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Developing Shared Leadership and Trust Within School-Community Partnerships Serving Concentrated Poverty Communities

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2007

BS, Washington & Jefferson College, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

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Abstract

School-community partnerships are critical for children and families in concentrated poverty neighborhoods. This basic qualitative study aimed to understand the dual leadership roles that are inclusive of the school and community leaders' collective voice for building trustworthy relationships and equitable leadership to support families and children from communities with high poverty concentrations. The conceptual framework included elements from transformative leadership theory, the family interagency collaboration model, and the Ubuntu philosophy of humanism. Four community-based leaders and four school leaders with at least 5 years of experience in an eastern U.S. state addressed the research questions by describing how they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating. Interviews were semistructured and conducted one-on-one online; data were analyzed using thematic and comparison analyses. All leaders emphasized being relational, responsive, resilient, and reliable in their interactions with one another and community members. Partnerships arose due to out-of-school time program grants, and more programs evolved from ongoing collaboration and shared visions of service. The leaders became companions in filling gaps in academics, resources, and community connections. Important agreements included system coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation. Recommendations are financial stability for partnership programs, more partner-leadership emphasis in preparation programs and professional development, advocacy for community school models, and additional research. Positive social change can occur when community and school leaders effectively unite to transform schools and communities.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my fellow community organization leaders, nonprofit leaders, grassroots leaders, school leaders, and community development leaders who work tirelessly and collaboratively to change policies that ensure children from communities of color have equal opportunities and high-quality education. It is my aim that this study adds to the literature the power of community not only as a voice but also as a colaborer, providing a comprehensive perspective to inform future leaders of the significant impact when school and community leaders collaborate. May the work you do be seen as necessary by all. Your unwavering commitment to seeing all projects through and ensuring the success of these communities, children, and families is deeply appreciated.

Furthermore, this research is dedicated to my community: to my children who reminded me that quitting is not an option, to my family who encouraged me to finish this process for us all, and to my colleagues who work collaboratively to impact our schools and communities. This work is created with families and children in mind with the objective of making whatever dreams you have a reality with the support of your community and school leaders. “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a

triple-braided cord is not easily broken" (New Living Translation, 1996/2015, Ecclesiastes 4:9–12).

Acknowledgments

"I am because we are, therefore, I am" is the South African *Ubuntu* philosophy meaning we cannot exist without each other. I would like to thank all my mentors who figuratively put their hands in my back to encourage me through my doctoral journey. Your words and deeds did not go unnoticed, and I am forever grateful for God placing each of you in my life. I'm also appreciative of my mentees who through their diligence in pursuing their goals motivated me to complete this goal. I share this accomplishment with you. I often say the letters I hold behind my name are the initials of my students who teach me daily the importance of using my gifts and talents to impact this education system for the next generation.

To my chairperson and co-chair, thank you for not giving up on me and for being my personal coach and cheerleader. The countless hours you spent reviewing my work and the time you made available to me to complete this assignment are very much appreciated. Thank you for believing in my study even when I did not.

And last, but certainly not least, a huge thank you to my support team, my family. When you told me I could do it, I believed you. When you told me it is all going to work out, I believed you. When you told me not to throw in the towel, I believed you. There were so many days that without you knowing you may have said something, posted a comment, or said a prayer on my behalf. For that and more I thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Beyond the widening academic achievement gap between Black and White students, the educational inequality and health disparities of poverty that plague the United States continue to create a cycle of miseducation and disinvested communities. School-community partnerships, an urban education reform strategy, are used to change the fabric of this disparity (Cook et al., 2020). It is not enough to establish a community school or school-community collaboration; it is also important to know and understand who the leaders are and how they work together to combat the ills of poverty affecting children and families. Researchers have concluded that schools that develop strong community partnerships have a higher percentage of students performing at grade level, increased family volunteerism, and supported school reform efforts (Gross et al., 2015). However, in distressed communities with a high concentration of poverty, school-community partnerships often fail due to lack of leadership (Böse & Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz, 2021; Peck & Reitzug, 2017), generally defined as school leadership (Rodela & Bertrand, 2018) or, more specifically, principal leadership (Valli et al., 2018). The term alone, school-community partnerships, implies two entities, yet the focus seems to have been more on the school with little emphasis on the community.

