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Elementary School Principals' Perceptions Regarding Instructional Leadership Practices Supporting Character Education

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Walden University

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Dawn Engle

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Elementary School Principals' Perceptions Regarding Instructional Leadership Practices
Supporting Character Education

by

Dawn Engle

MA, Walden University, 2015

BS, University of Central Florida, 2002

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

April 2021

Abstract

The problem addressed in this project study was that principals at the elementary schools under study had been inconsistent in applying instructional leadership practices (ILP) supporting character education (CE). The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of elementary school principals regarding ILP to support CE. The instructional leadership model was the conceptual framework guiding the study. The research question asked what practices elementary school principals implement to support CE in their schools. A basic qualitative research design with purposive sampling was used to select elementary school principals who were state-certified and administrators for at least 2 years. Interviews were conducted with 10 participants and, using thematic analysis, themes emerged. The first theme was that CE is important for a holistic learning experience. The second theme was that institutions have not done enough to promote CE. The last theme was schools' management must be at the forefront of the promotion of CE through the promotion of implementation of ILP. The key recommendation was a district-wide professional development (PD) to assist elementary school principals to learn how to support CE using ILP. The school district should use a district-wide 3-day PD to help school principals to learn how to implement ILP to support CE because the findings include strategies for elementary school principals to integrate CE into the curriculum. The strategies found in PD have implications for positive social change for elementary school principals to apply ILP to integrate CE into the curriculum.

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Dedication

Thank you to my immediate family for giving me the time these past 2 years to work on completing this paper.

Thank you to my parents and sister for believing in me.

Finally, thanks be to God for strength and renewal each and every day.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

According to the district superintendent, principals at the elementary schools under study had been inconsistent in applying instructional leadership practices (ILP) supporting character education (CE). Furthermore, state scores in literacy and mathematics had decreased in the school district (assistant superintendent, personal communication, August 29, 2019; see Table 1).

Table 1

State Scores

Year	Literacy Scores	Mathematics Scores
2016 - 2017	221	240
2017 - 2018	221	239
2018 - 2019	219	240

ILP of school administrators affect the integration of CE in the school curriculum (Voogt et al., 2016). CE should be used in the schools (Jeynes, 2019) because schools where school administrators and teachers integrate CE into the curriculum have fewer behavioral issues (Collins et al., 2017). Binti Si-Rajab et al. (2019) studied the ILP of school principals and stated that professional development (PD) to enhance ILP may increase the levels of leadership practices of school administrators resulting in effective schools. The goal of having PD should entail the practice of enhancing principal

successes as they are instructional leaders (Vogel, 2018). School principals should implement ILP as a leadership practice in their schools (Gawlik, 2018).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

State scores had decreased at the elementary schools under study (Table 1). The school district had 20 elementary schools and the principals reported to district administrators that they were struggling to support CE. District directors reported to the board of education that principals were unsupportive of CE (superintendent, personal communication, January 31, 2020).

Evidence from Professional Literature

CE is a curriculum framework that helps students to make moral decisions (Jeynes, 2019). CE strategies should be used by principals to praise students (Bayar, 2016). School principals should use CE in the schools (Voogt et al., 2016). CE should be used in elementary schools with the emphasis on the curriculum to address behavioral issues (Collins et al., 2017). The integration of CE into the school curriculum helps students to improve their behaviors (Jeynes, 2019). In one study, students in schools that integrated CE into the curriculum had fewer behavioral issues (Zurqoni et al., 2018). CE can be used to foster positive behaviors (Jeynes, 2019). I examined the perceptions of elementary school principals regarding ILP to support CE.

Definitions of Terms

The key terms are as follows:

Character education (CE): CE is a program that can be integrated into educational curriculum to help students with moral education (Jeynes, 2019).

Instructional leadership: Instructional leadership of principals refers to providing support to teachers (Jeynes, 2019).

Significance of the Study

The selected project site was an urban private school district. This study was significant because principals had not been supporting CE. I recommend that the district use a district-wide 3-day PD to help school principals to learn how to implement ILP to support CE. The findings include strategies for school principals to integrate CE into the curriculum. The strategies found in PD have implications for positive social change for school administrators to apply their ILP to integrate CE into the curriculum.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was as follows: What ILP do elementary school principals implement regarding CE?

Review of the Literature

I searched terms on ILP and CE via Walden's Library. I focused on peer-reviewed journal articles regarding ILP and CE. A search strategy included these keywords: *instruction, leadership, school principals, elementary school students, instructional leadership, instructional leadership practices, and leadership practices*. Other keywords included *students' behaviors, positive attitudes of students, negative behaviors of students, strategies, leadership strategies, curriculum, and character education in*

elementary schools. I found 85 peer-reviewed journal articles on ILP and CE. Last, peer-reviewed journal articles were used to develop the interview protocol.

Conceptual Framework

Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model (ILM) was the conceptual framework. ILM should be applied by administrators to help students improve their behaviors (Zeinabadi et al., 2020). ILM has become a successful leadership model (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). ILM is principal-centered and affects school effectiveness (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). Thus, I used the principles of ILM to prepare the interview protocol.

ILM includes the process of identifying the significance of CE and whether its implementation influences students' positive behavioral attributes. ILM is used as a framework to understand implementation practices of elementary school principals regarding CE. ILM proposes varying dimensions of understanding leadership. An example of ILM responsibility includes the implementation of effective strategies that measure students' weaknesses and ways to use strategies to address communication between students and teachers (Jeynes, 2019). School principals are expected to foster a positive relationship between teachers and students (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). ILM of elementary school principals should be applied to CE. ILM was central in seeking answers to the research question. ILM was used during the data analysis.

ILP and CE

School principals and teachers are tasked with the responsibility of instilling elementary students with appropriate knowledge and skills in different contexts (Bayar, 2016; Blazar & Kraft, 2017). School principals should apply ILM in schools (Boyce &

Bowers, 2018). Eldridge et al. (2017) stated that CE is associated with improvement of student behavior. CE is a process of teaching moral education and students need to know about core values (Fitria et al., 2019). Dishon and Goodman (2017) found that CE helped students to develop behavioral competencies. Further, they found that ILP and CE impact positive performance and reduce disruptive behaviors in schools. Thus, they asserted that CE may have an impact on instructional leadership. Principals should support teachers in the implementation of effective teaching strategies and programs as well as student learning (Bayar, 2016; Wang & Goldberg, 2017). In a school setting, CE can also be encouraged through good academic performance (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). Therefore, this means that with instructional leadership, a teacher would follow guidelines prescribed to them by policymakers (Wang & Goldberg, 2017). CE can help students develop social skills and core values (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). Disciplining students is used in the classroom setting and there is the need to make alterations and create well-balanced student (Eldridge et al., 2017).

CE should be integrated into the curriculum and used for students to develop conflict resolution skills (Wang & Goldberg, 2017). Curriculum programs should use CE for students to develop good behavioral skills (Eldridge et al., 2017) because CE can help students solve conflicts (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). The school curriculum should be built around learning themes (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). CE should be part of learning for students to develop emotional, social, and intellectual skills (Dishon & Goodman, 2017; Zurqoni et al., 2019). CE curriculum can help students to learn to be responsible by building good character (Wartini, 2016).

CE can be used to create a learning community (Dishon & Goodman, 2017).

According to Wartini (2016), teachers can implement CE because it is vital in elementary schools. According to Saputro and Murdiono (2020), CE-based curricula help students to become responsible members of society. Accordingly, incorporating CE-based programs in schools is very important for students to think critically (Wartini, 2016).

Teachers should focus on teaching students how to build character (Park & Park, 2016). Character development could be done via CE to foster improved academic performance (Collins et al., 2017). CE is integrated into the curriculum for students to interact with their teachers (Wartini, 2016). CE helps students to make informed decisions regarding their behavioral attributes particularly when they bombarded with stressful conditions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Positive Performance of Schools

Principals should focus their ILP on improving the performance of students (Wartini, 2016). Principals should also focus their ILP on students' office discipline referrals (Gage et al., 2018). This is because when school principals apply ILP to reduce office discipline referrals, students' negative behaviors decrease (Gage et al., 2018).

PD for educators is an example of supervising instruction (Jeynes, 2019). ILP of principals should focus on helping students improve their performance (Urlick, 2016). Principals should implement ILP to help both students and teachers outline specific daily activities needed to enhance positive performance (Urlick). ILP of principals can help teachers to address issues outside in the classroom (Urlick). ILP include ways to communicate school goals (Urlick). A principal should focus on the positive performance

of students (Gawlik, 2018). Additionally, ILP of principals should also focus on supervision (Gawlik, 2018). Jeynes (2019) reported that CE can be used by principals to improve student performance. Jeynes reported that instructional leadership should be used to support teachers. School principals should use ILP to focus on the character development (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). Also, school principals should use ILP to communicate with teachers (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). ILP can be applied to integrate CE into the curriculum (Dishon & Goodman, 2017) because CE affects the performance of students (Karpicke et al., 2016).

