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Principal Perspectives on the Dual Roles of Manager and Instructional Leader

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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Cynthia C. Chairez

MA, Lamar University, 2013

BS, The University of Texas-Pan American, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Educational Administration and Leadership Administration

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Abstract

The responsibilities of school principals in the United States have shifted to include instructional leadership in addition to the management of facilities and people. Principals at all levels can find it challenging to balance their administrative and instructional leadership roles. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to understand principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers and instructional leaders, including how they set priorities. Instructional management theory and instructional organization framework informed the study. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 principals from one district in the southern United States; participants had at least 2 years in their roles. A combination of a priori and open coding was used to support thematic analysis. Participants believed that managing both roles was overwhelming and often imbalanced toward the managerial, especially when addressing the challenges of COVID-19. Their primary challenge was managing time to respond and fulfill both roles successfully. Participants used delegating, sticking to schedules, and practices focused on instructional leadership such as coaching teachers and monitoring student academic achievement. Principals need more support from their districts' administration to fulfill their dual roles; they also indicated ongoing professional development was a need for all staff at the schools. This study has implications for positive social change. Providing principals with support in their roles as campus managers and instructional leaders remains important as educators deal with worldwide health and safety challenges and opportunities. This study indicates principals being given assistance to navigate remote and virtual learning in addition to face-to-face interactions can improve student academic success.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my two sons, Jeremy Daniel and Corbin David Chairez. My sons are my most incredible supporters and my reason and inspiration for continuing my education. Also, I dedicate this to my mother, Enedina J. Ochoa, and my father, Ruben Ochoa Jr. They are proud of the accomplishments I've had for these past 41 years. I aspire to be much like both of them as I continue learning and growing in this educational profession. If it weren't for all these individuals, this educational journey would have been far more challenging to accomplish.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Alberto Gonzales for keeping me consistent and on track for graduation. I'd also like to thank Dr. Tina Dawson for her supportive, constructive feedback, and her dedication to helping me get through to the finish line. Lastly, I'd like to thank my late husband, David L. Chairez, for his constant support and motivation throughout the years, especially in the most trying times of this doctoral journey. I hope that he is shining down from heaven enjoying this moment with me because it is as much his as it is mine. These three individuals never ceased to ensure I was working on bettering myself and my work. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The principal's role has changed from school manager to a dual role of school manager and instructional leader. In this role, principals work fluidly with teachers and students toward ensuring student academic success. Although instruction has always been the more significant part of education, its role has adapted to the times. Principals have to be well-rounded in terms of methodologies and pedagogy to provide the support teachers need in the classroom. They are to provide instructional support and be available to debrief with teachers when requested or needed. As instructional leaders, principals provide instructional support where they review data during professional learning communities (PLCS), demonstrate instruction in the classroom, and build leadership among their staff of teachers. Through these processes, teachers are better able to build rapport with principals and are also able to make improvements to their instructional delivery and operations to feel confident in taking on various challenges. Principal educators are expected to provide teacher support by clearly defining teacher leadership roles and expectations because their primary function is to strengthen teacher needs consistently (Oliveras-Ortiz, 2017). Since expectations for students' educational success have changed, schools are required to perform well on state assessments. This means principals need to possess skills to serve as teacher evaluators and instructional coaches. Because of these demands on principals, it becomes imperative for principals to build instructional time into their workdays.

Background

I examined why principals have problems balancing their administrative and

instructional duties. With daily demands placed on principals, this dual role poses challenges. My goal was to provide insights for local southern United States district and national administrations by providing them with a perspective of these challenges. This would give those administrators relevant data to help build focused initiatives that assist principals with better time management skills. Furthermore, this study revealed how principals prioritize both roles within the school day and throughout the academic year. With leadership being a critical factor in terms of successful school performance, it is important for campus principals to balance both managerial and instructional leadership duties.

Campus principals have multiple administrative requirements that place many demands on them daily. Principals attend daily and weekly meetings with superintendents of schools and directors. These daily and weekly meetings often focus on instructional components of campus; however, more often, sessions consist of finding solutions to challenges that arise daily for both facility and management operations. Additionally, states set timelines for submission of public education information to state education management and monitoring systems. These deadlines require verification and analysis, which could take up the entirety of a school day. Hence, principals need to manage their time efficiently and delegate duties accordingly to ensure they succeed. This study was essential to address daily struggles principals face and their perceptions of their roles. This research will provide future primary and secondary principals, central office staff, and educators insights regarding how to best prepare and support campus principals in achieving their dual roles. Study findings can inspire change in primary and secondary

educational systems to ensure equal consideration of principals' instructional and managerial roles.

Included in this document is research involving the dual role of principals. It was evident that neither of the dual roles principals must fulfill can solely exist without the other. As the value of principals becoming instructional leaders continues to increase, district and state administrators place increasingly less value on principals' school manager roles. It is necessary to highlight how each role crucial for principals, teachers, and students. I explain why each role is vital and how each position can lead to success.

Problem Statement

The problem was that primary and secondary principals' struggle to balance their time as both school managers and instructional leaders. Terosky (2016) said principals' roles have evolved into spending more time on administrative tasks (e.g., paperwork, management, and facility) and less time on instructional facilitation (e.g., formal and informal teacher observations). Wanzare and Da Costa (2001) said principals' jobs include unexpected noninstructional interruptions. These interruptions often prevent them from fulfilling their instructional leader roles.

Fulfilling both roles can lead to an imbalance of priorities. Day-to-day logistics (i.e., building operations, personnel, budgeting, student affairs, and family and community relations) tend to take precedence over daily instruction. Reports, emails, and meetings can consume their entire day. Several principals in a local district in the southern United States indicated to their district administrative office that they were having difficulty completing informal observations. Thompson (2017) said, "the principal

is the respected leader of leaders who empowers teachers and directs them towards the achievement of the stated instructional goals" (p. 1).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe primary and secondary principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers and instructional leaders. I sought to provide information on how those principals work to balance both of their different roles to increase students' academic success as measured by performance on standardized tests equitably. Study results could help these and other principals find equal value in being both instructional leaders and campus managers.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to provide insight into perceptions principals have of their dual roles.

RQ1: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding the roles of manager and instructional leader?

RQ2: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their roles as managers?

RQ3: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their roles as instructional leaders?

Conceptual Framework

Bossert et al. (1982) developed the instructional management and instructional organization framework, a theory on principals' instructional management that stated it affects both the learning climate and instructional organization. I built the study's

research questions to relate directly to that framework. Bossert et al.'s framework identifies critical components of instructional leadership that affect teacher instructional performance, such as conditions of learning and the instruction process. One goal of the study was to find solutions primary and secondary principals can use to manage their time more efficiently over the day and school year.

Nature of the Study

This study was conducted using a basic qualitative research design. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) said interviews are the primary data source in qualitative research. My research sample was comprised of four secondary principals and six primary principals from a southern state district along the U.S. and Mexican border. Again, this study's purpose was to describe principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers and instructional leaders. The basic qualitative research method was selected to provide me with a greater understanding of my participants made meaning of a phenomenon through their perceptions so I could provide descriptive outcomes. I sought to gain participants' perceptions of the dual roles they must fulfill. The interview process allowed each participant to answer research questions honestly. Once interviews were complete, I analyzed the data for emerging concepts, themes, and categories.

Definitions

Instructional Leadership: Suh (2019) described instructional leadership as a role principals and district administrators have in terms of improving curriculum and instruction. Suh also stated that principals and administrators are learning leaders responsible for planning curriculum, observing, and coaching teachers to increase student achievement.

Principal: The manager and instructional leader of a primary or secondary school. Principals are expected to be school managers and administrators in charge of lunchroom duty, bus supervision, and master schedules, as well as focusing on being an instructional leader to support staff, analyzing teacher time utilization and student performance data with teachers, and increasing student achievement (Sheng et al., 2017).

School Management: Day-to-day organization and supervision of a school by the principal. This includes evaluating teachers, managing the school budget, scheduling, and facility management (Suh, 2019).

Assumptions

Although the qualitative research design was most suitable for my research study, some factors affected overall findings. It is assumed the participants were representative of primary and secondary principals at large in similar settings. It is assumed the participants answered honestly and had reflections to share.

Scope and Delimitations

I focused on the dual role primary and secondary principals must fulfill and perceptions about each role. I selected this study because principals struggle to balance

their roles as instructional leaders and school managers. Participants in this study were 10 principals from primary and secondary schools who worked within the target district for a minimum of 2 years and have shown success in their roles as instructional leaders and school managers.

Even though participants were limited to one school district, the study could apply to other school districts. Additionally, this study also could apply to principals who fell outside the identified range of years of service.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study related to when the study was conducted. The first was time available to conduct the study within the school day. I conducted this study during the spring semester when principals have multiple end-of-year requirements to meet in a short period of time. Each of these requirements created its own limitations in the insights people might have since their time and attention were scattered. In addition, they limited how much time participants had to reflect on their responses. The time limiting factors included testing and accountability, end-of--year programs, presentations, and events.

Significance

A principal's most important responsibilities are to lead instruction through communication skills that facilitate relationship building, teacher reflection on instruction, and making school a great workplace for teachers and students (Oliveras-Ortiz, 2017). Findings of my study provided insight for principals locally and nationally, including not just principals but also central administrations. They can do that by giving

them perspectives on causes of imbalances in terms of principals' dual roles, as well as how to provide them with support. These insights also provided local and national central administrations with tools to build both focused and staff development initiatives to assist principals with better time management skills. Furthermore, study results suggested how principals could prioritize both roles throughout the academic year. With leadership being a critical factor in terms of successful school performance, campus principals need to balance managerial and instructional leadership duties.

Summary

Chapter 1 includes the introduction to the study. In Chapter 1, I discussed how instructional leader and school manager roles reveal the necessary role of principals to ensure both teacher success and student achievement. Additionally, I discussed how my qualitative study revealed how current principals interviewed and, potentially, principals with similar backgrounds perceived their dual roles and showed how they struggled to balance them.

Moreover, the study's assumptions, delimitations, and limitations were presented as well as possible factors that could have weakened the study. I addressed the study's significance. I discussed research I conducted and its contributions for educational principals and administrators in situations similar to those that were the focus of my study. In Chapter 2, I address school principal roles and how these roles have changed due to federal legislation requirements.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In this study, my goal was to examine why principals in a local district struggle to balance their time as both school managers and instructional leaders. Results of this study will provide central office administrators both in the location where I conducted the study and in similar settings insights regarding principals' perspectives on the imbalances of these roles. These insights will provide those administrators with tools to build focused initiatives to assist principals with better time management skills. Furthermore, I sought to reveal how principals prioritize roles within the school day and throughout the academic year. Since leadership is a critical factor in terms of school performance, it is important for principals to balance their managerial and instructional leadership duties. Essentially, effective schools must begin with effective instruction. Therefore, instructional leadership is a necessary participatory approach for principals to provide teachers knowledge regarding curriculum, instruction, and student learning in order to increase teacher and student achievement (Indra et al., 2020).

Literature Search Strategy

Various study topics were examined as part of this literature review. They include conventional and current roles of principals, factors that impede them in terms of meeting their roles as instructional leaders, and perceptions of the dual roles of manager and instructional leader. The purpose of this study was to describe primary and secondary principals' perceptions of their dual role as managers and instructional leaders. I conducted a literature search using the Walden University Library and the following databases: ERIC, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. Key terms were *campus manager role*,

instructional leader role, *principal's dual role*, *roles and responsibilities of principals*, *instructional leader*, and *campus manager*.

