2022

Principals' and Coaches' Perspectives on Leadership Practices and Instructional Coaching

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Coaching

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MSEd, Johns Hopkins University, 2011

MEd, Bowie State University, 2007

BA, Manhattan College, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

Education reform is the driver for changes in principal leadership practices. Instructional coaching is a common lever used to meet reform mandates but has had inconsistent results. The problem in practice is little is known about how principals use leadership practices to establish effective instructional coaching in their school building. The conceptual framework used in this study was the distributive leadership framework, which was used to analyze how leadership skills are distributed throughout an organization to meet overall goals. In this study, the principals and the instructional coaches were asked to perceive and describe the principal's leadership practices that influence the implementation of instructional coaching. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 12 participants—four principals and eight instructional coaches working in four different middle schools in a district. The thematic analysis produced five significant categories: (a) transparency, (b) support, (c) leadership style, (d) collaboration, and (e) trust. The findings suggest that principals who were former instructional coaches are more likely to use leadership practices that positively influence the implementation of instructional coaching. The findings have the potential to contribute to professional development to enhance principals' leadership practices that influence instructional coaching. Potential implications for positive social change may be the requirement that district leaders provide training for principals and instructional coaches to counter inconsistencies in the implementation of coaching to better support the classroom teachers and influence student success and achievement.

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Dedication

I give honor to my ancestors who have paved the way for me and spiritually aligned me with many people who have contributed to this goal. I leaned on my alignment with my ancestors and spirituality to give me focus, commitment, and grace to persevere through all the challenges during my doctoral journey. I am my ancestor's wildest dreams.

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Martha Berry, for always being an inspiration for me through her hard work and dedication to our family. You have shown me how to love unconditionally and consistently. Most importantly, you demonstrated how formidable a woman with a plan can be. Thank you for making our future your plan.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my greatest accomplishment, my son Savyon Stokes. I only hope to be an inspiration to you as you are to me. Your ongoing support and consideration have motivated me to accomplish everything I have in my career.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my esteemed committee led by my committee chair Dr. James Bailey. Your timely feedback and flexibility supported me reaching the finish line. This process can be a battle of attrition and your support was paramount. Thank you, Dr. Yarosz, for being a part of my entire journey and constantly providing feedback on my methodology alignment.

Thank you, Dr. Jermaine Ellerbe and Dr. Ki Eisha Jordan, for affording me your education and researcher expertise. Thank you for your willingness to review my work and progress. Thank you for being a sounding board when I needed to discuss the ideas in my head related to my research. Dr. Jordan, thank you for reminding me to KISS the process.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me throughout this process. Specifically, my sister Samitra Butler, for taking care of me during this journey when I had my car accident that left me with a brain injury. I appreciate everyone's understanding, consideration, and motivation that supported me to reach my educational goals. I appreciate all my friends who accompanied me while working in local cafes to provide company during this long and sometimes lonely journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

A school principal is responsible for ensuring that policies and programs put in place by the district, state, and federal governing bodies are executed. The Common Core State Standards, Race to the Top, and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require rigorous instructional changes and evaluation practices of teachers and leaders (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Many school districts across the nation have created instructional coaching programs to support teachers' development to meet the demands of school reform. Yet, instructional coaching has not been effectively implemented consistently throughout the nation (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015).

School reform policies have increased demands on school leaders to address education reform that frames the expectations around evaluation, teacher professional development, and student achievement (Fuller et al., 2017). The shift in principal leadership has transformed from manager to instructional leader (Gates et al., 2019). Researchers such as Green (2018) and Young and Lewis (2015) have articulated that education reform and policy implementation are highly contingent on a principal's leadership and understanding of reform and policies. While instructional coaching is commonly used across districts and states to meet reform requirements, the effectiveness is not consistent. Principals are required to implement instructional coaching, but they may not receive training to understand how to effectively implement or use coaching for their teachers. According to Carraway and Young (2015), principals need structured staff

development and district support to be effective instructional leaders because most principals do not possess the knowledge and skills needed to be instructional leaders.

Considering recent curriculum reforms, accountability policies, and changing demographics, leaders must have expertise not only in culture building and supervision skills, but also in adult learning, cultural funds of knowledge, curriculum, and the role of politics. Changes in federal and state mandates on teacher quality have put principals in a unique position to manage school reform implementation and focus on instructional leadership (Lochmiller & Mancinelli, 2019). Instructional coaching is an option that districts have pursued to support the shift to high quality instruction and principal and teacher evaluations that include student achievement.

According to Killion et al. (2012), the instructional coach is supposed to share and support the principal's vision on instruction; however, the effectiveness of coaching hinges on the relationship between the principal and the instructional coach. In some cases, instructional coaching is a district initiative that principals must support, and in others instructional coaching is school-based initiative. A principal must communicate the roles of the instructional coach to the school community. The framing of coaching roles systemically and individually has conflicting impacts on the implementation of instructional coaching (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). What is missing from the literature on principal leadership is the process of principals establishing and implementing an effective instructional coaching program in their school building.

In this chapter, I include a review of the background, the problem statement, the purpose, and the conceptual framework relating to principal leadership practices. I use

theory from school reform implementation, education policy, and instructional coaching. This chapter includes an overview of the nature of the study, definition of key terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the study significance.

Background

The benefits of principal leadership can vary on a school-to-school basis. Principal leadership is key in setting school climate, student achievement, and meeting the demands of education reform (Allen et al., 2015; Koyama, 2014). Principals are required to perform as instructional leaders and as managers. Educational policy has illustrated the need for principals to be instructional leaders to have a positive impact on teacher professional growth and student learning (Terosky, 2016).

Education reform is the driver for changes in principal leadership practice. Districts, school leaders, and teachers are consistently implementing education policy daily. School leaders and educators are left to prioritize and integrate school reform while making sense of new ideas and practices and managing accountability measures (Rigby et al., 2016). ESSA replaced the previous school reform bill, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and required more accountability by states, districts, and schools with performance expectations for students, teachers, and principals (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). ESSA requires states to staff each classroom with an effective teacher and each school with an effective leader. Fuller et al. (2017) conducted a document analysis study to examine the degree to which state equity plans identify the distribution of principals and principal turnover as factors influencing leadership mechanisms that affect student access to effective teachers, hiring teachers, building instructional capacity

of teachers, and managing teacher turnover. Researchers found that 27% of states mentioned the distribution of principals and 48% of states mentioned principal turnover as factors for student access to effective teachers and effective school leaders (Fuller et al., 2017)

Schechter and Shaked (2017) investigated how principals impact school reform initiatives in Israel. The researchers found that principals may decide to partially implement school reform due to how they view the reform fitting into their school reality. Reform methods are ongoing and often layered upon other reform efforts. Rigby et al. (2016) characterized principals as a bridge between shifting instructional logics and enactments of instructional leadership in schools. Wieczorek and Theoharis (2015) conducted a qualitative study using semistructured interviews to examine principals' emotional sense making of Race to the Top reform and their ability to balance the promoting demands of teacher's emotional needs with the charge to implement mandated, accountability-driven, instructional, and evaluation changes in their schools. Wieczorek and Theoharis (2015) found that principals commonly reflected on how their leadership practices and high-stakes policies can effectively influence their performance and instructional leadership in their buildings.

Instructional coaching has been used as a lever to meet school reform requirements. ESSA requires that states revise their teacher evaluation programs and support the development of teachers and school leaders to increase student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Instructional coaches' work provides an opportunity to span the boundaries between district and school levels by transmitting

logic of instruction and supporting school leaders' understandings of instruction reform (Rigby et al., 2016).

Mayer et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative case study of how one external coach engaged as an intermediary of a school reform using a communities of practice framework and found that coaches were initially viewed as the leaders of the reform effort, but teachers enacted the key aspects of the reform. The researchers also found that once the teachers took on the leadership role in relation to implementing the school reform in their classrooms, the coach's role shifted to developing the staff's capacity to institute new practices (Mayer et al., 2015). The leadership practices of the instructional coach translate policy understanding into policy practice. In an example of coaches' leadership practices in framing school reform, Woulfin's (2015) three-coach case study concluded that coaches commonly used the skills of invoking experts, accepting incremental change, and building consensus.

Instructional coaching can be a lever for school reform, but challenges can arise when coaching is used inconsistently (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). Researchers have found instructional coaching to be more effective with support from principals; however, more research is needed on how leadership practices influence the practices of instructional coaching (Day, 2015; Tanner et al., 2017). Woulfin (2015) surmised the importance of investigating the leadership practices of principals and instructional coaches in efforts to support school reform practices in the school building. The gap in practice is how principals implement instructional coaching in their building (Lownhaupt et al., 2014). The process of hiring coaches, qualified coaches, clear roles, leadership

opportunities, and coaching praxis are reasons that may relate to implementation differences (Knight, 2019).

A principal's active support for an initiative such as using an instructional coach to improve best practices for teachers largely determines an instructional coach's degree of impact (Tanner et al., 2017). Chief complaints about instructional coaching from principals come when coaching is executed poorly and is ineffective, wasteful, and harmful to classroom teachers' practice (Knight et al., 2015). Instructional coaches have expressed that lack of principal support, clear roles, and a need for a narrowed focus of work have negatively impacted their practice (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). Researchers are starting to examine high-quality instructional coaching and low-quality instructional coaching. The differentiation is a place for partnership for principals and instructional coaches, when implementing an instructional coaching model. A question remains of how principals establish that partnership.

There is a gap in practice of how principals effectively implement instructional coaching (Lownhaupt et al., 2014; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Neumerski, 2013). By exploring principals' and instructional coaches' experiences and perceptions of implementation in middle school, I present how principal leadership influences instructional coaching. This study may provide information on the process of effective implementation and instructional coaching success working with teachers. The findings of this study may contribute to professional development for principals to support instructional coaching implementation.

Problem Statement

School principals are challenged to meet the demands of school reform with the use of implementing instructional coaching. The problem is that there is little current knowledge on how principals' leadership influences the effective implementation of the instructional coaching mandate. The ESSA and the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards require rigorous teaching reform across all content disciplines (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). School district superintendents and principals in nearly every urban district in the country are rapidly increasing the number of coaches to help meet school reform goals (Kurz et al., 2017). To meet the rigorous requirements, a large east coast school district implemented an instructional coaching model to meet the ESSA and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) requirements. Gibbons and Cobb (2017) found that present research and policies are lacking the available research on effective coaching practices and implementation. Significant structural differences by school principals lead to distinct ways the coaching model interacts with existing infrastructures at the school level, which makes coaching difficult to implement (Lownhaupt et al., 2014). According to Taylor et al. (2013), administrators should receive professional development for coaching to have a positive return measured by changes in student learning outcomes.

The gap in practice is how a principal's leadership influences implementation of instructional coaching in their buildings. According to Neumerski (2013), researchers concluded that a principal's level of support of instructional coaching influences the frequency of teacher–coach interaction and coaching effectiveness. Researchers Dean et

al. (2016), Brown and Militello (2016), and Schecter and Shaked (2017) have identified a need to examine further the perspectives of principals and coaches. Coaching will thrive if teachers feel safe and supported. Principals are responsible for setting the tone and creating the conditions where instructional coaching is supported by leadership, norms, and protocols (Trach, 2014). Mangin (2014) found that principals would prioritize their ideology in the decision-making process that did not support the implementation of instructional coaching, and future research should use micropolitics and informal leadership to understand policy implementation related to coaching.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study dissertation was to explore the perspectives of principals and instructional coaches on how principal leadership influences the implementation of instructional coaching in local middle schools. A basic qualitative study approach was used to address the study problem. Semistructured interviews with the school administrators and coaches were used to examine the perceptions of the participants to develop an understanding of how the principal leadership supports instructional coaching.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research:

RQ1: What are principals' perspectives of how their leadership has influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

RQ2: What are instructional coaches' perspectives of how principal leadership has influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was based on Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership (DL) framework. The framework illustrates how leadership skills are distributed throughout an organization to meet overall goals. Spillane (2005) is one of the main theorists for DL theory in education. Spillane leads the research for the theoretical framework for DL in schools (Spillane et al., 2001). Spillane (2005) suggested that DL is about leadership practice rather than traditional roles, functions, routines, and structures. A distributed perspective of leadership practice is an accurate way to examine the themes of leadership patterns in schools (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2011; Kelly & Dikkers, 2016; Spillane et al., 2001).

The conceptual framework was DL theory. During the 1990s, DL theory revitalized education (Gronn, 2002). DL theory is centered on the belief that leadership is best considered a group quality. Two popular interpretations of DL stem from the work of Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2005). Gronn's (2002) work focuses on leadership that is individualized or takes the collaborative approach as described as additive or holistic. The additive form of DL is based on a hierarchical view, whereas the principal extends leadership roles to individuals or groups. The midlevel leadership members may be team leaders, instructional coaches, or department chairpersons that make decisions for other groups in the school below the midlevel. The midlevel leaders add their expertise to the goal outlined by the principal. Holistic distribution refers to consciously existing and managed collaborative patterns involving some or all leadership sources in the organization (Gronn, 2002; Kelly & Dikkers, 2016). Professional learning communities,

focus groups, and committees are examples of holistic distribution. The members of the group blur the lines of title leadership to focus on the goals of the group, synergetic working experiences, and equal voice. Holistic DL requires collaboration among those in leadership.

In contrast to Gronn's work, Spillane's conceptualization of DL is focused on the leadership practices for analysis. Multiple sources of influence within an organization is described as *leader–plus* that notes both informal and formal roles of leadership from Spillane's DL research (Harris, 2011). The primary focus of Spillane's distribution framework is that leadership practices take shape in the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situations (Spillane, 2006). The practices of leadership are described as collaborative, collective, coordinated, and parallel (Tian et al., 2016).

According to Spillane (2006) leadership practices are categorized as artifacts such as tools and organizational routines. Artifacts are externalized representation of ideas and intentions that constitute leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004. The school principal is chiefly responsible for the educational infrastructure in the building. Educational infrastructures are designed to support, maintain, and/or improve instructional quality. This includes standards for learning (professional learning and student learning), curriculum, organizational routines, formal positions, tools of various sorts, and a set of norms and cultural–cognitive beliefs that inform practice (Diamond & Spillane, 2016).

Bagwell (2019) used semistructured interviews and observations to explore the leadership practices of two urban elementary school principals in an ethnographic case study using the DL framework. Exploring leadership through the DL framework provided

insight into how leadership practice is enacted by individuals and their situational context. Bagwell's observations described the interactions, behaviors, and leadership practices of the school principals. The case principals used goal setting, a data analysis cycle, and ongoing data dialogues to connect themselves and their teachers to the goals of maintaining a focus on instruction and impacting student learning. The leadership practice that resulted from the implementation of these routines served to strengthen the commitment of administrators and teachers to improving instruction (Bagswell, 2019). While principals are responsible for the educational infrastructure of the school, Baswell (2019) concluded that principals must have the tools to research and apply alternative ways to engage other leaders in the work of school improvement.

The DL framework provides a different way to analyze how the artifacts of the leadership practices of the principal and those of other school leaders merge to improve teacher practice to meet school reform demands (Spillane et al., 2004). The focus is on how principals implore all school leaders to support school, district, state, and federal initiatives. Chapter 2 contains a more thorough explanation of the conceptual framework.

Nature of the Study

Qualitative researchers explore and describe socially constructed meanings developed by individuals as a result of their interactions with their world. When the goal is to understand the meanings that people have associated with an occurrence, the study is descriptive in nature. A basic qualitative study can include data collected through interviews, observations, or analysis of documents to provide rich, descriptive accounts of participants' experiences (Caelli et al., 2003; Kahlke, 2014).

In this basic qualitative study, I focused on principals' and instructional coaches' perceptions of how principals influenced the instructional coaching implementation process. I will interview six instructional coaches and three principals working in one Maryland school district to provide interpretations of their experiences with the instructional coaching program implementation process. This school setting was selected because the district has coaches working consistently in middle schools. The majority of the middle schools have a minimum of two instructional coaches, math and literacy, in the building. I sought to describe the experiences of participants who work in three middle schools within a 10-miles radius and I did not consider other middle schools in the district. The anticipated number of participants was between five and six instructional coaches and three principals.

Definitions

The following definitions reflect terms' meanings in the context of this study.

Artifacts: Externalized representation of ideas and intentions that constitute leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004).