Instructional leadership impacts the development of positive character and in worst case scenario serves as a cause for disruptive behavior (Jeynes, 2019). ILP of school principals could be applied to CE to create a positive learning environment (Jeynes, 2019). Also, ILP of school principals should strive to increase student progress (Boyce & Bowers, 2018, para 1). Among the schools where the administrators have supported the implementation of the instructional leadership and it is followed to the core, the aftermath is positive results from the students (Jeynes, 2019).

In elementary schools, the main aim of instructional leadership is the development of CE. Therefore, principals need to follow the policies and procedures of supporting teachers in the implementation of effective curriculum programs, such as CE (Jeynes, 2019). In the event principals deem such policies as ineffectual, they can easily make recommendations on changes that can be included to fast track the development of CE among children (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019).

Students benefit when principals use instructional leadership to implement CE (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). Similarly, Domitrovich et al. (2017) elaborated that the implementation of an interactive-based process is key in fostering positive performance in a learning environment. School administrators should implement CE programs in elementary school (Collins et al., 2017). In conclusion, school principals need to implement CE (Shaked & Schechter, 2016). CE can be encouraged through good academic performance (Wang & Goldberg, 2017) because it helps educators to build good character in students (Wartini, 2016).

Implications

The PD plan I employed for this project study was slated for 3 days to enable the acquisition of new information pertinent with the requisites of intention of enabling the acquisition of new information regarding how to support CE. Most importantly, the content developed for the PD included appropriate instructional leadership strategies employed to facilitate the integration of CE into the curriculum of elementary schools. The content of the PD may help principals to better integrate CE into the school curriculum. The PD should be promoted by senior school district administrators to support principals to learn how to support CE in their schools. The findings have implications for positive social change for school administrators to apply to support CE by integrating it into the curriculum.

Summary

Summarily, principals at the elementary schools under study had been inconsistent in applying ILP to support CE. To better understand why, I examined the

perceptions of elementary school principals regarding ILP to support CE. The integration of CE into the curriculum can elicit positive behaviors and improved performance among students as well as school performance (Pike et al., 2020). Collins et al. (2017) stated that schools that had not integrated CE experienced more behavioral issues. In Section 2, I present the methodology for my study. I also present the selection criteria for the participants and a justification of the number of participants. In addition to outlining measures of protecting study participants, I also provide a concise guideline for data collection and analysis. In Section 3, I present the project. In Section 4, I present the reflections and conclusions.

Section 2: The Methodology

In this section, I present the study methodology. The population and sample are presented together with the selection criteria. This section also provides a description of the sampling procedures, details regarding how interviews were conducted, and the process for how interview transcripts were analyzed.

Research Design and Approach

According to Yin (2017), a qualitative research method is used to collect rich data. A qualitative research design is often guided by the research questions (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016). The research approach is used to “underpin the collection methods” (Chun Tie et al., 2019, p. 11). I used a basic qualitative research design. I collected data from study participants who were elementary school principals.

A qualitative research design allows the collection of data from the participants (Aspers & Corte ,2019). Interviewing participants provides a researcher with sufficient information from the interview questions as well as prompting an opportunity to collect nonverbal communication (Gill & Baillie, 2018). Thus, I used interviews to examine the ILP of elementary school principals supporting CE. Thus, the qualitative approach was central in examining the ILP of elementary school principals regarding CE.

I did not use the quantitative method as the project study question was required qualitative data, which meant that there was no need to use statistics (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I examined the phenomenon under study for quite some time (see Yin, 2017). Thus, a qualitative design was chosen.

Participants

Population and Sampling

The project site had 20 Title I elementary schools where 20 principals and 10 assistant principals were the instructional leaders. The school district served over 3,000 elementary school students. The sample selected for this project study included principals recruited from elementary schools.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Evidence presented by Yin (2017) indicates that purposive sampling is an appropriate approach for selecting study participant to meet the specifications or purpose of a proposed study. I recruited elementary school principals and used purposeful sampling to select the participants. Ames et al. (2019) stated, “Using a purposive sampling method helps to harness the recruitment process of participants from a wide geographical to ensure rich data are collected” (p. 17). The rationale for selecting the purposive sampling technique entails the assertion where study participants showcase experiences that is associated with the phenomenon under study (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). Most importantly, the selection criteria of the study participants included state certification and employment in the district for at least 2 academic years.

Justification of Participants

I invited all 20 elementary school principals in the district to be interviewed. Ten principals consented to participate in interviews. Thus, I interviewed 10 participants using an interview protocol.

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

To recruit and interview the participants, I obtained Walden University's institutional review board (IRB) approval (IRB # 05-08-20-0302894). I also obtained approval from the project site administrator to select the participants who met the selection criteria. After I received approval from both Walden University's and project site's IRB, I created a list of emails of participants. Via emails, I communicated with the participants.

Establishing a Researcher–Participant Working Relationship

After IRB approval, I invited the participants via email and included information about this project study. Additionally, it is imperative to note that relationships between researchers and study participants are often manifested during the data collection process (McGrath et al., 2019). Most importantly, the need to establish and harness researcher-participant is dependent on the willingness of both parties to share pertinent information regarding the study during the interaction (Råheim et al., 2016). Researchers need to take a leading role in building trust with their participants as this helps to establish collaborative relationship during the interviews (Nyström et al., 2018). The participants appeared comfortable during the interviews. I encouraged the participants to ask questions for clarity. Participants felt comfortable to honestly answer the interview questions found in the interview protocol.

Measures for Protecting Study Participants

I will not share the interview transcripts with school district administrators or teachers at the project site. Protecting the participants is a crucial element of research

ethics (Surmiak, 2018). Qualitative research tends to enable researchers to form relationships with participants, which are key during data collections (Hammarberg et al., 2016). During data collection, researchers need to take into consideration measures to protect study participants, such as anonymity, informed consent, and confidentiality (Mayne et al., 2018). I will keep the interview transcripts for 5 years as required by the IRB. The interview transcripts are password-protected.

Data Collection

Justification for Data Collection Methods

I conducted interviews with the participants by using a basic qualitative research design. Numeric data were not collected because I did not study the relationship among variables. Qualitative data were collected.

Systems for Keeping Track of Data

I conducted the interviews. I took notes as well as recorded the interview sessions with the permission of each participant. I kept a journal to compare the interview transcripts with my journal notes. I will keep the interview transcripts for 5 years.

Role of the Researcher

As a K-12 educator, I taught specializing reading to K-12 students. Since the year 2015, I have been an elementary school principal. Even though I was a novice researcher, I ensured that I embraced uttermost professionalism and research ethics to reduce chances of eliciting personal research biases.

The role as the lead researcher was centered around collecting data from study participants. I followed the ethical guidelines regarding the participants. Moser and

Korstjens (2018) elaborated on the relevant roles played by qualitative researchers that are central in accessing the thoughts and feelings of study participants. Råheim et al. (2016) further recognized the significant role of researchers on how to archive data collected and addressing challenges that are likely to rise from the research process. Another significant role I played involved the recruitment of participants.

Sufficiency of Data Collection

I collected meaningful and in-depth qualitative data. Also, I conducted the interviews with the participants. Furthermore, I stored the interview recordings in a secured laptop. The implications of the Coronavirus pandemic meant that I used video conferences to conduct the interviews. I collected the responses and ascertained them after reaching the saturation level. The sample size was 10 elementary school principals.

Data Analysis

I saved the interview transcripts into a Word document, which was password protected on my personal computer. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. During this doctoral project study, the interview responses were organized. The transcribed data were exported to a spreadsheet to organize the data.

Categorized codes were prepared using along similar words and phrases to yield emergent themes. I used the Atlas program to organize interview transcripts. After organizing the interview transcripts using the Atlas software program, I commenced the coding process with low level coding, such as summarizing segments of the interview transcripts. I analyzed the interview transcripts thematically. I identified categories and themes through sorting codes.

Evidence of Quality

Trustworthiness is an imperative component evidenced through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. For credibility, I asked the participants to review the interview transcripts. The participants confirmed the accuracy of the interview transcripts. The project study will be presented to the local school district administrators to use the findings and to check for consistency. I described in detail how I collected interview data and the analysis process. I protected the anonymity of the participants by using pseudonyms.

Discrepant Cases

Cross-checking or intercoder agreement is attributed to the case where another researcher used the same data agreed on the codes (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017). No discrepant cases existed in the data. Thus, no discrepant cases are reported in Appendix A.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

The scope was a private school district in the United States. I reminded the participants to provide me with honest responses. One of the underlying limitations was that school administrators were interviewed. Elementary school teachers were not interviewed. The interviews were limited to elementary school principals to focus on their ILP regarding CE.