Principal Roles and Responsibilities

The underlying issue that led to this study was primary and secondary principals' struggles to balance their time as both managers and instructional leaders. Terosky (2016) said with growing student enrollments and changes in educational processes and expectations involving school management and efficacy, principals' roles evolved into spending more time on administrative tasks (e.g., paperwork, management, and facility). As a result, principals are spending less time on instructional facilitation. Wanzare and Da Costa (2001) said principals must deal with unexpected interruptions that are noninstructional and often create constraints on them in terms of fulfilling their roles as instructional leaders.

Fulfilling both roles can lead to an imbalance of priorities. Day-to-day logistics (i.e., building operations, personnel, budgeting, student affairs, family relations, and community relations) can take precedence over a daily instructional focus. Understanding principals' dual roles as managers and instructional leaders requires people understand how principals prioritize daily tasks. In studying primary and secondary principals, Terosky (2016) concluded if principals did not budget and protect sufficient time for instructional work with teachers, administrative tasks would take up their entire day. In addition, local district officials are discussing this problem at district-wide principal meetings and have expressed it to their central administrations, indicating they are having difficulty performing informal observations. Informal observations along with principal

and teacher analysis of student performance data is key to student success. One type of
collaboration used frequently by principals to fulfill this role is Professional Learning
Communities (PLCs).

Principals and PLCs

It is important for principals to be present, visible, and collaborative during
teacher planning time to directly impact student learning. A common and highly effective
approach to instructional leadership is PLCs. PLCs provide principals and teachers with
opportunities to discuss teacher needs, share best practices, and analyze student strengths
and weaknesses. During PLCs, teachers and principals collaborate and establish open
lines of communication about topics in the best interest of all students. Principals'
primary roles in PLCs are both to facilitate data analysis and teacher discussions and
provide teachers with strategies and tools to increase student mastery of content. In PLCs,
principals and teachers establish necessary norms to ensure their focus is on student
academic achievement and success. At PLCs, principals are the main communicators and
facilitators in terms of disseminating information to improve instructional goals (Buttram
& Farely-Ripple, 2016). As instructional leaders, principals must create cultures of
progress through instructional refinement. These must be established as campus goals to
ensure all their schools' campus administrators and staff understand that instruction is
principals' primary focus to ensure student success. Being effective instructional leaders
is paramount to the success of their campuses.

Principals must also build high academic expectations for their campuses by
establishing measurable outcomes and tools that demonstrate teachers' impacts on

learning (Buttrum & Farely-Ripple, 2016). This means a part of principals' roles as instructional leaders is setting measurable goals. They must be physically visible in classrooms to demonstrate to teachers their expectation teachers will be accountable for incorporating initiatives and practices discussed in PLCs. Effective instructional leaders with high expectations understand they must expect teachers who have a direct impact on student learning to follow their leadership plans to increase student content mastery and academic achievement. Principals ensure both teacher and student success by providing the most useful resources for teachers to build effective and flexible curricula.

Aside from leading effective PLCs through talks about data and auditing instructional materials and resources, principals must also establish norms and become collaborative instructional leaders within PLCs. Teachers must become collaborative instructional leaders within PLCs. Therefore, principals must establish norms of collaboration, focus on students and their academic experience, work toward a common goal with colleagues and district administrators, and access a wide range of learning resources (Buttram & Farely-Ripple, 2016). Additionally, principals must also increase leadership capacity among teachers to ensure this happens by actively fostering teacher instructional development and capacity. Open sharing among principals and teachers rather than supervisory discourse is essential in order to bridge partnerships between both. In order to establish partnerships, collaborative efforts, and systems of trust among principals and teachers, it is imperative principals spend time with teachers, so members of each group believe they are vital to each other. Principals cannot spend only occasional time as instructional leaders if they seek student academic success (Spanneut,

2010). Principals also must aim to increase teacher morale. Principals must carefully craft and lead teacher instructional discussions in part by developing shared and common beliefs, mutual understanding about areas needing improvement, and professional growth (Spanneut, 2010). PLCs incorporated into teachers' weekly schedules allow for collective efficacy as well as shared leadership.

Student Achievement

PLCs both create a culture of collaboration and enhanced student learning. New primary and secondary principals, responsible for assuring a sufficient student success rate on state student performance assessments, found they needed to incorporate opportunities to collaborate with their teachers to analyze the data and strategically plan for success.

Primary and secondary school campus instructional leaders are also charged with ensuring that students in special populations are provided instruction suitable to their needs. As a result of lower performance levels on state assessments, students in special populations, such as special education, 504, dyslexia, migrants, and emergent bilinguals (EBs) are monitored consistently. Systematic organizational monitoring helps students in special populations learn (Paideya & Dhunpath, 2018).

Monitoring Special Population Students

Since EBs have become the fastest-growing subpopulation of students in the United States, principals need to focus a lot of attention on supporting these students. Additionally, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act had built-in accountability requirements for schools to monitor and provide effective English instructional programs

to help these students build English language acquisition. This has required principals to focus on these students' progress and growth (Mavrogordato & White, 2020). As instructional leaders, principals also must focus on other subpopulations at the same time. However, the need for them to build not only academic strength but also language acquisition can take large amounts of time for both teachers and them.

There are also other students with unique needs who demand academic structure and planning. Special education students with behavioral problems often profit little from the instruction and curriculum designed for all students (Evans et al., 2021). Therefore, principals and teachers must also evaluate these students' abilities and deficiencies to structure a classroom learning environment conducive to their learning style. Principals are vital to leading and fostering these discussions among colleagues. Principals also lead the discussion in admissions, review, and dismissal (ARD) meetings for these students to build academic and treatment programs for them (Evans et al., 2021).

Postsecondary Career Technology Education

While principals continue to monitor the academic progress of all students, they also are particularly responsible for closing achievement gaps for low socio-economic students in their populations. Schools across the nation have added courses focused on career technology education (CTE) as a partial effort to address this challenge. These courses offer students the opportunity to receive certification in a specific career area like business, agriculture, hospitality, or law enforcement before leaving high school and, as a result, give them an option for a career when they graduate (Michaels & Barone, 2020).

As instructional leaders, principals must ensure CTE courses are offered in

careers that are in high demand and relevant to the region where students reside. With careers in computer technology and health care increasing, principals must ensure they hire and retain teachers certified to teach and provide hands-on skills for CTE courses. Those courses provide students with a sense of affective engagement which allows them to retain a positive attitude toward school and minimizes the possibility of them dropping out of school. As principals are tasked with ensuring students receive equitable and career-ready educations for the 21st Century, they must ensure students receive skills for the workforce and closely monitor the growth and progress of all students (Diehl, 2020).

Staff Development

In an effort to ensure student academic success and achievement continues, principals are also tasked in their instructional leader role with providing their staff and teachers appropriate development opportunities to continue productivity and performance. During PLCs, principals and teachers not only discuss student performance data, but also discuss how to bridge gaps in student learning so their performance is increased. After reviewing student data, principals and teachers must develop a plan of action suitable to increase students' success. One way in which principals accomplish this is by offering staff development opportunities to their teachers. Through well-organized staff developments, teachers can not only impact student productivity and performance, but also gain pedagogy skills relevant to their needs in the classroom (Sohail & Nabaz Nazwad, 2019). Without principals organizing staff development opportunities, teachers would fall short of learning and implementing the newest, research-based strategies and skills and, as a result, would fall short of providing their students with these skills. Sohail

and Nabaz Nazwadi (2019) concluded that principals need to collaborate with and train teachers yearly to ensure they maintain their efficiency and effectiveness in teaching. Further, DePass et al. (2019) found principals also determined an implemented strategic plan allows teachers to feel supported in all they do with students daily. Principals also knew highly effective schools are largely impacted by the vision and implementation of effective leadership generated by principals.

Teacher Morale

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers shifted from face-to-face instruction to teaching virtually within a week's time. The sudden shift in instruction greatly impacted teachers and principals alike. Continuing normal weekly collaborative practices such as PLCs became impossible. During the pandemic, teachers and principals reported working more than they ever had before (Brion, 2021). Teachers spent late nights on the phone checking in with their students, waiting for students to submit work, and grading student work. At the same time, teachers also had their own children to supervise and their families to take care of at home (Brion, 2021). Soon, teachers, principals, and other administrators became overwhelmed with the strains COVID-19 placed on schools as a whole. Principals focused on providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and teachers, which required almost weekly updates from states' education agencies. Principals also had to contact parents daily. Because many students were left unsupervised at home caring for their siblings, those students couldn't engage in online instruction and learning. Although chronic absenteeism existed prior to the pandemic, "extreme chronic absenteeism," which meant students missing well over

50% of school days, rose significantly in the 2020-2021 school year (Chang & Cooney, 2021, p. 33). In addition, principals had significantly more local meetings with their districts' central office administrations to discuss, plan, and implement changes required by state education agencies. Because of that, principals found it difficult to juggle both the daily demands COVID-19 and still provide the support teachers needed to navigate this new way of teaching and learning. Hence, according to Chang and Cooney, teachers became overwhelmed and felt they received a lack of support from principals, which led some to stop trying to work with students and parents and, eventually, to give up on the profession itself. Principals' response times to teacher morale concerns took longer than usual. Developing student tracking spreadsheets for monitoring grades and attendance became the most important tools to help principals understand what was occurring during the year, which inevitably resulted in a disconnect with teachers.

As soon as principals noticed the resulting disconnect, frustration, and anxiety teachers exhibited, many did their best to improve morale. It became evident that teachers were worn out mentally, physically, and emotionally (Will, 2021). To meet teachers' needs, principals had to refocus and juggle the many administrative demands created by the pandemic into their day-to-day activities. Principals had to allow teachers more planning time both to increase their opportunities to socialize under the constraints of social distancing and to provide teachers time with counselors for mental health and overall well-being check-ins (Will, 2021). Additionally, principals had to dedicate faculty meetings to teachers expressing their concerns, sharing their ideas on working more effectively and simplistically, and providing emotional support from peers when needed.

Their need to support instruction was great, yet the demands of the day-to-day operations overwhelmed them. Still, the importance of tracking and analyzing student performance data to work for greater student improvement was necessary, so principals had to ensure they still provided time to complete it weekly.

Data Tracking and Analysis

Thompson (2017) said, "the principal is the respected leader of leaders who empowers teachers and directs them towards the achievement of the stated instructional goals" (p. 1). Still, PLCs were not the only practice and process that had to be completed by principals. As instructional leaders, they also had to follow up with the data analysis and instructional plans developed in PLCs. Therefore, principals conducting classroom walkthroughs proved an essential practice to ensure the instructional plans developed in PLCs were incorporated into daily instruction. Yet, principals could not simply walk into classrooms without a strategy. They had to use the student performance data they reviewed to seek strategies for implementation and make sure they related that data to the overall instructional plans of their specific campuses. Through walkthroughs, teachers received a visible sign their principals were invested and part of the campuses' commitments to improvement (Rouleau & Corner, 2020). As instructional leaders, they were better able to collect a snapshot of their campuses and make the necessary adjustments alongside teachers at PLCs by using those walkthroughs.

