of the participants. Thus, a basic qualitative research design was used to collect qualitative data from high school principals. School principals were the focus of this research.

Participant Selection

The setting for the research was a public school district where the student-to-teacher ratio was 21:1 and school violence was on the rise. Purposeful sampling was

appropriate because the participants were intentionally selected to participate in the interviews. The selection criteria were high school principals who were principals for at least 2 years at the research site and were state-certified.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The participants were high school principals who were intentionally selected to participate in this research. The goal was to identify participants who met the selection criteria of being school principals for at least 2 years and state certified. Participation in this study was voluntary. I collected data via interviews and the data were treated confidentially. The school's name and school principals' names are not included in the findings to prevent the identification of the research site. I explained to each participant that my role was that of a researcher and that I listened and served as the primary instrument for gathering data during each interview.

I established a good rapport with each participant and assured each participant that the information they provided to me with was kept confidential. I interviewed each participant professionally. Regarding my work with each participant to develop a researcher-participant relationship, before seeking Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Walden University and the research site, I completed the training *Protecting Human Research Participants* offered by the National Institutes of Health.

I informed each participant that their participation in the interviews was voluntary. A letter was assigned to each participant to protect their identities before, during, and after data collection. For example, I used the letter P followed by a number to

refer to each school principal participant. P1 referred to the first school principal, P2 referred to the second school principal, and so forth. The identity of the participants was not used in the findings or revealed at any time to the school district or school administrators at the research site.

Interview transcripts were stored electronically in my house in a password-protected file on my personal computer. All files containing the interview transcripts are encrypted. All nonelectric data are stored securely in a secure desk located in my home office. Data will be kept secure for 5 years, per the protocol of Walden University. After 5 years, I will destroy all the data that I collected.

At the research site, each school has its own website. I visited each school's website to get the name of the school principal, their school email address, and credentials. For example, each school principal's educational qualifications were listed on the website together with the number of years they have been in the role of school principal. I compiled a list of emails of school principals who had been in this role for at least 2 years. I send an email to each principal and included my email address and cell phone number, a copy of the consent form, and information about the research. I asked them to email me back if they wished to participate in the interviews with me. I invited the school principals who contacted me by e-mail to the interviews by responding to their emails and scheduled the interviews. Thus, all school principals were asked if they would be interested in participating in this research.

I conducted the interviews using an interview protocol (Appendix A). I used email to communicate with participants and Skype to conduct the interviews. I conducted

the interviews and recorded them by using an audio recording application found on an

iPhone6 plus. Each interview took between 45-60 minutes to complete. I transcribed each

interview within 24-48 hours after each interview.

I did not know saturation was reached until I conducted the interviews. When the

participants shared with me the same responses over and over and no new information

was gleaned from the interviews, then I knew I had reached saturation. I interviewed 10

school principals. The size of the sample in purposive sampling determines when the

researcher reaches a point of information saturation where he or she is hearing similar

responses, and no new information is gained (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Instrumentation

Interviews are used in qualitative research and are guided by specific research

questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Interviews are a respected source of data for research

and are structured by having stress free conversations instead of conventional or official

questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I developed the interview questions based on the

conceptual framework and the literature review on instructional leadership practices and

school violence.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis Plan

</div>

I reviewed the collected interview data many times. I analyzed patterns as related

to the research question. First, I organized and analyzed data. The text from interview

transcripts and my observational notes were analyzed to develop new ideas through

induction from the data. I categorized the data based on the conceptual framework and

the research question (Saldaña, 2016). I used coding as a cyclical process to identify

codes and to put the codes into categories. Based on the conceptual framework, I coded

common patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I reorganized all the data because further

descriptions of the data were discovered that appeared to be more succinct and

appropriate, or some codes were merged together because of their conceptual similarities

(Saldaña, 2016). I used pattern coding to identify similarly coded data and organized the

entire data into concise categories that were used to identify emergent themes that

included attributes of the conceptual framework.

        I used a color-coding system on the interview transcripts and recorded codes onto

a matrix spreadsheet using a data management program on my computer. I

then used color-coding within the spreadsheet to classify codes. During this process, I

wrote notes and memos about my initial discoveries in my journal, then I created process

maps to assist in my understanding and self-processing of emerging themes.

        Themes are broad ideas that develop a comprehensive and succinct concept and

may encompass several codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After transcribing the audio

recordings and conducting analysis of the data, I used member checking to establish

credibility of the findings in this study (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants had the

opportunity to review my interpretations of the data and the preliminary findings to

confirm that I accurately captured the essence of their experiences and point of view. I

provided, via email, a report of preliminary findings for participants to review and offer

an opportunity to provide feedback. No participants provided feedback or information

that warranted adjusting my preliminary findings.

Results of a qualitative study are presented in narrative form (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I incorporated direct quotes from participants when it was appropriate to emphasize or justify my interpretation. I synthesized the categorized data and offered a summary of findings that incorporated the core constructs of the research question. Thus, I started the data analysis process with the initial coding process. I used the NVivo software program to organize the data. After the interviews, a follow-up appointment with the participants allowed the participants to review and approve their responses.

For this research, data were collected during the interview period of 3 months. Principals who met the criteria were invited to participate in the interviews. I compiled the responses from the school principals and used axial coding procedures to identify key phrases and words that were recorded on a chart. A second chart was developed to allow me to search patterns and sub-categories. Subsequently, the data were triangulated through analysis of the interviews, my narrative records, and the digital recordings utilized during the interviews.

Trustworthiness

I used Skype to conduct the interviews. Concepts of the procedures are used based on the complexity of the participants' experiences and methodically scrutinizing the participant's responses based on perspectives and experiences to assist in presenting valid interpretations (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I scheduled follow-up meetings for member checks within the same 3 weeks' timeframe for each participant to examine their responses for accuracy. While reviewing the interview transcripts, I focused on trustworthiness and adherence to ethical procedures.

Credibility

The credibility of this research was supported by protecting the participants'
anonymity. To institute credibility with the participants, I made sure to accurately
represent the participant's responses. Member checking was used to minimize my biases
as a novice researcher. The participants reviewed their responses for accuracy after the
interviews were transcribed. To further establish credibility, I made every effort to
accurately represent the responses of the participants. Reflexivity means attempting to
examine one's own thinking and feeling during the different phases of a research study.
During the data collection and analysis, I did not have emotions or reactions to the
participants' responses, and I was able to avoid personal biases and reactivity. Thus,
elements regarding credibility were an important component of this research.

Confirmability

Researchers pursue data that are verified (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I controlled my
personal biases regarding school violence. Reflexive notes were used to analyze
interview data, replies to interview questions, and the interviews by building a foundation
based on the findings being able to be substantiated (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).
Confirmability describes the notion that other researchers would be able to confirm the
findings of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I diligently analyzed the data to ensure that
the results of the study precisely reflected a synopsis of the participants' perspectives.

Dependability

Dependability references the strength of the data collected. Dependability requires
that the researcher has a stable argument that can answer the research questions that are

presented (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I strengthen concepts of dependability to support the research. This was done by strategically and consistently including the contributions of each participant as well as a thorough inspection of the standards of qualitative research (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative research can achieve dependability by ensuring consistency within the subject regardless of existing variables, conditions of the interview location, or timeframe (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I maintained consistency in the way I asked, recorded, and transcribed each section of the collected data.

Transferability

Data were transcribed to explicitly describe the participants' interviews. Transferability is how to apply or transfer a comprehensive context while maintaining its richness of the context from the participant's responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This permits the research to record this design and its results by taking into an understanding of the diverse influences as an alternative to duplicate the design and conclusions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I transcribed the interviews and conducted member checks to ensure accuracy of the data. The findings may be generalized or transferred to other similar public schools based on reasonable explanations of the findings. Transferability in this research was enhanced by interviewing multiple participants. The findings may be transferable to other high schools.

Ethical Procedures

Approval from the IRB (#07-17-20-0673284) confirmed that I complied with the proper ethical standards for recruitment, interviewing, and the data collection process. I will keep all recorded and transcribed data in a filing cabinet for a period of 5 years. I am

the only one who has a key to the filing cabinet. I did not include in the findings details that could reveal any of the participants' information.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I restated the primary purpose of this study. I described the research design and rationale. I described the role of the researcher and the criteria for the participants, as well as how they will be contacted and recruited. I included the data analysis plan, procedures for coding, connections to the research questions, and the data management system. Also, I described credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reliability. In Chapter 4, I will present the findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The problem was that high school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. Thus, the purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. The research question asked how high school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. In Chapter 4, I describe the setting, data collection, and data analysis. I also explain the results in relation to the research question. Finally, I detail the strategies I used to establish trustworthiness.