Educational infrastructure: Structures designed to support, maintain, and/or improve instructional quality. This includes standards for learning (professional learning and student learning), curriculum, organizational routines, formal positions, tools of various sorts, and a set of norms and cultural–cognitive beliefs that inform practice (Diamond & Spillane, 2016).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A federal legislation passed in 2017 that emphasizes that all students should have access to effective teachers and all schools

should be led by effective leaders. The law authorizes federally funded programs to support the act, which are administered by the states (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Implementation: The process of making something active or effective (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

Instructional coach: A specialized educator who can provide teachers with one-on-one job-embedded professional development, resources, strategies, and knowledge of research (Killion, 2017; Knight, 2005).

Instructional Coaching: In school settings, instructional coaching is a way to partner coaches with teachers to identify teaching and learning in their classroom to set goals to provide high-quality teaching in academic areas including reading, math, and science. Instructional coaching is also a component in school change initiatives to provide job-embedded, individualized, time-intensive, discrete skilled, focused, and sustained professional development to teachers (Knight, 2019; Kraft et al., 2018).

Leadership practices: Activities tied to the core work of an organization that are designed or understood by the organizational members (Diamond & Spillane, 2016).

Praxis: The act of applying new knowledge or skill (Knight, 2011; Knight, 2019).

Principal: A person who has controlling authority and is most consequential or influential in a formal role as the organizational leader in a school building (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

Situation: The tools, routines, and requirements that give form to leadership practices (Spillane, 2006).

Tools: The externalized representation of ideas used by people in their practice, such as, but not limited to, observation protocols, evaluations, teacher lesson plans, coaching logs, collaborative planning protocols, and schedules (Spillane, 2006).

Assumptions

Assumptions are believed but cannot be demonstrated to be true and are things outside a researcher's control; without the assumption they are true, the research problem cannot exist (Simon & Goes, 2018, p. 292). In this study, I assumed that the principals and instructional coaches would provide honest in-depth answers to the interview questions. Another assumption was that the instructional coaches would speak freely about their experiences and perspectives related to how principal leadership skills influence the implementation of the coaching model. Third, I assumed that the interview location and time would not influence an interviewee's responses. Lastly, I assumed the principals' and instructional coaches' memories of principal leadership practices would provide more accurate accounts if I required information referring back to the beginning of school.

Scope and Delimitations

In conducting this study, the following scope and delimitations were considered. The population included in this study was limited to four public middle schools in one school district in the state of Maryland. The schools included in this study were middle schools, Grades 6–8. Participants in this study were selected based on their role in the school and the school being conveniently located to the researcher. Data were collected at one point in time by semistructured interviews. A comparison of classroom teachers'

perspectives of principal leadership practices influence on the implementation of the instructional coaching program was not conducted.

Limitations

Limitations are potential shortcomings or weaknesses that can affect a study's results or reach of the inferences drawn (Simon & Goes, 2018). There are a few limitations for this study. First, the findings cannot be generalized due to the small population studied. Second, I was the only person responsible for collecting the data. Third, there was potential for researcher bias from working in the district and working at one of the sites.

Significance

The findings from this research may benefit school principals and instructional coaches. Kraft et al. (2018) surmised that traditional professional development has failed to improve instruction and achievement and implied that more research is needed to identify specific conditions in which programs might produce more favorable outcomes. The study fills the gap in practice by examining specifically how principal leadership skills influence the implementation of instructional coaching. This study can lead to positive social change in educational leadership because school leaders can evaluate their leadership practices, as well as those of others, and make decisions that are more supportive to instructional coaching before they invest in the positions. This research may also contribute to informing the training of future principals and the research on the practice of instructional coaching.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a brief synopsis of the direction for this study. I introduced the background for the study, purpose for the study, conceptual framework, and definitions of key terms that will be used in later chapters. I provided a description of the research method, research problem, and questions that need to be addressed. Additionally, I included assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to determine how principals in a large urban school district in Maryland influence the implementation of instructional coaching in three middle schools. The gap in practice is how principals effectively implement instructional coaching (Lownhaupt et al., 2014; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Neumerski, 2013). School reform constantly shapes the landscape of district and school initiatives. Principal leadership is a key factor in the success or failure of school reform and district initiatives (Soini et al., 2016). The purpose was to both identify and compare patterns in principals' perceptions of their own practices and the instructional coaches' perception of the principals' leadership practices when implementing an instructional coaching model. According to Kane and Rosenquist (2019), principals mediate district policies and are central to supporting coaches' work with teachers. Accumulating evidence points to the efficacy of instructional coaching as a model for teacher professional development and improving the effectiveness of instruction generally and specifically (Conor, 2017).

A thorough examination of the DL theory was pivotal to the research. The examination included a discussion of the types of DL, leader-plus and practice-aspect, as well as the benefits and challenges of DL. The literature review will also include research on principal practices of DL, such as decision making, interactions between people, and the ability to identify the situation. Next the literature review will narrow the focus of principal leadership. The discussion will highlight leadership styles to include

autocratic/authoritarian leadership, situational leadership, instructional leadership, servant leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership. I detailed how education reform has reshaped the approach of principal leadership in the literature review. Lastly, instructional coaching and how it is used to address education reform demands in a school will be highlighted in the literature review.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review included research-based and theoretical sources from journal articles, seminal works, and books. Full-text journal articles were collected from peer-reviewed journals. Databases used included Educational Resources Information Center, Education Research Complete, EBSCO, ProQuest, Sage Publications, and Google Scholar. Other sources of research included the U.S. Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Education. Search terms, descriptors, and keywords used included *principal leadership, education reform, reform implementation, instructional coaching, distributed leadership theory, principal leadership practices, professional development, principal perceptions, perceptions of instructional coaching, principal decision making,* and *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*.

Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation

DL emerged in the early 2000s and was often heralded as an alternative to top-down and hierarchical forms of leadership. The conceptual framework for this study was composed of DL. DL is focused on an organization's approach to leadership practices. Multiple sources of influences within any organization and the focus of empirical attention on leader-plus are reinforced in DL theory (Harris, 2011; Spillane, 2006). I used

the Spillane (2006) framework for DL practice in this study. The framework illustrates how leadership practices, interactions between people, and their situation are distributed throughout an organization to meet overall goals. According to Spillane and Diamond (2007), a DL conceptual framework involves the leader-plus aspect and the practice aspect of DL influenced by the situation. DL has gained popularity since last decade due to its capacity to include broad stakeholders with expertise and skills into school management and operation (Bellibas & Liu, 2018).

Empirical studies about DL are often found in studies that relate to school improvement, school reform, organizational change, and teacher leadership (Harris, 2011). In educational sciences, researchers have focused on shared leadership since the 1990s; however, DL was being explained under concepts such as *self-leadership*, *shared leadership*, and *democratic leadership* (Goksoy, 2015). DL allows for shared leadership depending on the situation (Spillane, 2006). For example, if another stakeholder in the school has more expertise or knowledge on a situation, the principal may appoint that person the leader and joins the followers to meet the set goals. In contradiction, Spillane (2006) argued that shared leadership is different from DL because some leadership activity may require only one individual working on the process.

Two Distributed Leadership Approaches

Gronn's Approach

During the 1990s, DL theory implementation and commitment to the process revitalized education (Gronn, 2002). DL theory is centered on the belief that leadership is best considered a group quality. The foundations of DL theory are appropriated from both

the distributed cognition and activity theory, whereas Harris states that the genesis of the theory dates back to the 1960 through organizational theory (Gunter et al., 2013; Harris, 2008; Spillane et al., 2004). Distributive cognition theory is focused on the organization and operation of cognitive systems that define the phenomena being observed and not specifically about the individual. Activity theory, however, is centered on the perspective of the individual situated within a phenomenon (Halverson, 2002; O'Donovan, 2015). Two popular interpretations of DL stem from the work of Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2005).

For this study, a principal is a person who has controlling authority and is most consequential or influential in the formal role as the organizational leader in the school building. Gronn's (2002) work centers the principal as the initiator of the leadership work. In Gronn's framework, the illumination of leadership describes how leadership is hybridized in any organization at any time. At some points, leadership may be more centralized while at other parts of the year, or within an organization, the leadership is distributed (Leithwood et al., 2009). Gronn's framework focuses on leadership that is individualized or takes the collaborative approach described as additive or holistic.

The additive form of DL is based on a hierarchical view in which the principal extends leadership roles to individuals or groups, which leaves the principal at the center of leadership distribution. The midlevel leadership members may be team leaders, instructional coaches, or department chairpersons who make decisions for other groups in the school below the midlevel. The midlevel leaders add their expertise to the goals outlined by the principal as contributing members of the leadership team.

Holistic distribution refers to consciously existing and managed collaborative patterns involving some or all leadership sources in the organization (Gronn, 2002; Kelly & Dikkers, 2016). Professional learning communities, focus groups, and committees are examples of holistic distribution. Holistic DL requires collaboration among those in leadership. The members of the group focus on the goals of the group and equal voice.

Spillane's Approach

Spillane (2005) is one of the seminal theorists for DL theory in education. DL reconceptualizes leadership in schools by exploring how leadership is spread across a variety of roles and the process of leadership (Leithwood et al., 2009). By centering research on the understanding of leadership instead of the prescription of leadership, Spillane offered a conceptual framework for researchers to focus on the whys of leadership (Gunter et al, 2013). Spillane led the research for the theoretical framework for DL in schools (Spillane et al., 2001). The DL perspective describes how leadership is distributed in different ways and the drivers and consequences of the leadership practices. Analyzing leadership practices is an accurate way to examine the themes of leadership patterns in schools (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2011; Kelly & Dikkers, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2009; Spillane et al., 2001;). DL is about leadership practice rather than traditional roles, functions, routines, and structures, which amplifies how leadership is distributed in an organization (Hairon & Goh, 2015; Spillane, 2005.)

In contrast to Gronn's work, Spillane's conceptualization of DL is focused on the day-to-day practices of leadership for analysis. Multiple sources of influence within an organization are described as *leader-plus*, which notes both informal and formal roles of

leadership from Spillane's DL research (Harris, 2011). The primary focus of Spillane's

distribution framework is that leadership practices take shape in the interactions of

leaders, followers, and situations (Spillane, 2006). The practices of leadership are

described as collaborative, collective, coordinated, and parallel (Tian et al., 2016).

According to Spillane (2006), leadership practices are categorized as artifacts,

such as tools and organizational routines. Artifacts are externalized representations of

ideas and intentions that are constitutive of leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004. The

school principal is chiefly responsible for the educational infrastructure in the building.

Educational infrastructures are designed to support, maintain, and/or improve

instructional quality. This includes standards for learning (professional learning and

student learning), curriculum, organizational routines, formal positions, tools of various

sorts, and a set of norms and cultural–cognitive beliefs that inform practice (Diamond &

Spillane, 2016).

Formal and informal leaders are arranged differently in each school. Spillane has

identified three central arrangements for distributing leadership: division of labor,

coperformance, and parallel performance (Gunter et al, 2013, Spillane, 2016). Multiple

arrangements can coexist in a school depending on the leadership function or routine.

According to Spillane (2006) Division of labor is when leaders from areas

perform leadership functions. An example of division of labor in a school is when an

assistant principal focuses on discipline and the principal focuses on instruction. The

division of labor approach leaves room for overlap of leadership functions among the

leaders. In schools, a pattern of leadership is challenging to identify using the division of

labor approach because the overlap of leadership functions. Unlike the division of labor leadership arrangement, the coperformance arrangement allows two or more leaders to collaboratively execute leadership functions. Formally designated leaders, such as principals, and informal leaders, such as teachers, work together to execute leadership functions.

Spillane (2006) identified the third arrangement of DL as parallel performance. This arrangement allows two or more leaders to perform leadership functions at the same time similarly to the coperformance arrangement. But, unlike coperformance, parallel performance leads to overlap and redundant leadership functions being executed because there is no collaboration. An example of this approach in a school would be a teacher making a list of teachers to attend a workshop and the assistant principal making a list for the same workshop. Both leaders performed leadership functions, but the communication was missing. Parallel performance can create the opportunity for leaders to work toward the execution of different or competing instructional visions. While division of labor, co-performance, and parallel performance are three main common arrangements of DL, they all are identifiable in the two aspects of DL, leader-plus and the practice aspect (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2011, Spillane, 2006, 2016).

Bagwell (2019) used semistructured interviews and observations to explore the leadership practices of two urban elementary school principals in an ethnographic case study using the DL framework. The researcher was able to gain insight into how leadership practice is enacted by individuals and their situational context. Bagwell's observations described the interactions, behaviors, and leadership practices of the school

principals. To connect the teachers to the goals of maintaining a focus on instruction and

impacting student learning, the principals in the case study used goal setting, a data

analysis cycle, and ongoing data dialogues (Bagwell, 2019). The principals' leadership

practices and routines served to strengthen the commitment of administrators and

teachers to improving instruction (Bagswell, 2019). While principals are responsible for

the educational infrastructure of the school, Baswell (2019) concluded that principals

must have the tools to research and apply alternative ways to engage other leaders in the

work of school improvement.

The main components of Spillane's DL framework are leadership, followers, and

situations. Depending on these three components is how leadership is distributed.

Leadership is described in the form of leadership practices, and not necessarily formal

roles. According to Grenda and Hackmann (2014), the situation is the main concept

within the DL framework. Aspects of the situation include the complexity of the work

performed by the organization, its size, resources, and the environment. Examples of

situation variables may include district-office support, resources, and technical assistance,

priorities, mandates, and staff. Aspects of the situation are treated as independent

variables that shape leadership behavior and mediate the effects of leadership on teachers

or other organizational members (Spillane et al., 2004). Those whom are subscribing to

the direction of the person in the leadership position for the situation represent the

followers. The analysis will focus on the leadership practices of the leaders and followers

as it relates to the situation, which will change over time. Distributed perspective centers

leadership practices as the focus is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Distributed Perspective Framework
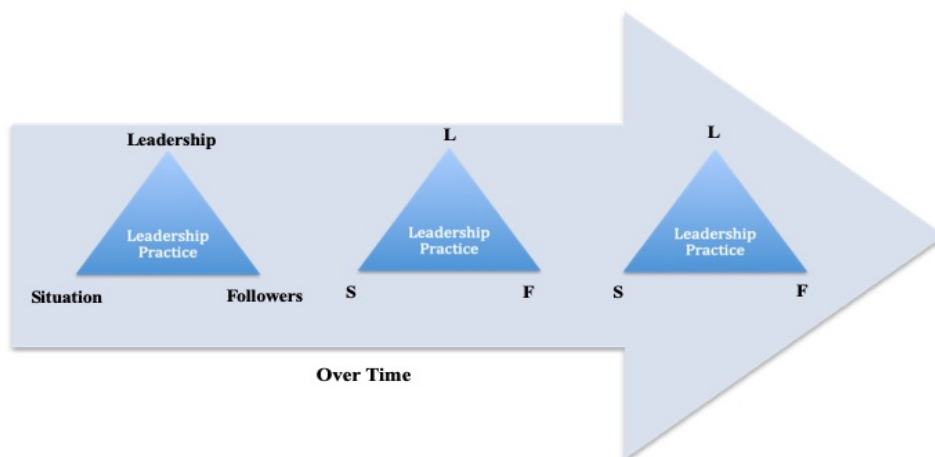
The DL perspective framework provides a different way to analyze how relationships, situations, and the artifacts of the leadership practices of the principal and those of other school leaders merge to improve teacher practice to meet school reform demands (Spillane et al., 2004). The focus is on how principals implores all school leaders support school, district, state, and federal initiatives. For this study, DL occurs when the formal leader, principals, provide opportunities for others, instructional coaches, to take the leadership role to make decisions based on the situation related to coaching (Spillane, 2006). The way DL practices are centered on the interactions between the leaders, followers, and the situation is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Distributed Leadership Practice Interaction
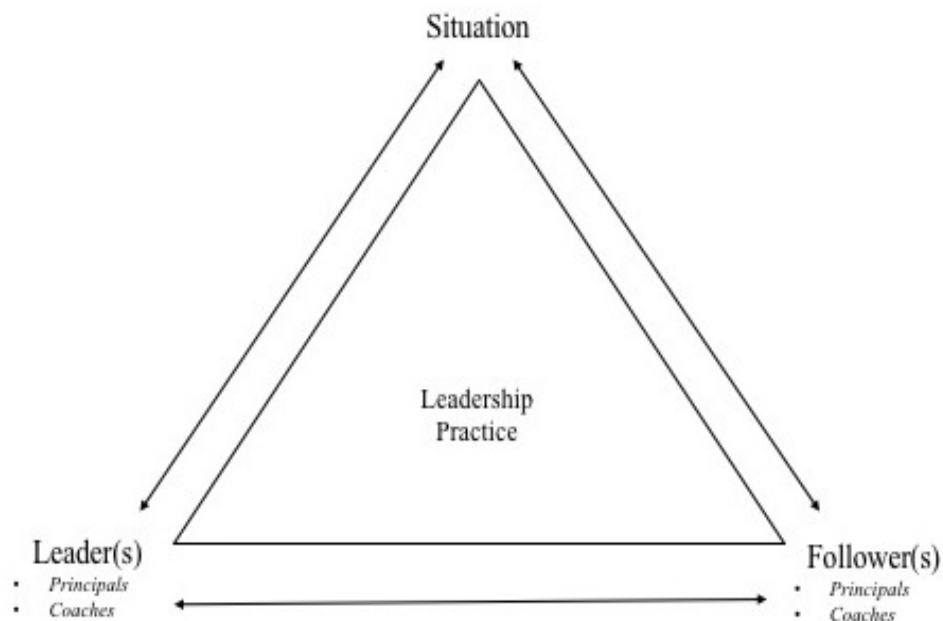
Note. Leadership practices are distributed to informal and formal leaders. Adapted from Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, J. B. (2004).