The changes at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic school year changed the face of PLCs and walkthroughs. Schools worked diligently to provide students and teachers with equal access to electronic devices and wireless Internet. However,

instruction never became equitable for all. The impacts of COVID-19 varied, so it became vital for principals to continue PLCs and instructional walkthroughs virtually to make appropriate plans. The most heavily focused topics during meetings were the common, yearly struggles, but they were magnified in number and percentage. This included areas like student daily attendance, failing progress, and report card grades, as well as a lack of engagement in instruction and collaborative activities during remote instruction. It became vital to assist working parents who were unable to monitor their children attending school remotely. Therefore, teachers, counselors, and principals developed solutions to get students back to school or to attend online instruction daily. Collaboratively, teachers, principals, and counselors tracked student attendance on shared Google documents all could engage with. These spreadsheets became the focal point of many faculty meetings, as well as the daily responsibilities of all involved. Tracking attendance also required a team effort in contacting parents daily. Teachers who worked asynchronously were asked to assist in making phone calls home for each class period in hopes of getting students to engage in instruction daily. This practice provided some time for principals to review data as well as to be present in classrooms, whether face-to-face or virtually. PLCs, data tracking, and data analysis were focused on improving student engagement while finding virtual methods of instruction to interest students. So, instructional walk-throughs took on a new look.

Instructional Walkthroughs

Virtual walkthroughs served as the most common form of walkthrough in 2020-2021. When attending virtual walkthroughs, principals noted immediately that teachers

had to become creative to boost collaborative efforts and to provide them with one-to-one intervention and tutoring when needed. Principals were able to experience the use of major tools by teachers during the school year, such as Zoom and Google Meets, two major teleconferencing platforms used for virtual instruction. When conducting walkthroughs, principals were able to see teachers enable teleconferencing platform features such as chat and breakout rooms to provide the most effective modes of instruction (Rouleau & Corner, 2020). Teachers spent their days on Zoom and Meet sessions, recording their lectures for later viewing by students. Because they had limited time, principals were able to view these recorded sessions later and use them as instructional pieces with their teachers. After attending or viewing a lesson, principals then provided immediate feedback to their teachers to meet the needs of students learning from home.

Teachers were able to collaboratively discuss digital tools which increased student learning virtually (Rouleau & Corner, 2020). Virtual walkthroughs continued to provide principals with informal data collection to promote school improvement. Principals still faced challenges reviewing teachers' new practices and students' achievement because they were frequently over-scheduled ensuring they met the demands to not just maintain daily operations, but also apply they met the overarching demands of applying like COVID safety protocols. However, to make walkthroughs most effective, principals had to provide clear feedback during multiple multimodal meetings with teachers and visit them regularly to follow up on their needs and concerns (Barron & Maxey, 2019). As instructional walkthroughs changed in dynamics and forms, teacher evaluation systems

changed, too.

Teacher Evaluation Systems and Instructional Coaching

Although teacher evaluations were eventually waived during the pandemic, states across the nation continued to use teacher evaluation support systems. Teacher evaluation support systems were designed to provide coaching support for teachers to increase professional growth. Throughout the academic school year, principals also needed to function as mentors and instructional coaches for teachers who needed additional support. However, that role became hard for principals to complete with fidelity. Instructional coaches were responsible for developing teachers professionally by helping them implement instructional best practices while focusing on teachers' specific instructional goals based on the teacher evaluation support system. Instructional coaching became a vital practice in schools due to state assessment data, which increased teaching standards and teacher accountability (Tanner, 2017).

Where principals had coaching support from instructional coaches or deans of instruction, their active support helped teachers improve best practices and determine the impact of instructional coaching (Tanner, 2017). Principals worked in conjunction with instructional coaches or deans of instruction and teachers to ensure student academic achievement and the closing of student learning gaps.

Campus Climate and Safety

Although the instructional leader roles were impacted by a lack of time, the roles of principals as campus managers also absorbed much of the school day. A greater component of student academic success was tied up in the establishment of a safe,

welcoming, student-centered school climate for all stakeholders. School campuses needed to provide everyone associated with them a sense of inclusiveness. Through active PLCs and strategic staff developments, principals and districts designed and built campuses to make them strong instructional organizations, although the environments may not have turned out as strongly as possible. Teachers who added strategies to cultivate strong classroom climates that valued problem-solving, risk-taking, and trust helped sustain classroom climates dedicated to inclusiveness (Oder & Eisenschmidt, 2018). During COVID, students no longer sat in rows and presented teacher-directed and controlled lectures to students. Instead, maintaining strong instructional classrooms required extensive collaboration, communication, and critical thinking between principals and teachers. Through these new experiences, teachers realized that face-to-face instruction with students at times led to disengagement in the classroom and lack of communication with their peers and teachers.

Although lack of motivation and student disengagement occurred for years prior to the pandemic, during the pandemic principals discovered virtual learning environments were faced with recurring discipline issues among all student populations. It caused some passive learners to actively participate in what seemed to be a risk-free environment (HongKun, 2021). This occurred in part because teachers allowed students to attend virtual class without having their laptop cameras on during instruction, which gave them the opportunity to share answers and ask questions without criticism from their peers. Students also were allowed to arrive 10 to 15 minutes after the start of class. Finally, students did not face dress code issues.

Although the preceding circumstances were acceptable during virtual learning, once students returned to face-to-face instruction, they refused to follow school policies and procedures. Principals faced not only the effects of disparities in student learning, but also student mental health concerns and more discipline issues than prior to virtual learning (Oster et al., 2021). This evidence suggests that virtual learning was a challenge for many students.

Mental Health

As students returned from virtual learning to face-to-face instruction, it became evident that children's and parents' worsening mental health continued to impact students' academics (Oster et al., 2021). Principals saw a need to develop plans to address the resulting student discomfort and rising absences. Principals recognized quickly that no school employees were prepared for the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. Although they all had training, they were facing pressure to assist parents and students alike. Many parents continued working from home while others reported to work, leaving their eldest child to attend school virtually and simultaneously manage the household. At the same time, their children had the added stress of worrying about the risks of COVID-19 and the restrictions it imposed on their lives (Und Experts Webinar, 2020). As these concerns began to filter through schools' front offices, they began to take precedence over focusing on instructional needs as principals needed to prioritize phone calls to parents, outside counseling partners, and suicide hotlines over daily school functions.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Schools closed in March of 2020 to reduce spreading COVID-19, and with the start of the 2021-2022 academic school year public schools faced many concerns in regard to the continued mitigation of the virus. Principals continued the school year with COVID-19 safety plans in place. However, mandates later became less restrictive and optional (Landeros et al., 2021). Principals and their campus nurses, teachers, and support staff faced contact tracing challenges on campus. This lengthy process took time away from principals' ability to focus on instruction and students' learning, instead forcing principals to refocus on managing the facility to ensure all stakeholders remained safe and healthy. As COVID-19 continues to be present, principals continue to face mitigation changes almost daily. Due to contact tracing and the ongoing spread of the virus, they struggle with teachers being absent due to exposure that results in mandatory quarantines. Principals are dealing with a lack of substitute teachers to cover classes; so, they must be resourceful, using any and all available staff to assist.

Only a tiny part of K-12 education is managed by the state and local governments (Casalaspi, 2017). In the 1920s, principals spent much of their time fulfilling administrative and clerical duties (Hochbein, 2019). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was enacted (Casalaspi, 2017). This Act changed the course of education. Even though ESEA changed education for all students' betterment, the actions ESEA built for education changed the face of campus principals' duties. This increased workload required principals to demonstrate their influence on school success, teacher retention, and parent and guardian engagement (Reid, 2021). Principals'

workloads began to include more than working with on-campus management and systems. It became necessary for principals to have a direct impact on on-campus instruction and student achievement. The need to restructure the educational system forced principals to evolve into instructional leaders whose job was to shape teaching and learning (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). The new, contemporary principals understand their roles are no longer one-dimensional and, instead, focus on various educational aspects, including instruction and safety (Reid, 2021).

Even though principals' expectations grew to include creating equitable education, there was still a growing number of students across the country without educational equity. Principals focused on increasing alignment between teaching, curriculum, assessments, standards, evaluations, and professional developments geared toward closing the gaps (Wieczorek, 2017). Before the development and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the U.S. Congress aimed to provide quality education to every student to promote civil rights (Haller et al., 2016). The NCLB, established by President George W. Bush, endeavored to further increase that equity by incorporating a strict accountability system focused on the expectation that all students would learn. The NCLB's emphasis on closing achievement gaps and holding schools accountable impacted principals' roles on educational success and principals' effectiveness as a critical part of the restructuring process (Haller et al., 2016).

This was the point at which principals' roles no longer focused solely on managing facilities and their people, turning instead to coaching teachers and monitoring student academic achievement to impact student achievement (Lee & Hallinger, 2012).

To conform with NCLB's expectations, principals across the country began prioritizing instructional leadership to balance it with their managerial duties. With NCLB passed, principals shifted some of their administrative tasks to instructional leadership. To meet state accountability systems' expectations, principals had to improve student learning and instruction (Wieczorek, 2017). Improving the capacity of principals as instructional leaders created a necessity to receive further staff development to support teachers and students (Brinia & Tsouni, 2017). Principals also acquired complicated duties like increasing awareness of student diversity, accelerating use of information and communication technology, and increasing parental involvement and school accountability (Pollock & Winton, n.d.). Because instructional leadership was not the primary activity for campus principals, most principals struggled to drive instruction on their campuses. The responsibilities they faced daily required proficient use of their time to enhance school outcomes, including student achievement (Hochbein et al., 2018). As such, instructional leaders needed to incorporate time to work with teachers on instruction. Comparatively, ESEA and NCLB noted the roles and duties of campus principals as instructional leaders and campus managers. Principals were in charge of administrative and management matters, establishing and building partnerships, and enforcing policies. The principals' instructional leadership roles shifted from that of traditional managers to include serving as facilitators of teaching and learning (Costello, 2015).

Although NCLB brought principals more responsibilities, these added responsibilities were an expected change. For principals under NCLB, organizational

duties such as budgeting, personnel, building maintenance, and occupational, health and safety compliance continued to be necessary (Pollock et al., 2015). Organizational responsibilities focused on instruction were addressed by developing District and Campus Improvement Plans. Instructional needs drove budgets and facility needs. The main focus for principals became to "develop, supervise, evaluate, and be accountable for instructional programs; providing professional development opportunities for school staff; support student advancement; and evaluate student performance and progress" (p. 539). Principals focused their day-to-day work on classroom observations, professional learning communities, and building purposeful progress monitoring and intervention to close gaps across and among student populations.

Although NCLB set the tone for student achievement, adequate yearly progress, and student equity in learning, schools across the nation still face difficulty meeting its demands (Diorio, 2018). To attempt to demonstrate closure of the achievement gaps, schools began adopting formulaic approaches to teaching and learning to improve test scores, which reduced quality and quantity in instruction (Haller et al., 2016). In 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law, replacing NCLB. Cook-Harvey et al. observed, "ESSA represents an opportunity for the federal government, states, districts, and schools to equitably design education systems to ensure that the students who these same education systems have historically underserved received an education that prepares them for the demands of the 21st century" (2016, p. v).

Because of the new demands in ESSA, principals found themselves heavily

focusing on instructional leadership components such as teacher coaching, staff development, student interventionists, and progress monitoring. ESSA's primary goals were to "require states to align their education programs with college and career-ready standards and to extend the federal focus on equity by providing resources for poor students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities" (Young et al., 2017, p. 706).

Principals of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s could have difficulty recognizing the roles of principals of the 2010s. The concept of building manager has long since transformed but not disappeared (Alvoid & Black, 2014). The principals' "redefined role" was to provide quality leadership that nurtures a trustworthy and loyal culture that is safe, supportive, and collaborative and fosters PLCs to turn schools around (Young et al., 2017). Expecting principals to provide constructive yet corrective feedback to teachers on their daily and weekly walk-throughs and formal evaluations proved necessary. Even though ESSA requires principals to offer quality instruction to all students, day-to-day campus management often keeps principals from engaging with teachers and students. The principals' jobs as managers are to maintain the campus budget to ensure students are provided quality instructional resources. With the complexity of a school budget, principals now ensure their budgets align with their campus goals and vision through their Campus Improvement Plan (CIP). This includes budget dimensions like the Title I fund, which allocates money for low performing schools to improve student performance. Principals' responsibilities require them to balance demands to lead the school (Hoyer & Sparks, 2017). This table shows the changes in principals' roles made by the ESSA.