Setting

The setting for the research was a public school district in which about 75% of high school students graduate from school and the student-to-teacher ratio was 21:1. There had been an increase in school violence and school principals reported to senior district administrators that they needed support with school violence and that they were not trained to know how to reduce school violence.

Participants

The participants were high school principals who were intentionally selected to participate in this research. I identified participants who met the selection criteria that they were school principals for at least 2 years and state certified. Participation in this study was voluntary. Purposeful sampling was appropriate because the participants were intentionally selected to participate in the interviews. The sample size for a qualitative

study varies from study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The goal for this research was to identify 10 participants.

Data Collection

Before seeking IRB approval from Walden University and the research site, I completed the training *Protecting Human Research Participants* offered by the National Institutes of Health. Procedures to collect data began after final IRB approval from Walden University (#07-17-20-0673284). I invited all 25 high school principals who met the selection criteria via email. In the email, I included information about the research and a copy of the consent form requesting a reply with the words 'I consent.' Ten principals replied to my email and consented to participate in the study were invited to be interviewed. Data were collected by conducting the interviews. The school's name and school principals' names are not included in the findings to prevent the identification of the research site. I explained to each participant that my role was that of a researcher and that I listened and served as the primary instrument for gathering data during each interview. I established a good rapport with each participant and assured each participant that the information they provided to me with will be kept confidential. I interviewed each participant professionally. I developed an interview protocol (Appendix A) and used it as a guide to extrapolate detailed information from the participants. The interview protocol was developed to include questions relating to the research question.

Location, Frequency, and Duration of Semistructured Interviews

Interviews were conducted upon IRB approval. Prior to beginning the interview, I reviewed the purpose of the research. I informed each participant that their participation

in the interviews was voluntary. A letter was assigned to each participant to protect their

identities before, during, and after data collection. For example, I used the letter P

followed by a number to refer to each school principal participant. P1 referred to the first

school principal, P2 referred to the second school principal, and so forth. The identity of

the participants was not used in the findings nor was revealed at any time to the school

district or school administrators at the research site. Each semistructured interview was

conducted face-to-face at a time requested by the participant.

Methods to Record Data

Each interaction was audio recorded. After each interview, I downloaded the

audio file into a password protected folder on my personal computer. Each file was

labeled using the interviewee's pseudonym. I manually transcribed the file by listening to

each recording and typing each word using a word processing program on my computer.

The transcripts were saved in the same password-protected folder as the audio recordings.

I transcribed all audio recordings in the summer 2020. There were no unusual

circumstances collecting the data. I engaged in reflexive bracketing and occasionally

wrote field notes during the interviews for various reasons such as identifying personal

feelings or reactions based on responses.

I invited all high school principals who met the selection criteria via email. In the

email, I included information about the research and a copy of the consent form

requesting a reply with the words 'I consent.' Those who replied to my email that the

consent to participate in the study, I invited to the interviews. Once an adequate number

of participants expressed interest in contributing to the study, data collection commenced.

Data were collected by conducting the interviews. The school's name and school

principals' names are not included in the findings to prevent the identification of the

research site. I explained to each participant that my role was that of a researcher and that

I listened and served as the primary instrument for gathering data during each interview. I

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circumstances collecting the data. I engaged in reflexive bracketing and occasionally

wrote field notes during the interviews for various reasons such as identifying personal

feelings or reactions based on responses.

Data Analysis

I reviewed the collected interview data many times. I used pattern coding to

identify similarly coded data and organized the entire data into concise categories that

were used to identify emergent themes that included attributes of the conceptual

framework. I used a color-coding system on the interview transcripts and recorded codes

onto a matrix spreadsheet using a data management program on my computer. I then used

color-coding within the spreadsheet to classify codes. During this process, I wrote notes

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assist in my understanding and self-processing of emerging themes.

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may encompass several codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After transcribing the audio

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establish credibility of the findings in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants

had the opportunity to review my interpretations of the data and the preliminary findings

to confirm that I accurately captured the essence of their experiences and point of view. I

provided, via email, a report of preliminary findings for participants to review and offer

an opportunity to provide feedback. No participants provided feedback or information that warranted adjusting my preliminary findings.

Results of a qualitative study are presented in narrative form (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I incorporated direct quotes from participants when it was appropriate to emphasize or justify my interpretation. I synthesized the categorized data and offered a summary of findings that incorporated the core constructs of the research question. Thus, I started the data analysis process with the initial coding process. I used the NVivo software program to organize the data. After the interviews, a follow-up appointment with the participants allowed the participants to review and approve their responses.

For this research, data were collected during the interview period of 3 months. Principals who met the criteria were invited to participate in the interviews. I compiled the responses from the school principals and used axial coding procedures to identify key phrases and words that were recorded on a chart. A second chart was developed to allow me to search patterns and sub-categories. Subsequently, the data were triangulated through analysis of the interviews, my narrative records, and the digital recordings utilized during the interviews.

Discrepant Cases

I addressed discrepant cases during the data analysis stage. Discrepant cases refer to data uncovered that may not align or contradicts with the assumptions that support the conceptual lens that frames a research study (Yin, 2016). During the interviews, I did not note responses that could be considered discrepant cases. I evaluated any plausible

contradictions during all stages of data analysis. I examined all the data and found no discrepant cases that conflicted with the emerging themes.

Results

The research question that guided this study was:

RQ: How are high school principals implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence?

The RQ was answered by all six interview questions. The answer resulted in three themes. The high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through (a) communication with teachers and students, (b) professional development on school violence, and (c) the use of funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence. Those themes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes

Theme	The high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through:
1	Communication with teachers and students.
2	Professional development.
3	Funding for professional resources.

Theme 1: Communication with Teachers and Students

The high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with both students and teachers. The participants revealed that communication is an essential component of instructional leadership, which

is used to interact with stakeholders such as teachers and students. Communication is a skill that principals use to ensure that teachers and students are provided with support to reduce school violence. Specifically, the participants stated that an instructional leader is an instructional resource person who provides support to teachers and students to reduce school violence. Thus, all of the participants stated that they implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication.

Communication with teachers. The participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers during staff meetings, classroom observations, and school assemblies. All participants mentioned that they implement one or more of these communication activities with teachers.

P1 said, "An aspiring leader communicates the school goal clearly to teachers regarding school violence during staff meetings, classroom observations, and school assemblies." For example, the principals clearly communicate with teachers what to do when students' behaviors are an issue at school (P1). "Communication with teachers" is a successful strategy for principals to use to reduce school violence (P1). P1 uses communication as a strategy to communicate with teachers the school's goals regarding school violence during staff meetings, classroom observations, and school assemblies.

An instructional leader should be an excellent communicator. Communication is used to implement the school's mission and vision. A school principal is "is an excellent communicator who communicates with teachers to reduce school violence during staff meetings and school assemblies when most teachers are together" (P2). According to P2,

without communication with teachers, how could teachers implement the school vision, which is to reduce school violence? The school mission is for all students to excel academically by "reducing school violence." (P2). Thus, as P2 stated, "communication with teachers" is as an effective strategy to support teachers to reduce school violence by explaining to them what to do when students' behaviors are putting others at risk.

According to P3, principals should communicate clearly with teachers what to do to reduce school violence at school. One example that P3 shared was that he informs teachers of "the importance of clear communication when students do not behave at school." P3 encourages teachers to communicate with him when a student's behavior is an issue in the classroom. P3 communicates with teachers during staff meetings and school assemblies when most teachers are present. Thus, P3 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers.

P4 provided similar responses to P1-P3 that principals should apply communication with teachers to real time situations in the school to reduce school violence. P4 communicates with teachers to explain the school district policies and procedures regarding school violence. Because school violence is a school district issue, principals communicate with teachers, district documents regarding school violence (P4). P4 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers.