Data Analysis Results

The problem addressed was that principals at the elementary schools under study had been inconsistent in applying ILP supporting CE. I interviewed elementary school

principals regarding their ILP to support CE. As such, a basic qualitative study was conducted by interviewing 10 principals.

Method for Generating, Gathering, and Coding Data

An IRB application from Walden University was approved and the IRB approval number was 05-21-19-0584497. I conducted interviews with 10 participants. Each interview was between 30 and 45 minutes via Skype using video calling due to COVID-19. I maintained a journal and saved the interview data in a Word document, which is password protected. I transcribed the interviews and searched for patterns using color codes. I used these processes for data analysis:

- Organization of data,
- Verification of interview data by reading and rereading,
- Coding to group patterns,
- Categorization of patterns,
- Identification of themes,
- Description of themes, and
- Interpretation of findings.

Coding Procedure

I read all interview transcripts many times to familiarize myself with the participants' responses. I found common phrases in the conceptual framework and the interview transcripts. I then color coded the patterns. After the interviews, follow-up appointments and interviews were conducted in the cases where there was deficient of information or answers to the interview questions. I also ensured that member checking

was executed to minimize and eliminate any chances of personal research biases. I used this procedure to confirm the trustworthiness of the proposed project study.

Subsequently, after confirming responses from the study participants, I organized the interview data in a central location. I grouped phrases according to the interview questions. I charted similar phrases using axial coding. Thus, I compiled the responses from each participant using axial coding to identify the subcategories of ILP. The following were the steps during the coding process.

- Data search to identify both irregularities and patterns,
- Coding through the use of the Atlas software program,
- Creation of coding categories depicting thematic pattern,
- Examination of codes to identify and remove overlap and redundancies,
- Creation of coding groups,
- Sorting of interview transcripts using coding groups, and
- Use of situation codes to determine the participants' reflections.

The subsequent phase involved the identification of thematic words using perquisite and assigned colors to similar words and phrases (Table 2).

Table 2*Coding*

Theme	Codes	Subcodes
1	CE	Personality development
	Important	Fostering mutual respect
	Holistic	Development of good personality
	Learning experience	Promoting acceptance in society
2	Institutions	Poor management and networking
	Promote CE	Poor conflict resolution strategies
3	Schools' management	Working with students
	Promotion of CE	PD
	Implementation of ILP	Improve skills on CE

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was: What ILP do elementary school principals implement regarding CE?

Themes and Descriptions

I explored the perceptions of principals regarding the ILP in supporting CE. Thematic analysis was used for emergent themes. Common themes were developed by eliminating redundancies. As such, the data from the interviews provided the first layer of analysis. Additionally, the events description provided the second layer of data analysis. Three themes were identified in the third layer (Table 3).

Table 3*Themes*

Theme	Description
1	CE is important for a holistic learning experience (personality development, fostering mutual respect, development of good personality, and promoting acceptance in society)
2	Institutions have not done enough to promote CE (poor management, networking, and conflict resolution strategies)
3	Schools' management must be at the forefront of the promotion of CE through the promotion of implementation of ILP (offering corrective feedback, working with students to create relevant goals, holding target conversations, and PD opportunities)

Theme 1: Character Education is Important for a Holistic Learning Experience

The participants reported that the corrective feedback is the main ILP supporting CE. During the interviews, it was apparent why participants used the principle of offering corrective feedback. The participants revealed that they observed their teachers engage in corrective feedback mechanisms at the study site and that this was important in shaping students' ability to accept corrections and make improvements.

P1 said, "Students can always appreciate their wrongs when they are talked to nicely about it and hence make improvements in due course." P1 implied that offering corrective feedback is an efficient instructional leadership principle. P2 provided insight

on how students react when teachers and principals correcting them. To put this into perspective, P2 said, “Students interacted with the teachers more when they feel valued.”

P3 shared similar views and said, “It is easy to know the teacher who is students favorite because they will always flock around him or her.” P3 implied that offering corrective feedback nurtures the relationship between teachers and students.

P4, P5, P6, and P7 added an important dimension to the establishment of the right instructional leadership principle to adopt to support CE.

All participants said offering corrective feedback aided in relationship building. Specifically, P4 said, “students need to be corrected.” P5, on the other hand, said, “A teacher’s experience is improved when students appreciate the work done in class and one way of measuring student satisfaction is by the number of times they seek to be corrected.”

P6 said, “Students always improve when they are given corrective feedback and more so if they follow it up.” This opinion was echoed by P7 who said, “Teaching experience has improved because student involvement has been improved by corrective feedback.” P8, P9, and P10 said that there ought to be a variability in the instructional leadership principles adopted.

P8, P9, and P10 implied that schools have different CE needs. P3 said, “Each school has different circumstances and different principles apply.” P8 said, “Most efforts to promote character education fail because institutions and principals are rigid to adjust practice.” Schools have unique CE needs. These sentiments were echoed by P9 who said,

“An alternative instructional leadership principle to promote character education is working with students to create relevant goals.”

P10 further reflected these sentiments and said, “To improve the efficiency of efforts to promote character education, teachers should attempt integrating various instructional leadership principles.” P10 specifically cited offering of corrective feedback being deployed together with the provision of professional development to principals to inform their efforts in choosing the right instructional leadership principles to promote CE.

Theme 2: Institutions Have not Done Enough to Promote Character Education

The second theme involved the role of CE on the holistic nature of learning. Specifically, P8 said, “Character education aids the effort of a student in most spheres of life.” P8 alluded to acceptability especially to colleges as well as the reciprocity of respect with colleagues and other members of the society. P8 said, “I encourage my teachers to emphasize character education because good results come with good behavior, which can only be achieved if the right practices are implemented.” For example, P3 said, “Character education is important because it helps students to develop their personality.” P10 said, “Character education is important in ensuring that there is mutual respect among students and between students and teachers as well as between students and principals.”

Theme 3: School Principals Should Promote Character Education

The third theme was that principals in the urban private schools at the study site were not promoting CE and were not implementing ILP supporting CE. This theme was echoed in the responses given by participants P4 and P9. P4 and P9 said most principals having wrong perceptions about the role of CE to the lives of students and that of teachers, especially within the school context. P4 said, “My administration has not done enough regarding the promotion of because we are only focused on results.” P9 said, “Character education can be made part of their curricula which means that principals must be trained on how to oversee operations regarding character education.”

P4, P5, P6, and P7 all agreed that despite laxity in implementation, corrective feedback is important in promoting good relationships between teachers and students. When there are good relationships, academic efforts can be enhanced. P8, P9, and P10 highlighted that the perception that character building and instructional leadership philosophy are similar to all schools leads to failure. Thus, all participants attested to the fact that offering corrective feedbacks is the most prevalent instructional leadership principle used in the schools.

Discrepant Cases

During the interviews, the same interview protocol was used in this project study. I asked all participants the same interview questions. I conducted member checking with each participant. I found no discrepant cases.

Evidence of Quality

Trustworthiness occurs through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. I used the purposive sampling technique to recruit elementary school principals. I used abbreviations such as P1 to refer to the first school principal to protect their anonymity. I interviewed multiple participants. I conducted member checking and took notes during the interviews to minimize any personal biases as a novice researcher. I believe that the findings may be generalized should other project studies be conducted with similar school district characteristics.

Discussion of the Findings in Relation to Literature Review

All of the participants implied that corrective feedback is the main ILP supporting CE. All of the participants mentioned that they used the principle of offering corrective feedback to elementary school students for students to improve their behaviors in the classrooms. The participants mentioned that they support teachers to use corrective feedback for the elementary school students at the study site, which consisted of urban private elementary schools, to help students accept corrections to their behaviors in order to make behavioral improvements. As P1 implied, “students need to know when their behavior is wrong in the classroom and benefit from the teachers or school administrators who explain to the students nicely about their negative behaviors.” According to P1, corrective feedback helps students to make improvements in due course to their negative behaviors.

Offering corrective feedback to students is an efficient ILP to reduce students’ negative behaviors. P2 implied that students react when teachers and principals are

correcting their behaviors. P2 also said that students interact more with the teachers when they feel valued. P3 stated that offering corrective feedback nurtures the relationship between teachers and students. These comments imply that corrective feedback could help students improve their behaviors in the classroom. All of the participants mentioned that ILP can be used to support CE.

All of the 10 participants mentioned that offering corrective feedback aids in relationship building between students and teachers, and between students and school administrators. For example, according to P4, students need to be corrected when their behaviors are negative in the classroom. P5 stated that students benefit from teachers who correct their negative behaviors. The input from all participants can be used by school administrators in elementary schools to help students improve their negative behaviors when they are given corrective feedback.