The problem is that school-community partnerships are effective school reform models; however, school-community partnerships have been least successful in schools located in high-poverty communities due to inadequate leadership (Holme et al., 2020; Peck & Reitzug, 2017; Valli et al., 2013). The research has strongly supported that successful school-community partnerships result from strong leadership committed to a

clear shared vision. In this study, I explored the roles and relationship between school and community-based organization leaders (hereinafter community leaders) when partnering in concentrated poverty communities. The literature describes successful partnerships as successful school leadership, usually the principal; however, many researchers have claimed that schools improve when community members play an active role (Valli et al., 2018). Subsequently, concentrating solely on the viewpoint of the school principal overlooks the role of community leadership. This study adds to the knowledge of transforming schools through a school-community partnership from the dual perspective of school and community leadership.

The following sections describe the need to understand the experiences community and school leaders have when partnering in high-poverty neighborhoods. In this chapter, I present the background information, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the conceptual framework associated with school-community partnerships. The nature of the study is outlined, followed by critical definitions that are used throughout the study. Additionally, the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of school-community partnerships are discussed.

Background of Study

The youngest children are the poorest, and nearly 73% of poor children in America are of color, which equates to nearly 1 in 3 Black (30.1%), and nearly 1 in 4 Hispanic (23.7%) compared to 1 in 11 White (8.9%) were poor children. The negative benchmark statistics continue for poor children. In 2014, an eastern local newspaper

headlined, “More than half of Cleveland’s kids live in poverty, and it’s making them sick” (Zeltner, 2014). Poor children are more likely to have poor academic achievement, drop out of high school, later become unemployed, and experience economic hardship leading to criminal behavior, thus repeating the cycle of poverty. Contrary to the anecdotal notes and dismal statistics about poverty, child poverty is not a crisis without a solution. High-quality preschool, free and reduced lunch programs, and out-of-school time (OST) programs have resulted in positive turnaround strategies for children in poverty, hence the purpose of school-community partnerships.

School-community partnerships are not a new concept; on the contrary, collaborations among community members emerged during the Progressive Era of urbanization. Public schools were the central social platform allowing groups to meet to discuss community plans (Dewey, 1997; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Various community groups gathered in schools such as women’s groups, activists, and settlement-house movers (Berry, 2020). Most often, these community leaders sought partnerships or patronage with the local schools to ensure students’ needs were fulfilled. In contrast to what many believe, parents and other community and civic organizations joined forces advocating for better schools and more resources for their children (Welton & Freelon, 2017).

Residents who settled in poor neighborhoods where they served the community’s needs coined the term “settlement house” (Berry, 2020). The settlement house movement consisted of affluent settlers serving the poor community to mend the problems within. Over the years, the settlement house residents would serve communities through perilous

times of war and the Civil Rights Movement to provide childcare, health, education and recreation, arts, and housing programs (Berry, 2020). Early literature notes Robert Woods as the apostle of the settlement movement who believed a change in society required more persons to serve in hopes of creating "a continuous link between settlements (settlement houses) and universities, with the settlements serving as laboratories for social problems" (Berry, 2020).

When researching the history of school-community partnerships, it is critical to examine the underlying cause of the urge for additional educational services. School-community partnerships developed over 20 years ago to combat the systemic racism of unequal educational opportunities among Black communities (Jones, 2013). Education for African Americans was outlawed and inaccessible during slavery, which led to the restructuring of education with the Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, establishing the citizenship of African Americans, and granting privileges including separate but equal education for both races, White and Black (Plessy, 1986). Education segregation continued until the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Education* (Walker & Archung, 2003). African American families continued to fight for equal education opportunities by establishing charter schools and working with community service organizations and nonprofits to ensure children receive various opportunities and enrichment. Family engagement is a civil rights problem, not just an issue of education.

Within the past 20 years, the academic achievement gap widened, causing federal government leadership to introduce legislation and programs such as the No Child Left

Behind Act of 2001, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), Race to the Top, and the revised Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Ford et al., 2019). Each of these programs, including family and community engagement partnership, brought awareness to unequal educational opportunities. These partnerships are vital, as researchers have found that schools alone cannot meet the multifaceted needs of students, especially those from disadvantaged communities requiring a range of social supports.