P5 said, "I use communication as a strategy to support teachers with school violence." Teachers need the support of the school principal. P5 communicates with teachers all school policies regarding school violence. Communication with teachers is an

excellent strategy to support teachers in order for school violence to be reduced. Like P1-P4, P5 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers.

According to P6, "I have learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of school violence, but one must also be directly involved in school violence reduction and communication with teachers and students is the strategy." P6 emphasized that he uses communication with teachers as an effective strategy to support teachers at the school. P6 provided examples such as he explains the district's policy regarding school violence to teachers not only during the monthly staff meetings but also when teachers need his support regarding students' behaviors in the classroom. P6 strives to reduce school violence through communication with all teachers.

P7 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers during staff meetings and school assemblies because then most teachers are present. P7 explained that the strategy he uses to reduce school violence is to explain in detail the district-wide policy on how to reduce school violence by providing teachers with "specific what-to-do list." The list contains step-by-step instructions on what to do when students' behavior in the classroom is an issue. The instructions are communicated clearly to all teachers (P7).

P8 stated that a district policy on how to reduce school violence contains "strategies for principals to use during a school violence." Those strategies are communicated to teachers clearly during staff meetings and school assemblies when most teachers are present because the main goal is to reduce school violence as much as

possible by supporting teachers. P8 concluded that without communication with teachers the district policy on school violence would be difficult to implement.

P9 stated, "Communication with teachers" is an effective strategy to use at school to reduce school violence because the teachers know when students display negative behaviors in the classroom. P10 uses communication with teachers during staff meetings as a strategy to reduce school violence. For example, P10 knows from the local police department a few effective strategies regarding violence prevention and communicates those strategies to all teachers. P10 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers during staff meetings by being a facilitator to support teachers. P10 invited police officers to the school to demonstrate how violent situations at a school could be avoided. During staff meetings, P10 supports teachers by acting as a facilitator to answer their questions regarding school violence. Thus, communication with teachers is the key to reduce school violence (P10). In conclusion, the high school principals who were interviewed during this study implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers.

Communication with students. All of the participants reported that as school leaders they implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with students during school assemblies when most students are present and during classroom observations. According to P1, communication with students regarding school violence is an important strategy to use to reduce school violence. P1 communicates with students during school assemblies where he explains in

detail the responsibilities of students to reduce school violence. P1 provides examples to students and expects them to communicate with the administration and the teachers. P1 also explained that he implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence via good communication with students.

P2 also uses communication with the students during school assemblies and classroom observations as a strategy to reduce school violence. During school assemblies, P2 communicates with students the importance of communicating with teachers and administrators to reduce school violence. P2 stated that by inviting police officers to school assemblies to talk about school violence to all students has been useful to students because students learn about the importance of communicating with adults while at school. P2 used this strategy of inviting police officers during school assemblies to increase communication with students. According to P2, both teachers and students benefit from this practical communication with students when all teachers and students attend the school assemblies to hear about how communication among administrators, teachers, and students can be used to reduce school violence. Communication with students is a practical strategy to use to reduce school violence because students can ask the police officers and the principal questions about violence in general (P2). "The facilitators (i.e., police officers) keep students really engaged during the school assemblies and answer challenging questions on how to reduce school violence" (P2). Thus, P2 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with students during school assemblies and classroom observations.

Communication with students is a strategy for school principals to use to reduce school violence by encouraging students to communicate with school administrators and teachers to develop the skills on deescalating violence in the school. P3 said that working with students during classroom observations on school violence issues was seen very positive by the students. Such a communication between the principal and the students was a successful strategy to reduce school violence. P3 also said that involving students in dialogue during school assemblies when most students are present to reduce school violence is an effective strategy to use. P3 reported that students have expectations such as a safe learning environment and therefore principals need to communicate with students not only during school assemblies but also during classroom observations to reduce school violence.

P4 reported that communication with students is an important strategy to use to reduce violence at the school. Communication with students is needed to know how to locate troubled students in order to find possible ways to reduce school violence (P4). For example, P4 said that communicating with students regarding school violence has been proven as an effective strategy to use to reduce school violence. P4 also said that without communication with students, school violence incidents would have been worse at the school. Similar to P1-P3, P4 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence via communication with students.

P5 reported, "I communicate with students at school during school assemblies when most students are present regarding violence." P5 also stated, "Communication with all of our students regarding school violence incidents is the most effective strategy

to use to reduce school violence." According to P5, communication has helped students improve their behaviors at school.

P6 reported that school violence is "a real challenge at this school" and a strategy to use regarding school violence is communication with all students. P6 has been working with other school principals in the school district to reduce school violence by emphasizing that communication with students is a good strategy to help students understand the severity of violence. P6 also emphasized that communication with students during school assemblies and classroom observations is "the most effective strategy during school assemblies because through this kind of communication all students who are attending the assembly benefit from what is presented regarding the school issue, which is school violence." Communication with students has been effective because students know that we need to reduce school violence (P6).

P7 explained that communication between administration and students has been effective. By communicating with students during school assemblies and classroom observations, P7 explained that students understand more the issue of school violence. P7 reported, "I communicate with students to change the school for everyone to feel safe. I did it by communicating with students via school assemblies."

P8 said that he is aware of the different behaviors of students and knows how to help them manage their behaviors at school. P8 communicate with all students not only during school assemblies but also during classroom observations regarding school violence. P8 added that he communicates with students by participating in dialogue with them. Communication with students to reduce school violence is truly an effective

strategy to implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. P9 acknowledged, "Leadership affects the success or failure of a school." P9 also said that school violence can be reduced by communicating with students during school assemblies and in the office to deal with violence. P10 also communicates with students in the office or in the classroom and such communication is considered a proactive approach as a strategy to reduce school violence.

In conclusion, the 10 school principals who participated in the interviews implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with both teachers and students not only during school assemblies but also during classroom observations. All participants strive to reduce school violence through communication. The participants shared strategies to improve students' behaviors. For example, P1 said, "I am communicating with teachers and students to better understand school violence." P2 stated, "I use communication with students and teachers as a strategy to reduce school violence. I rely on communication to reduce school violence." P3 reported, "I ask questions during school assemblies as a communication strategy to reduce school violence." P4 communicates with students as a proactive strategy for students to understand the negative effects of school violence on the school. Thus, these school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with both teachers and students.

Theme 2: Professional Development

The participants stated that attending professional development (PD) on school violence is a strategy to reduce school violence. All participants implement instructional

leadership practices to reduce school violence by attending and using PD in their practices. P1 said, "PD helps me to know how to reduce school violence." P2 stated, "Trainings with hands-on activities from the police department has been very beneficial." P3 and P4 expressed the need to continue to attend PD on how to reduce school violence. P5 acknowledged the need to know what skills and knowledge are needed to reduce school violence. P6 reported that colleagues who are school principals benefited from workshops on school violence because the workshops helped them to increase their self-confidence in school violence reduction. P7 provided a similar response and said PD is used to promote a positive school culture and to reduce school violence." P8 emphasized that principals address the students' needs by reducing school violence via professional development. P9 stated, PD on how to reduce school violence is what he uses the most. P10 said that to know what to do to reduce school violence PD sessions on what strategies are used to deal with school violence are effective.

P1 said that PD on school violence reduction for all K-12 school principals has been beneficial to administrators. P2 provided a similar response and stated that school violence is an issue and a solution to that issue is training. P4 stated that PD is effective training district-wide for all principals. P5 benefitted by attending PD on how to develop more instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence P6 said, "I believe that my participation in PD, as an instructional leader, has helped me to gain confidence via training with hands on activities to know how to reduce school violence." P7 believes in teamwork and collaboration with other principals during PD could help address school violence in the school district. P8 said that PD has been helpful to continue to learn better

strategies to use to reduce school violence. P9 stated that PD helped him to reduce school violence.

P1 said, "I learn about school violence reduction via professional development sessions." P2 reported, "I am not prepared to know how to reduce school violence and believe that professional development has been very helpful to me." Like P1 and P2, P3 responded, "I am unprepared regarding school violence." P3 also said that he attends PD on how to reduce school violence. P4 stated, "The district should offer more training on how to reduce school violence." P1 – P4 implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through PD. P5 said that PD on school violence has helped principals to reduce school violence." P6 participated in PD sessions at another school district and suggested "a school violence reduction PD should be used not only by administrators but also by teachers." P7 explained that a PD program to "reduce school violence has helped principals to gain knowledge of things they did not know about school violence." P8 emphasized the need for more PD on school violence training to become a well informed and trained instructional leader who would know and understand how to reduce school violence. PD encourages school leaders to focus on how to reduce school violence. According to P10, PD is helpful and can lead to students having a quest for academic success by reducing school violence. Thus, the participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through PD on strategies to apply for students not to be involved in violence at the school.