The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated Figure 3. The DL framework was used to analyze the leadership practices of the school principal and the instructional coaches to meet the school goals of program implementation and teacher development. The framework is used to analyze how leadership is transferred based on the situation overtime with the internal authority to make decisions to meet goals. As principals apply their leadership practices, how do they influence the internal authority for leadership of the instructional coaches to meet school goals. The framework was used to develop the interview questions and to analysis the data.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework for Principals Leadership Practices in Implementing Instructional Coaching
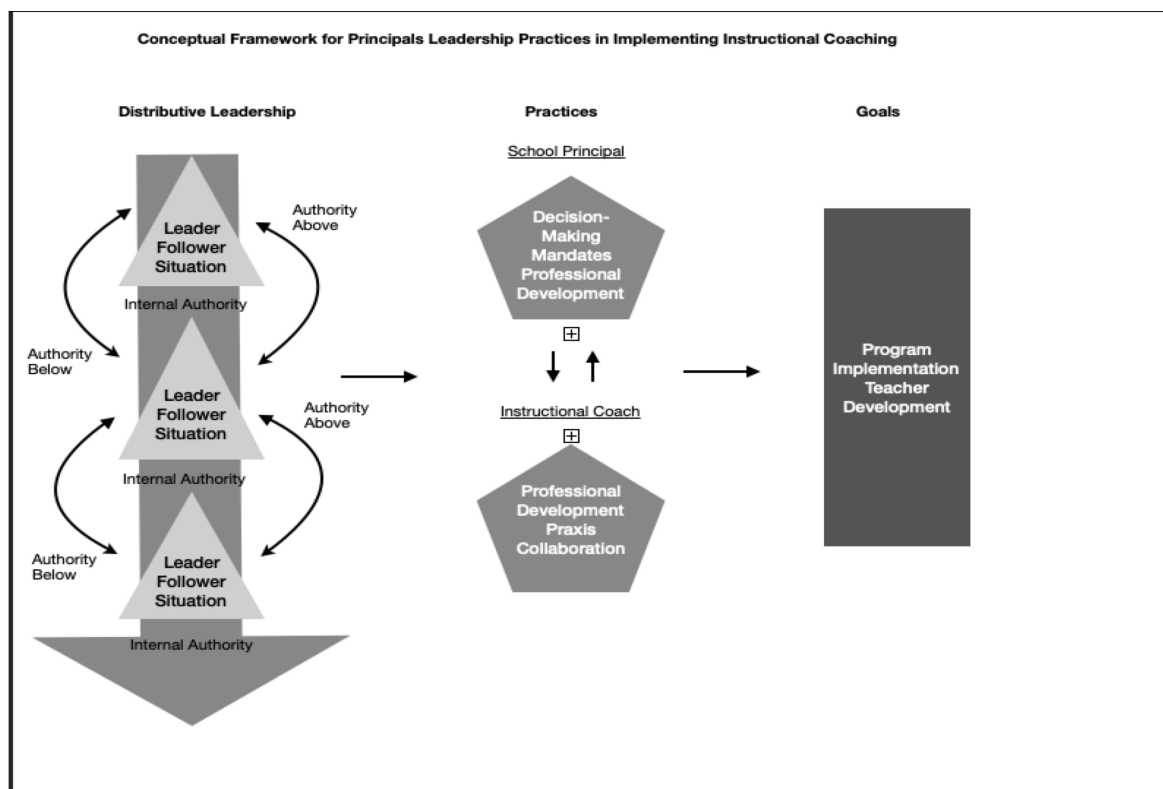
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

Principal Leadership

Traditionally educational leadership research centers on the stylistic differences of principals' approaches. As the instructional leaders of the school building, principals are charged with the task of implementing district, state, and national mandates. The ESSA mandates put an emphasis on student learning and quality instruction. According to Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016), the hierarchal leadership accountability can create a challenge to sustaining cultures of learning while meeting administrative mandates.

Types of Principal Leadership

The principal's leadership styles included in this literature review include transactional leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, servant leadership, and authoritarian.

Transactional Leadership. Transactional leaders are autocratic leaders and also characterized as managerial leaders. Transactional leaders use rewards to manage and influence the organization including resources such as people, time, budget and facilities (Raza & Sikander, 2018; Urick, 2016). A transactional leadership style can be beneficial at the inaugural stages of school reform or program implementation. Throughout the implementation process, this approach can seem too removed from the actual work to appropriately lead it. Transactional leaders normally engage with staff members when expectations are not met.

Transformational Leadership. Unlike transactional leadership, transformational leaders tend to get followers to perform beyond expectations. Transformational leaders are measured on their charisma, ideals, intellectual stimulation, ability to transmit goals, and how they encourage others to reason in new ways (Urick, 2016). Principals that are transformational leaders tend to the growth of the school as an organization. Transformational leaders communicate a vision and have a charisma for motivating, raising the morale, and performance of the followers by applying different inspirational strategies (Baptiste, 2019; Munir & Aboidullah, 2018).

Instructional Leadership. According to Robinson et al. (2008), instructional leadership has been found to have the largest effects on student outcomes. Many times,

transformational leadership is used to describe instructional leadership due to the focus on communication and professional growth. The performance of teachers and students is associated with the type of leadership that prevails in the academic environment of the school, culture, and climate that may impact the achievement of academic goals (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018).

Servant Leadership. Servant principal leaders recognize that the strength of the organization is within its people. The principal maximizes opportunities to support the staff to maximize their potential. Greenleaf provided the basis for servant leadership and described ten characteristics of servant leaders. The characteristics are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to people's growth, and the ability to build a community (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016).

Autocratic. Autocratic leadership is also referred to as authoritarian leadership. According to Oyugi and Gogo (2018), autocratic leadership style encompasses being controlling, power-oriented, punitive, and close-minded. The school principal that embodies an autocratic leadership style takes sole responsibility for decisions and control of followers' performance. The principal's focus would be on rules, obedience, and compliance. Autocratic principals do not encourage teachers participate in the decision making for the school (Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018). A benefit to autocratic, or authoritarian leadership, is that during the time of crisis, the decision-making process is much more efficient because other's input is not solicited. There is also

a benefit to autocratic leadership when working with staff with limited knowledge and must be developed to perform.

Principal Leadership & School Reform

Contemporary accountability frameworks position school leaders as being essential to improving school performance and driving innovation (Holloway et al., 2017). School reform and accountability demands have forced the restructuring of school leadership. School principals need to lean towards a more instructional practice instead of a managerial practice. School reform efforts require principals to be at the forefront of implementation.

School Reform

A concern about student achievement in America's public education over several decades has been the driver for public school reform. Three eras of instructional policymaking and implementation research have been identified: the standards-based reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, accountability-based reforms of the late 1990s and 2000s, and today's efforts that combine aspects of both (Coburn et al., 2016). In 2001, the NCLB Act was signed into law. NCLB required schools to show annual yearly progress (AYP) and teachers to be *highly qualified* in order to teach in public schools.

The Obama administration ushered in the CCSS initiative and initiated the Race to the Top initiative (Galey, 2015). In 2011, forty-three states and the District of Columbia had adopted the CCSS. States were offered more funding through the Race to the Top initiative to support the implementation of the CCSS and college and career-readiness standards. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) required

states to adopt the CCSS in order to receive Title I funding. The current federal education reform act in place is ESSA. The Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and ESSA require rigorous teaching reform across all content disciplines (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

ESSA requires states to establish high learning standards by developing effective teachers and leaders, create data systems, and lastly, turning around the lowest-performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). School districts need to create the conditions for reform, innovation, and learning by creating schools and cultures that remove obstacles, and actively support, student engagement and achievement as well as improve teacher and principal effectiveness (Fuller et al., 2017). Instructional coaching is used to support the school's attempt to improve teaching practice. Literacy coaches have become a central part of federal, state, and district literacy reforms throughout the United States (Marsh & Farrell, 2014).

DL framework is predicated on leadership being shared across stakeholders. DL has gained popularity since last decade due to its capacity to include broad stakeholders with expertise and skills into school management and operation (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). The leaders are identified as those persons with the knowledge or expertise on the situation (Spillane, 2006). To meet school-reform requirements related to teaching and learning, school districts across the nation have invested in instructional coaching models. Instructional coaching is a form of teacher leadership (Knight, 2019). DL theory challenges school leaders and policymakers to put mechanisms in place to develop

teacher-leadership capacity and to reflect on the future direction of leadership

(O'Donovan, 2015).

Instructional Coaching

Federal, state, and district-level governments have mandated instructional

coaching as a strategy for developing teacher practice (Desimone & Pak, 2017).

Instructional coaching is a form of job-embedded professional development. The

regulations of the ESSA require that teachers have access to teacher-centered-job-

embedded professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Instructional

coaching has become a common method for providing professional development that

increases teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Mangin, 2014). Coaches work

consistently with teachers to develop their skills, knowledge, instructional decision

making, and evidence-based instructional practices (Mangin, 2014).

Learning Forwards standards of professional learning and Federal Title II funding

require that professional development is sustainable, intensive, collaborative, job-

embedded, data-driven, and classroom focused (Learning Forward, 2021; U.S.

Department of Education, 2017). There are many models of instructional coaching and

coaching practices take on many forms. All of the models center on increasing teacher

instructional practices. Instructional coaches can promote reflective practice, though

coaching- conversations, and collaborative inquiry into new topics, practices, and

curriculum. Instructional coaching removes the state of isolation from teaching and

supports teacher's ability to apply newly learned strategies and receive feedback

throughout the process (Spelman et al., 2016). Fewer than 10% of teachers actually

implement strategies learned in one-time professional development opportunities, but with instructional coaching that percentage increases (Knight, 2019; Spelman et al., 2016).

The results of a three-year longitudinal study, where researchers analyzed the effectiveness of types of professional development, suggested that professional development focused on knowledge development alone is not as effective as professional development that encompasses instructional coaching (Spelman et al., 2016). The university of Kansas Center for Research conducted a rigorous study of instructional coaching where 51 teachers attended an after-school workshop to use unit organizers. Teachers were randomly assigned to a group to receive coaching or not. Teachers that received coaching were more likely to implement the professional development 87% of the time compared to the non-coaching group with 33% implementation (Knight, 2019).

Instructional coaching can be implemented in a variety of models. The models may stem from new teacher mentoring to curriculum-focused coaching, content coaching, and cognitive coaching. Thus, to understand how instructional coaching can contribute to instructional improvement, conceptualization of coaches' roles as embedded within a system of instructional leadership that includes not only school administrators but also coaches and teacher leaders is a must (Neumerski, 2013).

Challenges to Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching can be a lever for school reform, but challenges can arise when coaching is used inconsistently (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). A misconception that instructional coaching is a *magic bullet* to solving student achievement and school reform

interferes with the implementation of an effective instructional coaching program.

Implementation differences can be related to the process of hiring coaches, qualified

coaches, clear roles, leadership opportunities, and coaching praxis (Knight, 2019).

Administrator Challenges

Some administrators challenge the work of instructional coaches because they see

them as other administrators, which alternatively make it harder to build trust with

teachers (Lowenhaupt, McKinney, & Reeves, 2014). Misconceptions held by

administrators inhibit the work of instructional coaches. The administrator may not fully

understand how the instructional coach should be used.

Teacher Resistance

A common challenge that instructional coaches face is teacher resistance. ESSA

and Title II require that professional development be intensive, continuous, job-

embedded, and collaborative, to which instructional coaching embodies, but classroom

teachers do not always welcome coaches (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Teacher

resistance may stem from a number of problems. In some cases, the teacher is concerned

about confidentiality, lack of clarity of coach's role, and or resentment of time being

spent with the coach. In some cases, the school climate and administrator explanation of

roles add to teacher resistance (Range et al., 2014). The high-accountability from

education reform efforts put more pressure on classroom teachers with top-down

demands. The pressure and stress often deters teachers from engaging in mandated

professional development, including instructional coaching.

Summary and Conclusions

A review of the literature highlighted the properties of the DL theory. The foundations of DL theory are appropriated from both the distributed cognition and activity theory, whereas Harris states that the genesis of the theory dates back to the 1960 through organizational theory (Gunter et al., 2013; Harris, 2008; Spillane et al., 2004). Gronn and Spillane's work towards developing the theory of DL highlighted that the practice of leadership was shared across a situation and both formal and informal leaders can assume the leadership role (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2004). The distributed framework used to explore leadership in schools was based on Spillane's research. Spillane concluded that the DL perspective unit of analysis was centered on the leader, situation, and followers (Spillane, 2005, 2006, 2017; Spillane et al., 2004).

Principal leadership is centered at the forefront for meeting school reform mandates. ESSA requires states to establish high learning standards by developing effective teachers and leaders, create data systems, and lastly, turning around the lowest-performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The literature review highlighted principals' leadership styles such as transactional leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, servant leadership, and authoritarian. While principal leadership is at the forefront for school reform, instructional coaching is a strategy often used across the nation to support the process of meeting the reform mandates. Instructional coaching is a job-embedded professional development approach that focuses on teacher development. Instructional coaching can be a lever for school reform, but challenges can arise when coaching is used inconsistently (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015).

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine the perspectives of principals and instructional coaches on how the principal's leadership practices influence the implementation of instructional coaching in local middle schools. In this chapter, I discuss the research methods used in the study. I used semistructured interviews with the school principals and coaches to examine the perceptions of the participants to develop an understanding of how principal leadership supports instructional coaching.

In this chapter, I describe the basic qualitative research design for this study of principal leadership practices when implementing instructional coaching and discuss the rationale for choosing each in this context. Also, in this chapter, I describe the methodology for this study, including a description of the participants, how participants were selected, the researcher's role, and ethical issues. This chapter also includes explanations of the data collection tools and how data were collected and analyzed.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were formulated to guide the present research:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of principals of how their leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of instructional coaches of how the principal's leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

In this study, I used a basic qualitative study research design. Basic qualitative study research designs are among the most common form of qualitative research in

education (Caelli et al., 2003). Basic qualitative studies are best described by what they are not. A basic qualitative study embodies the characteristics of qualitative research, but rather than focusing on particular framework, such as grounded theory, this research is conducted to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives, and worldviews of the people involved (Caelli et al., 2003; Kahlke, 2014; Patton, 2015). Basic qualitative studies either combine several methodologies or approaches or claim no particular methodological viewpoint. Basic qualitative studies should encompass a thorough plan that addresses the theoretical positioning of the researcher, congruence between methodology and methods, strategies to establish rigor; and the analytic lens to examine the data for credibility (Caelli et al., 2003).

In this study, I used the basic qualitative design to answer questions about school principals' and instructional coaches' perspectives on the principal's leadership influences when implementing instructional coaching. Basic qualitative study research is focused on understanding the meaning a phenomenon has for those involved. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that a basic qualitative study has distinct advantages when researching how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (p. 24). Basic qualitative studies are among the most common form of qualitative research (Caelli et al., 2003). As a former instructional coach and instructional leader, I have knowledge of leadership and coaching and have facilitated trainings for others in that role. A generic qualitative study is appropriate when a researcher has knowledge or understanding about a topic and wants to

examine the participants' perspectives and actual world experiences and happenings of the topic (Kahlke, 2014; Percy et al., 2015).