The consequences of the politics of American education have resulted in the great divide, a line of demarcation between of affluent suburban areas and low-income communities. The inclusion of governmental politics created a federal bureaucracy of state and local schools (Spring, 2011). Without an official budget item for education, the federal government adopted categorical aid, forcing local schools to abide by federal educational policies. President Eisenhower, as well as the presidents that followed, launched an educational act, with the first being the establishment of a modern Department of Education. Following Eisenhower, President Lyndon B. Johnson initiated the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Head Start. Succeeding presidents expanded programs and funding for special education, each adding to the former with larger concepts and ideals to ensure no child was left behind and that every child succeeds. By the Obama administration's reign, critics claimed that Americans could not close the achievement gap among low-income and Black and Hispanic students. New federal initiatives invited external sources to meet student needs for social-emotional support, health and wellness, and other extra-curricular and vocational studies that were unavailable or underfunded in lower-performing school districts (Ford et al.,

2019, p. 91). Hence, charter schools, public schools, and community-based organizations began to operate with more educational and structural autonomy. The Afterschool Alliance (2016) acknowledged that 21st CCLC, school-community-based programming supporting OST enrichment, are the only federally funded programs. The U.S. education federal administration continued to toss out school reform acts like the Race to the Top grant, another competitive grant rallying states to adopt standards and assessments, build better data systems for tracking student achievement, recruit quality teachers and school leaders, and effectively turn around low achieving schools.

Urban schools plagued with socioeconomic ills adversely impact Black and Hispanic students, and the teachers who educate them have challenges to meet their needs, which require external family and community support (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Schools alone cannot meet the challenging and diverse needs of students today, which make community partnerships vital to education reform planning. Valli et al. (2018) explained that student achievement improves when family and community members play an active role in the schools by addressing their students' various needs—a joint effort with a common goal and vision leading the change.

Since the 1960s, socioeconomic structures, such as the rise of poverty, have caused an accelerated decline of urban schools and communities (Peck & Reitzug, 2017). The corrosive damage of disinvestment in Black urban communities and the schools located within them have resulted in low student enrollment, poor school test scores, and fiscal deficits (Green, 2017). Youn et al. (2019) provided strong evidence that community-based partnerships are needed to address challenges when implementing

evidence-based models of community collaborations. However, community leaders and staff struggle to sustain their efforts.

Community funders and philanthropists have supported school reform efforts with billions of dollars, yet the systemic racial divide between Black and White students continues to enlarge. Although diverse funding sources have allowed for many children's opportunities, the dollars have not changed because students who attend low-performing and high-poverty schools perform two to four grades behind their suburban, more affluent, peers (Turner et al., 2016). Children are byproducts of their families, schools, and communities. Casto et al. (2016) examined the powerful impact of school, family, and community confluence to promote the education of children, the well-being of children, and the vitality of communities. Children living in concentrated poverty communities, mostly Black and Hispanic, are more likely to attend schools with high dropout rates and low test scores, and they live in neighborhoods with higher crime rates (Afterschool Alliance, 2016). A failed attempt of school-community partnership in a distressed community with high concentrations of poverty is not an option Americans can continue to afford or allow. If the lack of effective leadership is the cause of failed school-community partnerships, it is imperative to identify strategies on how school and community leaders trust one another to work equally and cohesively to ensure students receive a quality education.

Problem Statement

Although researchers have described the necessity for school-community partnerships and leadership from the principal's point of view, very little research has

addressed the perspective of the community organization leader's leadership role. Incorporating both perspectives of the school and community leader relationship provides more opportunities to strengthen school-community collaborations in urban areas in order to improve student achievement, sustain interagency collaborations, and coordinate better services to students and families in concentrated poverty communities. Understanding the experiences of the school and community leaders involved in a school-community partnership lends to the research for policymakers, educators, and other community leaders to strengthen families, schools, and neighborhoods.

The underlying social issue identified in this study is that school-community partnerships in concentrated poverty communities have not proven to yield the best results due to the quality of leadership (see Peck & Reitzug, 2017); however, the lack of community leadership is not understood without knowing their experiences. More is known about the school leadership and the various types of community collaborations, but little is known about how school and community leaders establish trusting relationships of equal leadership to maintain an effective collaboration in poor communities. Therefore, this study focused on school and community leaders to narrate their roles and experiences when collaborating in a school-community partnership in concentrated poverty neighborhoods. These leaders described how they engage with one another using the practice of *Ubuntu*, compassion and togetherness, accomplishing a common goal of student achievement. Green (2016) indicated that to equitably improve urban schools and communities requires "broad-based leadership that can bridge the chasm between urban school reform and community development" (p. 5). I addressed

why leadership equates to school leader versus community leader. Two leaders are better than one.