All of the participants reported that schools have different CE needs implying that corrective feedback may benefit students. Each school principal needs a clear school vision and corrective feedback may be used in different circumstances in the elementary schools. Because students have unique CE needs, ILP of principals should be applied to support CE by integrating CE into the elementary school curriculum. CE can be integrated into the elementary school curriculum to encourage students to practice good behavior, which can be achieved by implementing ILP supporting CE for students to develop their personality.

PD on how to promote and how to integrate CE into the elementary school curriculum can help principals to implement ILP supporting CE for students to improve

their negative behaviors. With PD on CE, school principals could better understand the role of CE to the lives of students. School principals can attend PD on how to better implement ILP supporting CE for the benefit of students.

Findings reported by Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017) indicated that school administrators benefit from PD. Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017) further highlighted the roles mentors, which involved fostering and utilizing the professional abilities of mentees via the PD. As a subset of PD, mentoring should revolve around appropriate activities responsible for imparting knowledge (Gisbert et al., 2016). According to Vikaraman et al. (2017), educators need professional and personal guidance to focus on various issues and challenges of teaching. Effective PD can be used to provide guidance in the areas of professional and personal development (Vikaraman et al.). Roberson (2019) reported that educators sought professional and emotional support from their administrators.

School administrators and teachers should integrate CE into the curriculum to help students improve their behaviors at school (Collins et al., 2017). CE should be integrated into the curriculum to promote positive character development (Jeynes, 2019). Principals should have the competency and the capacity to be able to effectively lead their school (Perrin, 2017). The principal improves the performance of the teachers and students by inspiring and reassuring them (Şenol & Lesinger, 2018). The ILP of school administrators should consist of giving feedback to teachers and students to promote professional growth and development (Jeynes, 2019). The implementation of principal leadership yields positive outcomes from both teachers and students (Eller & Eller,

2018). Principals play an important role as instructional leaders in student academic success (Perrin, 2017).

Project Deliverable

The deliverable is a PD developed for elementary school principals to learn new ways to implement ILP supporting CE. The PD is the project. School district administrators should support this project to integrate CE into the curriculum. In addition to helping to improve school and student performance, the implementation PD's strategies is key in reducing instances of behavioral challenges among students. PD content contains strategies on (a) ILP supporting CE, (b) how to support CE, (c) how to apply ILP supporting CE, (d) special initiatives to support CE, and (e) how to encourage principals to use CE.

Summary

Data collected was analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis. All of the participants mentioned that they used corrective feedback for students to improve their behaviors in the classrooms. The participants mentioned that they supported teachers to engage in corrective feedback to help students accept corrections to their behaviors in order to make behavioral improvements. Offering corrective feedback to students is an efficient ILP to reduce students' negative behaviors. All of the participants mentioned that ILP can be used to support CE to offer corrective feedback to help students improve their negative behaviors. Because students have unique CE needs, ILP of principals should be applied to promote CE by integrating CE into the elementary school curriculum.

A PD has been developed to help principals to be successful in implementing CE for the benefit of students. The project deliverable includes a PD plan for school principals regarding ILP to support CE. With PD on how to promote and how to integrate CE into the elementary school curriculum can help principals to implement ILP to support CE for students to improve their negative behaviors. With PD on CE, school principals could better understand the role of CE to the lives of students.

Some urban schools are not having successful efforts in promoting CE. Bearing in mind the inconsistency of urban private school principals to promote instructional leadership principles to promote CE, it is important to determine what works and what does not work. In conclusion, this principle should be applied in urban private schools to guide students in how to accept corrections and make improvements, develop character, and apply CE to improve their behaviors in the classroom. Thus, CE must be promoted in urban private schools because of a seemingly inseparable relationship between academic excellence and good behavior.

With the right academic philosophy, urban private schools at the study site can bolster efforts in promoting CE. CE facilitates the development of a student's practical wisdom, equipping them with the capacity to make intelligent choices. A character enhancing curriculum influences different aspects of a student's life. Besides improving their well-being, it also increases their interpersonal relationships. In Section 3, I present the project. In Section 4, I present the reflections and conclusions.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The problem addressed was that principals at the elementary schools under study had been inconsistent in applying ILP supporting CE. I examined the perceptions of elementary school principals regarding ILP to support CE. Based on my findings, I developed a PD plan to help elementary school principals to learn how to support CE. The outstanding recommendation relevant for this project study was that a district-wide PD needed to support CE based on the three themes that emerged from the study. Theme 1 of this study's findings indicated that corrective feedback was the main ILP supporting CE. The participants said that their teachers engage in corrective feedback mechanisms in shaping students' ability to accept corrections and make improvements.

Theme 2 was that the role of CE must related to the holistic nature of learning. CE aids the effort of a student in most spheres of life. The participants mentioned that they encourage teachers to emphasize CE because good results come with good behaviors of students. CE is important because it helps students to develop their personality.

Theme 3 was that all of the participants were not promoting CE and were not implementing instructional leadership principles to enhance CE. Most principals had incorrect perceptions about the role of CE to the lives of students and that of teachers, especially within the school context. CE can be integrated into the curriculum meaning that principals must be trained on how to apply ILP supporting CE. Thus, all participants attested to the fact that offering corrective feedback is the most prevalent instructional leadership principle used in the schools.

Project Purpose

The PD is designed for elementary school principals (see Appendix A). The project is the PD for elementary school principals to better implement their ILP supporting CE. The PD is a supplemental support for principals. The PD includes strategies on (a) best ILP regarding CE, (b) how to support CE, (c) how to apply ILP to support CE, (d) to implement CE, and (e) how to encourage principals to use CE.

Project Outcomes

Elementary school principals who will attend the PD will receive training on specific strategies. The content of the PD is on how to apply ILP to support CE. The attendees will learn how to (a) use CE to reduce students' negative behaviors, (b) apply ILP to support CE, and (c) integrate CE into the elementary school curriculum.

Project Outline

The PD for school principals includes three sessions. Session 1 includes strategies on best ILP regarding CE and how to support CE. Session 2 includes strategies on how to apply ILP to support CE and special initiatives to support CE. Session 3 includes strategies to encourage principals to use CE and to create committees to support CE. These three sessions will be presented on 3 different days, preferably one session per day.

Project Implementation

I will request the institution's management for their permission to communicate the PD's contents. I will request the PD to be offered to elementary school principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors to learn how to integrate CE into the curriculum. I will also request, from senior district administrators, presentation materials

for the PowerPoint Presentations slides (see Appendix A) and access to use the auditorium for the PD sessions.

Rationale

This PD was developed to help elementary school principals in implementing ILP supporting CE. The PD content will help the attendees to recognize that CE can be integrated into the curriculum. CE is a core component of institutional ethos. CE determines all forms of institutional interactions and subsequent students' academic performance. The PD content has been developed to be presented during 3 days to the attendees. Each day of the PD will contain discussions based on the strategies that need to be applied to integrate CE into the school curriculum.

I will present each PD session by using the PowerPoint Presentation slides (see Appendix A). I will also ask senior school district administrators to invite school administrators such as principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors to attend the three sessions. I will inform other school districts in the area of the availability of the PD. I will also evaluate the PD via a survey administered to attendees (see Appendix C).

Review of the Literature

I searched articles on ILP and CE via Walden's Library to access online databases because CE is associated with students improved behavioral conduct and better academic performance. This would necessitate a common language to facilitate communication between the stakeholders. Moreover, it would require visionary leaders whose core responsibility is to maintain the momentum for sustaining CE, which helps shape young learners' character. CE comprises all explicit and implicit learning processes that

inculcate virtues and other personal strengths in young learners. Thus, CE facilitates the development of a student's practical wisdom, equipping them with the capacity to make intelligent choices. Agreeably, a character enhancing curriculum influences different aspects of a student's life. Besides improving their well-being, it also increases their interpersonal relationships.

School principals should manage the school curriculum and focus their ILP on ways to improve students' performance (Eldridge et al., 2017). The ILP of school principals should focus on the positive performance of students because ILP entails all the principals' efforts to improve the students' character development for schools to implement change, which includes changes in people (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). According to Ross and Cozzens (2016), changes faced by the organization include changes in values.

Spiritual leadership encapsulates the installation of values, attitudes, and behaviors alongside satisfying self-esteem that supports the growth of professional development (Meng, 2016). Via PD, principals could enhance the quality of teacher performance, which is the teachers' quality in carrying out their primary tasks that include education and learning (Skedsmo & Huber, 2017). The facilitation of instructional supervision undertaken by the principals will yield professional development that will elicit positive performance among the teachers and students (Chen, 2018). The application of ILP should be fostered by school principals to enhance a favorable teaching and learning environment (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). The principal will

ardently enhance and foster positive relationship between the school leadership and students (Daniëls et al., 2019).