Role of the Researcher

At the time of the study, I was a teacher in public school district where the study was conducted; however, the participants did not include any current or former principals I previously worked for or instructional coaches I worked with. I conducted semistructured interviews with 12 participants, four principals and eight instructional coaches, and transcribed all interviews. The participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms and the school and district names were changed to protect the privacy of all participants and the school district. As the researcher, I then analyzed the data and presented the findings.

Methodology

The methodology section includes information about participant selection and plans for data collection and analysis. I explain how principals and instructional coaches were selected to participate in the study and the documentation of consent. I describe how the interview protocol was developed. Lastly, I explain the plan for data collection and analysis.

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling for this basic qualitative study. Quantitative methodologists are more likely to label this selection process nonprobability sampling, which contrasts random sampling that lends to generalization to a larger population and controls selection bias (Patton, 2015, p. 264). The purpose of this study was to answer the

how's and why's of the principals' influences and practices. Purposeful sampling

provides context-rich and detailed accounts of specific populations and locations. The

participants were strategically selected because of their unique ability to answer the

study's research questions and knowledge of the specific phenomenon, in contrast to

random sampling used in quantitative studies with goals to generalize data (Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). The participant selection included the school principal of four middle

schools and two instructional coaches from each school. There were a total of four school

principals and eight instructional coaches.

The population of interest for this study was middle-school principals who were

in the same area and instructional coaches. Purposeful sampling secured a sample for the

study that met the requirements. I asked for volunteers to ensure the participants did not

have a previous supervisory or coaching relationship with me to avoid bias. I sent a

written invitation to the participants and asked them to participate via email. Participants

were given an informational letter and an informed consent form. Participants submitted

their consent responses directly to me.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument included an interview protocol with 12 open-ended

questions for the principals and seven open-ended questions for the instructional coaches

relating to the participants' perceptions of the principals' leadership practices when

implementing instructional coaching and follow-up prompts to clarify if necessary. I

developed the interview protocol and saved an audio recording of the interviews. I also

used dialogic engagement to discuss, reflect, and analyze the effectiveness of the

semistructured interview questions. The basis for the development of the interview questions was the conceptual framework, DL, and instructional coaching. I created an interview schedule with the participants at each school. Then, I was ready to conduct the semistructured interviews.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The first step for recruitment was to receive permission from the institutional review board (IRB) and from the school district to implement the research. Next, I contacted the school principals who have instructional coaches in their buildings and sent them the information letter to request permission to conduct the research at their site and to request their participation. Once I received permission from the school principals, I sent the instructional coaches the information letter as well as a consent form.

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis are simultaneous activities unlike quantitative research, which is more of a step-by-step (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To answer the study's research questions and gain insight on the perceptions of the principals and the instructional coaches on principal leadership practices when implementing instructional coaching, I used qualitative methods to collect data and conduct ongoing analysis. The data collection method included semistructured interviews. Along with the semistructured interviews to collect data, I took field notes during and afterward. To prevent discrepancies when transcribing, I took notes regarding participants' responses during the interviews. As I transcribed the interviews, I made additional notations pertaining to the study's purpose that I coded and sorted. I then used the data to identify emerging categories and codes and to sort data.

Semistructured Interviews

In-depth qualitative interviewing was used for this study to collect rich and detailed information; this method allowed me to use open-ended questions and provided flexibility (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 29). Semistructured interviewing was the primary tool used for collecting data. A semistructured interview is a responsive style of interviewing. The interview consists of a prepared open-ended question but allows opportunities for follow-up questions. In semistructured interviews, a researcher uses flexibly worded questions to allow the worldview and perspectives of the participants to emerge while staying connected to the research questions. Unlike semistructured interviews, unstructured interviews have the possibility to go in a direction not aligned to the study, which makes it less useful as the sole source of data collection in a qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The predetermined semistructured questions allowed interviewees the opportunity to share their thoughts about the study topic. This topic was about how the principal's leadership practices influence instructional coaching.

The interviews were conducted virtually on Zoom at a time chosen by each interviewee that was quiet, free from distractions, and suitable for audio recording. During the interview sessions, I employed the interview protocol as a guide to ask suitable open-ended questions. For each interview, I collected data using an audio digital recorder and I wrote detailed notes that assisted with the transcription of the data. The data collected from the interviews were stored on a password-protected digital device. I used a reflective journal during the interview and the data collection process to organize the data into similar or separate categories. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that

researchers should take field notes during interviews to access later during data analysis to support organization and transparency.

I conducted separate virtual interviews with four principals and eight instructional coaches assigned to four schools. I used the digital recorder app on my mobile device as a backup. Each interview took between 40 and 50 minutes. The questions were presented to the participants to allow them to share their experiences, beliefs, and knowledge concerning their perceptions of how principal leadership practices influence the implementation of instructional coaching.

Data Analysis Plan

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perspectives of school principals and instructional coaches on the principal's leadership skills when implementing instructional coaching. Basic qualitative research studies rely on rich descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation and generally use open-coding, categories, and thematic analysis (Kahlke, 2014). The data analysis plan included chunking information, such as phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, based on meanings or significance. The data were analyzed concurrently, as data were still being collected. A constant comparative method was used for triangulation between the different levels of participants, principals and coaches, rather than simply describing the perspectives of the participants. The products relate directly to the applications and practices within the setting (Kahlke, 2014).

The initial step to the analysis process was to create transcripts of the interviews. I used Microsoft Word to create transcript documents to transcribe and code categories. I also used memos and reflexive journaling throughout the interview and analysis process

to reduce bias. In this basic qualitative study, data saturation was reached when I could no longer identify any new data, categories, or coding in the data analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the entire study and can be described as the process of strengthening the value of a study by establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Amankwaa, 2016; Griesheim et al., 2017). In this study, I used member checking to ensure trustworthiness and credibility. During the member-checking process, I sent each participant the transcript of their interview so they could review it for accuracy and provide clarity for any misinformation through email. Transferability was established through the use of thick descriptions in the notes, such as descriptions of the site, reactions observed that were not audible, participants' attitudes toward the interviewer, and dialogic engagement. Confirmability was established through the collection of raw data, process notes, data reconstruction such as categories, reflexive notes, and triangulation. By using reflexive notes, a researcher can reflect on their role as the interviewer and form part of the data to be analyzed in relation to interpreting the interviewee's body language and/or emotional experiences (Gubrium et al., 2012). The combination of the aforementioned strategies to communicate transparency for how and why decisions were made throughout the study provided a trail for a reader to determine the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility

Credibility is a term used to describe the likelihood of the study design, implementation, and findings are true. The researcher must ensure that a qualified

participant sample is selected, and the richness of the data obtained from those

participants is pivotal in developing credibility. In this study, participants were either a

principal at a middle school, or an instructional coach working in a middle school, and

willing to be interviewed. I used reflexive journaling, memos, and member-checking to

establish trustworthiness and credibility in this study. Member-checking is noted as the

most crucial technique for establishing credibility (Amankwaa, 2016). During the

member-checking process, I sent each participant the transcript of their interview to

review for accuracy and provided clarity for any misinformation through email.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability to generalize the research findings to other settings.

In quantitative studies, transferability is parallel to internal validity. Transferability was

established through the use of thick descriptions in the notes, such as, but not limited to

descriptions of the site, reactions observed that are not audible, and participants attitude

towards the interviewer, and dialogic engagement. I developed a coding system and inter-

rater reliability which increased transferability. The coding system was used to ensure

that the meaning of the analysis is the same between coders and enhances validity and

certainty of the findings (Morse, 2015).

Dependability

Dependability is based on the ability of the study to be repeated. In quantitative

studies, dependability is parallel to reliability. The focus was on the process of the

inquiry. The researcher ensured that the process was logical traceable, and documented

(Patton, 2015). I provided all of the participants with a transcript of their interview

responses to review and ensure that the data collected was accurate. I provided a detailed

description of the procedures taken to analyze the data and interpret the findings to

increase replication. I included the interview protocol in the appendix to add clarity to the

process.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the qualitative counterpart to objectivity. Confirmability was

established through the collection of raw data, process notes, data reconstruction such as

categories, reflexive notes, and triangulation. Triangulation has a number of levels,

investigator, data, theory, or methods. For establishing validity, it usually refers to the use

of two or more sets of data or methods to answer one question (Amankwaa, 2016; Morse,

2015). The study used data triangulation that involved time, space, and persons.

Interviews for this study took place at different times, at more than one site, and involved

more than one level of individuals. The principals' perception of how their leadership

practices influenced instructional coaching as well as the instructional coaches'

perception of the principal's leadership practices were analyzed. This approach allowed

for a broader understanding of the issue being investigated in the study.

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Ethical Procedures

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I abided by the ethical codes as outlined by Walden University institutional

review board. The ethical codes require the researcher to show respect, honor promises,

do not pressure, and do no harm. The core expectations and obligations of the researcher

was to assure that participants are not harmed as a result of the research. I have shown

respect to the participants by being straightforward about the research and my position in

relation to the research. Participants were not harmed as a result of this study, because the questions were not intrusive and would not lead to termination, arrest, or loss of income. I did not pressure the participants to answer questions that they were not comfortable answering and ensured that they understood that they could stop or refuse to continue at any time during the interview. The principals did not have access to the instructional coaches' interview responses, nor did the instructional coaches see the principals' responses. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), a researcher should not pretend to be a person who shares the participants' beliefs or claim a similar experience to influence participation (p. 85).

To maintain ethical procedures, I secured the informed consent from the participants. The study did not require participation from at-risk populations, such as children, intellectually disabled, or anyone unable to give informed consent. I submitted interview questions to the institutional review board to ensure that the questions were not too intrusive and did not pose a risk to the interviewees. Once approval was received from Walden University's institutional review board, I submitted a request to the school district's research compliance office to gain approval to conduct the research study within the district. Once I gained approval from the school district, I contacted potential participants at each school by emailing to invite them to participate in the study. I reviewed the purpose of the study, reiterated that participation was on a voluntary basis, to which all participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The participant rights and information about member-checking were outlined in the consent form. I collected the consent responses and stored them on a password protected device

to protect the participants' privacy and identity, for up to five years after the publication of the study.

I provided the participants confidentiality by using pseudonyms in the final study. The participants that worked in the same school were encouraged to maintain confidentiality of the identity of the other participants. I did not use any school or district identifiers.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of school principals and instructional coaches' perception of how the principals' leadership practices influence the implementation of instructional coaching. The study was a basic qualitative research design. The 12 selected participants for the researcher were four principals, and eight instructional coaches working in four different middle schools in an urban school district in Maryland. The interview instrument for the study was developed by the researcher. The researcher obtained data through interviews. The data was analyzed through constant comparison analysis. The results of the study could contribute to the knowledge in the professional field as it relates to the implementation of instructional coaching to meet education reform.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study dissertation was to examine the perspectives of principals and instructional coaches on how the principal's leadership practices influence the implementation of instructional coaching in local middle schools. I used semistructured interviews with school principals and coaches to examine the perceptions of the participants to develop an understanding of how principal leadership supports instructional coaching. I developed an interview protocol specific to the information needed to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of principals of how their leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of instructional coaches of how the principal's leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

I interviewed 12 participants. In this chapter, I describe the setting, data collection, data analysis processes, results, and evidence of trustworthiness before concluding with a summary.

Setting

The setting for this study was a school district on the East coast. The school system serves over 136,500 students in a combination of urban, suburban, and rural areas within the school district. The school systems serve a diverse population of students. According to the 2019–2020 school enrolment data, the demographics were 55.2% Black/African American, 36.5% Latino, 3.9% White, 2.7% Asian, and 2% other.

The school district is structured into three areas and thirteen clusters. The areas are represented by grade level, elementary, middle, and high school. The clusters represent the school groupings within each area. In this study, I used schools in the middle school area represented by two clusters. All the middle schools are Title I schools, meaning that 75% of the students receive free or reduced meals. This study was done during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's restrictions influenced the study by limiting the semistructured interviews to be conducted solely online.

Participants

The participants for this study were four middle-school principals and eight instructional coaches. I purposely selected middle-school principals and coaches who worked in their buildings within the same area with similar demographics. All the participants worked at Title I schools during the 2020–2021 school year. I conducted the interviews via Zoom during a time that was preferable to the participants. The principals answered 12 interview questions and the instructional coaches answered seven interview questions (see Appendix E and Appendix F). The demographic data captured limits their chances of being identified in this study. The participants' experience in their respective positions ranged from 1-10 years, and varied from 8-28 years within the school district. Table 1 contains a complete reporting of the available demographic information. I created pseudonyms for each participant and school to protect their identities.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participants	Title	Years of experience in position	Years of experience in district	Education level	Gender
McPherson	Principal	4	19	Doctorate	Female
Brown	Coach	3	15	Master's	Female
Green	Coach	9	8	Doctorate	Female
Covington	Principal	8	24	Doctorate	Male
Khaki	Coach	6	18	Master's	Female
Mauve	Coach	10	28	Master's	Female
Washington	Principal	3	25	Master's	Female
Apricot	Coach	4	11	Master's	Female
Siena	Coach	7	11	Master's	Female
Stevenson	Principal	1	6	Master's	Female
Denim	Coach	2	8	Master's	Female
Honeydew	Coach	5	14	Master's	Male

Data Collection

In this section, I present the data collection process, including the number of participants, type of data collected, location, frequency, and duration of the data collection, and the means of recording the data. The data collection began following IRB approval, school district partnership permission, and returned consent forms from the participants. A detailed invitation was sent to principals and the instructional coaches at each middle school via email. Eligible participants were middle-school principals who had at least two instructional coaches working in their buildings. Participants gave consent electronically by responding *yes* to the consent form in the email.

The interviews with the 12 participants took place between June 5, 2021 and June 12, 2021. Each interview lasted between 25 and 40 minutes, with an average of 35 minutes. I was the only researcher and received informed consent from each participant

prior to setting the interview date. At the beginning of each interview, I stated the

purpose and described the informed consent and confidentiality procedures being used.

Next, the participants answered the interview questions (see Appendix F and Appendix

G), and I asked clarifying probing questions as appropriate. I concluded the interviews by

thanking the participants, confirming the preferred email to send their participation gift,

and noted that they would receive a copy of the transcript within a week for member

checking. No follow ups were necessary via confirmation of transcript review. Table 2

shows the data collection log.

Table 2

Data Collection Log

Participant	Title	Interview date	Interview time
McPherson	Principal	6/5/2021	12:30 p.m.
Brown	Coach	6/6/2021	4:30 p.m.
Green	Coach	6/6/2021	6:00 p.m.
Covington	Principal	6/7/2021	10:00 a.m.
Khaki	Coach	6/8/2021	5:30 p.m.
Mauve	Coach	6/8/2021	3:00 p.m.
Washington	Principal	6/12/2021	10:00 a.m.
Apricot	Coach	6/9/2021	7:00 p.m.
Siena	Coach	6/9/2021	11:00 a.m.
Stevenson	Principal	6/11/2021	4:30 p.m.
Denim	Coach	6/10/2021	8:30 a.m.
Honeydew	Coach	6/10/2021	11:30 a.m.

Data Recording Process

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted online via Zoom.

The data were recorded using the voice record app on an Android device and through

handwritten notes. I wrote field notes during the interviews to identify reactions based on

responses, to write down key words or phrases that I wanted to revisit, or to write down

possible connections for further examinations during the data analysis stage. Each interview was recorded separately and transcribed using Microsoft Word. During the member-checking stage, the transcribed notes were sent to each participant separately via email within a week of the interview. Participants were asked to review the transcript and clarify any mistakes, misinterpretations, or inaccuracies. This was done to increase the validity of the findings.

I arranged to interview the principals and coaches from each school sequentially before interviewing participants from another school. The interview for Principal Washington was conducted out of sequence from the coaches in the building due to a schedule change. The principal had a COVID-19 situation to manage within the building. This schedule change did not break the protocol of the district agreement or the IRB protocols.