Table 1
Changes in Principals' Roles

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Provide Equitable Educational Opportunities to Children of Poverty	Curriculum Leaders
	Instructional Leaders
Close Achievement Gaps Among Student Populations	Producers of College-Ready Students
	Accountable for High-Stakes Testing
Hire Highly Qualified Teachers	Teacher Evaluation and Support System

Additionally, principals dealt with ever-changing student demographics in areas such as class size; number of special classrooms; and educational services required to support individualized needs, special programs, and discipline (Pollock et al., 2015). Such changes in student demographics required principals to adhere as much as possible to their master schedule during grading periods or by semester to ensure equity and balance for teachers' instruction. Students withdrawing or leaving the campus or district impacted the size of special populations from week to week, including groups protected by Section 504 (a federal act designed to prohibit discrimination based upon disability), special education students, and English Language Learners.

Although principals are required to fill both managerial and instructional roles, equally distributing those roles can almost never occur. The variety and brevity of principals' daily tasks are fragmented by unplanned activities or dictated by others (Bezzina et al., 2018). Maintaining daily schedules can require a full day of discipline, meetings, or both. Therefore, principals have an ongoing need for flexibility and crisis planning to prioritize instruction in their days. Principals must allocate evenly distributed

time throughout the day for their own activities, those of their team, and their resource utilization to assist in daily campus instruction. There may be a mindset that principals need to carefully plan their own time and schedules because if they do not intentionally do so, then reports, emails, and meetings will consume their workday. However, it is easier said than done (Terosky, 2016). Principals find it necessary yet difficult to implement educational change and school reform on their campuses since a large portion of their time focuses on student affairs and other administrative duties, and only a small part focuses on instructional leadership activities (Hoyer & Sparks, 2017).

Principals and School Improvement

Because principals have a substantial effect on school performance, the opportunity to acquire tools and resources can help transition principals into instructional leaders with some ease. Stringer and Hourani stated, "Principals, who are the catalyst for change, initiate improvement by enacting roles and responsibilities framed around professional standards and provide professional development to build individual and collective school capacity" (2016, p. 225). As principals move toward becoming the core of school improvement, they must accept the responsibility of attending workshops, district meetings, and national conferences which assist them with training and coaching (Ediger, 2014, p. 267). Time elements of the day and impeding organizational factors can continue to keep principals from fully immersing themselves in the instruction (Lee, 2015). To apply the learned techniques from staff developments, principals established transitions throughout their day. These established transitions include about 20% of them every day, with 54% being in the school office, 9% in the main building, 40% observing

teachers, and 8% on classroom teaching (Khan et al., 2015). Much of the literature suggested setting achievable goals, identifying priorities, and monitoring progress while remaining organized can lead to effective time use (Grissom et al., 2015).

Many people perceive principals as school-building managers more interested in wielding power and enforcing compliance than leaders of teaching and learning (Alvoid & Black, 2014). As with most education roles, principals can transition from the building manager to family mediator, school counselor, caregiver, and parent supporter role. Because of the many hats principals wear, it becomes challenging to balance them equally; moreover, it is difficult for principals to have a clear perception of who they are. The difficulty in managing their tasks comes from focusing their time on managing the facility instead of daily school functions (Van Vooren, 2018). Principals are much more than "dispatchers of administrative issues;" principals are also responsible for improving academic units (Brinia & Tsouni, 2017). The day-to-day workings of principals can range from facility manager to counselor to instructional leader. Principals perceive themselves as having many different identities. The principal constructs are building manager, aspirational leader, team builder, coach, and visionary change agent (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Principals must fulfill all these varying roles throughout the school day, which can be daunting. "Principals do not feel sufficiently prepared by their training to meet the demands of school leadership successfully" (Alvoid & Black, 2014, p. 2). Because of this, principals need to receive support and consideration of their responsibilities from others.

How Principals Perceive Their Roles

Principals perceive instructional leadership as one of their most significant challenges. They seek to prioritize instructional leadership; however, it may fall unintentionally second to management. Principals who strive to be most effective know that instructional leadership must come first because effective principals focus less of their time on managing and more of it on leading learning (Gray & Lewis, 2013). Effective school principals direct their attention to academic goals; they help develop curriculum, assess teachers' instructional practices' effectiveness, and provide instructional improvement time (Bellibas, 2015). Principals know that, when they assume the instructional leader's responsibility, they must increase quality instruction and student progress and success. Principals learn that to meet this expectation, they must observe instruction and coach teachers toward instructional success in the classroom.

Principals tasked with both the school's daily functioning and the instructional aspects of their role perceive themselves as managers and instructional leaders. Depending on the level at which principals serve--elementary or secondary—principals know their involvement in instructional leadership will vary due to the differences in organizational structure and departmentalization (Sheng et al., 2017). Principals know factors such as a more extensive staff and student body can place school operations at the forefront of their school day. The complexity in organizational structure can imply more managerial responsibilities, creating less time to devote to instruction (Sheng et al., 2017). Among these responsibilities, principals must fulfill tasks such as hiring, evaluating, and providing professional support to all staff (Hansen & Larusdottir, 2015).

Principals prepare themselves for disgruntled parents, full email boxes, and numerous other administrative obligations during their workdays (Hochbein, 2019).

Moreover, cell phones and social media have resulted in 24-hour communication channels to which many school leaders feel the pressure to provide an immediate response (Hochbein, 2019). Additionally, principals perceive their daily operational duties as an impediment to instructional leadership; however, withdrawing from management of school operations reduces the likeliness of success within the classroom (Hochbein, 2019). Although mentally and physically prepared, principals struggle to meet instructional leader component demands.

Principals respond to the responsibility of the need to be instructional leaders. With the current implementation of accountability policies, principals know they must reframe their minds and think about instructional leadership as necessary rather than optional (Gurley et al., 2016). They know that their involvement in improving the curriculum, providing workshops for teachers, attending conferences themselves for professional growth, and reading to keep up with educational trends is of extreme importance (Ediger, 2014). Principals also realize that their role as instructional leaders is not limited to providing teachers in the classrooms; instead, their substantive involvement in instruction is positive for schools, teachers, and students (Finkel, 2012). Principals also serve as instructional leaders with detailed knowledge of classroom practices to improve and facilitate instruction (Goddard et al., 2015). Their role has evolved from simply being manager of a school plant's operation to being responsible for mandates outlined by federal and state legislation focused on student performance (Goodwin & Babo, 2014).

As this position continues to evolve, principals know the expectations and the demands set for them. "Further to this, in the new millennium, [principals know] being an instructional leader helps identify a school vision, empowers and inspires teachers, and innovates school classroom-based strategies to improve teaching and learning for teachers and students" (Mestry et al., 2013, p. S50).

Principals are busy dealing with various intermittent activities; they struggle to devote time and planning to their day because many tasks throughout the day interrupt their work (Kouali & Pashiardis, 2015). Expecting principals to meet demands means they will need to remain dynamic and adaptable despite school context even when district priorities or school climate change (Lavigne et al., 2016). Many can be challenged due to a lack of necessary skills, knowledge, or attitude to lead and manage a school. Yet, empowering principals to deal with challenges they face regularly is critical (Mestry, 2017). Principals need to communicate high expectations for teachers and students and set the stage for a collective vision and mission to produce lasting change (Meyers & Hambrick Hitt, 2017). The multiple roles must be fulfilled daily (Ogina, 2017). These roles are challenging and are even conflicting in terms of the limited time principals have to fulfill those responsibilities (Ogina, 2017). The direct and indirect roles of principals supporting classrooms as instructional leaders often lead to them ignoring human resource management, school finances, and the schools' physical plants (Sebastian et al., 2018).

Therefore, managing both principals' instructional and managerial roles may continue to be a struggle; but hopefully, it will be a manageable one. School principals

play a leading role in setting school goals based on their campuses' missions and visions. This pivotal role requires planning, implementing, and coordinating school programs (Sisman, 2016). Because one of their primary roles is to help professionals develop their qualifications and enable teachers to use their new knowledge, principals must coach and instruct their staffs to feel accomplished. As principals continue to face demands, they must have knowledge and skills to promote student success. They must facilitate the development of the school vision, promote a positive culture, manage operations and organizations. They must be collaborative; be ethical; and understand political, social, economic, and legal influences (Tak Cheung et al., 2018).

Additionally, principals must manage their time, adopt meeting management strategies, and delegate only when their staff members have proper abilities and task completion skills (Victor, 2017). Bossert et al. (1982) indicated that principals' managerial and instructional behaviors are vital to effective schools; however, one does not take precedence over the other. Thus, principals need to understand their roles and capacities to meet their campuses' needs. Therefore, principals must develop an instructional management and leadership style and approach conducive to their districts' and campuses' expectations. Principals must understand how their instructional and management role impacts their organizations' effectiveness and their students' learning experiences. Bossert et al. provided to the research the balance needed to better understand principals' perceptions of their roles of manager and instructional leader. Through participant experiences and responses, the conceptual framework revealed

perceptions principals have about their preparedness for the dual roles they must fulfill, manager and instructional leader.

Summary

In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature related to the evolving role of school principals. Principals, not only as managers of school facilities but also as instructional leaders, are essential to the climate and culture of schools and success of students and their teachers. Principals must be both managers and instructional leaders, and their time during the school day may not be evenly divided due to time constraints and demands of both roles. In Chapter 3, I provide information on the research method, research design, my role, methodology, and trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this qualitative study, I examined perceptions of primary and secondary principals in a local research site have about balancing their administrative and instructional duties. I examined principals' perceptions of managerial and instructional roles and responsibilities related to their roles as administrators and instructional leaders. I used the following research questions:

RQ1: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding the roles of manager and instructional leader?

RQ2: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their roles as managers?

RQ3: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their roles as instructional leaders?

I used Bossert et al.'s instructional management and instructional organization framework to guide my research and interview questions. Principals' instructional management is key to learning climate, instructional organization, and school management, all of which impact student learning outcomes. I collected participants' perceptions about how their roles as principals, instructional leaders, and school managers influence their schools' ability to improve student achievement. One goal of the study was to find solutions that principals can utilize to manage their time more efficiently over the day and school year.

Research Methodology and Design

For this research, applying the basic qualitative methodology was important.

Because the study involves primary and secondary principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers and instructional leaders in one local district, a qualitative approach was the most logical choice. According to Ravitch and Carl (2020), purposeful sampling involves collecting context-rich and detailed accounts of a phenomenon from a specific population. Through one-on-one interviews, participants revealed how they balance demands of their roles as managers and instructional leaders. Furthermore, they showed how principals prioritize both roles within the school day and throughout the academic year. This provided insights regarding principals' perceptions of their dual roles and challenges in terms of balancing both roles.

Role of the Researcher

As a current district principal, I have a working relationship with each primary and secondary principal. However, our interactions are often at principal or leadership meetings with the superintendent and curriculum directors. I have been with this district for approximately 7 years. I have spent 4 of the last 7 years as a dean of instruction at the high school and the previous 3 years serving as a high school principal. Additionally, before working with my current district, I was a high school English teacher for 10 years, and then spent 4 years as an elementary instructional facilitator and campus testing coordinator. I have worked in an administrative position in two separate districts. For research purposes, however, participants are from my current district. Three of the 10 participants have commonalities in that they have 3 or fewer years of experience as campus principals. The other seven principals had 10 or more years as campus principals. My research focused on perceptions of these 10 district principals.