As the person at the top of the institution's leadership hierarchy, the principal needs to understand all the factors of teacher and student performance (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). With these, principals can formulate mentoring initiatives that will improve their performances even further (Vikaraman et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, such actions prepare students to face the future since it makes them better leaders (Vogel, 2018).

Counselors, educators, and behaviorists, agree that positive outcomes in an institution result from the successful implementation of character development curricula (Wartini, 2016). The most notable aspect of character development is that it helps regulate students' thoughts and conduct (Zurqoni et al., 2019). As a result, they get empowered to pursue individual achievements. For this reason, some scholars described the character-based curriculum as moral education and other acceptable terms include service-learning and life skills education (Wang & Goldberg, 2017). Principals should focus on students' ethical conduct, which is a character development curriculum altering the expectations within the institution resulting in positive academic outcomes (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Therefore, policymakers and school principals should aim to include in PD sessions a character development content.

Increasing the character strengths of urban originating learners is only possible through participating in a character development (Bates, 2019). Given that character education is associated with love and self-discipline, participating in character development will enable them to flourish socially and academically (Jeynes, 2019). Some

of the anticipated changes in these students include the development of perseverance traits, improved performance, ethical conduct, character reasoning, academic integrity, and interpersonal connectedness (Domitrovich et al., 2017).

Students get the chance to participate in community care initiatives that help them learn how to relate with others resulting in social bonds (Domitrovich et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, an institution's approach to creating a character development curriculum determines its success or failure (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). The method also influences the preliminary implementation outcomes and students, educators, and parents' adaptability (Sebastian et al., 2019). As such, school principals and policymakers need to formulate visionary strategies to guarantee social and academic success of students by reducing office discipline referrals (Gage et al., 2018). Due to the many benefits of PD on CE such as expressing themselves and leading school initiatives, the implementation of a character development curriculum needs to be preceded by prior research (Pike et al., 2020). Therefore, the skills of institutional leaders developed via PD; for instance, principal leadership matter in the effectiveness of character development implementation plans (Hartiwi et al., 2020).

Character Education

School principals could attend PD to embrace new approaches in their instructional leadership as a way of promoting successful instructions by integrating CE into the curriculum. In recent years, the emphasis on CE has become a key concept requiring attention from the principals (Fitria et al., 2019). Most importantly, the rationale for integrating CE into the curriculum is to elicit positive behaviors among learners

(Jeynes, 2019). Besides, “behavioral issues among elementary school students have increased” (Collins et al., 2017, p. 22). CE should be integrated into the curriculum to promote positive character development (Jeynes, 2019). The integration of such effective school leadership approach tends to support achievement of positive learning outcomes among the students (Jeynes, 2019).

PD on CE is a significant concept in elementary school with principals and teachers focusing on the development of a curriculum that promotes virtues and moral education. The new era of CE offers insight on the need for a positive influence from school principals (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). This can be done via PD. CE has registered a significant evolution over the years due to the social, cultural, and economic changes that have taken place over the years.

CE became a concept associated with religious studies (Binti Si-Rajab et al., 2019). For principals to implement instructional leadership that promotes CE, it is imperative for them to establish a deeper context of CE (Berkowitz et al., 2017). The emphasis on CE brings out the need for school principals to play an active role in adopting instructional leadership with emphasis on student development (Eller & Eller, 2018). School principals should develop a positive attitude towards adopting instructional leadership emphasizing character development (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2018). The effectiveness of school principals in instructional leadership affects students’ learning and determines the approaches and subject matters that teachers address (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). It is possible to achieve positive outcomes in instruction by embracing ILP despite the evident challenges and complexity in this role (Wieczorek & Manard,

2018). Thus, school principals can learn from PD how to increase student learning via CE (Daniëls et al., 2019).

In the context of PD on CE, school leaders can learn how CE can be used to mold the character of learners. In the end, school principals must be able to influence student achievement by focusing on taking a leading role in determining the best instructional practices (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Therefore, via PD on the implementation of CE can help principals to integrate CE into the curriculum to have a positive effect on students' behaviors. For instance, students' social and emotional aspects are bound to improve.

PD on CE can help students make positive choices that enhance societal interactions. Besides, PD with content on CE could develop well-rounded students by empowering them to make sound decisions. Such students also engage productively with others since they have better self-awareness skills (Şenol & Lesinger, 2018).

Presenters of PD on CE should be skilled facilitators to empower their attendees by presenting strategies on how to help students develop emotional intelligence. Besides accelerating social change, PD on CE can also help to increase the competency of learners by empowering them to make sound decisions (Perrin, 2017). While PD programs have been proposed to address students' behavioral issues, content on CE could be beneficial to school principals to learn how to integrate CE into the curriculum. For example, character-based education programs aim to initiate dramatic transformations that reinforce prosocial behaviors, making students cooperate more, respect one another, and be compassionate about each other's situations (Wang & Goldberg, 2017).

Principals can benefit from PD on CE because the implementation of CE programs helps inculcate discipline by resolving conflicts (Perrin, 2017). For instance, school principals can attend PD on CE to help teachers teach CE because teaching students to solve theoretical problems on paper without empowering them to solve problems with their peers is insufficient in today's unpredictable world (Wang & Goldberg, 2017). Therefore, school principals can benefit from PD on CE by learning how to integrate CE into the curriculum.

In the US, several programs are geared towards the support of CE. Such CE programs include the Child Development Project, Seattle Social Development, and the Peaceful Schools Program (Park & Park, 2016). All of these programs have been developed to improve academic performance of students via CE. Therefore, it is justifiable to say that PD on CE enhances academic performance by reducing disciplinary issues in the classroom.

Professional Development

School administrators need mentoring (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). PD in the form of mentoring should include activities that can be used to support practical knowledge (Gisbert et al., 2016) and can also be used to improve schools and student learning (Postholm, 2018). School principals and teachers need PD, which can be used to provide guidance in the areas of professional and personal development (Vikaraman et al., 2017). Conversely, policymakers and educators have been facing critical challenges in the development of PD for CE curriculum and its subsequent implementation, and need PD. PD on a critical comparison of the moral education of students in the modern

day and in the past demonstrates limited effects of CE. PD is needed by principals (Roberson, 2019). For example, principals can apply ILP to implement programs (Postholm, 2018).

PD should include strategies on how school principals can promote CE. Through PD, principals can take up the role of enhancing the effectiveness of CE with a view of ensuring that learners can benefit from the programs (Bredeson, 2000). PD is needed for principals to create the educational climate that can foster the adoption of CE (Voogt et al., 2016). PD has become a concept that can address some of the predominant ethical and social issues in the American society (Shernoff et al., 2017). Specifically, because of the decline in morality, policymakers suggest teaching the value of morality (Urlick, 2016). As a result, PD should include perspectives about moral education. Principals have a critical role to play in their decision regarding PD centered on their perceptions of the long-term benefits of moral education (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). Having PD will differentiate CE from religious education. The development of an appropriate PD is becoming a necessity in many schools (Gore et al., 2017). According to Sebastian et al. (2019), educators should focus on CE. An effective PD can help teachers and principals (Postholm, 2018). For example, PD on behavioral issues can help students to increase their positive behaviors (Postholm, 2018). However, schools can only achieve this by principals attending PD on CE.

During PD, elementary school principals can recognize their role in instructional leadership (Postholm, 2018). For many years, researchers have placed emphasis on the need for effective instructional leadership from principals by attending PD (Roberson,

2019). Principals' understanding of instructional leadership is important (Eller & Eller, 2018). Instructional leadership empowers principals to set up the right pace for the implementation of CE in schools (Martin, 2018).

PD on how to use ILP to support CE is an effective intervention in an era when CE has declined in American schools. The emphasis of ILP is of great relevance in preparing school principals on the role that they must embrace if they are to promote the effective implementation of different projects (Eller & Eller, 2018). The early childhood setting should provide multiple opportunities for positive character development (Postholm, 2018).

School principals, via PD, gain insight from the intervention and learn important aspects of creating a favorable environment for fostering CE. School principals shall apply ILP to manage education settings (Gawlik, 2018). For this reason, early childhood schools should embark on promoting the successful implementation of CE with a view of fostering better outcomes in the future (Postholm, 2018). For this to happen, school administrators need PD (Urick, 2016).

The school principal can establish a framework that supports CE. Specifically, the principal can promote CE (Mayne et al., 2018). Via PD, school principals may be fully cognizant of their role in education (Urick, 2016). The education of principals can increase the effectiveness in understanding the best framework for managing schools (Urick, 2016) because school principals can achieve better outcomes (Mayne et al., 2018). By attending PD, school principals could use evidence-based approaches in implementing instructional improvements. If principals have the right perspective

towards CE, then they are likely to set up successful instruction strategies for promoting its implementation.