Data Analysis

I conducted all 12 semistructured interviews over a 2-week period in June 2021 using the interview protocols for the principals and for the instructional coaches. The transcripts were written and shared after all the participants in each school were interviewed. This method allowed for member checking and follow ups on any questions that I had in my reflexive notes to occur with each site at the same time.

After I transcribed all the interviews and completed my member-checking process, I began to read the transcripts to identify codes based on conceptual ideas from the DL framework. Once I became more familiar with the data, I identified axial codes, such as collaboration, transparent, integrity, support, communication, leadership style,

trust, distributive, democratic, decision making, modeling, and knowledgeable. Table 3

illustrates examples of the quotes that led to the development of the axial codes.

Table 3

Sample Quotes That Led to Axial Codes

Axial codes	Principal quotes	Instructional coach quotes
Collaboration	"They are very much aligned in it, involved in it, and very much about delivering it." (McPherson)	"Collaborating with teachers and administrators to determine the needs of teachers as well as students." (Green)
Transparent	"They also set expectations for implementing those strategies that I talked about." (Stevenson)	"My role is to work directly with teachers." (Brown)
Integrity	"They sit in sessions where I am being coached and they can actually see that." (McPherson)	"My principal admits when they are wrong." (Apricot)
Support	"I have to coach my coaches to grow their practice so that they in turn can grow the practices of the teachers." (Washington)	"I feel supported, so I can go to the principal with questions or guidance if I am not sure where I am going." (Mauve)
Communication	"It's so important that everyone's voice is heard so everyone's voice counts." (Stevenson)	"I can come to the principal and say this is what I am thinking about." (Green)
Leadership style	"I am all the leadership styles wrapped up into one depending on what's needed, but I would say that I am a distributive leader." (McPherson)	"Wants it to be principal's way, authoritarian." (Khaki)
Trust	"Another barrier is trusting the process, trying not to over manage the process." (Washington)	"Principal shows a lot of trust in me to lead the department." (Denim)
Distributive	"I am going to follow what you say; you are on the same level as me." (McPherson)	"If I have an idea, I can take it and run with it." (Apricot)
Democratic	"I would say that I am a democratic leader." (Stevenson)	"I would say my principal is more democratic." (Brown)
Decision making	"My decisions are always centered around students first, consider their needs because this is what it is all about." (Stevenson)	"The decisions in making sure that you have the time making sure that you have the resources, and so on to do the job." (Honeydew)
Modeling	"As the instructional leader you have to model and be a part of the coaching part with your coaches." (Covington)	"Showing you know by modeling how it gets done." (Brown)
Knowledgeable	"I used my coaching experience to ensure that I got the most out of my coaches." (Washington)	"Most of the training was centered around how do you mentor, guide and help new teachers especially years 1-3 to get to a level where they are comfortable teaching." (Siena)

After reviewing the data from the first round of coding I analyzed the data using pattern coding to identify similarities in the codes that answered the research questions and contained attributes of the conceptual framework. I analyzed the emerging categories for consistency of the meaning of each code when reading the original data. I did a bias check to make sure the codes talk about the same things in the same way. According to Saldana (2016), codifying is the process of arranging things in a systematic order to makes something part of a system or category. I continued the coding process during the second round of coding. I made analytical memos to capture possible connections. I also used an interrater to confirm the connections between codes and patterns.

The second round of coding, in which I was able to identify and analyze patterns between codes, led me to combine the like codes into axial codes. The axial codes were then used to create categories and subcategories. The categories were (a) collaborative; (b) transparent with subcategories of decision making and communication; (c) support with subcategories of modeling and supportive; (d) leadership style with subcategories of knowledgeable, democratic, distributive, and leadership; and (e) trust with the subcategory of integrity. I tallied the frequency of each code within each category to support the value of the data to the study. Table 4 represents the frequency of references included in the categories.

Table 4

Data Analysis: Frequency of References Included in the Categories

Categories	Number of participants who supported the categories	Frequency of references in the data set to the categories
Category 1: Transparency	12	137
Category 2: Support	12	107
Category 3: Leadership style	12	64
Category 4: Collaboration	12	50
Category 5: Trust	12	37

While reviewing, and reflecting on the data again, I noted that the collaboration category did not have any subcategories. I asked myself whether collaboration was discussed the same way in every example given. I conducted a third round of coding to examine the patterns through the lens of the conceptual framework to make more connections among the data. The categories were solidified as the categories, and all the categories had subcategories related to the conceptual framework of DL. Table 5 shows sample quotes from the principal participants and the instructional coach participants that align with each category.

Table 5

Sample Quotes That Led to Categories

Categories	Principal quotes	Instructional coach quotes
Collaboration	"I like to see things from their lens and sort of merge that together from an administrator's lens and identify the appropriate support needed." (Covington)	"I can go to my principal about any situation or an idea and we can work through it." (Apricot) "When there is no accountability, this hurts collaboration." (Siena)
Transparency	"I make sure that they know that it is imperative for them to own their data." (Washington)	"My role is to provide support to teachers with respect to improving their art." (Siena) "Then I have a coaching role, which has changed because of the pandemic, so it looks a little different." (Khaki)
Support	"I try to model for them by having them come with me to show them the work I have to do as the leader around instruction which will help to support you with coaching teachers." (McPherson)	"She makes sure that I get opportunities for training and professional development for coaching and anything else that I need to perform my duties." (Denim) "It's all about helping teachers to grow and to develop the necessary competencies to be the best they can be in the classroom." (Honeydew)
Leadership style	"By creating good systems and structures helps me to model for them how to do their jobs." (Washington)	"Takes your hand walks with you through the process the entire time." (Brown) "After I am shown an approach by my principal, I then transform over to the leader and I model the expectations for the department." (Denim)
Trust	"I place value in considering the perspective of others this empowers my staff. It builds trust and respect." (Stevenson)	"Trustful of those that are put in leadership roles to do their jobs." (Mauve) "That trust and faith in me and my ability helped me to figure out my role in this position." (Apricot)

After the third round of analysis, I engaged in a peer-review process again with colleagues in leadership and in coaching. Their feedback enabled me to reflect on the data analysis I presented. My peers asked me reflective questions about how and why I synthesized the data in the way I did. Through this process, I realized that I had reached saturation in my data analysis process. The subcategories refined and crystalized the meaning of the categories within this study. The peer-review process supports the credibility of the study.

Saldana (2016) emphasized that a theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection. After the analysis of the categories and codes, five common categories were identified. The categories were (a) transparency, (b) support, (c) leadership style, (d) collaboration, and (e) trust.

Results

The answers to the research questions emerged in the form of five categories: transparency, support, leadership style, collaboration, and trust. The interview questions that align with the axial codes used to analyze and create the categories are presented in Table 4.6. To create the categories, the data was coded based on the frequency and commonality between the statements that the participants shared during their individual interviews.

Table 6

Subcategories–Categories Relationships

Subcategories	Categories	Interview questions
Decision making, communication, clear expectations	Transparency	C4, C2, C1, and C7 P4, P2, P3, P7, P11, and P12
Modeling, supportive	Support	C4, C2, C7 and C6 P4, P5, P12, and P10
Knowledgeable, democratic, distributive, leadership	Leadership style	C3, C2, C7 and C6 P1, P10, P11, and P12
Working together, involved, ongoing	Collaboration	C5, C3, and C4 P8, P9, P1, and P5
Integrity, trust	Trust	C6, C7, and C4 P6, P11, and P12

Category 1: Transparency

All participants stated that transparency was the starting point when principals are implementing an instructional coaching program. Transparency had three subcategories honesty, decision making, and communication. All participants discussed the importance of the principal being clear expectations for the instructional coaches when implementing the coaching program.

Principals

Transparency was coded 76 times with the principal participants. Transparency had three subcategories of honesty, decision-making, and communication. Principal participants noted that being honest was vital to the work of leading a school and supporting instructional coaches.

Honesty. Honesty can be in the form of being clear on expectations as well as being truthful on what you do or do not know. All the principal participants stated that

they did not receive any training or development on how to implement an instructional

coaching program within their schools. All the participants stated that they had some

experience working with an instructional coaching prior to becoming a principal. Three

of the four principals were former coaches, with one principal having shared that they

had district level coaching experience. Principal Covington stated that it is important the

coaches and the teachers have a clear understanding that the coaches will run

collaborative planning. Principal Washington said, "Honestly, all the professional

development starts and ends with the instructional coaches. I am clear with them that this

and the data are their responsibilities." Principal McPherson stated that the experience as

an instructional coach provides insight of the dilemmas that instructional coaches

experience. "It gave me a lens to what coaching really is and I cannot deny that there are

challenges." Principal McPherson also stated the importance for the coaches to be honest

about how the expectations are impacting them. "Coaches have to let me know when

what I want doesn't make sense or puts them in a position. I can step back and say, my

bad." Principal Washington made it clear to the instructional coaches that they are the

middle managers and they impact change at the ground level.

All the principal participants stated that they make it clear to the instructional

coaches that they are responsible for running the collaborative planning sessions and

professional development. In three of the four schools, the principals meet weekly with

the instructional coaches to review the collaborative planning expectations and to clarify

any questions. Principal McPherson was the only principal in the principal participant

group that noted that they explain to the staff the role of the instructional coaches each

year. The clear expectations set by the principals support the implementation of the instructional coaching program. Principal McPherson, Principal Stevenson, and Principal Washington stated that their prior experience in the role of an instructional coach supports their understanding and clarity on the expectations of the instructional coaches beyond the job description.

Decision Making. The principal participants discussed decision making in relation to the process of making decisions and the practices of making decisions. When implementing the instructional coaching program in schools the principal participants discussed that the coaches have to be a part of the decision-making process. Being a part of the process made the expectations transparent so that the instructional coaches could execute the expectations. Principal Stevenson stated, when making decisions, the process involved checking in with the instructional coaches and the assistant principals so that everyone could weigh-in on the decision as long as time permitted. The principals discussed that time was a factor when making decisions. When there was more time they could get more impact. There were times when they could not make a decision jointly with the coaches. When this happened, sometimes it may have caused friction with the coaches and the administrators, or with the coaches and the teachers. Principal Washington stated, "I am willing to make the decision to change course if the instructional coaches present data to support how a decision negatively impacts their ability to perform their duties." Two of the four principals discussed how data were a major lever when making decisions. Principals' Washington and McPherson discussed

how they used data in their weekly meetings with their instructional coaches to inform

decisions.

Communication. Principal McPherson said, "Coaching on my team is really

about making sure that instructional coaches build relationships and making sure to have

those courageous conversations, the push and pull that leads to growth." Principal

McPherson stated that the role of the instructional coaches was communicated to the staff

every school year. Sometimes their roles changed and everyone needed to be clear on the

expectations so that the work can get done effectively. Principal Washington said,

"Communication is important because the coaches have to communicate with the

teachers and the administrators and it is important that the messages are crystal clear

because we do not want to let anything get lost in translation." Principal Stevenson stated

that it was important to remain open and have an open-door policy for the instructional

coaches because the work that they lead was vital. Principal McPherson discussed that a

major part of the communication process was active listening. "In some cases, I am not

the person leading with the message. I have to listen to the instructional coaches because

they are leaders in the school as well. They are leading work that I need to listen and

understand their needs and supports."

Coaches

Transparency was coded 61 times with the instructional coach participants within

the three subcategories of honesty, decision making, and communication. Coach

participants noted that being honest is vital to their work when principals are

implementing instructional coaching within their school. The instructional coaches were

transparent about the formal training that they received prior to becoming an instructional coach. One of the eight instructional coaches stated that they received formal training prior to becoming a coach. Coach Green discussed that the training was delivered by the Jim Knight Coaching Institute. Coach Green's principal, Principal McPherson also experienced training from Jim Knight's Coaching Institute as well while in the instructional coaching role. Coach Khaki was a part of a district level coaching unit, so the coaching training that the office received was internal, *for them by them*. Coach Apricot, Coach Siena, Coach Brown, Coach Mauve, Coach Denim and Coach Honeydew all expressed that they had never received formal instructional coaching training. However, Coach Siena, Coach Honeydew, Coach Brown, and Coach Honeydew expressed that their principal leadership training was transferred into practice when they became instructional coaches.

Honesty. The instructional coaches discussed that when the principal was honest their work could be more meaningful and productive. "One of the things that I love about my principal is that she is honest, which makes me more comfortable and confident when doing my job," as stated by Coach Apricot. Coach Siena said, "The clarity about the roles and expectations is honestly one of the biggest supports in the building. In a previous experience in this role in a different building, the transparency was not there. This made it hard for others to trust me in my role because they were not sure about what I could do or what I was telling the principal about them." Coach Khaki stated that her roles and expectations were communicated from the district office and the principal communicated those roles with the staff. "Honestly, the principal cannot change my role because it is

communicated through the district office. This transparency supports my confidence in saying no to things that do not align with what I am required to do." Both coaches Denim and Honeydew stated that their principal was transparent and honest that their main objective and role was to support teacher instructional growth. Coach Denim stated that keeping a teacher-first mindset created transparency with the teachers. All the instructional coaching participants emphasized that the honesty of the principal about their roles and responsibilities influenced their transparency in the work with the teachers that they supported.

Decision Making. The decision-making process and practices of the principal influenced the instructional coach's work. Coach Apricot discussed how the weekly meetings with the principal supports the ability to plan and manage time on a project. Coach Siena, Coach Green, Coach Brown, Coach Apricot, Coach Denim, and Coach Honeydew all stated that their principals influenced their coaching practice by making them a part of the decision-making process. Coach Brown said, "The principal's decision-making practices gave me confidence because you have a leader in front of you that is including you in the decision-making process." Coach Honeydew said, "The principal pays special attention and has a genuine interest in the work and makes the decision to try to ensure that I have the time and the resources to do the job." Coach Apricot and Coach Green stated that the principal's use of data to inform decisions makes the decision-making process clearer because you can see what the data is saying and make sense of the decision. Coach Mauve said, "My principal's approach to decision

making gives me more flexibility to do my job. The principal asks for my feedback or impute."

Differences

Both principals and the coaches discussed the importance of transparency. However, there were some differences and or barriers to transparency. Coach Honeydew stated that at times the decisions of the principal removed them from their work with task such as lunch duty and bus duty, or other duties as assigned. Coach Khaki stated that "Other duties as assigned should be removed from the job description because that is the lever that the principals used at times to remove instructional coaches from their identified roles." Coach Khaki also stated, "Because I work for the district office, the principal is not my supervisor and I do not have to adhere to the other duties as assigned because they cannot assign me other duties." Coach Denim said, "Being one person, time gets in the way especially when you hold other positions in the school. Those other responsibilities take me away from the work of coaching."

Category 2: Support

All participants stated that support was critical when principals were implementing an instructional coaching program. Both, the principals and the coaches described support in the subcategories of techniques and outcomes. The codes categorized as support were presented with a frequency of 107 times. The techniques subcategory was about how support was provided. The subcategory of outcomes was about the effects of support on the coaches.

Principals

The category of support was coded with a frequency rate of 64 times through the subcategories of techniques and outcomes by the principals interviewed in this study. Principal participants noted that it was their responsibility to provide support for their instructional coaches for the instructional coaches to be effective in their jobs. The collective sentiment was that the instructional coaches were the main source of support for teachers.

Techniques. Principals discussed support in the ways that they provided support. Principal Washington stated that the use of videos was pivotal to the strategy used to support instructional coaches coaching process. Principal McPherson stated, "I used in house professional development, and my previous experience of being an instructional coach to turn-key support for my instructional coaches." Principal Covington and Principal Washington both provided the instructional coaches with an assistant principal to partner with throughout the year. Principal Stevenson stated that the use of effective on going feedback was the best strategy of support for the instructional coaches in the school. Principals McPherson, Stevenson, and Washington all stated that they provide support by building the coaches' capacity. Principal McPherson provided book studies and article discussion of Jim Knight's work to support the skills development for coaching. Principal Washington discussed the use of data to drive the professional development needs of the teachers and the coaches. If the instructional coaches were not experienced in the strategy that they needed to train the teachers, Principal Washington provided professional development from outside sources to support the coach's growth.