All participates reported that school violence reduction PD has helped them as instructional leaders. P1 explained that PD at the district level regarding school violence

reduction for principals has been effective. P2 said, "A school violence training in our school district has made a tremendous difference in the schools because PD sessions have helped us to reduce school violence and to focus on academic success. P3 stated that the district must continue to provide PD for principals to reduce school violence and to increase students' learning. P7 said, "The greater the training the less the school violence. P8 reported that the principals learn from PD sessions how to reduce school violence. P9 said that principals focus on PD to learn strategies to reduce violence at the school. P10 as an instructional leader believes that PD is a good leadership practice to reduce school violence. In conclusion, the participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through PD.

　　All participants spoke about their instructional leadership practices and stated that district-wide PD is a good strategy to use to reduce school violence. For instance, P1 said, "School violence is visible in every school. We are aspiring leaders. We engage in classroom observations and are accessible to faculty and staff but we need to continue to know what practices to use to reduce school violence." P2 stated, "The principals are knowledgeable with graduate degrees but without training we cannot reduce school violence." P3 reported, "Training is helpful to reduce school violence." P4 stated, "Implementing a school violence PD district-wide should include school district leaders to strengthen the administrative teams to reduce school violence." It is important for the instructional leader to continue to receive training and to implement the skills learned in the school setting where they preside. School leaders need PD in order to be introduced to strategies to reduce school violence. P7 said that the school district should continue to

offer PD on how to reduce school violence. Effective strategies to reduce school violence are learned via PD. Implementing a school violence reduction leadership PD at the district could help all school principals. P10 said that effective implementation of instructional leadership practices is important, knowing when and how to effectively "reduce school violence through professional development."

In conclusion, all participants stated that training on how to reduce school violence is essential. Well trained principals on how to reduce school violence could create safer schools. The high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through PD.

Theme 3: Funding for Professional Development Resources

The participants need funding for PD resources in order to improve their skills so they can better implement strategies to reduce school violence. All of the participants said that funding for PD resources has been used to better implement strategies to reduce school violence. The participants reported that as instructional leaders they need PD resources to know how to handle school violence. P1 said, funding for PD resources on school violence is an effective strategy to help principals improve their skills so they can better implement strategies to reduce school violence at school. P2 said that through PD resources that are print materials containing step-by-step strategies on how to reduce school violence are helpful. P3 reported PD resources for school leaders to use to improve their skills to better implement strategies to reduce school violence have been helpful and new ones are needed. The school district should provide more funding for PD resources such as manuals containing strategies for school principals to use to reduce

school violence. P4 and P5 stated that funding for PD resources is limited for school principals; however, funding for PD resources should continue to be available to principals.

School district administrators believe that funding for PD resources should continue to be provided to school principals. P6 stated, "I need new printed information on how to reduce school violence in these challenging times but my school budget for administrative professional development resources is very limited due to cuts in education." P7 said, "As a current principal, funding for professional development resources is limited; however, such resources are very helpful and are needed." P8 reported that professional resources for principals are "must have." P9 stated, "Professional resources with more hands-on activities have been very helpful and are still needed for us to implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. Funding for professional resources should continue. P10 emphasized that the school district receives funding especially for training of teachers and support staff; however, "principals used to receive funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence and funding should continue to be unavailable.

The participants had access to professional resources on how to improve their skills so they can better implement strategies to reduce school violence . Some participants such as P2, P5, P6, P8, and P10 expressed the need for funding for professional resources to continue for them to improve their skills to reduce school violence. P1 stated that the school violence has been controlled with funding for professional resources. Specifically, mainly through funding for professional resources,

"we manage to reduce school violence; however, funding is limited said P2. P3 had access to professional resources; however, funding for district-wide professional resources needs to be available According to P4, "School violence is increasing. Professional resources should continue to be funded to reduce school violence." According to P5, "My goal has been for teachers to take ownership of teaching and learning and for students to become independent learners using critical thinking skills and problem solvers through discussion; however, school violence is an obstacle." P5 benefitted from professional resources on school violence. P5 also stated, "I use PD resources to decrease school violence incidents." P6 reported, "Providing professional resources at the district, has helped all of us to reduce school violence." P7 said, "Funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence has helped school principals to develop the skills necessary to reduce school violence." P8 provided examples such as "district leaders used to provide principals with funding for professional resources regarding school violence." Like P1-P7, P8 stated that professional resources on how to reduce school violence has been beneficial because he has access to specific strategies on how to deal with violence. P9 said, "Funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence should not be limited." P10 emphasized that the school climate "would be better when we will as a school district reduce school violence" with funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence. In conclusion, improve their skills so they can better implement strategies to reduce school violence through funding for professional resources.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Data were collected through interviews with high school principals who were purposefully selected. I developed and used an interview protocol in order to ask the same interview questions to all participants. During the interviews, I asked each participant for permission to record each interview. Each participant gave me permission to record the interview. I took notes during each interview noting the participants' perceptions of school violence. After I conducted all interviews, I transcribed the interviews. I focused on trustworthiness during the reviewing of the interview transcripts

Credibility

I facilitated credibility through member-checking for accuracy of the data. I conducted member checks with each participant in order for each participant to examine their responses for accuracy. I kept a reflexivity journal during the interviews to write down emotions and reactions to minimize my biases by including details regarding data collection and analysis, recruitment, and privacy protection procedures. Data were triangulated by comparing and combining the participants' responses. I reviewed the interview transcripts, field notes, and observations made during the interviews to triangulate the interview data from all participants to create codes organized by the interview questions. Thus, I was able to minimize personal biases and reactivity.

Transferability

I interviewed 10 school principals and conducted member checks to ensure the accuracy of the interview data. I collected enough interview data to reach data saturation to strengthen the transferability of the findings. This study has transferability because I

provided the readers with sufficient evidence that the findings could be applied to other

contexts, situations, times, and populations. The findings can be transferred to other

similar public school districts based on reasonable explanations of the findings. Other

researchers who may replicate this research may find comparable results.

Dependability

I interviewed 10 school principals in different locations using an interview

protocol. I maintained consistency in the way I asked the interview questions, recorded

the interviews, and transcribed each interview. I included in the findings the contributions

of each school principal and followed the standards of qualitative research to achieve

dependability. I conducted member checks to ensure the accuracy of the interview data. I

collected enough interview data to reach data saturation.

Confirmability

I believe that the findings can be confirmed by other researchers because I

categorized phrases based on the participants' responses and identified patterns and

similarities in the participants' responses. I triangulated the data by comparing and

combining the participants' responses. I minimized personal biases and reactivity with

professionalism.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity encourages a researcher to self-reflect about their motives before

conducting a study. I am an educator and have earned various academic degrees, and

certifications in education. During the data collection and analysis, I was constantly

reflecting on the education experience to ensure personal biases did not influence the findings.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the data collection and analysis procedures. I discussed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Data were collected from 10 principals during face-to-face semistructured interviews. Data were coded for emergent themes. I also presented the themes. Three themes emerged. The high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers and students, professional development on school violence, and the use of funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence. In Chapter 5, I discuss the conclusions and make recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

A purposive sampling was used to select 10 high school principals for data collection. The selection criteria were high school principals who were principals for at least 2 years at the research site and were state-certified. Ten principals participated in semistructured, face-to-face, audio-taped interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes (Table 1). High school principals can use the findings to better implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence.

Research Question

The research question that guided this research was:

How are high school principals implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence?

Interpretation of the Findings

I present excerpts from the interview transcripts. Each theme includes excerpts from the participants. The following themes emerged: communication with teachers and students, professional development, and funding for professional resources.