Traditionally, principals lead schools by managing and supervising (Boudreaux, 2017) or by engaging the community and parents through open house meetings, parent-teacher conferences, or planned professional development (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). The term "school-community partnership" reflects two entities coming together; school leaders impact student achievement and community leaders address the influences that affect student learning (Ford et al., 2019). Schools and school districts adopting a school-community partnership must broaden their reach to formal and informal, familiar and unfamiliar, resources to meet their students' culturally diverse needs (Ford et al., 2019). The problem of having the sole viewpoint of school principals overlooks the role of community leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to understand the dual leadership roles that are inclusive of the school and community leaders' collective voice for building trustworthy relationships and equitable leadership within school-community partnerships to support families and children from communities with high poverty concentrations. In this study, I examined the experiences and behaviors that school and community leaders have in working together when partnering in concentrated poverty neighborhoods.

Research Questions

Research Question (RQ)1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership?

RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

Conceptual Framework

This study's combined concepts focused on community and school leaders aimed at building effective school-community partnerships in concentrated poverty neighborhoods using a shared trustworthy leadership role. The ideas formalized for this study included Shields and Hesbol (2019) transformative leadership, Valli et al.'s (2013) family and interagency collaboration model, and the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Transformative leadership "critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others" (Shields, 2020, p.29). The family interagency model proposes better coordinating education, social, and health services by offering them at the school site (Valli et al., 2013). A common theme from both the transformative leadership theory and the family interagency model is the notion that relationships are better with a common coordinated mission. *Ubuntu* is a South African philosophy based on the premise that we are one

human body, we recognize each other through our human connection, and strength lies within unity (Lundin & Nelson, 2010; Ngomane, 2020).

The transformative leadership theory hypothesis is the primary approach that emphasizes the requirement for organization and societal change to progress the lives of both people and communities, a complete transformation of an entire social system (Shields, 2020; Shields & Hesbol, 2019). School-community partnerships centered on a transformative level impact education from community leaders to administrative levels from the school district and even the state level. To be clear, transformative leadership is different from transactional leadership, which focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. In contrast, transformative leaders are intentionally relational by engaging others through making connections that raise the leader's and follower's motivation and morality (Northouse, 2016, p. 162). The impetus of the transformative leadership theory recognizes that traditional reform efforts have not successfully ameliorated the continued inequities, injustices, and disparities found in outcomes that occur in education and other sectors of social life. A review of standardized assessments in high-poverty school districts has revealed that most of the population are Black and Hispanic students (Boschma & Brownstein, 2016).

The family and interagency collaboration model (Valli et al., 2013) theory of action encompasses the notion that students' educational opportunities will improve when community and family become more involved. Epstein (2019) defined school, family, and community partnerships as a shared responsibility among educators, parents, and others in the community for student learning and development. Community involvement

in schools is a critical component of student achievement (Gross et al., 2015). Schools partnering with community-based organizations result in increased student test scores, increased student attendance, and connections for student learning opportunities outside of school. The family and interagency collaboration framework aligns with educational theorists such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and zone of proximal development (Eun, 2017), and Bronfenbrenner and Comer emphasized the multiple and interrelated dimensions of human development (as cited in Valli et al., 2013). Leaders of school-community partnerships must understand the community and social constructs that impede student education. Schools operating as silos, ignoring or disregarding their community partner's vital necessity, cause a gap in student achievement data.

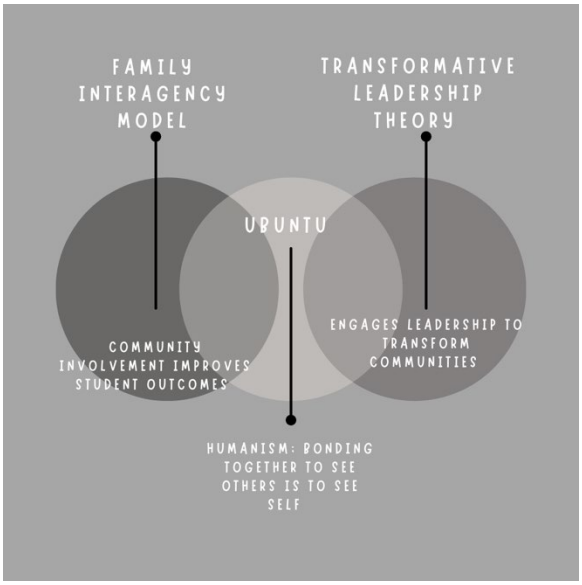
There is also a gap in the literature on the leadership required to make these school-community partnerships work. Researchers have highlighted school leaders who seek community partnerships, including families and community in their planning, and link classrooms to the students' communities (Gross et al., 2015). On the other hand, understanding how the community leader receives the school leader, establishes their leadership style, and connects with the school and students has yet to be disclosed in the research. Community leaders have become advocacy coalitions or joined forces with philanthropists in a significant role as education reform agents lobbying against policymakers (Lenhoff et al., 2019).