Outcomes. The principals discussed support in the subcategory of outcomes. Outcomes were described as the effects of their support on the coach's ability to do their job. Principal McPherson stated that articulating the expectations of the coaches and reiterating them to the staff cemented the alignment of the coach's role and the school performance goals. Principal Washington said, "Balancing grace and mercy supports the coach's ability to do their jobs and grow in their roles." The instructional coaches have more autonomy within their roles and therefore take a more active approach to solving instructional challenges. Principal McPherson stated, "I try to make a culture with coaches which allows them to be more of a space where teachers can fail, but fail with support." By providing coaches the leeway to encourage teachers to take risk supports instructional coach's ability to build trust and support teacher development. Principal Covington stated that allowing the coaches to lead departments that they have expertise in was a form of support.

Principal Stevenson stated that monitoring is huge to being able to provide support for the coaches. "If I am aware of the instructional coach's practices then I can provide on the spot support when they need it in the field." Principal McPherson used real time coaching support for instructional coaches while they are dialoging with teachers about their practice. "I reiterated to the teachers that I am here for the coach and not to evaluate the teacher." The coaches were able to develop their coaching conversations practices because the principal was in the field with them supporting them to improve their practice. Principal Washington said, "The challenges in implementing

instructional coaching is that fine line on how leaders develop and use their coaches with the staff."

Coaches

The category of support was coded with a frequency rate of 43times through the subcategories of techniques and outcomes by the instructional coaches interviewed in this study. Instructional coaching participants noted that when their principals provided support for their practice then they felt more effective in their roles. The collective sentiment was that the level of support provided by the principals influenced how motivated they were to execute their duties and expectations.

Techniques. The instructional coaches collectively stated the way the principal provided support to them in their roles had a great influence on their practice. Coach Apricot said, "My principal is outstanding, the mentorship, frankness, guidance in feedback provided to me is why I can do this job today." Coach Siena stated that the principal provides weekly check-ins where the principal provides guidance as a form of support. Coach Mauve stated that the principal created opportunities to attend district coaching sessions with the department, which was the best form of support. Five of the eight coaches specifically stated that being a part of a team, or learning group within their coaching roles supported their development and execution of coaching practices. Coach Apricot stated, "Although I am still in the process of figuring it all out, I have a team so we are all figuring it out together." Coach Khaki discussed that the support from the district team was the main source of ongoing professional development. Coach Brown

stated, "I feel supported when the principal takes my hand and walks with me through the processes that I am supposed to execute the entire time if and when I need it."

Outcomes. The instructional coaches stated that they feel supported when they have the autonomy, time, and resources to execute their job expectations. **"**My principal is open with me and I am open with my principal, who then provides the space so that I can grow and learn in this role," as stated by Coach Apricot. Coach Denim stated that "Support is provided by the administrator to make sure that the teachers are teaching to the depth of the standards and the students are getting what they need, so if that means more time then that's what I get." Coach Mauve said, "I feel supported, so I can go to my principal with questions or guidance if I am unsure where I am going. Once I get this clarity, I can move on with my plan." Coach Honeydew said, "Having the resources that are needed to coach and the autonomy to deploy them the way I need to supports my ability to do my job." Coach Siena stated that "The principal is willing to delve deep into challenges and provide resources to support my ability to support the teachers." Coach Brown said, "The principal's reassurance of my practice builds my confidence and encourages me to take more risk."

Difference

The coaches and the principals stated instances when practices interfere with the coaches' ability to execute their roles and feel unsupported. Principal McPherson stated, "There are times when I have to walk back my expectations because they do not align with the goals and I have to say my bad!" Principal Covington stated, "Districts should only have school-based coaches because when they are district based, the teachers do not

have daily access to the coach." Principal Washington said, "I wish that I could have a coach for every subject so that I would not have to double up on my coaches, but the budget doesn't always allow it. This stretches the coach out thinner than I would like."

Coach Brown said, "Sometimes the support was not there all the way or as much as the principal perceived that it was. Or sometimes their version of support is not serving me in the way that the principal thinks that it is serving." Coaching can be a challenging position because the coaches have to maintain a non-authoritative or administrative. In the similar vein of thinking, coaches stated that principals should be more proactive in ensuring that teachers are practicing the skills that the coaches have taught them and not make it acceptable for them to revert back to previous practices. Coach Siena said, "If we are expected to help teachers improve their capacity so that they can improve the students' learning, then I strongly feel like there should be accountability when the teachers are asked to follow through on plans." Coach Brown stated that there were times that it was challenging when some messaging to the staff was coming from the coach instead of the administrator, when the administrator was needed. Coach Khaki said, "It is challenging when support is given to teachers to implement practices from professional development, and then next week the teacher reverts back to ineffective practices."

The instructional coaches discussed that being over committed interferes with their ability to work in their roles and feel unsupported. Coach Honeydew stated that coaching takes a lot of times and the first thing you need is time. "When I am assigned to lunch duties for two- hours, that takes me away from coaching teachers." Coach Denim stated that sometimes the multiple roles and expectations makes it hard to complete

coaching duties. Coach Khaki said, "Coaches should never be school-based because of the job description bullet that says, other duties as assigned. That little bullet keeps coaches from being able to focus solely on coaching." Coach Brown said, "Coaching is more challenging when I am pulled to substitute. This makes me feel less supported, even though it doesn't happen all of the time, I know other schools where that practice is done daily."

Category 3: Leadership Style

All participants stated that the leadership style of the principal was pivotal when principals were implementing an instructional coaching program. Both, the principals and the coaches described leadership style in the subcategories of knowledge, partnership, and implementation. The codes categorized as leadership style were presented with a frequency of 64 times. The subcategory of knowledge was compiled of examples of how the leader used their knowledge and experience. The subcategory of partnership was compiled of examples of how the leaders partner with others to do the work. The subcategory of implementation was compiled of examples of how the leaders put leadership style into practice.

Principals

Knowledge. The category of leadership style was coded with a frequency rate of 37 times through the subcategories of knowledge, partnership, and implementation by the principals interviewed in the study. Principal participants noted that their leadership style supported the instructional coach's ability to be effective in their jobs. The collective sentiment was that the leaders in the school have to be knowledgeable about what is

happening in the departments, use their experiences, and knowledge to support the instructional coaches.

Principal Washington, Principal McPherson, and Principal Covington all self-identified as collaborative leaders. Principal Washington self-identified as a transformational, transparent and a communicative leader all in one. "My teachers would probably call me collaborative and I can identify with that as my overall leadership style." Principal McPherson stated, "I am definitely collaborative. I am all the leadership styles wrapped up into one. Not one but all of them but the one that falls closets to me is distributive leadership style." Principal Covington identified as being collaborative, supportive with guidance. "I provide leadership in layers in which my assistant principals are one layer of support that I provide to instructional coaches." Principal Stevenson identified as being a democratic leader. Principal Stevenson stated that this leadership practice values everyone's voice. "I get the opportunity to collaborate with those people who work closely with me which is very important to me and it empowers the staff."

The principals stated that they have had previous experiences with instructional coaching practice or with other coaches prior to being a principal. They used their prior experiences and knowledge to support the implementation of instructional coaching in their schools. Coach McPherson said, "I was a district instructional coach for three years, which gave me a level of expectations for a coach that was beyond a job description. I was able to understand what the role was and also understand some of the dilemmas that they may face." Principal Washington was an instructional coach as well and stated, "Knowing the work that gets done at the middle manager level allows me to provide

support and supervision to my coaches." Principal Stevenson stated, "As a former instructional coach I provide coaching on coaching to my coaches using steps to effective feedback and plan for the feedback sessions to demonstrate how they would do the same with teachers." Principal Covington said, "I have always collaborated with instructional coaches prior to me becoming a principal, when I was an assistant principal and even as a teacher. I always looked for guidance from coaches. I like seeing things from their lens and identify the appropriate support that is needed."

The knowledge of the work of instructional coaching influenced how principals supported, collaborated and developed the coaches in their school. Principal McPherson said, "I didn't always make coaching easy. I am not here to make you a mediocre coach, I am here to push you to be a master in your craft. Having that background knowledge of being a coach helped me to do that." Principal Stevenson said, "Knowing the language of coaching makes it easier for everyone to speak the same language because we have an understanding of how it applies to the work." Principal Washington said, "I know what it's like to be in this work of instructional coaching and have to work in isolation, so I make sure that I provide opportunities for my coaches to work and collaborate together."

The principals stated that their knowledge and experience with instructional coaching allows them to value the role and work of the coaches in their school. They also acknowledged the need for training for leaders. Principal Covington said, "I would like to have an instructional coach in each content in my school to better impact instruction. There are always budget restraints that prohibit this move." Principal Washington said, "Instructional coaches are the backbone in a school." Principal McPherson said,

"Coaching is very important, and sometimes as administrators we don't know what we want from our coaches. You need to have this understanding prior to hiring them to do the work in your building." Principal Stevenson said, "I do know there is a need for further training for our leaders in the school just so we are on the same page and everyone is speaking the same language with coaching."

Partnership. Principal participants noted that their leadership styles influenced how they partnered with the instructional coaches. The collective sentiment was that as the leaders in the building they have to be side-by-side with the coaches in the work. Principal McPherson said, "Sometimes principals think that they are going to put instructional coaches in play and move back from instruction, but absolutely not, they have to go hand in hand." Principal Washington said, "This work is a cyclical process and we have to work together to figure what needs to be done next. We can't do that if we don't have a level playing field when it comes to the work." Principal Stevenson said, "I make sure that the school understands that we are a team." Principal McPherson and Principal Washington stated that they allow the instructional coaches to create professional development goals and decisions so that the coaches would have a stake in the process. Principal McPherson said, "If one of my coaches need a specific training I provide it personally or I send them where they can get the professional development. I make sure they have the tools they need to execute their roles." Principal Covington said, "I allow my instructional coaches to go to district trainings that are available to support them to do the work in my building." Principal Washington and Principal Stevenson said an important part of their leadership style is that they do not micro-manage. This supports

ownership of the task. Principal Washington said, "I don't micromanage, but you are responsible for the data that supports your work and you better know it and be able to teach the team about it."

Implementation. The data from the principal interviews illustrated the subcategory of implementation of leadership style. The principals described how their leadership style was practiced to support instructional coaching. Principal McPherson said, "I am proactive in my leadership style, I do not wait for a problem to happen." Principal Stevenson said, "When my coaches need help on how to give teachers feedback, I model for them." Principal Washington said, "I give my coaches a lot of grace, when something is new or there are challenges, I have to give space for my coaches to grow and figure things out. Instructional coaches should grow throughout the coaching process just like the teachers." Principal McPherson said, "I take my instructional coaches to my leadership coaching sessions so that they can see me getting coached in my role. They can see that this work is a moving target and we have to continue to grow."

Principals in the study stated that they demonstrated support within their leadership style and motivated their coaches to grow. Principal McPherson said, "I make myself available to support my coaches. I support my coaches feedback development by attending their teacher debrief sessions and providing them with feedback on their feedback practice."

Coaches

The category of leadership style was coded with a frequency rate of 27 times through the subcategories of knowledge, partnership and implementation by the instructional coaches interviewed in the study. Instructional coaching participants noted that when their principals' knowledgebase, willingness to partner in the work, and the way they implemented their leadership practices influenced their practice. The collective sentiment was that the leadership style of the principals influenced their comfort level when practicing their leadership within the role as an instructional coach.

Knowledge. Instructional coach participants interviewed in the study identified *knowledge* as how the principal used their knowledge and their experience when implementing instructional coaching within their building. When the principal was knowledgeable, the coaches were able to lead in their roles. Coach Green said, "The principal is very knowledgeable about data, instruction, and management, more than other principals that I've worked with. They normally have their forte, but my principal is very well versed in many areas and this helps when collaborating." Coach Brown stated, The principal's knowledge of the collaborative planning cycle made planning easier when working with teachers." Coach Honeydew stated, "My principal and I discuss the tenets of coaching cycle so that I can better use it with the teachers that I support." Coach Brown said, "I was able to get support and clarification from my principal on practices that I learned from my training from coaching professional developments due to the principal being a former coach."

Instructional coaches stated that the principal was more of a resource when they have knowledge of the coaching process or content. Coach Apricot said, "My principal has an open door so when I need clarification I can go to the principal. The discussion is rich because the principal knows what is happening." Coach Green said, "I wear a lot of hats and sometimes the priorities get jumbled around and I am not able to execute the duties the way I would like to, but I can always go to the principal to debrief and reset because they know what is going on in the school and in the content." Coach Green and Brown discussed that their principal's previous experience as a coach influenced the professional development that was provided to support them to execute their roles. Coach Mauve said, "My principal has never been a coach, but values them, so when I need training the principal is always willing to send me to get training from the district."

Partnership. Instructional coaches described partnership in the ways that the principal deployed their leadership by working with them directly to execute task. When the coaches and the principal partner in the work on a parallel level or side-by-side, there was more buy in from the staff. Coach Brown stated that the principal included the coaches in the entire process of school-leadership. Coach Denim said, "The principal and I work hand-and-hand to support the math department." Coach Honeydew stated, "My principal is a participative leader. There is a desire to be a part of the work. I am willing to go the extra mile because the principal is right there with me." Coach Brown said, "When there is a problem the principal creates a team and we all tackle it together." Coach Green said, "my principal delegates, but is still very much involved."

Implementation. Instructional coaches in the study described implementation by how the principals personified their leadership practices. When the principal described themselves as transformative, or supportive for example, the coaches could see what those leadership styles looked like in real time. When the principal implements tenants of their leadership style the coaches were able to model their leadership practices after the principal's. Coach Denim said, "The principal models for me how to engage with the team and in turn I am able to transform that and model the expectations with my department that I am coaching." Coach Apricot said, "Because my principal allows for me to make mistakes when I am learning, I give that same grace to the teachers that I coach because I see how my mistakes have helped me to grow in my role." Coach Siena, Alvarez, Green, Brown, Denim, and Honeydew have all described their principals' leadership style as being collaborative which they translated into their practices when they collaborated with the teachers that they support. Coach Honeydew said, "My principal is very democratic and solicits the thoughts of everyone on the team before making a decision. When working with teachers I leverage the practice so that I am not telling the teacher what to do and they feel like they are a part of the process."

Differences

Both the principals and the coaches shared that when knowledge was lacking it negatively impacted the work. Principal Washington stated that instructional coaching was the backbone of education, but the coaches need to be keen on their craft to be effective. Principal McPherson stated that "Coaches have to be knowledgeable and consistent in their craft in order for them to work. On the other hand, sometimes

administrators do not know what they want from the instructional coaches prior to hiring them." Coach Khaki stated that when the principal was not knowledgeable about instruction it interfered with their ability to do their job. The principal request information that does not progress the work.

Sometimes the principal's involvement level could negatively impact the work. Coach Green stated, "Sometimes the principal's knowledge and participation can be a gift and a curse. Sometimes they are overly involved and it gets in the way of what I am trying to do with the teachers." Coach Khaki stated, "The principal is not as knowledgeable as needed and is not as involved as necessary for the work to be cohesive and to get teachers to buy in."

Category 4: Collaboration

All participants stated that collaboration was vital when principals were implementing an instructional coaching program. Both, the principals and the coaches described collaboration in the subcategories of process, accessibility, and opposition. The codes categorized as collaboration were presented with a frequency of 50 times. The subcategory of process was compiled of examples of how the leader used collaborative planning meetings. The subcategory of accessibility had examples of how the leaders made themselves available to partner with the coach. The subcategory of opposition had examples of how collaboration was hindered.

Principals

The category of collaboration was coded with a frequency rate of 23 times through the subcategories of process, accessibility, and opposition by the principals

interviewed in this study. Principal participants noted that collaborative planning was one of the main ways that they used instructional coaching. They noted that they must work with their coaches so that they could execute this task. The collective sentiment was that the coaches were the main leaders of collaborative planning.

Process. Principals interviewed in the study shared that collaborative planning was the main service that they have the instructional coach provide. They noted that they must collaborate with the instructional coaches so that they were able to support the teachers to meet the school improvement goals. When the instructional coaches had an ongoing role and ownership of the collaborative planning process they could execute the expectations with greater fidelity. Principal McPherson said, "Coaches are a part of developing the professional development goals and therefore they are very much aligned in the work of delivering it." Principal Covington said, "The coaches are able to identify the needs and able to be a part of the delivery of instruction to support teachers in collaborative planning." Principal Stevenson said, "We work collaboratively to develop an action plan to put some next steps in place." Principal Washington said, "We have conversations about collaborative planning and figure out what needs to be done next. This is a cyclical process."