Theme 1: Communication with Teachers and Students

The high school principals implemented instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with both teachers and students. The participants revealed that communication is an essential component of instructional leadership, which is used to interact with stakeholders such as teachers and students. The participants also revealed that communication is a skill that principals use to ensure that teachers and students are provided with support to reduce school violence. Specifically,

the participants stated that an instructional leader is an instructional resource who provides support to teachers and students to reduce school violence. Thus, all of the participants stated that they implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers via staff meeting and classroom observations and with students via school assemblies and classroom visits.

Communication with teachers. The participants implemented instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication during staff meeting and classroom observations. P1 said that an aspiring leader communicates the school goals clearly to teachers regarding school violence not only during staff meetings but also during classroom observations. For example, the principals clearly communicated with teachers what to do when students' behaviors are an issue at school Communication with teachers is a successful strategy for principals to use to reduce school violence. P1 uses communication as a strategy to communicate with teachers regarding the school's goals to reduce school violence.

Communication is used to implement the school's mission and vision. P2 stated that a school principal is an excellent communicator who communicates with teachers often to reduce school violence. According to P2, without communication teachers would have difficulties in implementing the school vision, which is to reduce school violence. According to P2, the school mission is for all students to excel academically by reducing school violence. Thus, as P2 stated, communication with teachers is as an effective strategy to support teachers to reduce school violence.

According to P3, principals should communicate clearly with teachers what to do to reduce school violence at school and such communication occurs during staff meetings and classroom observations. One example that P3 shared was that he informs all teachers during the bimonthly or biweekly staff meetings of the importance of clear communication when students do not behave at school. P3 encourages teachers to communicate with him when a student's behavior is an issue in the classroom. Thus, P3 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers.

P4 provided similar responses to P1, P2, and P3 that principals should apply communication with teachers to real time situations in the school to reduce school violence. P4 communicated with teachers during staff meeting when most teachers are present or during classroom visits/observations to explain the school district policies and procedures regarding school violence. Because school violence is a school district issue, P4 stated that they communicate with teachers the school district's policies regarding school violence. P4 implemented instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers.

P5 said that he uses communication as a strategy to support teachers with school violence. Teachers need the support of the school principal during staff meeting or classroom visits/observations. P5 said that he communicates with teachers all school policies regarding school violence individually during classroom visits/observations or during staff meeting when most teachers are present. According to P5, communication with teachers is an excellent strategy to support teachers in order for school violence to

be reduced. Like P1, P2, P3 and P4, P5 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers during staff meeting or classroom visits.

P6 learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of school violence, but one must also be directly involved in school violence reduction and communication with teachers is a strategy. P6 emphasized that he uses communication with teachers as an effective strategy to support teachers at the school during staff meeting when most teachers are present or during classroom visits/observations or individually. P6 provided examples such as he explains the district's policy regarding school violence to teachers not only during the staff meetings but also when teachers need his support regarding students' behaviors in the classroom. P6 said that he strives to reduce school violence through communication with all teachers.

P7 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers. P7 explained that the strategy he uses to reduce school violence is to explain in detail the district-wide policy on how to reduce school violence by providing teachers with specific of what-to-do lists during staff meeting or classroom visits/observations or individually. The list contains step-by-step instructions on what to do when students' behavior in the classroom is an issue. P7 noted that he communicates the instructions clearly to all teachers during staff meeting when most teachers are present.

P8 stated that a district policy on how to reduce school violence contains strategies for principals to use during a school violence. Those strategies are communicated to teachers clearly during staff meeting because the main goal is to reduce school violence as much as possible by supporting teachers. P8 concluded that, without communication with teachers during staff meetings or classroom visits/observations or individually, the district policy on school violence would be difficult to implement.

P9 stated, "Communication with teachers" is an effective strategy to use at school to reduce school violence because the teachers know when students display negative behaviors in the classroom. P10 used communication with teachers during staff meeting or classroom visits or individually as a strategy to reduce school violence. For example, P10 had learned from the local police department a few effective strategies regarding violence prevention and communicated those strategies to all teachers. P10 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers by being a facilitator to support teachers during staff meeting or classroom visits or individually. P10 invited police officers to the school to demonstrate how violent situations at a school could be avoided. During staff meetings, P10 supports teachers by acting as a facilitator to answer their questions regarding school violence. Thus, communication with teachers is the key to reduce school violence. In conclusion, the participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with teachers during staff meeting when most teachers are present or during classroom visits/observations or individually.

Communication with students. All of the participants reported that as school leaders they implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with students during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually. According to P1, communication with students regarding school violence is an important strategy to use to reduce school violence. P1 communicates with students during school assemblies where he explains in detail the responsibilities of students to reduce school violence. P1 provides examples to students and expects them to communicate with the administration and the teachers. P1 also explained that he implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence via good communication with students.

P2 uses communication with students as a strategy to reduce school violence. During school assemblies, P2 communicates with students the importance of communicating with teachers and administrators to reduce school violence. P2 stated that by inviting police officers to school assemblies to talk about school violence to all students has been useful to students because students learn about the importance of communicating with adults while at school. P2 used this strategy of inviting police officers during school assemblies to increase communication with students. According to P2, students benefit from this practical communication with students during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually when and the majority of the students attend the school assemblies to hear about how communication among administrators, teachers, and students can be used to reduce school violence. Communication with students is a practical strategy to use to reduce school violence

because students can ask the police officers and the principal questions about violence in general. The facilitators (i.e., police officers) keep students really engaged during the school assemblies and answer challenging questions on how to reduce school violence. Thus, P2 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with students during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually.

Communication with students is a strategy for school principals to use to reduce school violence by encouraging students to communicate with school administrators and teachers to develop the skills on deescalating violence in the school. P3 said that working with students on school violence issues was seen very positive by the students. Such a communication between the principal and the students was a successful strategy to reduce school violence. P3 also said that involving students in dialogue to reduce school violence is an effective strategy to use. P3 reported that students have expectations such as a safe learning environment and therefore principals need to communicate with students to reduce school violence.

P4 reported that communication with students is an important strategy to use to reduce violence at the school. Communication with students is needed to know how to locate troubled students in order to find possible ways to reduce school violence. For example, P4 said that communicating with students regarding school violence has been proven as an effective strategy to use to reduce school violence. P4 also said that without communication with students, school violence incidents would have been worse at the

school. Similar to P1-P3, P4 implements instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence via communication with students.

P5 reported that he communicates with students at school regarding violence. P5 also stated, "Communication with all of our students regarding school violence incidents is the most effective strategy to use to reduce school violence." According to P5, communication has helped students improve their behaviors at school. P6 reported that school violence is a real challenge at this school and a strategy to use regarding school violence is communication with all students. P6 has been working with other school principals in the school district to reduce school violence by emphasizing that communication with students is a good strategy to help students understand the severity of violence. P6 also emphasized that communication with students is the most effective strategy during school assemblies because through this kind of communication all students who are attending the assembly benefit from what is presented regarding the school issue, which is school violence. Communication with students has been effective because students know that is needed to reduce school violence. P7 reported that he communicates with students to change the school for everyone to feel safe. P7 concluded that by communicating with students via school assemblies during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually, school violence can be reduced.

P8 said that he is aware of the different behaviors of students and knows how to help them manage their behaviors at school. P8 communicates with all students regarding school violence during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually. P8 added, "My participation in dialogue with behavioral students helped

me build on how to be supportive to my students." Communication with students to reduce school violence is truly an effective strategy to apply instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. P9 acknowledged that leadership affects the success or failure of a school. School violence can be reduced by communication with students to deal with violence. P10 also communicates with students and such communication is considered a proactive approach as a strategy to reduce school violence.

All of the participants reported that they apply instructional leadership skills to work with students to reduce school violence through communication with students. For example, P1 said that communication with students is needed when students need guidance in dealing with other difficult students at school. P2 implied that communication with students is a leadership skill needed in dealing with students with negative behaviors. P3 as a compassionate school leader uses communication with students to make decisions to reduce school violence. P3 said that by allowing every student to have a voice at the table is critical to reduce school violence. P4 reported that communication with students is a pivotal leadership strategy to reduce school violence. P5 uses constant communication with students as a strategy to reduce school violence. P6 communicates with students from each grade level who are having behavioral issues. P7 communicates with students in order to improve the climate of the school and to support students with behavioral issues. P8 strives to reduce school violence by communicating with students and by continually monitoring students' behaviors. P9 discusses school violence reduction during school assemblies. P10 is communicating with students regarding the school's goal to reduce school violence.