Ubuntu is a South African philosophy that describes how "my humanity is inextricably linked to yours" (Ukpokodu, 2016, p. 25). The premise of the *Ubuntu* philosophy rests on the core belief that education is the fundamental right of all children

around the world, encompassing inclusivity and equality (Biraimah, 2016). Historically, humanism, colorism, and racism have been questionable among minorities, especially African Americans. From the Reconstruction Era following the American Civil War, African Americans—those of the African diaspora—continued to face the legalized oppression of convict leasing, preserving the act of slavery (Smith & Smith Lee, 2019). As African Americans fought for their rights to vote, own land, and live freely, the right to receive a quality education is a fight that continues to this day. *Ubuntu* incorporates the idea that grounds and empowers the educator to embrace students as decent and worthy human beings. Ukpokodu (2016) defined the process and educative practice of *Ubuntu* as relationship, community, curriculum, and instruction. Figure 1 illustrates the initial conceptual framework for the study. This figure is presented again in the literature review where I discuss more details.

Figure 1

The Interconnectivity of School-Family-Community Leadership



Nature of the Study

I employed a qualitative inquiry approach based on the premise identified by researchers (see Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2015) as a social construction to investigate and comprehend the significance of individual or group perceptions of school and community leaders' experiences. Accordingly, the qualitative method is more commonly used to study the behavior of community leaders (Boudreaux, 2017; Epstein, 2019; Green, 2015). Consequently, this study followed the pattern of qualitative method because the cultural and relationship perspective among school and community leaders who partner to serve children and families from low-income neighborhoods residing in concentrated poverty communities is unknown.

As further described in Chapter 3, the data for this study were collected through interviews of school administrators and community leaders (directors and program managers), allowing them to tell their specific experiences about the behaviors, beliefs, and interactions as one of two leaders involved in a school-community partnership. Eight participants were chosen from four community-based groups, each group collaborating with an urban public school, to better understand their perspectives on their responsibilities, behaviors, and partnership relationship. Choosing to use interviews derived from the nature of Ravitch and Carl's (2015) definition of interviews that serve the purpose of developing full and detailed descriptions of individual experiences and perspectives, understanding and integrating multiple people's perspectives, and learning how people interpret their events and experiences.

This qualitative approach allowed me to explore the community leaders' perspectives of school-community partnerships and their impact on urban education. I interviewed school and community leaders, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences and the meaning of those experiences. The in-depth interviews made it possible for school and community leaders to share deepening reflections and changes in educational practices (see O'Grady et al., 2018).

Definitions

This study relied on the definitions of school-community partnership and community leadership. The key terms used in this study are defined in this section.

Community leaders: Those who lead as the executive director, program manager, or after-school coordinator of a nonprofit organization, and whose agencies partner with urban schools to improve student achievement and family-community support. Community leaders, not solely school leaders, influence education. The external governance from community-based organizations has the power to impact students and families as well (Borregard, 2019).

Community schools: Public schools that partner with stakeholders to create the conditions students need to thrive. The Partnership for the Future of Learning (2019) believes community schools are built upon four key pillars: (a) integrated student supports, (b) expanded and enriched learning opportunities, (c) active family and community engagement, and (d) collaborative leadership and practice. Community schools are specified differently in different states, such as community learning centers and full-service community schools (formerly known as school-community partnerships).

Concentrated poverty: A spatial density of socioeconomic deprivation. The concept and term are primarily used in U.S. policy and scholarship to refer to areas of "extreme" or "high" poverty defined as areas with "40 percent of the tract population living below the federal poverty threshold" (Herring, 2019, p. 1-10). Several studies on the effects of concentrated poverty showed that concentrated poverty affects crime and delinquency, education and psychological suffering, and a variety of health problems (see Herring, 2019). Culturally, these communities are referred to as "ghetto specific" or "inner city," and they are home to Black and Hispanic children and families. Herring (2019) explained that the Pew Economic Mobility Project, which has tracked 5,000 families since 1968, discovered that no other factor, including parents' education, employment, or marital status, was as important as neighborhood poverty in causing African American children to have significantly lower incomes than their parents. The sociocultural deprivation of race induced by massive violence may have psychological and physical consequences, but it also creates a social contagion, collective socialization, and networking for support and resources (Herring, 2019).