During my interview sessions, my role as a researcher was to observe and listen attentively. I functioned as the primary data collection instrument, demonstrating objectivity, and asking questions. In my role as researcher, I hoped to discover principals' perceptions of their roles as managers and instructional leaders, as well as how to provide district administration with insights regarding giving principals support in terms of their dual roles. As an acting principal for the district, it was important for my research to be valid. Therefore, to get the most valid responses, I informed other principals that the study was to remain confidential and their perceptions would be vital for reliable conclusions.

Participants

Ravitch and Carl (2020) said choosing participants for research based on their experiences and knowledge of the specific topic is essential to gaining accurate data. All participants had experiences as a primary or secondary principal. Those participants included six campus principals and four assistant principals from elementary and secondary campuses within the district. From a total population of 13 administrators, 10 agreed to participate. According to Ravitch and Carl, "the idea behind qualitative research is to purposely select participants that will best help the researcher understand that problem and research question" (p. 167). Therefore, I carefully selected and coordinated with each principal and assistant principal to ensure their participation enhanced the research and did not negatively affect its purpose.

To gain access to participants, I secured a letter of permission from the district superintendent to conduct research. As soon as the superintendent allowed permission, I

contacted primary and secondary principals as well as assistant principals who knew about being both managers and instructional leaders. I scheduled one-to-one interviews with each participant to discuss the intent of my study.

I informed each principal and associate principal that I would be interviewing them. I also advised them how this study's data would provide information for the district to deliver support for them to complete their daily roles as managers and instructional leaders. I interviewed each principal and assistant principal individually to account for their perceptions about these roles. Additionally, meeting with each principal individually rather than as a whole group made it easier for me to keep participation confidential.

Instrumentation

For this research, I used Zoom interviews as the primary means of collecting data. According to Ravitch and Carl (2020), "A mainstay of qualitative data collection is the utilization of interviews; the interview process allows for focused insight in lived experiences and an understanding of how participants make sense of and construct reality" (p. 146). I chose Zoom to focus on lived experiences. By using individual Zoom session interviews, I could discover what was unique in terms of participants' responses. I drafted interview questions to focus on the dual roles principals were expected to fulfill.

A factor in terms of beginning the interview process was developing interviewee documentation methods for interviews. For this research, I used audio recordings and field notes. They were most advantageous. I used the Video Field Guide provided by Walden University to document and track notes. Both tools allowed for accuracy in the coding process and in gaining feedback, as well as the opportunity to record observations

and behaviors. Additionally, these methods allowed for adequate data disaggregation while coding. I used the reflection process for relevant and valid data recording through coding. Good research questions were crucial to collect relevant and accurate data. Each of the participants was asked open-ended questions in the same order. Moreover, I provided interviewees with a sense of trust and ease, which is also important to the interview process's success (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Before the data collection process, I obtained IRB approval (approval number 11-06-20-0750561) for the study; after that, I secured the partner agreement from the district's superintendent of schools. Then, I began the recruitment process for participants for the study. Once each participant was confirmed, I had each complete the participant agreement, which provided information on the research, and participants received it via email.

The quality of information gathered during the interview process is mainly dependent on the interviewer (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). The tools to be used during the fieldwork process were extremely important. To get the best information possible, I used a journal to record all my findings in my one-to-one interviews. I recorded my observations of the open-ended responses and included my reflections, my notes, and any patterns I identified. I ensured my notes were both descriptive and analytical. In the data collection process, I sat with each participant and asked interview questions (see Appendix A).

Each interview session was conducted in a private Zoom session setting

comfortable for the interviewee. Each interview was conducted no more than one hour in

length. The ability to pose and ask good questions was vital to receiving the desired

results (Yin, 2017). During the one-hour Zoom interview, it was essential to listen to how

the interviewee recounts an incident or event to understand what the interviewee meant

(Yin, 2017). After each interview, I focused on organizing and managing the data I had

just acquired.

Zoom recordings during my interviews comprised the bulk of my data. During the

interview process, I provided district principals with the definition of an instructional

leader so that we started with a baseline understanding of the topic we were discussing.

Additionally, I followed up with prompting questions such as "How does your role fit the

definition provided and your definition of an instructional leader?" I provided principals

with varying roles they must fulfill, such as building operations, personnel, budgeting,

staff development, family and community relations, so we could have common

understanding as I asked follow-up questions. I asked these follow-up questions: How

much of your day is taken due to managerial duties/issues? What approaches can you use

daily to fulfill your role as an instructional leader? Throughout the research phase, I

uncovered why principals perceived either the role of manager or instructional leader

takes more of their allotted daily time.

Data Analysis

Finding relevance and meaning behind the data collected from all interviews were

critical. For validity, I transcribed the interviews verbatim; this ensured fidelity, so the

participants' experiences, words, and genuine experiences were secured (Ravitch & Carl,

2020). During data analysis, I needed a clear process to provide both minor and significant patterns among interviewees.

I began the transcription process through precoding, "the process of reading, questioning, and engaging with one's data" Ravitch & Carl, 2020, p. 243). This process was essential for me to keep track of the collected data; therefore, I organized details based on common themes (reoccurring phrases, terms, strategies, and tactics, and patterns among the participants) which emerged from the compiled data and categories I identified within them. The information I obtained allowed principals' perceptions of their dual role to be interpreted, allowing me to identify common consistencies or seeming contradictions (Yin, 2017). I organized and labeled all data, engaged in preliminary coding, and created a timeline to guide the data analysis process (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Last, I referred to the audio recordings to ensure I used accurate accounting and utilization of the interview so I could avoid misinterpretation of or loss of data.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

For the research, I ensured that all interviewees' perspectives were retained and accurately portrayed in the study. Therefore, my process of interpreting the one-to-one interview data collected was thorough. I used Zoom recordings and a detailed account of each participant's interview so I could eliminate any misspoken personal accounts being transferred into the study. Additionally, I used transcript reviews to engage participants in reflective sessions to verify their documented statements' accuracy. The transcripts allowed me to capture the participants' perceptions and allow their responses to be interpreted and accounted for. I incorporated well-constructed follow-up questions to

seek clarity. The constructed research questions kept me focused on collecting my data.

Since participant validation strengthens the research because the interviewees can view

and reflect on their perceptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2020), I selected principals with varying

years of experience, leadership styles, and primary or secondary experience to ensure

transferability. While interviewing each participant, I provided detailed data descriptions

to help make comparisons. I followed up with questions to ensure the transcript reflected

the participant's perspective, to ensure there were no misunderstandings, and to ensure

that there were no assumptions or biases (Ravitch & Carl, 2020).

Credibility

Credibility is the researcher's ability to account for all the complexities and deal

with patterns not readily explained but rather inferred from the study's instrumentation

(Ravitch & Carl, 2020). One-to-one interviews provided the analysis of common

perceptions for each participant identified during the coding process in my research. It

allowed for shared commonalities expressed by each participant, which allowed for valid

conclusions for the results chapter of this study. Although not anonymous, the study

participants were interviewed separately with no firsthand knowledge of when another

participant was interviewing or their responses; this approach allowed for lack of bias and

allowed other each participant to provide an uninfluenced response. Additionally, after

each participant's one-to-one interview, I provided that participant with a transcript of the

interview to check for the accuracy of their reflected perceptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2020).

Establishing credibility was essential to the study because it allowed me to capture the

participants' perceptions to analyze and interpret authentically.

Transferability

Transferability allowed context-relevant statements to add applicability and transferability to broader contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Because this study sought to provide insight into principals' time utilization, time constraints, and experiences, it was important for this study to be transferable and relative to all researchers seeking guidance on how principals manage their dual roles as instructional leaders and managers.

The study sample consisted of public-school principals at both the primary and secondary levels in a district in a Southern state. I used interview questions designed to collect data relevant to the study questions, including detailed descriptions of 'participants, environments, and themes and commonalities. I identified these data during the analyzing and coding process. Ravitch and Carl (2020) stated that detailed data descriptions must be used in appropriate contexts to allow researchers to make comparisons. As a support for transferability, I provided participants with a copy of their transcriptions, ensuring I accurately represented their perceptions. Throughout the transferability process, participant selection, sample demographics, and transcription verification were all critical factors and procedures to ensure the data and conclusions were appropriate and accurate.

Dependability

Dependability in a study ensures that a study is consistent and stable over time (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). The data gathered from the interviews were reliable and consistent. After finalizing all interviews, I provided participants with a copy of their own interview transcriptions. Through the transcription review, participants validated their

responses to ensure I accurately accounted for their perceptions. As they indicated

revisions to the transcriptions were needed, I made those necessary revisions.

Additionally, all participants could make any changes required to the transcripts

themselves. I utilized an audit trail throughout data analysis, including reflexive notes to

develop differences and, most significantly, comparisons from participant to participant. I

established all the processes to establish quality and integrity in the study and ensure the

data was consistent with my argument (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Ensuring dependability

was necessary to guarantee accuracy and consistency.

Confirmability

Confirmability seeks to have confirmable data collection free from subjectivity

(Ravitch & Carl, 2020). I established confirmability through one-to-one participant

interviews and transcriptions and, later, confirming the participants' presented

perceptions. Additionally, I used audit trails to track proven commonalities and allow for

valid interpretation of the data, which helped establish confirmability in the study.

Through coding, such as thematic linking, I recognized closely related perceptions of

principals' dual roles and how they fulfill each role. As a researcher, I worked to ensure I

remained neutral and open-minded to keep biases out of the study and keep my

perceptions from affecting the study's outcome (Ravitch & Carl, 2020).

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Ethical Procedures

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Before beginning the research study, I obtained permission from the IRB to begin

the research study. Shortly after that, I received approval from the district superintendent

to proceed with the principals selected as participants for the research study. I sent out the

Leader Participant Consent form to all selected participants to ensure they were willing to participate in the study. If a selected participant(s) did not want to be a part of the research study, I attempted to provide the refusing participants with explanations of the research study's security and confidentiality to ease any reservations. Because I work closely with all the participants, I assured them that the data shared was for my research only, so I would preserve their privacy and not share any information. I stored all participant data on a personal laptop and will discard the data after completing the study.

Throughout the research, I preserved the confidentiality of the participants' perspectives by storing the data appropriately. The Zoom recordings re on my laptop. I was the only individual who had access to the data, and I will dispose of data using procedures required by Walden University once I complete the study.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I introduced the study's research design and rationale. Also, I explained the role of the researcher. In the methodology section, I addressed how participant selection occurred as well as the population and sample size. A description of data collection and data analysis procedures completed the chapter, along with ethical procedures to keep participant data secure and confidential. In Chapter 4, I will explain how I analyzed and revealed study findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe primary and secondary principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers and instructional leaders. The research problem was that principals struggle to equitably balance their time as both school managers and instructional leaders. I sought to provide insights regarding those struggles and consider a means to balance both roles to increase students' academic success equitably. I have been an elementary and secondary administrator for the past 8 years at various public schools. This study is needed to assist principals in terms of finding equal value in being both instructional leaders and campus managers and revealing how both roles are pertinent to principal, teacher, and student success.

Overview of the Study

The gap in practice was primary and secondary principals' struggle to equitably balance their time as both school managers and instructional leaders. Prior research revealed that fulfilling both roles led to an imbalance of prioritization; thus, there was a need for this study to provide means for principals to equitably balance both roles as campus managers and instructional leaders to increase academic success amongst students. I used the following three research questions to guide the qualitative study.