All of the participants stated that communication is a strategy that principals can use to reduce school violence. Aspiring leaders communicate the school goals clearly to all stakeholders regarding school violence. The participants revealed that instructional leadership is a skill. Specifically, the participants stated that an instructional leader is an instructional resource who provides support to teachers and students.

All of the participants stated that communication is a strategy to reduce school violence. P1 said, "An aspiring leader communicates the school goal clearly to teachers regarding school violence." According to P6, "I have learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of school violence and instruction, but one must also be directly involved in school violence reduction and communication is the strategy." P1 said that working with students on school violence issues was seen very positive by the students. Such a communication between the principal and the students was a successful strategy to reduce school violence. P2 said that communicating with students to reduce school violence is an effective strategy to use. P3 reported that students have expectations such as a safe learning environment and principals need to communicate with students to reduce school violence. P4 reported that strategies are needed to know how to locate the signs of troubled students and possible ways to reduce school violence is by communicating with students. For example, P4 said that communicating with students regarding school violence during school assemblies has been proven an effective strategy to reduce school violence. P5 reported that he communicates with students during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually and such communication has helped students improve

their behaviors at school. P6 reported that school violence is a real challenge and a strategy to implement regarding school violence is communication with teachers and students. P7 reported, "I communicate students to change our school for everyone to feel safe. P9 acknowledged, "Leadership affects the success or failure of a school. School violence can be reduced by communicating with teachers and students in the process of dealing with violence."

All of the participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication and students during school assemblies or during classroom visits/observations or individually. For example, P1 said that leadership skills are needed when a student needs guidance in dealing with another difficult student at school. P2 implied that communication is needed in dealing with students with negative behaviors. P5 uses constant communication with teachers and students to reduce school violence.

The 10 school principals who participated in the interviews implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with both teachers and students. All participants strive to reduce school violence through communication. The participants shared strategies to improve students' behaviors. For example, P1 said, "I am communicating with teachers and students to better understand school violence." P2 stated, "I use communication with students and teachers as a strategy to reduce school violence. I rely on communication to reduce school violence." P3 reported, "I ask questions during school assemblies as a communication strategy to reduce school violence." P4 communicates with students as a proactive strategy for

students to understand the negative effects of school violence on the school. Thus, these school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through communication with both teachers and students.

An instructional leader prioritizes administrative tasks. Instructional leadership reflects those actions a principal takes to promote growth in student learning (Hallinger, 2020). Principals should make instructional leadership the top priority of the school and should attempt to bring the school vision to realization (Hallinger). School principals needs to have good communication skills. Observational skills are important for the principals to provide stakeholders with feedback to consider and reflect upon (Davidson, 2020). The school principal is an instructional leader in the school. Communication, research, and evaluation skills are needed for the school principals to create safe schools. In order to create safe schools, the principal needs to develop communities to help all students to improve their behaviors (Davidson, 2020). Huusela (2020) stated developing communities has reached a critical juncture, one well known to those who have witnessed the fate of other well-intentioned school reform efforts such as the reduction of school violence.

According to Rutherford 2020), collaborating with stakeholders is necessary for school improvement. Principals' communication skills during discussions with school stakeholders are needed in order to give every member an opportunity to resolve issues including to reduce school violence (Klain,2020). Principals should clarify expectations regarding roles, responsibilities, and relationships among stakeholders (Allen, 2020). Through communication, stakeholders an create goals linked with safe schools and

district goals (Allen, 2020). According to Hallinger (2020), for meaningful collaboration to occur, school leaders should not only focus on state standards or district curriculum guides to guarantee that all students have access to a common curriculum but also to create a safe learning environment. School leaders should discuss state and district curriculum expectations with all stakeholders (Hallinger, 2020).

Theme 2: Professional Development

The participants stated that professional development (PD) on school violence is a strategy to reduce school violence. All participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through PD. P1 said that he uses PD to know how to reduce school violence. P2 stated that PD with hands-on activities from the police department has been beneficial. P3 and P4 expressed the need to continue to have PD on how to reduce school violence because PD has helped them to reduce school violence. P5 acknowledged that with PD he knows what skills and knowledge are needed to reduce school violence. P6 reported that colleagues who are school principals benefited from workshops on school violence because the workshops helped them to increase their self-confidence in violence reduction. P7 provided a similar response and said that PD has been used to reduce school violence. P8 emphasized the need to address the students' needs by reducing school violence via PD. P9 stated that PD on how to reduce school violence has helped him the most to apply knowledge for students' behaviors to improve. P10 said that he learned via PD strategies to use to reduce school violence and as a result, he will continue to attend PD sessions on what new strategies are used to deal with school violence.

P1 suggested that the school district should continue to implement PD on school violence reduction for all K-12 school principals. P2 provided a similar response and stated that school violence is an issue and a solution to that issue is PD. The principals need to know how to reduce school violence as school leaders and reported that via PD will be in a better position to reduce violent incidents at school. P4 stated that PD on school violence has been effective training for principals. P5 expressed the need to continue to attend PD on how to develop essential skills needed to reduce school violence. P6 said that his participation in PD at the school district has been very helpful to instructional leaders because via PD principals have gained confidence with hands on activities to reduce school violence. P7 uses teamwork and collaboration with other principals to address school violence in the school district. P8 has attended numerous PD sessions and requested more PD on what new strategies to use to reduce school violence. P9 stated that PD training is essential. P10 reported that he did not know what to do to reduce school violence and by attending workshops He learned about strategies to use for students to behave at school.

P1 said that he has learned about school violence reduction via PD sessions. P2 reported that although he was not prepared to know how to reduce school violence, he befitted from PD. Like P1 and P2, P3 responded that he was unprepared regarding school violence. P4 stated that the district should continue to offer training on how to reduce school violence. P5 said that school violence PD has helped principals to better know how to reduce school violence. P6 participated in PD at another school district and reported that a school violence reduction PD has been beneficial not only to

administrators but also to teachers. P7 explained that a PD program to reduce school

violence has helped principals to gain knowledge of things they did not know about

school violence. P8 emphasized the benefit of school violence training to become a well

informed and trained instructional leader who would know and understand how to reduce

school violence. PD has been used to encourage school leaders to focus on how to reduce

school violence. According to P10, PD has been very helpful and for example a school

violence reduction PD in the schools leads to students having a quest for academic

success by reducing school violence. Thus, the participants implement instructional

leadership practices to reduce school violence through professional development on

strategies to implement for students not to be involved in violence at the schools.

All participates reported that school violence reduction PD has helped them as

instructional leaders. P1 explained that PD at the district level regarding school violence

reduction for principals has been effective because having the program in place has made

a difference in their leadership practices. P2 said that a school violence training in the

school district has made a tremendous difference in the schools because such a program

has helped principals to reduce school violence and focus on academic success. P3 stated

that the district should continue to provide PD for principals to reduce school violence

and to increase students' learning. P7 said that the greater the training the better the

school would be. P8 reported that the principals must know via PD how to reduce school

violence. P9 said that principals focus on PD to learn strategies to reduce violence at the

school. P10emphasized that PD is a good leadership practice to reduce school violence.

These school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through PD.

All participants spoke about their instructional leadership practices and stated that district-wide PD is a good strategy to use to reduce school violence. For instance, P1 said that school violence is visible in every school that as leaders, they are accessible to teachers and students. P1 emphasized that via PD he learned new strategies to apply to reduce school violence. P2 stated that the principals are knowledgeable with graduate degrees but without training the received via PD on school violence thy could have not reduced school violence. P3 reported that PD training has been beneficial to him to know how to reduce school violence. P4 stated that by continuing to implement a school violence PD district-wide, school district leaders would continue to strengthen the administrative teams to reduce school violence. It is important for the instructional leader to receive training and to implement the skill learned in the school setting where they preside, according to P5. School leaders need PD in order to be introduced to strategies to reduce school violence said P6. P7 said that the school district should continue to offer PD opportunities to principals and focus on how to reduce school violence. P8 learned effective strategies to reduce school violence via PD. By continuing to implement the school violence PD at the district, principals will continue to learn new strategies to reduce school violence. According to P10, effective implementation of instructional leadership practices is important, knowing when and how to effectively reduce school violence through professional development.