Accessibility. All principals in the study stated that they met to collaborate with the instructional coaches about collaborative planning weekly. Principal Covington said, "The collaboration process was tremendously important and the coaches executed by meeting weekly, receiving updates on a weekly basis of what worked, what didn't work, and what do we need to get rid of." Principal Stevenson said, "It is important to me to

work consistently and closely with the coaches because their role is so important for collaborative planning and professional development." Principal Stevenson stated that the collaboration with the instructional coaches to create a survey to assess the teachers' professional development needs was vital to their collaborative planning and professional development calendar for the year. Principal Washington said, "I have an open-door policy, my instructional coaches can come to me and ask questions whenever they need. I am asking a lot from them and they need to be clear on my expectations." Principal McPherson said, "I involve the coaches in a collaborative setting but push their thinking to go beyond being mediocre. This ensures that our approach is the best for the teachers and students moving forward. Principals have to be right there with the coaches, if not it is not going to work."

Opposition. Principals interviewed in the study stated that all of the instructional coaches experience some form of opposition when doing their jobs. When principals are aware of what was transpiring in their school, they could support the instructional coaches in executing their duties. Principal Washington said, "A challenge is making sure that the coaches consistently get what they need to do their jobs." Principals McPherson, Stevenson, and Washington stated that teacher resistance can be the main deterrent to collaborative planning and supporting the instructional coaches are key to overcoming this challenge. Principal McPherson said, "I have to be aware of a balance of support so that the coaches are not seen as an administrator."

Coaches

The category of collaboration was coded with a frequency rate of 27 times through the subcategories of process, accessibility, and opposition by instructional coaches interviewed in the study. Instructional coach participants noted that collaborative planning was one of the main ways that they provide service in the school. From collaborative planning, they are able to differentiate support for teachers after.

Process. Instructional coaches interviewed in the study stated that when the principals had a clear goal for collaborative planning process, their roles as coaches are more solidified with the staff. Coach Siena said, "My principal ensures that everyone is clear on collaborative planning each week and we work together to figure out what needs to be done." Coach Green said, my principal is very involved the collaborative planning process. Whereas Coach Mauve said, "My principal is willing to be involved when necessary, I just push forward until the principal has to intervene." Coach Green said, "The principal is very knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction, that part is very helpful so that we can collaborate with each other and when I meet with teachers." Coach Khaki stated that the principal made it clear that the expectation is to provide structural support for collaborative planning, "I focus on that."

The instructional coaches stated that when the principal is not available they have created a team of leaders that the coaches can collaborate with. Coaches Green, Apricot, Siena, Mauve and Khaki stated that they work with an assigned assistant principal or leader such as Title I coordinator to collaborate. Coach Mauve said, "I get hands-on learning from others who had a position similar to mine prior to me in the building.

Coach Apricot said, "I coordinate with the Title I coordinator to support with my process when I need it." Coach Green said, "I collaborate with teachers, other coaches, and all administrators to determine the needs of teachers as well as students."

Accessibility. Coach Brown said, "My principal is very involved in the collaborative planning process and we meet frequently, at lease biweekly." Coach Siena said, "The principal is very collaborative and I am very comfortable asking questions because the way that we work together. The principal is willing to delve deep and provide me with resources to help me to help the teachers." Coaches Green, Siena, Apricot, and Brown stated that they could brainstorm with their principals on strategies and approaches to supporting teachers. Coach Green said, "I can come to my principal with an idea that I am thinking about and we can think through it together."

Opposition. Collaboration could be challenged when faced with opposition and teacher resistance to collaborative planning and coaching. All the instructional coaches interviewed in this study stated that teacher resistance to new strategies creates the most opposition to the success of collaborative planning. Coach Siena said, "A barrier to collaborative planning is the fact that some groups cannot work together. When I work with one grade level, I say a prayer every time." Coach Apricot said, "Teachers' attitudes, conscience and unconscious bias get in the way of coaching and collaborative planning. Coach Honeydew said, "Some teachers have low skill but high will and they are willing to try new strategies, but other times the person has low skill and low will. These teachers are reluctant to make necessary changes. The collaboration with the principal is delicate and pivotal with these teachers."

Another opposition to the work of instructional coaches and the execution of collaborative planning was not having enough time. Coach Green said, "Time, there is definitely not enough time in the day. That is an ongoing challenge to get to everyone and the teachers have so many different needs." Coaches Honeydew, Green, Khaki, and Denim stated that having other responsibilities limit their ability to consistently perform in their coaching duties and collaborative planning. Coach Denim said, "Because I hold other responsibilities, at times those responsibilities take me away from doing the work of the coach." Coach Honeydew said, "I have two lunch duty assignments this year, which means that I don't have the time to plan with teachers that are planning during those lunch times, and those teachers have been denied my services that I could have provided." Coach Green said, "I also have what is called, "other duties as assigned" so I wear a lot of hats and at times things are harder to prioritize." Coach Khaki said, "Instructional coaches should never be school based solely due the job description, other duties as assigned, that alone interferes with the coach's ability to do their job."

Category 5: Trust

All participants stated that trust was required when principals were implementing an instructional coaching program. Trust had three subcategories, integrity, permits, and barriers. All participants discussed the importance of trust in the relationship with the principal and trust with the teachers in the coaching program.

Principals

Trust was coded 37 times with the principal participants. Trust was composed of three subcategories, integrity, permits, and barriers. Principal participants noted that trust was a key component to implementing instructional coaching.

Integrity. Integrity was coded as the personality trait of the leader. The personality traits were identified by the way the principal admitted that they were wrong or too challenging. Integrity was also coded by the way the principal showed openness, honesty and accountability. The principals that were interviewed in the study stated that their integrity allowed for the coaches to manage from their positions. Principal Washington said, "Creating good systems and structures helps them to do their jobs. My goal is to have my coaches thrive, not to survive!" Principal McPherson said, "Sometimes I push too hard and I have to pull back and acknowledge that they (coaches) need something else at that time." Principal Covington said, "Sometimes you have to model openness and be in the coaching part with the coach." Principal Stevenson said, "By being up front about students being the priority, and others can see how your decisions are for children they are more willing to support the school vision rather or not they agree. Principal McPherson said, "Instructional coaches have to have a level of openness with the principal so that we can see what some of the dilemmas are, so principals have to create that space."

Permissions. Permissions was coded by how established trust influenced the work of the instructional coaches. When trust was established the instructional coaches were permitted to execute their roles and make decisions. "You can only coach someone

that gives you permission to, this goes for the principal and the coaches," as stated by Principal McPherson. Principal Washington said, "As an administration team, we give the process so that they can own it and prepare to support their teachers the way they see fit." Principal McPherson said, "When the coach leads, I am going to follow what you say because I trust you to lead in accordance to our established goals."

Barriers. Barriers were created when trust was not established in the leadership practices and decision making. Principal Washington said, "Trusting the process and trying not to over manage the process is a barrier to trust. Principal McPherson said, "Sometimes the coaches get torn between leadership and being the support for teachers, because the lines can get blurred. When this happens, trust could be eroded over time. Principal Covington said, "Some teachers do not take the feedback as seriously from a coach as they would from an administrator because they are not being evaluated by them. I need to know who is not doing what they are supposed to do." Principal Stevenson said, "Many times, teachers do not want to see change, they want to keep things the same and they do not work with the coaches, as principals we have to figure that part out."

Coaches

Trust was coded 21 times with the coaching participants. Three subcategories of trust were integrity, permits, and barriers. Instructional coaching participants noted that the level of trust that were shared between the coaches and the principal influenced how the coaches can execute their roles.

Integrity. Instructional coaches described integrity in the principal's leadership practices by their willingness to keep communication channels open, admit when they are

wrong, accountability practices. When the principals and coaches have established trust, they were able to thrive in their roles. Coach Denim said, "The principal built a rapport where we can trust and rely on each other." Coach Siena said, "I am comfortable with what I am learning from the principal because the principal is pouring into us. Coach Apricot said, "The principal's trust in me and belief in me has allowed me to try to try things my own way. The principal has allowed me a lot of flexibility."

Permissions. When trust was established the instructional coaches were able to practice their craft. Coach Mauve said, "My principal is trustful of those that are in leadership roles to do their jobs. Coach Apricot said, "The principals trust and faith in me and my ability helped me to figure out my role. It's the trust that allows me to do what I am doing. My principal does not micromanage me the opportunity to learn from my mistakes is always there." Coach Mauve said, "The principal allows flexibility because the trust in me, what I know, and what I am able to do. The principal's trust allows me to step up." Coach Brown said, "The principal builds confidence in me and I trust my practices more." Coach Denim said, the principal's trust in me allows me to do my job well." Coach Khaki said, "Trust matters as a coach. It matters between the different relationships between the administrator and the coach, as well as between the coach and the teacher."

Barriers. Being new to a school could be a barrier to trust, especially depending on how much the staff trusts the principal. Coach Mauve said, "I felt some push back and resistance from teachers because I was new to the school and they did not trust what I was telling them to do." Coach Green said, "I was new to the school last year and I

experienced more push back because the teachers did not trust me." Coach Honeydew said, "I have been at the school for a long time and the principal was new, I did not trust the principal right away just because prior experiences with principals. The principals worked to gain my trust by supporting the working relationship."

Differences

There were times when the principal's leadership practices eroded trust. Coach Khaki said, "When the principal wants me to report on teachers, this erodes trust. I need to work with teachers on a volunteer basis and they won't do it if they do not trust me." Coach Siena said, "If there is no accountability for teachers it is hard to trust that all the work that you put in will be accepted or respected."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research seeks trustworthiness in the sense of asking, can the findings to be trusted (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The trustworthiness of the study describes the process the researcher uses to assess the rigor of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This section includes a discussion of how trustworthiness was achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Internal validity is directly related to the research design, the researcher's instruments, and data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). It was assumed that the participants in the study are telling the truth about their experiences. To support the credibility of the qualitative study, the method of member checking or participant validation was used. Each participant reviewed the transcript to check over their answers for clarity and

determined if there were any errors during member checking. Members were emailed their transcript and instructed to email any corrections back. There were no errors or clarifications required by the participants. The researcher used memos to reflect on data collected and reflexive journaling. The credibility strategies outlined in Chapter 3 were applied and no adjustments were needed.

Transferability

Qualitative research is not designed to be generalized to all situations and settings but rather it can be applicable in a broader context and maintain the specificity of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I provided rich descriptions of the data collection as well as in tables. I used thick descriptions to illustrate the perceptions of the participants and how they aligned with established codes and categories. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all of the interviews were conducted virtually on a Zoom or Google Meet platform, so there were no descriptions of the physical school site.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the data. In this qualitative study, I used triangulation to establish dependability. I collected data on the perceptions of the leadership practices from the principal and two instructional coaches in each school. I provided rich descriptions of how the data was collected and when it was collected. The interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim and all participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. The interview protocol was included in the appendix to add clarity to the process.

Confirmability

The researcher was a central focus of qualitative research. Researcher reflexivity is the constant awareness of the researcher's role and influence in the research. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the researcher is the primary instrument of qualitative research and the systematic assessment of their identity. Positionality and subjectivity was vital to the research design. As a former instructional coach, I needed to safeguard the research from my personal opinions, experiences and bias. To ensure my biases were not present in the data collection, I transcribed the interviews from the digital recording for accuracy. I also used reflexive notes throughout the process. I asked myself reflective questions during and after the interview to check my position in the interview and check any researcher bias. The study used data triangulation by conducting the interviews at different times, at more than one site, and involved more than one level of individuals, principal and two coaches. Most of the interviews at each participant level, principals and coaches, were conducted within a two-day window of each other so that the principals and the instructional coaches would be experiencing common events within the school building. One site did not meet this standard and had a four-day window between the principal interview and the coaches' interviews due to a situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The principal was not available until a later date. I used interrater reliability by having colleagues that were experienced in coaching and leadership to challenge my thinking during the research process.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore the two research questions: what are the perspectives of principals of how their leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching and what are the perspectives of the instructional coaches' of how the principals' leadership practices influenced the implementation of instructional coaching? The questions were answered by analyzing the data collected from the participants semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the participant's perceptions of the principals' leadership practices were created by coding the data and creating categories. The 12 selected participants for the researcher were four principals, and eight instructional coaches who worked in four different middle schools in an urban school district in Maryland. The principals and the instructional coaches stated that the principal leadership practices influenced five main categories: (a) transparency, (b) support, (c) leadership style, (d) collaboration, and (e) trust. Each participant stated that transparency influenced the execution of coaching and implementing the coaching program. Trust was imperative to executing their roles, the practice of collaboration, providing support, leveraging their leadership style to support all of the aforementioned categories. The categories represent the perceptions of the school principals' and the instructional coaches' perception of the principal's leadership practices when implementing instructional coaching. In Chapter 5 of the qualitative study, I provided the interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications to provide potential impact of social change, and the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of school principals and instructional coaches of how the principals' leadership practices influence the implementation of instructional coaching. The study participants consisted of four middle-school principals and eight instructional coaches who worked in an urban school district in Maryland. The participants had varying levels of principal leadership and instructional coaching experience. The research questions guiding this study were:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of principals of how their leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of instructional coaches of how the principal's leadership influenced the implementation of instructional coaching?

The findings showed that the principals who were transparent about their knowledge, expectations, and leadership practices were able to implement the instructional coaching program with greater fidelity than those principals who did not share the same qualities. The instructional coaches shared similar perspectives and influences on their practice to these principals. In schools where the principal did not share similar, practices the instructional coaches noted more discord and challenges in their ability to perform in the role of instructional coach. The participants from both groups, principals and instructional coaches, identified the factors that influence the implementation of instructional coaching in the following categories: (a) transparency, (b) support, (c) leadership style, (d) collaboration, and (e) trust. I used Spillane's

distributive framework to categorize, analyze, and compare principals' and instructional

coaches' interview responses related to the framework's construct of how leadership is

shared and transferred over time to meet goals. In this chapter, I present the study

findings, limitations, recommendations, and implications.

Interpretation of the Findings

The participants described their perceptions of the principal's leadership practices

influence on implementing instructional coaching. The principals interviewed in this

study shared examples of how they leverage their leadership practices, such as decision

making, collaboration, communication, and support, to support the implementation of

instructional coaching within their schools. The instructional coaches interviewed in this

study shared how the principal's leadership practices influence their experiences as

instructional coaches within the school. All the participants also described their

experience with instructional coaching and the professional development they received

prior to performing in the role of an instructional coach or a principal implementing the

program. The findings of this study confirm and contribute to both the concept of

leadership influence on instructional coaching and the conceptual framework of this

study. The interpretations of the findings will be discussed according to the key

categories that emerged as well as the conceptual framework.

Category 1: Transparency

Mangin and Dunsmore (2015) found that the framing of coaching roles

systemically and individually has conflicting impacts on the implementation of

instructional coaching. I found that the participants in this study described transparency

as an important leadership practice that principals need to have when implementing

instructional coaching. They described transparency in the areas of honesty, decision

making, and communication. When a principal is transparent on the roles and

expectations of the instructional coaches, they are able to execute the expectations more

confidently. Principal McPherson stated, "I share the roles and expectations of the

coaches every year with the staff because sometimes the roles change or we have new

staff member. I need to make sure that everyone is clear." Setting clear expectations

aligns with current literature on coaching and principal leadership. Reid (2019) found that

when principals constantly stress the importance of transparency and communication, the

coaching system can thrive. In situations where principals' expectations are not clear, the

instructional coaches described more challenges when implementing coaching practices.

Coach Khaki stated, "The principal is not clear on the instructional program in the school

and relies on the staff to create the program; sometimes this causes conflict."

The participants of the study, both principals and instructional coaches, described

how the principal leadership practice of decision making influences the implementation

of the coaching program. The principals who practiced a more inclusive approach to

decision making, a subcategory of transparency, had instructional coaches who described

how the leadership practices allowed them to execute their duties. Instructional Coach

Apricot stated, "The principal allows us to be a part of the process and the decision

making, which gives us a stake in the work." Coach Honeydew stated, "Because the

principal seeks everyone's opinions on the decision before it is made, it makes me feel

that the principal is serious about my contribution to the work."