RQ1: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding the roles of manager and instructional leader?

RQ2: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their roles as managers?

RQ3: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their roles as instructional leaders?

I gathered data via one-on-one interviews to answer these questions. Chapter 4 includes research study findings in conjunction with a description of the schools and district where I conducted the study. In Chapter 4, I present data collection and analysis processes, including organization. Additionally, I present an explanation of results as they pertain to research questions while emphasizing trustworthiness. The chapter begins with a description of the setting, data collection process, and analysis method. I address how study results relate and pertain to Bossert et al.'s instructional management and instructional organization framework, which affects principal instructional management. Results of this research may provide principals with significant insight regarding their dual roles.

Setting

This study took place in the US in a southern school district. Each participant was interviewed via Zoom due to the unprecedented circumstance of COVID-19. I emailed the partner organization agreement to the district's superintendent. After approval, I emailed all 10 participants the leader interview consent form. Each participant responded to the email with the words "I consent to participate in the study." I immediately scheduled one-on-one Zoom meetings during date and times that were conducive to participants' work schedules.

Participant Demographics

This study's participants were four secondary principals and six primary principals from a southern state district along the U.S. and Mexican border. Participants each had more than 2 years of administrative experience as assistant principals or principals; therefore, they each had experienced demands of fulfilling roles as campus managers and instructional leaders. Table 2 includes participant demographic information, including sex, current assignment (primary or secondary principal/assistant principal), and years of experience.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Participants

	Sex	Position	Campus Level	Years of Experience
Principal 1	Male	Principal	Secondary	8
Principal 2	Male	Principal	Secondary	17
Principal 3	Male	Principal	Secondary	26
Principal 4	Male	Principal	Secondary	37
Principal 5	Male	Principal	Primary	2
Principal 6	Male	Principal	Primary	8
Principal 7	Female	Principal	Primary	7
Principal 8	Female	Principal	Primary	4
Principal 9	Female	Principal	Primary	14
Principal 10	Female	Principal	Primary	2

Data Collection

After IRB approval from Walden University the superintendent of schools was contacted and consented to allow the study. For the study, I asked 10 principals to serve as participants; of the 10 principals selected, all 10 agreed to participate. Before one-on-one interviews began, participants were provided with general information regarding the study's purpose along with interview procedures, the study's voluntary nature, risks and

benefits of the study, privacy, and contact information. Next, I emailed campus principals requesting their participation. All 10 principals replied and consented to the research study. Next, each principal provided me with convenient dates and times to conduct interviews. I held one-on-one interviews via Zoom due to COVID-19. This allowed all participants to be safe and healthy. Before each interview, I sent a courtesy text message to each participant to confirm interview times and ensure they remained convenient and free from distraction. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. During one-on-one interviews, I explained the three primary research questions designed to explore principals' perceptions and lived experiences. I then asked structured questions to gain perceptions of their activities as campus managers and instructional leaders. I used interview questions focused on exploring the roles they as principals must fulfill. For this research, audio recordings and field notes were advantageous. Both tools allowed for both accuracy during the coding process and adequate data disaggregation and analysis, which I found beneficial due to current pandemic restrictions.

One-on-One Interviews

This qualitative study involved examining the perceptions principals at the local research site had about balancing their administrative and instructional duties. I examined principals' perceptions of their managerial and instructional leader roles and responsibilities. Zoom sessions proved to work best due to COVID-19 constraints. During Zoom interview sessions, all participants felt comfortable, shared various relevant and relatable experiences, and indicated that COVID-19 had changed principals everywhere. I structured each interview using questions with relatable follow-up

questions. Audio recording of Zoom sessions allowed me to maintain accuracy in terms of participant responses and ensured validity when they reviewed their interview transcriptions.

Location, Frequency, and Duration

I conducted one-on-one interviews via Zoom. I provided each participant with the flexibility to schedule times and days that were convenient for them and would be free from distraction. I planned interviews during weekends in the evening which lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. As participants logged into Zoom, I reminded them the session was being recorded. Additionally, I explained the research problem and purpose statement at that time. I acquired basic information such as administrative position, years of experience, and level (primary or secondary) of administrative position. I reminded participants of their confidentiality and privacy in terms of participating in the study, along with interview procedures and anticipated amounts of time the transcription process would take. I explained they would receive a copy of transcriptions to verify and ensure that I captured their perceptions. I informed them about how their interviews would be filed and stored for confidentiality in order to secure their identity. Last, I told them that if at any point they wished to stop the interview and withdraw from participating, they would be allowed to do so.

Data Recording

I acquired all data during each participant's one-to-one interview. I conducted each one-to-one interview via an individual Zoom session per participant. There were built-in components such as the recording feature through Zoom, which allowed me to

record the session to transcribe with validity. This recorded session was saved in a folder on my laptop with password protection. Later, I transferred it to external storage, a USB stick, to ensure participants' data were more secure and that I could maintain their confidentiality.

After each interview, I transcribed the data I received. I began each transcription by using the Zoom recording and using a Microsoft Word document to notate the participants' responses. The Microsoft Word feature Dictate was also used to ensure the accuracy of the participant's words during transcription. After I transcribed, I began the process of coding. Through the coding process, I was able to find common themes in the perceptions of the ten principal participants.

Data Analysis

Researchers can approach data analysis in various ways; however, for this study, I used coding. My first round of coding involved identifying specific phrases each participant revealed during their interview while the second round involved identifying common and repeating themes. I began the process of identifying codes and patterns as I transcribed the interviews. I started by identifying themes revealed within each research question. I color-coded those themes based on questions designated to answer campus managers' questions and instructional leaders. Additionally, I made side notations to identify subthemes and topics most consistently stated. The coding revealed key themes across each participant's transcripts. Table 3 shows the descriptive codes for the study.

Table 3

Descriptive Codes

Interview Questions	Descriptive Codes
RQ1	Knowledge in Curriculum and Instruction, Knows Instructional Leader, Responsible for Daily Operations
1	Active-Participant, Diversity, Best Practices, Staff Development, Teacher Methodology, Data Mining, Student Expectations, Feedback
2	Safety, Discipline, Duties, Schedules, Culture and Climate, Facilities, Parent Communication, Problem Solver
3	Leading Teachers, Coaching, Teamwork, TEKS, Data Analysis, Walk-throughs, Teacher Observations, PLCs, Goal Setting, Master Scheduling
4	Staff and Student Safety, ARDs, 504 Meetings, Scheduling, Parent Contacts, Delegator, Supervisor, Personnel, Streamline Operations, Student Discipline
	Involved, Knowledgeable, Experienced, Instructional Leader, Visionary, Time Consuming, Manages All
5	Prioritizing Campus Management, Practices and Approaches of Campus Manager
RQ2	Multiple Roles and Responsibilities, Imbalance, Prioritizing, Scheduling
6	Morning and Afternoon Schedules, Develop and Follow Schedules, Time Management, Prioritizes Students, Demanding
7	Time Management, Daily Planning, Daily Schedule, Delegating, Meetings, Calendars, Building Capacity, Follow-up, Follow-through, Lists, Open Door Policy
8	Prioritizing Instructional Leadership, Practices and Approaches of Instructional Leader
RQ3	Focus on Management, Schedules, Prioritize Instruction, Non-Negotiables, Balance, Delegate
9	Walk-throughs, Follow Schedule, Weekly PLCs, List Instructional Priorities, Weekly Goals, Monthly Calendar, Virtual Learning, Remote Learning, Divide and Conquer
10	Team Grade Level Assignments, COVID19, Attendance, Assignment Submissions, Morning Walk-throughs, Visibility, Build Relationships, Data Review, Weekly Team Goals, Daily Schedule

Discrepant Cases

During the interview process, there were no participant responses that rivaled or challenged any other participants' responses. After further data analysis, I found no discrepant cases that conflicted with the major themes of the research study's questions.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

Results for RQ1

What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions at the local research site regarding the roles of manager and instructional leader? After reviewing participants' feedback, I found the most recurring themes about participant perceptions included the following: (a) knowledgeable in curriculum and instruction, (b) knows instructional delivery, (c) responsible for daily operations, and (d) is involved.

Theme 1: Knowledge About Curriculum and Instruction

I revealed Theme 1 within the participants' interviews based on their years of experience as campus principals whose duties required them to be instructional leaders. I asked the principal participants to relay their perceptions about their roles as campus managers and instructional leaders and how they perceived their roles, which included defining and comparing both roles. The participants were able to express relevant perceptions based on their experiences as campus managers and instructional leaders.

Subthemes I found within the participants' responses were as follows: (a) active participant in teaching and learning, (b) knows teacher methodology, and (c) knows instructional delivery. The subthemes recognized principals' perceptions about their role as instructional leaders and what being instructional leaders is to them.

Principal #1 stated, "An instructional leader is an administrator who works closely with teachers to help them with instruction and curriculum through PLCs, professional development, conference periods, and via data analysis during walk-throughs." Principal #5 stated, "I think an instructional leader has to have the ability to provide support in all instructional areas. It is your job as an administrator to ensure that you have some backward knowledge as to teacher methodology and delivery methods." Principal #6 stated:

> For me, an instructional leader is being knowledgeable, being involved, and being an active participant in the curriculum, whether it is from 4th grade to Kinder. Also, being familiar with different ways the teacher can communicate or can teach or can show those TEKS to our students.

Principal #8 stated:

> An instructional leader is someone who has a primary focus on instruction at the campus level. The goal is to monitor instruction, provide feedback, coach teachers, and ultimately improve student learning by tweaking instruction and learning what works best for students.

Principal #9 stated:

> An instructional leader is knowledgeable in the instruction, specificities of curriculum (unpacking the TEKS), and student expectations for learning that each teacher must deliver each day. The leader is able to interpret data and identify instructional areas in need of improvement.

Theme 2: Instructional Delivery

Participants identified curriculum and instruction closely in close conjunction with instructional delivery. I determined the theme from the participants' transcripts. Because of the participants' experiences as instructional leaders, participants found a direct correlation between the importance of knowing curriculum and instruction to impact instructional delivery.

The following two subthemes were consistently found: (a) knowing student expectations and (b) knowing how to identify areas of weakness. These subthemes noted the participants' perceptions of the instructional delivery experience as an instructional leader.

Principal #3 stated:

A leader who shares ownership with colleagues to meet a common goal, shares ideas, collaborates, reflects on their work, and works on developing a strong curriculum. Additionally, meets regularly with campus leaders to review goals for the week and figure out how we can obtain those goals"

Principal #9 stated:

The role of an instructional leader is important to ensuring teachers deliver effective instruction and that students master learning concepts. The instructional leader must build trust among the staff and provide a schedule to allow for professional learning communities (PLC) where staff can learn, share, and discuss instructional issues, professional development, data concerns, and more.

Principal #10 stated, "An effective instructional leader is actually in the classroom with

teachers showing them. You teach and disseminate important information, strategies to reach a variety of students."

Theme 3: Responsibility for Daily Operations

I identified Theme 3 based on the experiences and perceptions of the principal participants. I determined this theme from the various transcripts of the participants who determined daily operations to be a large part of campus managers' tasks. Their perceptions of a campus manager's roles and responsibilities were revealed.

I found the following three subthemes consistent within the transcripts of the principal participants. These included (a) the campus safety plan, (b) daily campus schedules, and (c) campus manager duties. The subthemes revealed the perceptions principals had on the responsibility of day-to-day operations.

Principal #10 stated:

I know at the campus I was everywhere. I had to understand all the little areas of the building and safety for kids. I would speak with the custodians and find out what some of the safety issues were, what were some things we needed to look at, and what were some better ways we could be more efficient.