According to the participants who I interviewed, PD on school violence has helped them to know how to reduce school violence. All participants reported that they should continue to have PD on how to reduce school violence. According to P2, PD with hands-on activities has been beneficial. P1 and P3 reported that PD was necessary to reduce school violence. P1 and P5 stated that skills and knowledge developed via PD on how to reduce school violence have been applied when students cause violent incidents. P6 stated that colleagues who are school principals benefited from workshops on school violence because the workshops helped them to increase their self-confidence in violence reduction. According to P7, workshops have been used to promote a positive school culture in order to reduce school violence. According to all participants, PD on how to reduce school violence has been effective because the participants did not know what to do to reduce school violence.

All participants reported that the school district implemented PD on school violence reduction for all school principals because school violence has been an issue at all schools within the district and a solution to that issue has been training for principals. The participants stated that they benefited from PD because they learned how to reduce school violence as school leaders. A school violence reduction PD has been district-wide effective, according to P1-P4. P5 has attended PD to develop essential skills needed to reduce school violence. Participation in a district-wide school violence reduction PD designed for instructional leaders has helped these leaders to gain confidence via training with hands on activities to know how to reduce school violence, according to P1-P6. A district-wide school violence reduction PD has been used to promote teamwork and

collaboration with other school principals to address school violence within the school district said P7. According to P8, PD has been helpful and is still needed to know how to reduce school violence. Thus, PD has been helpful because the participants did not know what to do to reduce school violence.

The participants reported that they learned and want to continue to learn about school violence reduction via PD because they were unprepared to reduce school violence. P3 said he was unprepared regarding school violence. The district should continue to offer training on how to reduce school violence said P4. School violence reduction PD has helped school principals to better know how to reduce school violence, according to P5. A school violence reduction PD should continue to be available to principals said P6.

A PD has been used to reduce school violence by helping principals to gain knowledge of things they did not know about school violence said P7. PD on school violence training has prepared principals to know how to reduce school violence stated P8. PD with the focus on how to reduce school violence has been beneficial to principals, according to P9. PD on school violence reduction has resulted in students' improved behavior at school said P10. Thus, all participates reported that school violence reduction PD has helped them as instructional leaders to focus on how to reduce school violence.

The participants explained why PD on school violence reduction has helped them at the local school district. PD, at the district level, on school violence reduction for principals has been effective said P1. A school violence training in the school district has made a tremendous difference in the schools because such a program has helped

principals reduce school violence and focus on academic success, according to P2. The

district should continue to provide PD for principals to reduce school violence and to

increase students' learning stated P6. The greater the training the better the

communication between teachers and students and the better the school is, according to

P7.

The principals must know how to reduce school violence; however, training

should continue to be available stated P8. Because principals are communicators and

aspiring leaders, they need training on how to reduce school violence to create a safe

learning environment said P9. The school goals need to clearly be communicated to

students and teachers and as a result PD on how to reduce school violence has been

absolutely necessary, according to P10. Thus, all participates explained why a PD on

school violence reduction has been useful at the local school district.

All participants reported that they benefitted from PD and continue to need PD to

improve their instructional leadership practices regarding school violence. The

participants expressed the need to continue to have district-wide PD on how to reduce

school violence. According to P1, school violence is visible in every school. Principals

engage in classroom observations and are accessible to teachers and students. "The

principals are knowledgeable with graduate degrees but without training we cannot

reduce school violence," said P2.

Collaboration with teachers is good; however, PD has been proven to be effective

to reduce school violence, said P3. Implementing a school violence PD district-wide

should continue to include school district leaders to strengthen the administrative teams

to reduce school violence" said P4. It is important for the instructional leader to continue to receive training and to implement the skill learned in the school setting where they preside said P5. School leaders need PD in order to be introduced to strategies to reduce school violence. P7 said that the school district should have continue to have PD services available on how to reduce school violence. Effective strategies in leadership to reduce school violence are needed" reported P8. Implementing a school violence reduction leadership PD with the policymakers at the district has helped all school principals, according to P9. Effective implementation of instructional leadership practices is important, knowing when and how to effectively reduce school violence.

All participants stated that district-wide PD on how to reduce school violence has been essential to reduce school violence. The participants explained why PD on how to reduce school violence has been useful. All participants explained that well trained principals on how to reduce school violence could create safer schools. Thus, in order for principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices, PD on how to reduce school violence has been provided by the school district and senior district administrators should continue to offer PD to school principals.

The instructional leader seeks to bring balance to administration and staff. Instructional leadership is affected by the lack of in-depth training (Hallinger 2020). Goode (2020) stated that there is a lack of skills by some school principals. Howard (2020) stated that the National Institute for School Leadership's Executive Development program, which focuses on strategic thinking, coaching teachers, and driving and sustaining transformation, have found more positive effects in PD. Professional growth

opportunities for school leaders are needed (Simmons, 2020) because these leaders

should possess interpersonal skills to maintain trust, respect, motivation, and to enhance

collegiality. Relationships are built on trust, and tasks are accomplished through

motivation and empowerment wherein school stakeholders are involved in planning,

designing, and evaluating instructional programs (Redding, 2020). Empowerment leads

to ownership and commitment as teachers identify problems and design strategies

themselves (Redding, 2020). Collegiality promotes sharing, cooperation, and

collaboration, in which both the principal and teachers talk about teaching and learning

(Redding, 2020). If the school leader has only observational and instructional skills but

no planning skills, then their leadership is ineffective (Simmons, 2020). McLauglin

(2020) stated that planning begins with clear identification of goals or a vision to work

toward, as well as to induce commitment and enthusiasm.

In conclusion, all participants stated that PD on how to reduce school violence

has been essential. Well trained principals on how to reduce school violence could create

safer schools. The high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to

reduce school violence through PD.

Theme 3: Funding for Professional Resources

The participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school

violence through funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific

strategies to implement to reduce school violence. All of the participants said that funding

for professional resources has helped them reduce school violence. The participants

reported that as instructional leaders they have been using professional resources to deal

with school violence at the schools. P1 said that funding for professional resources on school violence has been an effective strategy to reduce school violence. P2 said that by using professional resources on specific strategies regarding students' behaviors, he applied knowledge to reduce school violence. P2 stated that the school budget should continue to include funding for professional resources for principals. P3 reported that professional resources for school leaders to use to reduce school violence have been useful and would continue to be needed. The school district provided funding for professional resources to school principals in order to reduce school violence, according to P4. P5 stated that funding for professional resources should continue for school principals.

School district administrators believe that funding for professional resources should be provided for principals to reduce school violence. P6 stated that he needs new information on how to reduce school violence in these challenging times. P7 said, as a current principal funding for professional resources has been helpful. P8 reported that access to professional resources for principals should continue to be offered by senior administrators to principals. P9 stated, professional resources with more hands-on activities have been useful and are needed for principals to implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. P10 emphasized that the school district receives funding especially for training and principals used such funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence.

The participants have access to professional resources on how to reduce school violence. Some participants such as P2, P5, P6, P8, and P10 expressed the need for

funding for professional resources to continue for them to improve their skills to reduce

school violence. P1 stated that the school violence may be reduced with continuous

funding for professional resources. P2 said that mainly through funding for professional

resources, they have managed to reduce school violence. P3 reported that access to

professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to

reduce school violence has been very helpful. According to P4, "School violence is

increasing. I benefited from funding for professional resources to reduce school

violence." According to P5, "My goal has been for teachers to take ownership of teaching

and learning and for students to become independent learners using critical thinking skills

and problem solvers through discussion." P5 also stated, "Funding for manuals

containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence helped me to

manage violent incidents at school." P5 believes that with funding for professional

resources on school violence "I have been able to decrease school violence incidents." P6

reported, "Providing funding for professional resources at the district, has helped all of us

to reduce school violence." P7 said, "Funding for professional resources on how to

reduce school violence has been very helpful to all of us as school principals to develop

the skills necessary to reduce school violence." P8 provided examples such as "district

leaders should continue to provide principals with funding for professional resources

regarding school violence." Like P1-P7, P8 stated that funding for professional resources

on how to reduce school violence should continue to be available to school principals. P9

said, "Funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence has been very

helpful." P10 emphasized that "funding for professional resources on how to reduce

school violence is an effective strategy to use." Thus, the participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence.