Professional development is one of numerous factors that stand out as both an achievement and a means to delivering quality services in any career discipline. In the field of education, teachers and institutional leaders are required to attain as much experience and skills as possible to enhance their delivery in the schools within their respective portfolios. Avidov-Ungar (2016) mentioned that professional development ensures that employees and managers are well equipped with the knowledge of practices in solving problems. The concept of professional development is also critical for coming up with innovative ways of improving service delivery.

Research findings of various scholarly studies have shown a link between the professional development of teachers and the quality of education offered in learning institutions. For example, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) mentioned that the development and implementation of education reforms are dependent on the teachers' professional development. The success or failure of any reforms that aim at making progress in the provision of services within learning institutions depends on the skills and knowledge of teachers of that particular school.

Similarly, in a research study that sought to understand how professional development improves teaching, Kennedy (2016) reported that professional development programs entail theories that help one to understand how students acquire knowledge as well as how teachers gain skills that they use to deliver the knowledge to students. Kennedy implied that professional development encompasses both the educational needs

of students as well as the career needs of teachers. Kennedy (2016) further confirmed the claim by stating that teachers participate in professional development on an annual basis because the concept is widely known to enhance teaching techniques.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) also agreed with Kennedy (2016) on the comment about the effect of the professional development of teachers on students' learning.

Teachers need to learn various special skills to assist students in understanding educational content that is challenging as well as the development of the learners' critical thinking, ability to solve problems, and communication skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). By stating this, Darling-Hammond et al. confirmed that there is a relationship between the skills, knowledge, and experience of teachers, that are acquired through professional development programs and the educational outcomes of students.

Various scholars have lauded professional development as a key element in the improvement of educational service delivery. For instance, Stewart (2014) commented that some aspects of professional development such as personal learning are not sufficient for the integration of skills and knowledge that are essential for delivering quality education. Moreover, Stewart concluded, based on a review of literature, that the contemporary professional development strategies are not as effective as the proposed techniques such as learning in a professional community. However, Stewart acknowledged that there are certain aspects of the contemporary methods of professional development that can be integrated into programs that seek to enhance teachers' skills and expertise in delivering content to students. The perception of Stewart (2014) about professional development pointed to the need for a review of some of the aspects that

have either been outdated by circumstances or that are no longer effective as a result of the changes in the education system over time.

Additionally, Sato and Haegele (2018) raised doubt on the effectiveness of professional development. According to Sato and Haegele, the process is essential to the overall development of teachers' skills and knowledge of delivering content. However, its only shortcoming is that the design and technique used to achieve the concept are not appreciated by teachers as the professionals feel undervalued. Notably, the comment by Sato and Haegele also emphasized the point raised by Stewart (2014) that there are various aspects of professional development of teachers that need to be reviewed and changed to make the concept viable for the improvement of the quality of services offered by the trainers.

In their findings, Sato and Haegele (2018) further mentioned that what teachers require are more responsibilities in the process and the ability to control their learning as it gives them a chance to acquire relevant knowledge based on their professional needs as well as the requirements of the classroom. The findings of Sato and Haegele's study indicated that the techniques used in professional development ought to be reviewed to fit the needs of teachers and make the professionals more active participants by giving them control over the process. Notably, this point conflicts with the observation made by

Based on the critique outlined by the above scholars it is evident that the process of professional development has certain shortcomings that need to be addressed to ensure the delivery of quality education and integration of best practices in the field of education. As such, there is a need for relevant stakeholders to make the necessary

adjustments to the traditional professional development methods. The literature review also revealed that professional development is linked to the learning outcomes of students. Thus, the management of learning institutions should put in place necessary measures to ensure the professional development of teachers to achieve high quality and standards of education offered in the schools.

ILP of School Principals

The ILP of school administrators should consist of giving feedback to teachers to promote professional growth and development. Teachers' and students' decisions in the schools depend on principal leadership and support for instruction (Eller & Eller, 2018). The performance of the teachers and students also depend on the principal who can inspire and reassure them (Şenol & Lesinger, 2018). Principals should have the competency and the capacity to be able to effectively lead their school (Jeynes, 2019). The efforts of principals determine the effectiveness of instruction in different levels of learning (Jeynes) because principals play an important role as instructional leaders in student academic success (Perrin, 2017). Thus, school principals can support CE. If the principal pays attention to different approaches of promoting instructional practices, then the result will be a higher level of commitment by the teachers to promote positive character development among learners.

The Role of School Principals to Support Character Education

The role of school principals is to establish an acceptable framework in accordance with existing regulations on CE. School principals should recognize and

implement CE (Kouali, 2017; Zurqoni et al., 2019). The implementation of CE should focus on transforming the perspectives of students (Jeynes, 2019).

Instructional leadership as a defining characteristic in the role of school principals emerges as a significant concept (Shaked & Schechter, 2016). For this reason, principals should create a framework for student discipline (Jeynes, 2019). In the context of CE, school principals can embrace their new role and focus on creating a remarkable environment in schools (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Boyce & Bowers, 2018). Apparently, the information gathered from teachers highlights the importance of school principals in creating a favorable environment for CE. School principals have the capacity to promote discipline-specific instructional leadership such as CE for the benefit of students (Shaked & Schechter, 2016). If principals apply their instructional leadership strategies, then they are likely to register positive outcomes in the end.

The school principals' experiences challenge the right CE curriculum. Principals should be ensuring that teaching in the school adequately meets the needs of students (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). In many cases, principals recognize the need for placing a high priority on the need for establishing the best curriculum to enhance the wellbeing of students (Eldridge et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers can offer instructions in CE should school principals embrace their role in developing the right CE curriculum.

The outcomes of successful CE depend on the effectiveness of principals in playing their role in instructional leadership, which can be enhanced via PD on CE. In the context of CE, school principals should promote instructions in ethics (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). School principals should set up a curricular framework that supports

positive character development among learners (Zurqoni et al., 2018). With a significant decline in morality and ethical perspectives, school principals should promote the instruction of CE. Over time, CE has become an area that requires attention from school principals. In conclusion, the overall role of principals in exploring ILP has the capacity to determine what teachers deliver in the classrooms (Vogel, 2018). Such an understanding is of critical importance in recognizing how school principals can encourage the instruction of CE.

Leadership Models to Support CE

School principals can use leadership models that govern CE to increase the outcomes of moral education in schools. Scholars have studied models used in instructional leadership and their potential outcomes in student achievement (Jeynes, 2019). Evidence reported from the success of such leadership models indicates the need for school principals to adopt and implement them in their schools (Gumus et al., 2018). The different models could be replicated in elementary school settings to alter the mode of learning to include character development (Sebastian et al., 2019).

At the elementary school level, the principals must establish a firm instructional leadership that places emphasis on CE (Bafadal et al., 2020). In the end, instructional leadership models and strategies can be used to promote the implementation of CE that will mold learners positively (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Liu & Hallinger, 2018). Thus, the school principals must remain cognizant of the importance of instructional leadership models and its expected outcomes in institutional leadership and performance.

Summary

The emerging trends in educational leadership have created a measure of tension on the effectiveness of school principals to make informed decisions regarding their emerging role in instructional leadership and curriculum. PD should be designed to address the role of principals on curriculum development (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). Principals should include character development in elementary school curriculum because the implementation of CE in elementary schools is important (Jeynes, 2019). Instructional leadership challenges may hinder the effectiveness of school principals in influencing ethics (Dishon & Goodman, 2017). The adoption of effective approaches in instructional leadership can only take place if school principals receive training (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). The adoption of CE approaches is to use specific strategies to reduce students' negative behaviors. Such an approach can help principals in elementary schools to improve their ILP via PD on CE to help teachers to mold the character of students. School principals via PD can promote CE and support teachers to use best teaching practices in molding the character of students. Thus, the role that school principals need to play to support CE is important.

Project Description

I developed the project. The content of the project will be presented to school principals. I will present the three sessions that contain ways to successfully support CE by attending PD. The PD content is on (a) best ILP regarding CE, (b) specific strategies to know how to support CE, (c) how to apply ILP to support CE, (d) special initiatives to support CE, and (e) strategies to encourage principals to use CE.

Needed Resources, Existing Supports, Barriers, and Solutions

I will request the PD to be offered to both elementary school principals and assistant principals and guidance counselors to learn how to integrate CE into the curriculum. I will also request funding to present the PD sessions to the attendees. Thus, in order to implement the PD at the local school district, I will ask senior administrators to present the content of the PD.

I will request, from senior district administrators, to present the project at the study site. I will also request presentation materials for the PowerPoint Presentations slides found in Appendix A. I will request access to use the auditorium for the PD sessions.