Category 2: Support

The category of support was discussed consistently among both the principals and the instructional coach participants. Ippolito and Bean (2019) found that it is important for principals to remain aware and recognize the coaches' needs to provide time and resources to support their work. The principals in this study discussed support in the form they provide it and how the instructional coaches support the teachers. The instructional coaches described support in terms of how they received it from the principals and how they are then able to support the teachers. I found that the principals who had prior experience being an instructional coach were able to provide more refined and purposeful support for their coaches. Principal McPherson described providing support by sending the instructional coaches in the school to trainings provided by Jim Knight, a renowned contributor and researcher of instructional coaching. The principals with prior coaching experience described their own experiences as levers to providing support for instructional coaches in their building and trying to strategically plan for challenges that coaches face in the practice. The instructional coaches in the study stated that when they felt supported, they were more comfortable leading their work with the teachers.

The experience and training that instructional coaches had prior to performing in the role influenced how much support they needed. In the study, the range of coaching experience was from 2 to 10 years. Two out of the eight instructional coach participants received formal coaching training prior to coaching. Seven of the eight coaches described administrator leadership coursework as the training that prepared them to be instructional coaches. The instructional coaches in the study stated that more professional development

was needed. I found that the instructional coaches who worked with principals who were coaches before becoming a principal described their coaching experience as being more fluent, supported, and confident. The instructional coaches in these relationships identified themselves as leaders in the work because they felt they were partnering with the principals and their perspectives were valued.

Category 3: Leadership Style

The participants in this study described leadership style as the ways the principal used knowledge and experience, partnered with the instructional coaches in the work, and implemented their leadership practices. Previous researchers have found that coaches have to maintain a growth mindset and principals should create and support leadership opportunities for coaches (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). I found that principals who were coaches previously were more purposeful and strategic in how they implemented the instructional coaching program and supported leadership roles. Principal Washington stated, "Coaches are the middle managers; this is where the work gets done." Coach Apricot and Coach Siena described their experience working with Principal Washington as an ongoing cycle of support and execution. The instructional coaches in other schools with principals with prior coaching experience stated that the principals were more knowledgeable about their experiences and were keen thought partners because of their in-depth knowledge of the work.

I found in this study the instructional coaches who worked with principals who were not coaches experienced more discord within their practice because it took longer for a resolution to challenges. For example, Coach Khaki stated, "The principal doesn't

really understand that this work is built on trust, and I can't be seen as a reporter to the principal. I don't really have a relationship with the other department, and now it is taking longer to build one."

In previous studies, researchers suggested a need for a clear understanding of how coaches and other leaders work together in supportive systems to catalyze improvement and build teacher capacity (Miller et al., 2019; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). The findings suggest principals who were able to involve themselves in the coaching process and involve the instructional coaches in the leadership process of instruction were able to influence the implementation of the instructional coaching program more effectively. I found that the principal leadership practices the instructional coaches described as influential in their execution of their roles were ability to model expectations, partner in the work instead of simply assigning, and ability to create a stake for the instructional coaches in the instructional decision making and development of teachers. I also found that the principals who were authoritative in their leadership style and gave directives for the work had instructional coaches who described a negative influence on the implementation of the instructional coaching program. Coach Khaki stated, "The feeling that I was here to report on teachers was against the role of an instructional coach. I had to work harder to get teachers that were not comfortable with me to engage with me."

Category 4: Collaboration

Bakhshaei and Hardy (2021) found that school administrators that work closely and collaboratively with coaches increases teachers' willingness to work with instructional coaches and activates coaches as leaders and change agents in the building. I

found that collaboration was an integral part when principals are implementing an instructional coaching program. The instructional coaches in this school district conducted the collaborative planning cycle within their schools. Principals and instructional coaches in the study described the importance of being a part of an ongoing cyclical process of discussion and planning together to effectively support the teachers. Instructional coaches felt prioritized when the meeting times and dates were honored weekly. I found that when principals in the study were accessible and aligned with the instructional coach's work, they were able to facilitate discussion and solutions for challenges that the instructional coaches may have faced. In the schools where the principal was not as accessible the instructional coaches stated that challenges lingered and they experienced more reluctance and resistance from teachers.

Category 5: Trust

The participants in this study stressed the importance of trust. Killion et al. (2012) found that instructional coaches are supposed to share and support the principal's vision on instruction; however, the effectiveness of coaching hinges on the relationship between the principal and the instructional coach. I found that trust was key to the instructional coach and principal relationship. The participants described trust as integrity, permissions, and barriers. In the study, principals that created strong trusting relationships practiced admitting when they were wrong, had integrity, they did not micromanage the instructional coaches, and created a level of openness with them. Instructional coaches described openness as the ability to ask questions, could come to the principals for help, or suggest new ideas or directions. I found that the trusting relationships provided

opportunities for growth and application of strategies for the instructional coaches. Principal McPherson stated, "It is my job to push the coaches to be better and not mediocre." Principal Washington stated, "the coaches should grow as they coach the teachers." Many of the instructional coaches stated that their principals trusted them to do their jobs. Cultivating trust motivates the instructional coaches to perform their duties, challenge themselves to improve and increase their confidence. These findings align with the Bakhshaei and Hardy's (2021) research that suggest that coaches need to be trusted to make decisions around coaching which builds their confidence in their practice. As with previous studies, a lack of trust can be a barrier to instructional coaching (DeWalt & Mayberry, 2019; Ippolito & Bean, 2019). Leadership practices that erode trust were described as micromanagement, reporting on other teachers, over management of process, push-back and resistance from teachers.

Interpretations in Context of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Spillane (2006) framework for DL practice. The framework illustrates how leadership practices, interactions between people, and their situation are distributed throughout an organization to meet overall goals. Spillane's (2006) DL framework has three central arrangements (a) coperformance, (b) division of labor, and (c) parallel performance. The coperformance arrangement is when two or more leaders collaborate to execute leadership functions. For example, the principal and the teacher would work together to execute leadership functions. The division of labor approach there is some room for overlap of leadership functions. An example of this may be when an assistant principal focuses on discipline

and the principal focuses on instruction. The parallel performance arrangement allows two or more leaders to perform leadership functions at the same time, but at times this approach may lead to redundant overlap due to lack of collaboration between leaders. For example, a teacher may make a list of workshops needed and an assistant principal makes a list for the same workshops. The same leadership functions were performed but the communication was missing. Analyzing leadership practices is an accurate way to examine the themes of leadership patterns in schools (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2011; Kelly & Dikkers, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2009; Spillane et al., 2001;). Leadership practices are categorized as artifacts such as tools and practices. The participants of this basic qualitative study outlined their leadership practices by explaining their experiences applying leadership to implement an instructional coaching program. The emergent categories were (a) transparency, (b) support, (c) leadership style, (d) collaboration and (e) trust.

As illustrated in the findings, principals' leadership practices could be identified in the artifacts of organizational routines. The principals established the expectations for the coaches to conduct collaborative planning and professional development for the school staff. Three of the four principals in the study reported practices that align with the central arrangement of coperformance. These principals included the instructional coaches in the planning, preparation, and execution of the collaborative planning task. They used leadership practices of transparency to ensure that all parties involved understood the expectations. The instructional coaches in these schools described experiences of a two-way street approach. They had an equal say in the approaches being

deployed and could make the decision to change directions of the work with proper

justification. The interactions between the principal and the instructional coaches in the

coperformance schools were described as trustful, supportive, and collaboratively

involved in the decision making. The principals used leadership practices such as

modeling, collaboration, communication and accessibility. One of the four principals

interviewed for this study reported practices that align with the division of labor

approach. The principal described how different assistant principals were responsible for

different roles in the school building and the instructional coaches were responsible for

different content. The principal and the instructional coaches described limited

opportunities to collaborate which led to misinformation at times. The instructional

coaches described opportunities to make decisions and lead, but also having progress

stalled when information was misinterpreted. The experiences of the participants in this

study described how they were able to make a decision to be a leader or a follower

depending on the situation overtime within their buildings.

The primary focus of Spillane's distribution framework is that leadership

practices take shape in the interactions of leaders, followers, and the situations (Spillane,

2006). The principals that use leadership practices that positively influence instructional

coaching implementation create environments where leadership is transferred and or

distributed based on the situation was suggested in the findings from this study. Coach

Apricot stated, "I am able to suggest and present evidence that a decision that the

principal made should actually be done in a different way. Then the principal agrees and

gives me the leeway to do it my way." Principal Washington stated, "Change happens at

the middle manager position so they must have the space to make decisions and lead their work." Each participant answered the interview questions and outlined their perceptions of how the principal's leadership practices influence instructional coaching implementation. My interpretations of the findings illustrated how leadership can be distributed to support the implementation of coaching when the principal leadership practices support the participation of leadership functions from both formal and informal leaders. In the school where leadership was not distributed, the implementation of coaching was stagnant and trust was a barrier. The conceptual framework and the results of the literature review in Chapter 2 were substantiated in this basic qualitative study.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to the study that may impact trustworthiness that were outlined in Chapter 1 included the small population that was studied. The fact that the sample size had 12 participants, in one school district, that only included middle schools, did not include assistant principals, and had mostly females may present a limitation to this basic qualitative study. I was unable to interview the participants in person, which may have led to a reduction in the information that they shared in their responses. The Covid-19 pandemic prevented in person interviews as well as a scheduling challenge for one of the participants.

Recommendations

The findings from this study can be beneficial for the district in which the study occurred. The district has a strategic plan in place to leverage coaching to meet state mandates as well as a rich history of funding instructional coaching throughout the

district both at school-based level and district-level. Districts can provide standardized professional development on instructional coaching to the principals as well as the instructional coaches. The findings of this study include evidence that the principals and instructional coaches that have had advanced experience and professional development in the use of instructional coaching were more adapt at working towards collaboration, transparency, trust, and support. In these situations, the participants expressed experiences of ease in taking on leadership and/or follower positions when necessary. The principals should also receive professional development on how to implement instructional coaching strategically to maximize best results. The principals will learn to leverage leadership practices that enhance instructional coaching programs and build partnerships.

Based on the historical and current literature, principal leadership is paramount in influencing how effective an instructional coaching program can be implemented. I recommend further research on how specific leadership practices create consistent and reliable results for implementing instructional coaching programs by observing principal' practices. The leadership practices that aligned with the DL framework principles were perceived by the participants as having a positive effect on the implementation of instructional coaching. Future scholars could research the impact of these principles on teacher performance outcomes with the quantitative method. A quantitative study on the effects of principals' implementation of instructional coaching program on teacher performance outcomes could indicate the most impactful leadership practices for coaches and teachers.

Implications

In this study, I determined that middle-school principals with experience and training in instructional coaching can consistently apply the leadership practices required to effectively implement instructional coaching programs in their buildings. The instructional coaches that had previous training in instructional coaching were strategic in communicating their needs for support from the principal and identifying what privileges in leadership that they needed in order to support the teachers. The purpose of this study was to explore the principals' and the instructional coaches' perceptions of the principal leadership practices influence on implementing an instructional coaching program. The findings presented the leadership practices that influenced the implementation of instructional coaching within the middle school setting.

School districts across the nation have invested in instructional coaching to meet the mandates of ESSA (2015). According to Mangin and Dunsmore (2015), instructional coaches have expressed that the lack of principal support, clear roles, and a need for a narrowed focus of work have negatively impacted their practice. Data from this study could help with improving the process of implementing instructional coaching programs within schools. The school districts could be strategic in their professional development design and facilitation for the principals and the instructional coaches.

The findings from this study could contributed to positive social change for principal leadership development and instructional coaching development. Specific professional development on coaching could increase consistency in the practice of implementing an instructional coaching program. Further positive social change could

result from focusing on strategic principal leadership and coaching practices that effectively influence the coaches' ability to support teachers and influence student achievement.

Conclusion

School improvement is an ongoing driver for federal legislation and research. Many school districts use instructional coaching as a lever to provide professional development for teachers and improve student achievement by enhancing teacher practice. Studies have shown that the implementation of instructional coaching programs have been inconsistent and varies from school to school (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). There is a gap in practice of how principals effectively implement instructional coaching (Lownhaupt et al., 2014; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Neumerski, 2013).

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the principals and the instructional coaches' perceptions of how the principal's leadership practices influence the implementation of instructional coaching programs. I conducted semistructured interviews with 12 participants (four principals and eight instructional coaches) in a middle school setting in one school district. The participants believed that the principal's leadership practice can influence the implementation of the instructional coaching program. The participants described several leadership practices that they found significant when implementing an instructional coaching program. The experiences shared by the participants in relation to trust, support, collaboration, leadership style, and transparency influenced their application of leadership practices aligned with Spillane's DL framework (2006).

The findings show the importance of identifying the principal leadership practices and how these practices influence instructional coaching implementation. The study's participants identified the leadership practices that contributed to the implementation of instructional coaching and how those practices provided opportunities for leadership within the schools to support the identified goals. There is still a need for more research to measure the quantitative impact of specific leadership practices to identify which practices have a greater impact on instructional coaching and ultimately teacher performance. These findings can then lead to more strategic and robust professional development for both the school principals and the instructional coaches.

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Appendix A: Research Approvals

IRB Approval Granted, Conditional upon Partner Approval - Shona Sandlin

IRB <irb@mail.waldenu.edu>
Fri 1/8/2021 4:34 PM
To: Shona Sandlin ███████████████████████
Cc: IRB ████████████████ James A. Bailey ██████████████████

📎 1 attachments (70 KB)
Sandlin Consent Form .docx;

Dear Ms. Sandlin,

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, " Principals and Coaches Perspectives on Principal Leadership Practices and Instructional Coaching," conditional upon the approval of the research partner, as documented in a signed notification of approval, which will need to be submitted to the Walden IRB once obtained. You may not commence the study until the Walden IRB confirms receipt of that signed notification of approval.

Your approval # is 01-08-21-0633784. You will need to reference this number in your dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on January 7, 2022 (or when your student status ends, whichever occurs first). One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Please note that this letter indicates that the IRB has approved your research. You may **NOT** begin the research phase of your doctoral study, however, until you have received official notification from the IRB to do so. Once you have received this notification by email, you may begin your data collection. Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application materials that have been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 10

business days of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you a made commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained on the Tools and Guides page of the Walden website: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/research-center/research-ethics/tools-guides

Doctoral researchers are required to fulfill all of the Student Handbook's Doctoral Student Responsibilities Regarding Research Data regarding raw data retention and dataset confidentiality, as well as logging of all recruitment, data collection, and data management steps. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKImdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Elyse V. Abernathy, MSL, MSM
Research Ethics Support Specialist
Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Walden University
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 1210
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Email: irb@mail.waldenu.edu

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link:
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Notification of Approval to Conduct Research - Shona Sandlin

IRB ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓
Fri 6/4/2021 4:28 PM
To: Shona Sandlin ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓
Cc: James A. Bailey ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Dear Shona Sandlin,

This email confirms receipt of the approval letter for the partner organization and also serves as your notification that Walden University has approved BOTH your doctoral study proposal and your application to the Institutional Review Board. As such, you are approved by Walden University to conduct research with this site.

Congratulations!

Libby Munson
Research Ethics Support Specialist, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Leilani Gjellstad
IRB Chair, Walden University

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Appendix B: Principal Interview Questions

For Research Question: 1

What are the perspectives of principals of the principal's leadership\ practices as it relates to the implementation of instructional coaching?

1. How would you describe yourself as a leader?

2. What were your previous experiences with instructional coaching prior to working with IC in your building, if any?

3. Describe your training on implementing instructional coaching models?

4. What is the role of the instructional coach in your building?

5. How do you support the instructional coaches?

6. How do you think your decision making and practices influence how instructional coaches work in your building?

7. What type of tasks or jobs have you assigned to your instructional coaches?

8. How involved is the instructional coach in monitoring the progress of the school goals?

9. How have instructional coaches influenced professional development goals?

10. What else would you like to share with me regarding instructional coaching implementation in general?

11. Can you describe any positives and/or challenges of implementing instructional coaching in the school?

12. What barriers do you believe instructional coaches face when attempting to improve instructional practices?

Appendix C: Instructional Coaches Interview Questions

For Research Question: 2

What are the perspectives of instructional coaches relating to the principal's leadership

practices as it relates to the implementation of instructional coaching?

1. How would you describe your role as an instructional coach?

2. Describe the training received to perform as an instructional coach in a school?

3. How would you describe the principal leadership style?

4. How does the principal leadership influence your ability to perform in the role of IC?

5. How have you influenced the professional development goals in the school?

6. What barriers do you face when attempting to improve instructional practices?

7. Would you like to provide additional information that you believe is relevant?