According to the participants, funding for professional resources has been helpful to school principals to know what strategies to use to reduce school violence. All of the participants reported that funding has been used to purchase and use professional resources such as manuals with specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence. The participants are instructional leaders and requested during the interviews for funding for professional resources regarding school violence at the schools to continue because they have benefited from manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence. Funding for professional resources on school violence has been beneficial to P1. Through funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence principals can be better prepared to help students, according to P2. The school budget should continue to include funding for professional resources for principals said P3. P4 reported that funding for professional resources for school leaders to use to reduce school violence has been very helpful. The school district should continue to provide funding to school principals to reduce school violence through professional resources stated P5. "District-wide capital resources are needed to support principals. Funding for professional resources to reduce school violence has been beneficial to principals, according to P6. P7 stated that funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence

should not be limited for school principals. P8 implied that providing funding for professional resources to reduce school violence has been productive." P9 has focused on reducing school violence with funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence." P10 reported, "Funding for professional resources for principals should continue to be available to school principals."

School district administrators believe that funding for professional resources should continue to be provided to principals. P2 reported that funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence has been proven to positively affect students' behaviors. P3 said, "There are capital resources available to be used by the school principal for teaching and learning including funding for professional resources; however, such funding should continue." P4 said that the focus of the district is on strong leadership and teamwork to help the students graduate from school and for teachers to grow professionally; however, funding for professional resources for principals had been proven beneficial to principals." "Without funding for professional resources, how can I reduce school violence?" (P5). P6 stated, "With funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence, I have managed violent incidents by students at the school." P7 said that with extra funding for professional resources on school violence "I will be able to decrease even more school violent students' incidents." Like P1-P7, P8 stated that funding for professional resources affected his management of school violence.

Learning is important to instructional leaders (Goode, 2020). Goode stated that learning from the experiences of others is beneficial to school leaders. Observational learning is learnt into the social and cultural context in which the individual school principal's school is situated (Goode, 2020). When participating school principals experience observation-based learning together with trusted colleagues, followed by vicarious learning from these experiences in their schools, the authors see some facilitating factors to be of particular importance: learning infrastructure, digital tools, compulsory tasks associated with preparation and subsequent experiments with their teachers (Goode, 2020).

Effective instructional leaders need to be good communicators (Hill, 2020). Also, effective instructional leaders need to be resource providers and communicators (Ward, 2020). Instructional leaders need to communicate essential beliefs regarding learning such as the conviction that all children can learn (Ward, 2020). The school principals who are instructional leaders must know the strengths and weaknesses of their faculties and facilities (Ward, 2020). The school principals should also be strong enough to recognize students (Ward, 2020).

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2020) defined instructional leadership as leading learning communities, in which staff members meet on a regular basis to discuss their work, collaborate to solve problems, reflect on their jobs, and take responsibility for what students learn skills and the instructional leader. The principal must possess certain skills to carry out the tasks of an instructional leader. The skills are interpersonal, planning, instructional, observational, and research and

evaluation (Lingram, 2020). More funding for professional growth opportunities could be brought to the schools to train administrators (Smith, 2020).

In conclusion, the participants implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through funding for professional resources such as manuals containing specific strategies to implement to reduce school violence. Funding for professional resources has been beneficial to school principals because they have learned strategies to know how to reduce school violence. Thus, funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence has been beneficial to the participants.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study was that the research site was an urban public school district consisting of 85 campuses of which 82 qualify as a Title I campus meaning the majority of students receive a free or reduced price either breakfast or lunch. The student-to-teacher ratio was 21:1 and school violence were on the rise. Another limitation was that a larger sample of school principals could have yielded more robust interview data. For example, during the interviews the participants could have been reluctance to provide honest responses.

By extending the semistructured face-to-face interviews to senior school district administrators, I may have been able to gain a better understanding of the instructional leadership practices of school principals to reduce school violence. Also, by extending the semistructured face-to-face interviews to K-12 school principals from other public school districts may have yielded different results. Another limitation was that K-12 teachers were not invited to participate in the interviews.

I did not review state scores and such a review could have provided further insight into the research phenomenon. I also did not review school district policies on professional development or school violence. This research study was limited to the geographic boundaries within the public school district. The final limitation of the study was the interpretations of the semistructured face-to-face interviews.

Recommendations

Based on the themes (Table 1), a recommendation for the school principals is to continue to focus on identifying strategies to reduce school violence. All of the participants stated that district-wide PD on how to reduce school violence is essential to create a safe learning environment. Principals better apply their instructional leadership practices via PD on how to reduce school violence at the school district.

Funding for professional resources has been beneficial to school principals to improve their instructional leadership practices by knowing what strategies to use to reduce school violence. A recommendation is for funding to continue to be provided by senior district administrators for school principals to purchase professional resources on how to reduce school violence. Another recommendation is for school principals to continue to use communication as a strategy to better communicate with teachers and students in order to reduce school violence. School principals should continue to communicate the school goals clearly regarding school violence. Another recommendation to school principals is to closely communicate with student and teachers to teach students skills on deescalating violence in the school. A final recommendation is

for school principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices to communicate with students to reduce school violence.

The recommendation for school district administrators is to help school principals to improve their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. School district administrators could provide the PD opportunities and funding to school principals to attend PD and to purchase professional resources to learn how to reduce school violence. School district administrators could provide funding for professional resources to school principals in order for principals to create safe schools.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The findings (Table 1) are that high school principals implement instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence through: (a) communication with teachers and students, (b) professional development, and (c) funding for professional resources. These findings may support school principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. Improvements in the school principals' instructional leadership practices can support the reduction of school violence at the schools at the research site. The findings promote positive social change through enhanced school principals' instructional leadership practices to create safe schools that may contribute to student success by graduating from school.

Recommendations for Practice at the School District

Senior district administrators could provide PD opportunities to school principals in order for school principals to improve their instructional leadership practices to reduce

school violence. PD opportunities should focus on strategies that can be implemented by principals to reduce school violence. PD planning on how to reduce school violence should be conducted throughout the academic year. Thus, providing PD to school principals could help them improve their instructional leadership practices.

School district administrators could help school principals to improve their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence by providing funding for professional resources. Such professional resources could help school principals to create safe schools by knowing what strategies to use to reduce school violence. Improvements in the school principals' instructional leadership practices can support the reduction of school violence at the schools at the research site that may contribute to student graduating from school.

Recommendations for Further Study

I interviewed 10 high school principals in different locations within one public school district. I used an interview protocol. Future scholars, willing to replicate this study, should interview more high school principals. Also, scholars should interview K-12 principals.

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Conclusion

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The problem was that high school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to examine the instructional leadership practices of high school principals to reduce school violence. A purposive sampling was used to select

high school principals for data collection. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes.

The first theme was that communication is a strategy that principals can use to reduce school violence. School principals communicate with teachers and students regarding violence in the school. The second theme was that all of the participants reported that PD on school violence has been beneficial to school principals to know what strategies to use to reduce school violence. All participants explained that well trained principals on how to reduce school violence create safer schools. In order for principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices, PD on how to reduce school violence should continue to be provided by the school district. The third theme was that funding for professional resources on how to reduce school violence has been helpful to the participants. Funding for school principals to purchase and use professional resources on how to reduce school violence has been proven beneficial to principals. Funding should continue to be provided by senior district administrators for school principals to purchase professional resources on how to reduce school violence.

A larger sample of high school principals could have yielded more robust interview data. By extending the semistructured face-to-face interviews to K-12 school principals may have yielded different results. A limitation was that school district administrators and teachers were not interviewed.

The findings support school principals to better apply their instructional leadership practices to reduce school violence. Improvements in the school principals' instructional leadership practices can support the reduction of school violence at the

schools at the research site. The findings promote positive social change through enhanced school principals' instructional leadership practices to create safe schools that may contribute to student success by graduating from school.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Tell me how you apply instructional leadership practices in your school.

2. Tell me about school violence in this school.

3. Tell me about your instructional leadership practices to prevent school violence.

4.   Tell me about the challenges or obstacles that keep you from effectively exercising your leadership skills.

5. Tell me how your leadership practices positively influence leadership at your school.

6. Tell me how you communicate your vision to all stakeholders.