Project Implementation and Timetable

I developed the project timetable, which includes strategies to help principals to support CE (see Table 4). In order to implement the PD at the local school district, I will request the PD to be offered to elementary school principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors to learn how to integrate CE into the curriculum.

Table 4*PD for Principals Regarding Character Education*

Time	PD Content		
9:00-9:25 a.m.	Activity 1: Best ILP	Activity 1: Best ILP	Activity 1: Best ILP
9:30-10:30 a.m.	Activity 2: CE Strategies to support CE	Activity 2: CE Strategies to support CE	Activity 2: CE Strategies to support CE
10:45 am -12:10 p.m.	Activity 3: ILP and CE	Activity 3: ILP and CE	Activity 3: ILP and CE
12:10-13:45 p.m.	Break		
13:10-14:15 p.m.	Activity 4: CE Expectations & Norms for support CE	Activity 4: CE Expectations & Norms for support CE	Activity 4: CE Expectations & Norms for support CE
14:15-15:15 p.m.	Activity 5: Reflections and recommendations	Activity 5: Reflections and recommendations	Activity 5: Reflections and recommendations
15:15-15:45p.m.	Activity 6: Evaluation	Activity 6: Evaluation	Activity 6: Evaluation

Roles and Responsibilities

I will take a leading role in presenting the PD at the research site. I will invite school principals at the project site to participate in the PD. The roles and responsibilities of the attendees will be to learn new strategies to better implement ILP to support CE. The roles and responsibilities of senior district administrators will be to encourage elementary school principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors to attend the PD.

Project Evaluation Plan

I developed the PD and will deliver its content to elementary school principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors for 3 years at the project site. The PD will help attendees at the project site to implement ILP to support CE. The PD will also help attendees to better understand CE's purpose and its benefits. After 3 years, I will evaluate the PD content. The attendees will be asked to provide written feedback by completing an evaluation form (see Appendix C). Such an evaluation may be important in order to strengthen the PD content regarding the implementation of CE in schools, which aims to impact students' interaction at the social level. I will use outcome-based evaluation to evaluate the PD content.

Project Implications

At the project site, school principals will learn how to better implement ILP to support CE. PD content will help the attendees to support CE at the project site. Hands-on activities include ways to:

- Apply best ILP regarding CE,

- Use specific strategies to know how to support CE,
- Apply ILP to support CE,
- Use special initiatives to support CE,
- Use strategies to encourage principals to use CE, and
- Use strategies to create committees to support CE.

Senior school district administrators should offer the PD for elementary school principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors to support CE. A PD plan was developed to assist elementary school principals to learn how to support CE. The strategies found in PD have implications for positive social change for school administrators to apply to support CE by integrating it into the curriculum.

The attendees will benefit from the project by learning how to successfully integrate CE into the curriculum. Students will benefit from the PD outcomes that are promoting positive behaviors by focusing on CE. Parents will benefit from the project by understanding their roles such as participating in proper character development and possibly recognize ways of instilling their children with good character traits. The PD further benefits policymakers in the education field by supporting the quest to improve education by designing and implementing educational strategies on CE.

Direction for Future Research

Future scholars willing to replicate this project study should interview K-12 school principals. I interviewed principals in different locations within one school district using an interview protocol. Scholars should interview senior school district administrators to identify ways to support elementary school principals to better

implement their ILP to support CE. Scholars should also interview teachers to identify factors influencing their decisions to support CE.

Summary

The project is a PD, which is designed help those who will attend to implement ILP to support CE. The PD is a supplemental support for the attendees (see Appendix A) to implement CE. Specifically, the PD content is on (a) best ILP regarding CE, (b) specific strategies to know how to support CE, (c) how to apply ILP to support CE, (d) special initiatives to support CE, and (e) strategies to encourage principals to use CE. In Section 4, I present the reflections and conclusions.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I present the strengths and limitations of this project. I also address recommendations for stakeholders such as elementary school principals. Finally, I present information on scholarship and change.

Project Strengths and Limitations

I have administrative and teaching experience as a K-12 educator for the past 19 years. My experience as a principal for the past 6 academic years informed the development of the PD. The project leans on the understanding that educational facilities play the role of character development solely. On the contrary, character development is a social aspect that occurs in the individual's surroundings and continues to grow until maturity. Nevertheless, the students spend more time with educational experts in the school setting than the time spent at home or any other settings that could influence character development. As such, I developed this project because a substantial level of character development is acquired in elementary school facilities. I believe that a strength of this project is the involvement of the attendees regarding ILP supporting CE. The PD sessions will help the attendees to support CE. The PD timeframe could be a limitation because the attendees may not be able to attend given their schedules.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

CE is important for a holistic learning experience (personality development, fostering mutual respect, development of good personality, and promoting acceptance in society). The project deliverable is the PD for attendees to better implement their ILP to support CE. Alternative approaches could include recommendations for the development

of a policy for CE to be integrated in all elementary schools at the study site. Other alternative approaches could include ways to successfully use CE as an intervention program to reduce students' behavioral issues. This PD content includes (a) best ILP regarding CE, (b) specific strategies to know how to support CE, (c) how to apply ILP to support CE, (d) special initiatives to support CE, and (e) strategies to encourage principals to use CE.

Institutions have not done enough to promote CE (poor management, networking, and conflict resolution strategies). Schools' management must be at the forefront of the promotion of CE through the promotion of implementation of instructional leadership practice (i.e., offering corrective feedback, working with students to create relevant goals, holding target conversations, and provision of professional development opportunities). Thus, the findings of this project added valuable information to instructional leadership in supporting student character development at an early age in elementary school settings. This project could include teachers and other administrators to understand of the impact of instructional leadership on supporting CE. As such, involving representatives from these groups would expand the catchment of morals inculcated into the elementary school children.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

I learned how to develop an interview protocol, recruit participants, and schedule interviews. Furthermore, I learned to apply research to organize interview transcripts and how to use thematic analysis for emergent themes. I will use this positive experience to conduct more qualitative research at the study site.

I was a novice researcher. I applied knowledge on how to conduct qualitative research. I obtained critical skills in data collection and analysis. Since I had not received prior training on such methods of data collection, I learned by doing and validating the methods via a literature review. I also learned how to conduct thematic analysis. I am a state-certified educator with 25 years of experience in the school setting. I am passionate about academics. I plan to mentor other educators within and without my school setting to understand the integration of CE into the curriculum.

Importance of the Work

I learned from the participants about reflection on their instructional leadership practices supporting CE. I developed the PD content based on the emergent themes. I learned how to manage time when conducting research. Overall, I enjoyed the entire process of conducting this research.

The doctoral journey has had positive impact on my career as an elementary school principal and a novice researcher. I applied the knowledge acquired from the research coursework to collect, code, and analyze the data collected from 10 interviewees. I demonstrated high levels of patience and critical expertise in reviewing the literature to support my findings. Lessons from my research coursework were applied to research ILP and CE. Furthermore, as an elementary school principal, I have a professional responsibility to better implement ILP supporting CE.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The attendees will learn new strategies to implement ILP to support CE. Hands-on activities will help the attendees to know how to support CE. Senior school district

administrators should offer the PD to elementary school principals to support CE. I recommend to elementary school principals and senior school district administrators to use the PD content to support CE. I recommend to future researchers to collect quantitative data to examine PD on CE. The strategies found in PD have implications for positive social change for school administrators to apply to support CE by integrating it into the curriculum.

Conclusion

In Section 4, I expressed personal reflections. I also drew conclusions from the project. This project involved school principals and the project deliverable is a PD on how to better implement ILP to support CE. PD content is on (a) best ILP regarding CE, (b) specific strategies to know how to support CE, (c) how to apply ILP to support CE, (d) special initiatives to support CE, and (e) strategies to encourage principals to use CE. This project added valuable information to instructional leadership in supporting student character development at an early age in elementary school settings. PD hands-on activities will help the attendees of the 3-day PD to know how to apply ILP to support CE. A PD plan was developed to assist elementary school principals to learn how to support CE. The strategies found in PD have implications for positive social change for school administrators to apply to support CE by integrating it into the curriculum.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development for
Elementary School Principals to Support Character Education

by

Dawn Engle



Professional Development

A Three-Day Professional Development for Elementary School

Principals Regarding Character Education

Dawn A. Engle

Dr. Jerry Collins, Dr. Peter Kiriakidis

EDD 8990

07-11-2020



DAY 1: Utilization of Cognitive Activities for Enhancing Proficiency

- a) Individual activities to regain insights
- b) Group activities
- c) Improve teachers' proficiency and increase their experience with practice
- d) Make students to complete tasks by using the instructional leadership model



a) Individual Activities to Regain Insights

- Gather insights regarding 'character education'
- Principals and teachers must understand the importance of 'character education'
- Organize sessions to make principals and teachers aware of the concepts related to 'character education'



a) Individual Activities to Regain Insights (Contd...)