Principal #9 stated:

As principal of a school campus, it is critical to balance instructional leadership and campus manager. Creating a safe, supportive campus culture conducive to collaborative planning and decision making is important to getting started without a hitch and ending the day by tying loose ends affords the campus manager time to oversee the day-to-day operations.

Principal #6 stated:

> The campus manager to me is you can look at in different ways. I guess right
> now, the one I'm dealing with the most is just basically managing safety. For me,
> the management has been a challenge because of this whole COVID thing; we
> know that every day is different and is constantly changing. Do we have
> everything in place? Do we have enough chemicals for custodians? Do we have
> enough chemicals for our teachers what they need in the classroom?

Principal #5 stated:

> I think we've become a little bit more managerial as it comes to daily tasks
> because we have to worry about safety and many other items that come with it,
> and therefore, it seems to be taking a little bit longer time about 60% of the time
> has become managerial, looking at daily tasks of safety. My campus has become
> more concerned with safety instead of instruction.

Principal #1 stated:

> On our campus, I am responsible for and ensure the safety and well-being of our
> students and staff. I am responsible for the safety protocols that we have created
> from the morning duties until the end of the day responsibilities.

Theme 4: Involved in All Aspects of Management

I identified Theme 4 based on each principal participant's years of experience and based participants' transcripts from this research study. The participants were able to use their perceptions of a campus manager to define this role.

The four subthemes found within the transcripts of the participants were (a)

duties, (b) parent communication, (c) creating schedules, and (d) supervising staff.

Principal #1 stated:

They manage the discipline, duties, and responsibilities of staff and support all department events on and off-campus. I am also responsible for campus discipline, staff scheduling, such as paraprofessionals and custodians. I participate in ARDs and 504 meetings. I communicate with parents on a daily basis to address any concern they have about their child.

Principal #2 stated:

A campus manager is to be visible and take initiatives on creating a well-run campus by supervising staff and coordinating activities with staff members. You have to work together with all stakeholders if you plan on moving a campus or district forward.

Principal #5 stated:

You are supposed to solve every problem, and you will also need your personnel to buy into your process. You have to maneuver coverage, parents, phone calls, the daily happenings of the day, from the lights being turned on at the beginning of the day to the lights being turned off at the end of the day. You are supposed to tackle every problem.

Principal #6 stated:

The campus manager works on timelines whether it is PE schedules, lunch schedules, professional schedules, and management. They manage time and people. They manage everything from the front office staff to absences,

substitutes; they make sure everything is in place.

Principal #7 stated:

> The campus manager is the janitor, the nurse, the counselor. We have to talk to
> parents, listen to their concerns, try to find solutions, mediate between teachers
> and parents. You have to manage everything. You need to be knowing of every
> situation.

Principal #8 stated:

> A manager is someone who is able to take care of the logistical components of the
> campus: facilities, schedules, operations, pretty much everything that is not
> instruction. I create schedules and organize campus initiatives and be ready to
> restructure when needed.

Principal #9 stated:

> A campus manager manages the day-to-day operations of the campus to ensure
> safety, efficiency, use of facilities, maintenance and transportation, discipline,
> staff and students, attendance, clerical duties, and communication with parents.

Results for RQ2

What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions at the local research site
regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their role as a manager? After reviewing the
participants' feedback, the most recurring themes found within research question two
about participant perceptions included the following: (a) prioritizing campus management
and (b) practices and approaches to fulfilling the role as a campus manager.

Theme 1: Prioritizing Campus Management

I identified this theme based on the perceptions of the participants and their experiences as campus principals, drawn from the interview transcripts of each principal participant. The participants were able to provide some examples.

The two subthemes found were as follows: (a) the campus manager role is constant and overwhelming and (b) difficulty balancing the roles because of the many responsibilities. The subthemes noted the participants' views on how principals prioritize their role as campus managers.

Principal #1 stated:

"The responsibilities of campus manager are constant and overwhelming at times. As such, I feel we as administrators tend to have difficulty in managing both responsibilities. For example, we have incidents that require us to investigate and interview several students or staff members and call parents to inform them of the situation. These types of incidents may take hours to complete and make final decisions. Other times our days are overwhelmed with managing different events such as ARDs, 504 meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.

Principal #2 stated, "Sometimes your day gets overwhelmed with management duties but prioritizing them can give you more time on the instructional component of your job." Principal #3 stated:

They are both extremely important. However, it always seems like I wear the hat of campus manager more often. Managing your campus involves dealing with students and parents directly; therefore, you tend to spend more time on dealing

with items firsthand.

Principal #5 stated:

> You manage, and you try to manage our time wisely. It is the unknown of the
> managerial part that throws your day out of whack. I can tell you today that I am
> planning to do so many walkthroughs this week, and I will meet with so many
> teams this week, and I'm going to talk about small group testing and
> interventions, but once I get into the daily happenings of the campus, it might turn
> out that I get to half of those items because the rest of the time has been devoted
> to daily parent phone calls, people calling the lack of support during our lunch
> periods and our pick-up and afterschool. All those items take up your instructional
> goals and become managerial tasks.

Principal #7 stated:

> It has to have a balance. I may have my day planned out, and I'm going to be
> instructional all day and be in the classrooms all day long, but something will
> come up, and it may take the better part of my day. It may be an issue with a
> parent, or it may be a custody issue where I have to collect documents and send
> them to Central Office to have them reviewed. Other situations arise, and we have
> to deal with them. Whether it's a discipline issue such as a child that is acting out,
> and we need to remove him from the classroom. That takes away from what we
> had planned for the day, and so it's difficult because you have to prioritize what
> needs to be done.

Theme 2: Practices and Approaches to Fulfilling the Role of Campus Manager

I identified Theme 2 based on the perceptions of the participants and their experiences as campus principals as determined from the interview transcripts of each principal participant. The participants were able to provide some examples.

The two subthemes found were as follows: (a) delegating roles and responsibilities, (b) having a daily schedule/planning, and (c) time management. The subthemes noted the participants' views on how principals prioritize their role as campus managers.

Principal #8 stated:

I have designated the head custodian as the go-to for facilities, my secretary as the go-to for payroll and timesheets, work orders, and supplies; my AP as the textbook and behavior person; my counselor as attendance and social-emotional so that instead of people coming to me for everything, there is usually someone that can answer or help before it gets to me.

Principal #4 stated:

As a principal, I try to delegate some of the operations of the school to staff and teacher leaders. This helps me to spend more time on instruction and culture. At times it is easier to say than to put into practice because putting out fires can be urgent.

Principal #9 stated:

Management duties can take over your day! Instructional leadership must be scheduled and done consistently and continuously. Prioritize regularly scheduled

time for instructional decision-making. Beginning the day and end of the day are best for taking care of management issues at the campus. Making sure the day gets started without a hitch and ending the day by tying loose ends affords campus managers to oversee the day-to-day operations of the campus while reserving time to address the instructional management.

Principal #10 stated:

I spent more time managing than really learning the instructional part. It was like you're almost putting out fires all the time. I think that's where I needed to learn how to be more efficient, and of course, building leadership capacity so you don't have to put out so many fires. Other people start helping you out with some of those roles, too, and so there should be more of a balance.

Principal #5 stated:

Daily scheduling, you have to be very meticulous to the way you schedule everybody, the way you schedule yourself to make sure you're checking on all those people and all those items. It is very scary when you are dealing with 450 lives of students and who you are supposed to keep safe, so those daily schedules make sure every corner is covered is very important. Adequate planning, you have to plan for the unknown.

Principal #6 stated:

We've come up with schedules and have said we will not touch these items because they are not as important, and we're going to focus on visiting the classrooms and going into the classrooms virtually. What I've done is I go in at

six in the morning. I send emails and reminders to teachers. My secretary keeps

me on track. Sir, we haven't done this. The managerial part before hours, then two

hours during lunch duty, I'll take my laptop, and I'll look at my list to see what

needs to get done things of that nature.

Results for RQ3

What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions at the local research site

regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their role as instructional leaders? After reviewing the

participants' feedback, the most recurring themes found within research question three

about participant perceptions included the following: (a) prioritizing instructional

leadership and (b) practices and approaches to fulfilling role as an instructional leader.

Theme 1: Prioritizing Instructional Leadership

I identified Theme 1 based on the perceptions of the principal participants'

experiences as a campus principal, drawn their interview transcripts. The participants

were able to provide some examples.

The two subthemes found were as follows: (a) sticking to a schedule and (b)

making a list of instructional priorities/setting weekly goals. The subthemes noted the

participants' views on how principals prioritize their role as campus managers.

Principal #4 stated, "I plan weekly schedules to fulfill instructional time to focus

on instructional leadership and culture. I try to follow a daily schedule, and I depend on

my team leaders to help, so I can focus on instructional leadership."

Principal #1 stated:

I begin my day by doing informal walkthroughs in the classroom and observing

our teachers and students in the morning. We pull our morning, lunch, and

afterschool duties. In the afternoons, I like to continue making informal

walkthroughs in the classroom.

Principal #3 stated:

You must schedule times with your staff on curriculum issues and hold to those

times because your day can get away from you very quickly with managerial

duties. You must use your administrative team to set a daily schedule for meeting

instructional needs. Schedules should include PLC meetings with departments and

walkthroughs.

Principal #9 stated:

Instructional leadership is purposeful and intentional. It is planned and is expected

to have an outcome: change in instruction, creation of tests, professional

discussions, and professional trainings. Specific time is set aside to accomplish

the instructional goals. Campus management is ongoing day to day occurrences

that must be done to ensure continuity and safety.

Principal #8 stated:

I would say that 70% of my time goes to management and 30% goes to

instruction. The reason is that at least one hour in the morning, two at lunch, and

one in the afternoon goes to duties where I am supervising the arrival, lunch, and

departure of students. That is easily half of my day. The rest is split between

conducting walkthroughs, meetings with departments for PLC, meeting with

individual teachers and sitting in on meetings for 504, SPED, students and

speaking with any parent or staff that have any questions or concerns.

Theme 2: Practices and Approaches to Fulfilling the Role of Instructional Leader

I identified Theme 2 based on the perceptions of the principal participants and their experiences as a campus principal. I determined them from the interview transcripts of each participant. The participants were able to provide some examples.

The two subthemes found were as follows: (a) data review and (b) designating responsibilities. The subthemes summarize the participants' views on how principals prioritize their role as campus managers.

Principal #8 stated:

One of my goals for this year is tracking and submitting data on a daily basis. I have implemented daily goals of observing four classes daily along with my AP. We have spent a lot more time and energy in instruction. Goals are everything. Data, data, data. Constantly using data to tweak and inform the next plan.

Principal #6 stated:

All three of us, my counselor, my assistant, and myself, we are constantly emailing the teachers to share with us who is not turning in assignments and who isn't logging in. I make phone calls during my lunch period when kids are coming into the cafeteria. On Class Dojo, I'll send a message to parents that so and so hasn't turned in his assignments. I need to know this daily, so by Wednesdays and Thursdays, that's what we're doing.

Principal #9 stated:

Instructional leadership is purposeful and intentional. It is planned and is expected

to have an outcome. Specific time is set aside to accomplish the instructional

goals. I planned and scheduled weekly PLC meetings to allow teachers time to

meet for purposeful delving into data and instructional concerns. Daily

conversations, classroom observations, and walkthroughs help to ensure

instruction is going as planned. Review data after each benchmark assessment

with staff helps to develop a collaborative effort and professional trust to do what

needs to be done for the sake of getting the positive outcome.

Principal #1 stated:

I like to start the morning by doing informal walk-throughs. In the afternoons, I

like to continue to make informal walk-throughs in the classroom. We create

weekly schedules to walk-through sessions by department. We do several

informal walk-throughs in the mornings and afternoons between our morning and

lunch duties.

Principal #4 stated, "I plan a weekly schedule to fulfill instructional time to focus on

instructional leadership and culture. I try to follow my daily schedule, although at times

constraints hit you in the face and throws off your task."

Summary of Results

After analyzing the one-to-one interview data, several themes emerged from this

qualitative study which explored principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers

and instructional leaders. The data analysis process generated eight themes overall from

the three research questions. RQ1 involved the following themes: (a) knowledge of

curriculum and instruction, (b) knowledge of instructional delivery, (c) responsibility for

daily operations, and (c) being involved. RQ2 generated the following themes: (a) prioritizing campus management and (b) practices and approaches to fulfilling the campus manager role. RQ3 involved the following themes: (a) prioritizing instructional leadership and (b) practices and approaches to fulfill instructional leaders' roles.

Themes were verified based on interview transcript. Each was found to be consistently verbalized during each interview session. The focus was to gain principals' perceptions of their dual-role experiences as managers and instructional leaders to provide insight into balancing both roles in order to increase students' academic success equitably. The principals in this study believed that managing both roles was overwhelming and often imbalanced due to the high demands of both roles, especially the management role due to the need to mitigate the COVID-19 virus. Many principals felt that their most significant challenge was managing time management to respond and fulfill both roles successfully. They holistically thought that the campus manager role took over most of their days and sidetracked their intended instructional leader duties. The principals also relied heavily on the schedules created and implemented practices to ensure both roles, especially the instructional leader role, were equally fulfilled. Yet even with schedules and daily practices, both roles' equitability continued to present itself as an impeding factor.

Because of this reality, most principals thought delegating to their assistant principals and teacher leaders was a considerable effort to balance the roles' responsibilities since their time as principals were limited. Principals would meet with their teams afterward to debrief on concerns or needs, and this made them feel as if they

were addressing teacher and staff concerns and needs and were knowledgeable. Chapter 5 will provide a more extensive discussion of the results, any conclusions based on those results, implications of the study, and future research recommendations.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is the researcher's ability to account for all the complexities and deal with patterns not readily explained but rather inferred from the study's instrumentation. One-to-one interviews provided the analysis of common perceptions for each participant identified during the coding process in my research. These semistructured interviews collected data and recorded participants' perceptions via Zoom. Additionally, after each participants' one-to-one interview, I provided them with a transcript copy of their discussion to check for accuracy of their reflected perceptions. Each participant returned their transcripts with approval of accuracy. After each interview, I used the transcripts to transfer participant perceptions as my research data. I began coding shortly after finding commonalities from participant to participant. I highlighted descriptive words and phrases and engaged in field notes to document support for the emerging themes through the coding process. Establishing credibility was essential to the study because it allowed me to capture the participants' perceptions to analyze and interpret authentically.

Transferability

Transferability allowed context-relevant statements to add applicability and transferability to broader contexts. Because this study sought to provide insight into principals' demands, the study was transferable because it allowed introspection of

public-school principals in both the primary and secondary levels. Throughout the transferability process, participant selection, sample demographics, and transcription verification were all critical factors and procedures to ensure the conclusions were accurate and relevant.

Dependability

Dependability in a study ensures that a study is consistent and stable over time. The study's findings, drawn from data gathered in the interviews, were reliable and consistent throughout each participant interview. After finalizing all interviews, I went through the transcription review where participants validated their responses to ensure I accurately accounted for their perceptions. All participants could make any changes required to account for their principal experiences. My data analysis included reflexive notes to develop differences and comparisons from participant to participant; these were color-coded by theme. I established all the processes to establish quality and integrity in the study and ensure the data were consistent with my argument. I reviewed the study's data multiple times to confirm it complimented the study's alignment.

Confirmability

Confirmability seeks to have confirmable data collection, free from subjectivity. I established confirmability through one-to-one participant interviews and transcriptions and confirmed the participant's presented perceptions. I reflected on my continuous note taking and highlighted patterned themes presented in each interview. Through coding, including thematic linking, I recognized closely related perceptions of principals' dual roles and how they fulfill each role. As a researcher, I considered it vital to remain neutral

and open-minded to keep biases out of the study and keep my perceptions from affecting the study's outcome. Therefore, I did not allow my personal experience as a principal to interfere with my research's data collection and the analysis process. This study's findings were reliable. I was able to attain trustworthiness because of the study's thorough explanation of each of the following steps: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Summary

Chapter 4 includes data collection and data analysis methods for this research study. Additionally, study results relate to the gap in practice involving principals and their struggle to equitably balance their time as both school managers and instructional leaders. The purpose of this study was to describe principals' perceptions of their dual roles as campus managers and instructional leaders. Study' results could provide district central administrators and national administrators with information regarding how to assist principals in terms of managing their work schedules more efficiently and effectively. Participants emphasized the importance of both roles and how managing them is a daily struggle. All principals also placed equal importance on campus manager and instructional leader roles. All principals felt that their dual roles, although challenging to balance, enhanced their growth and experience as school principals. Chapter 5 includes study findings, limitations, recommendations, implications, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe 10 principals' perceptions of their dual roles as campus managers and instructional leaders. The basic qualitative method allowed me to use one-on-one interviews to gain insight into principals' lived experiences. The study was relevant because I focused on several critical components of primary and secondary principals' duties that affect instructional leadership outcomes and related student performance outcomes. Those included learning conditions and organization, planning, and implementation processes. I also provided an analysis of the study and interpretations of my findings.

The study yielded several key findings. One key finding was that the campus manager role tends to overpower that of the instructional leader role, no matter how much principals plan or schedule instructional time. Another key finding was that principals need to make instruction a daily priority as they focus on weekly goals. Other findings involved the importance of principals delegating roles and responsibilities to their administrative team, counselors, and lead teachers so they have more time to dedicate equally to both roles. The primary challenge for all principals was sticking to schedules because of unexpected events.

Interpretation of the Findings

I framed the study using Bossert et al.'s instructional management and instructional organization framework. I developed each research question to explore principals' perceptions about their dual roles as instructional leaders and campus managers. Interpretations of key findings follow.

Imbalance of Prioritization

According to Terosky (2016), primary and secondary principals struggle to balance their time as both managers and instructional leaders, and that imbalance adds time constraints to their accomplishment of the expectations of their roles. In this study, imbalance of prioritization was a factor in terms of principals' lived experiences involving instructional leadership. I also emphasized how campus management tends to be an ongoing challenge even on the most organized and scheduled days. Principals stated they delegated duties, scheduled PLC time with teachers, and implemented instructional leadership practices in the morning hours or afternoon. Still, campus manager duties prevented them from achieving their instructional leadership goals, even though each stated the instructional leadership role was the more important role to them because it drove teachers' and students' success.

Principals explained they maintained open door policies, which they saw as opportunities for teachers to walk in and ask or seek instructional support from them when needed. They also indicated they ensured their team, including assistant principals, deans, and counselors, also knew campus instructional goal and were well-versed in curriculum and instructional components. They indicated their campus instructional team prioritizes debriefing with them to understand instructional concerns and needed supports. Principals also indicated they use their weekly faculty meetings to address teacher and staff instructional concerns.

Time Management

Hochbein and Meyers (2021) said principal roles and expectations have evolved into including "increasing student achievement while closing the gaps, providing instructional leadership, and establishing a data literate faculty" (p. 175). Because of increased demands, the theme of time management was raised consistently throughout the data collection and analysis process. Principals' time management reflected the imbalance of their time utilization with their priorities. Principals indicated they ensured they had daily schedules and practices to be available for both instructional leader and campus manager duties. They indicated they begin their day with classroom visits to meet with and greet teachers before classes start. They also make time for classroom observations throughout the day to reinforce teachers. After completing classroom observations, they immediately sent feedback to teachers via emails or their local internal recording system, the Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC) system, used within the state teacher evaluation system. Principals ended their days by extending their work hours to focus on communicating with parents and communities.

Participants stated that regardless of creating schedules or using daily time management practices, they continued to struggle to maintain an intentional focus on instruction. Each principal stated there was never enough time in the day to focus on both roles because the campus manager role was constant and overwhelming. Additionally, they noted that balancing both roles was a challenge because each role carried many responsibilities.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. One limitation was use of participants from a single district. Before the data collection process, I ensured the study included 10 principal participants with experience at either the primary or secondary level. Creswell and Creswell (2015) said the "idea behind qualitative research is to purposely select participants that will best help the researcher understand that problem and research question" (p. 167). A second limitation was the small sample size. However, by using a small sample, I could collect deeper insights regarding experiences of participants who all came from the same district. A third limitation was the timing of the study during the spring semester when schools are at their busiest. A fourth limitation was the occurrence of the global pandemic, which changed traditional school settings and produced challenges for principals.

Recommendations

When I began my research, I initially planned to include participants from other districts. However, as I began the data collection phase, COVID-19 had affected schools and school principals. Therefore, I choose to keep my study within an existing district to better coordinate and interview participants during such a challenging time.

Based on study results, principals continue to need additional support to ensure they have needed time to provide instructional support. My recommendation is to follow up with a study on curriculum and instruction departments that have successfully assisted principals with prioritizing instructional leadership roles. That study would allow planning and implementation of methods to support principals.

Implications

This study has implications for positive social change. Principals struggle to develop practices and receive support from district central administrations and national administrations to fulfill their dual roles successfully. As education continues to be transformed due to the worldwide pandemic, providing principals with support in their roles as campus managers and instructional leaders becomes more important than ever. This study indicates principals who receive assistance to navigate remote and virtual learning can improve student academic success.

Bossert et al. (1982) said principals' instructional management is key to learning, instruction, and campus management. Therefore, enabling principals to emphasize instruction is crucial. My research revealed common practices of principals: delegating, sticking to a schedule, and implementing practices focused on instructional leadership. I aim to provide awareness to districts' central office staff and bring tools and resources as supports for campus principals.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to describe principals' perceptions of their dual roles as managers and instructional leaders. Through this study, it became clear that campus principals find the instructional leadership role to be of extreme importance and try their best to dedicate time to instructional leadership. Yet, with the demands of their roles as campus managers, they find it a daily struggle. Principals schedule daily instructional leadership time but find they are spending more time performing management duties. Participants said they thought instruction is often neglected.

However, indicated a need to find tools, methods, and resources to support them to positively impact their instructional leadership roles. By doing that, principals could be more effective leaders with more established and effective practices.

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Appendix: Interview Questions and Their Alignment with Research Questions

RQ1: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions at the local research site regarding the roles of manager and instructional leader?

Interview Questions used to answer RQ1:

1. What is your definition of an instructional leader?

2. What is your definition of a campus manager?

3. What is your perception of your role as an instructional leader?

4. What is your perception of your role as a campus manager?

5. How do your perceptions fit your previous definitions of an instructional leader and campus manager?

RQ2: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions at the local research site regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their role as a manager?

Interview Questions used to answer RQ2:

6. How does the time for your management duties compare to your time for instructional leadership duties?

7. How do you prioritize your role as a campus manager?

8. What practices/approaches do you use to fulfill your campus manager role?

RQ3: What are primary and secondary principals' perceptions at the local research site regarding prioritizing and fulfilling their role as instructional leaders?

Interview Questions used to answer RQ3:

9. How does the time for your management duties compare to your time for instructional leadership duties?

10. How do you prioritize your role as an instructional leader?

11. What practices/approaches do you use daily to fulfill your role as an instructional leader?