- Advocate the inclusion of ‘character education’ in the curriculum
- Consider one-to-one interaction concerning ‘character education’ for the students and their family members
- Give ample time for students to develop related skills



a) Individual Activities to Regain Insights (Contd...)

- Design individual classroom assessments to detect good character
- Introduce activities to develop connections between teachers and students during instructional practices
- Encourage the elementary school students to be accountable for their portrayal of their characters



b) Group Activities

- Principals must try to form an adequate learning environment
- Before the initiation of new classes, students must be provided with a safe space to interact with themselves
- Encourage effective and positive communication



b) Group Activities (Contd...)

- Consider discussions, exercises, and practice of effective communication
- Assign group tasks to the students to enhance their character
- Monitor and promote participation along with interaction




b) Group Activities (Contd...)

- Promote engagement for improving their character
- Counsel those students who portray negative traits
- Give importance to ethical values
- Provide students with instructions to convey their understanding regarding the procedures



b) Group Activities (Contd...)

- Work collectively to form a community
- Nurture group coordination and co-operation
- Select meaningful and relatable instructions
- Promote meaningful dialogue
- Allow the students to clear their queries



c) Improve Teachers' Proficiency and Increase their Experience with Practice

- Encourage teachers to view themselves as leaders in the classroom
- Allow them to consider instructional practices
- Plan a roadmap for teachers and students
- Apply personal experience and gain proficiency




c) Improve Teachers' Proficiency and Increase their Experience with Practice (Contd...)

- Encourage personal involvement
- Facilitate deeper learning
- Provide active learning scope to the students so that their problems can be resolved
- Avail instructional guidance to the teachers and students
- Align the character education goals with academic study




d) Make Students Complete Tasks by Using the Instructional Leadership Model

- Set success/achievement goals for students
- Formulate specific instructions and activities
- They must be encouraged to learn with examples
- Continuous learning must be supported



d) Make Students Complete Tasks by Using the Instructional Leadership Model (Contd...)

- Show videos or PowerPoint presentations to the students
- Provide adequate resources to the students
- Ensure students follow instructions
- Allow students to learn on their own pace during character education programs




d) Make Students Complete Tasks by Using the Instructional Leadership Model (Contd...)

- Use story-telling for making students understand the difference between good and bad conduct
- Implement “Conscious Discipline”
- Rewarding or correcting students



d) Make Students Complete Tasks by Using the Instructional Leadership Model (Contd...)

- Assign tasks so that they can develop good character traits throughout their life
- Facilitate self-regulation techniques for students to manage their emotions
- Teach character education through meaningful interactions and play



DAY 2: Incorporation of Intense Projects and Cognitive Activities

- a) Intense projects and cognitive activities
- b) Practical Application of learned lessons
- c) Understanding the requirements of elementary students



a) Intense Projects and Cognitive Activities

- Developing interesting and challenging activities for the students
- Assigning them with projects that are highly relevant to character education
- Choosing activities in which they can reflect their understanding



a) Intense Projects and Cognitive Activities (Contd...)

- Promote positive character development
- Encourage students to be creative while listening to stories
- Enable students to express themselves appropriately while performing tasks
- Organize challenging and rewarding activities



a) Intense Projects and Cognitive Activities (Contd...)

- All the activities must be aimed to resolve the issues faced by the students
- Teachers must adapt to the learning styles of the students through continuous evaluation and differentiated instructions
- Receive feedback from the students



a) Intense Projects and Cognitive Activities (Contd...)

- Develop communication skills so that students can resolve their issues appropriately
- Reward students showing progress at any level
- Encourage others to follow their role models
- Display individual success of the students in an exhibition



b) Practical Application of Learned Lessons

- Understanding the difference between positive and negative behavior
- Understanding the difference between the learning pace and style of students
- Providing ample opportunities for interaction



b) Practical Application of Learned Lessons (Contd...)

- Provision of differentiated instructions that guide every student to improve
- Enable students to select how they can show their understanding
- Allow them to complete the tasks in their way



b) Practical Application of Learned Lessons (Contd...)

- Give them adequate materials to support them
- Integrate technology with face-to-face learning for better understanding
- Enable them to make their own decisions



c) Understanding the Requirements of Elementary Students

- The foremost requirement is competent school staff members and teachers
- Teachers need to give needful support
- Frequent meetings are required
- Parents' input is also equally important



c) Understanding the Requirements of Elementary Students (Contd...)

- Students also need efficient strategies, which can shape their character development
- They also require core values to comply with effectively
- They further need to develop adequate skills
- Each instruction need to fit the requirements of students



c) Understanding the Requirements of Elementary Students (Contd...)

- Resources and learning materials must be freely accessible for both students and their parents
- Students must be acquainted with interesting and simulated games
- They must be free from restrictive structures



Reference for Elementary School Principals & Teachers

- <http://www.fldoe.org/em-response/resources-families.shtml>
- <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5660/urlt/StandardsRecommendationsPacket.pdf>
- <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5574/urlt/K-5TopicCoverageCharts.pdf>
- <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5636/urlt/0072410-professdevreport08.pdf>



DAY 3: Recommend Leadership Practices for Professional Development

- a) Formulate differential instructions**
- b) Integrate knowledge into daily practice**
- c) Enhance instructional practices regularly**



a) Formulate Differential Instructions

- Enhance character development instructions
- Expand and improve students' understanding regarding character education
- Incorporate curriculum materials along with instructional strategies



a) Formulate Differential Instructions (Contd...)

- Identify individual student's behavioral issues
- Students must be provided with differentiated instructions from their teachers
- Teachers must also assess and identify the presence of serious issues



a) Formulate Differential Instructions (Contd...)

- Tasks and instructions must be planned appropriately
- 'Hands-on' instructional leadership can be utilized for some students requiring extra attention
- Teachers must identify pedagogical characteristics
- Usage of evidence-based and reasonable practices



b) Integrate Knowledge into Daily Practice

- Educate and mentor teachers through instructional leadership
- Encourage the students to behave adequately by teaching them Christian values
- Undertaking regular interactive classes



b) Integrate Knowledge into Daily Practice (Contd...)

- Make routines according to the policies made by policymakers
- Make agendas through the valuable inputs of the teachers
- Enable peer-to-peer meetings regularly
- Instruct teachers to conduct non-scheduled or scheduled observations



b) Integrate Knowledge into Daily Practice (Contd...)

- Teachers must facilitate reflective supervision
- Purchase character education and instructional leadership materials
- Teach Biblical principles related to character development
- Consider regular feedback and self-reflection practices



b) Integrate Knowledge into Daily Practice (Contd...)

- Implementation of pictures, videos, posters, presentations and other digital materials
- Recommendation of graphic organizer
- Conducting values clarification tasks
- Facilitating open communication inside and outside classrooms



c) Enhance Instructional Practices Regularly (Contd...)

- State and district-wise initiatives must be undertaken
- Theories and concepts such as learning-centered leadership can also be applied
- Guidelines and handbooks can also be helpful
- Regular interactions among stakeholders are necessary



c) Enhance Instructional Practices Regularly (Contd...)

- Consideration of reciprocal teaching for effective instructional practices
- Teachers can also play the role of coaches through instructional coaching practices
- Leading-by-example is one of the effective ways to attain positive character education outcomes



Consideration of Guidelines And Regulations

- School principals must closely abide by the objectives and guidelines established by policymakers
- The guidelines must be well-balanced
- Adherence to ethical regulations
- Clear vision, teamwork, and enforcement of school rules
- Consideration of the state regulations by the teachers



Information and Reports on related Programs

- Instructional leadership model is widely used
- It helps the assessment of principals' role in implementing character education in the curriculum
- Schools' positive performance can be attained by building positive attitude among students
- Poor performance of teachers can affect the outcomes
- Professional development of principals, teachers, and students is highly necessary



Information Related to standards that needs to be followed for Professional Development

- Ethical standards along with state standards need to be followed for adequate professional development
- With appropriate materials, schools can meet high standards, thereby making teachers and students accountable
- Teachers must change their perception regarding character education and demand high standards

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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Elementary school principal: _____

1. Tell me about your instructional leadership practices.
2. Tell me about character education in general.
3. Tell me about character education in your school.
4. How do you implement your instructional leadership practices?
5. How do you support character education?
6. How do you implement character education in your school?
7. What ILP do you implement as an elementary school principal regarding character education?
8. How do promote positive character development?
9. How does character education contribute to the academic success of students?
10. How do you provide support and guidance to teachers regarding character education?

Appendix C: PD Evaluation

Name of Facilitator(s): _____

Date of evaluation: _____

- Your comments regarding the overall quality of this PD.

- Your comments regarding the impact of this PD on your work.