Family and interagency collaboration model: Encompasses the notion that students' educational opportunities will improve when community and family become more involved (Valli et al., 2013).

School leaders: Refer to school principals, assistant principals, program coordinators, family-school liaisons, and schoolteachers. The school leaders used in this study were from schools located in high-poverty areas.

School-community partnerships: Integrate school, community, and home to strengthen, support, and even transform individual partners, resulting in improved program quality, more efficient use of resources, and better alignment of goals and curricula (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010).

Transformative leadership theory: Recognizes that traditional reform efforts have not successfully ameliorated the continued inequities, injustices, and disparities found in outcomes that occur in education and other sectors of social life (Shields, 2020).

Ubuntu: An ancient South African philosophy that states that when people come together for the common good, they will solve problems with the power and voice of a group (Ngomane, 20). It not only recognizes others but also recognizes one's own inner value.

Assumptions

Assumptions associated with leadership required for implementing the overlapping spheres of influence, the integrative family model, and the *Ubuntu* philosophy, which result in collective work and responsibility, included the following:

1. Leaders engaging in a school-community partnership are familiar with the children and families from the sampling site in order to explain their interactions.
2. When dealing with children and families from a highly concentrated poverty group, school leaders have a constructive relationship with cooperating community leaders.

3. The school and community leaders share a common vision and mission to address the needs of the urban community's children and families.

Scope and Delimitations

I explored how school and community leaders collaborate to build trusting and equal relationships through a school-community partnership. The views of families and children who attend schools and who participate in community organizations were not addressed in this study. I did not look at educational leaders who worked at for-profit institutions. This research concentrated on representatives from four elementary schools and four collaborating community-based organizations, four leaders from each entity, who were responsible for engaging families and students in ways that promoted their learning and growth. The schools and community-based organizations were chosen for their proximity to a high-poverty area.

Limitations

Limitations consist of the potential unpredicted problems that may arise in the study that are out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). In this qualitative study, I aimed to explore how school and community leaders collaborate to build trusting connections to meet the needs of children and families living in high-poverty neighborhoods. The possible school bureaucratic policies of sharing information were potential limitations of the study. With the focus on the school leaders' personal leadership experiences and the fact that the study did not serve to slander or defame the school in any nature, no school bans were applied. Participants were interviewed individually. School district rules and bans on interviewing schools posed no restrictions

relevant to this qualitative study's nature. The community leaders identified that school leaders did not have a conflict of interest in referring a school leader partner. Qualitative interview studies are not always the most reliable as each narrative and explanation is subjected to the participant. Finally, using the interview method amid the COVID-19 pandemic meant that interviews were not in person but were done electronically.

Significance

Effective school-community partnerships provide long-term opportunities for the transformation of urban and rural communities. This study's significance is that it advances knowledge in school education reform from a community leaders' narrative. School systems in concentrated poverty communities have students and families with various concerns and challenges, and these school systems cannot meet the high demand alone. With more effective school and community partnerships, resources, and sustained funding, children and families have greater opportunities to thrive. This study can impact public education programs on grassroots leadership in education and advocates for policymakers to help make more community-based organizations available in high-poverty neighborhoods. Exploring the leadership roles and the impact of school-community partnerships suggests that urban school reform improves student learning and development. Using a basic qualitative study with interviews as the primary method, community leaders shared their school-community collaboration experiences to describe trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas. Data collection includes translations of stories shared by community and school leaders. This research study provides knowledge on the roles and impact of community and

school leaders of school-community partnerships as other studies have limited the perspective to solely focus on the school leader (see Smith et al., 2019).

Partnering can be challenging for both schools and external partners. For this reason, four community leaders and four school leaders described their stories to share their experiences, best practices, and even challenges when collaborating. The success of partnerships is based upon the leadership to develop active family and community engagement, which, according to Suh (2018), strong community leadership has been proven as the best practice of school-community partnerships toward student achievement. This study can also benefit school leaders in their search for effective community partnerships. Also, nonprofit and community-based organizations can gain knowledge of various strategies and practices to establish school partnerships. Low-income schools need college and university partners to help students who may not otherwise have access to postsecondary options (Duncheon & Relles, 2019). Successful school-community partnerships can improve teaching methods and narrow the gap between affluent and at-risk students (Suh, 2018). Research findings from the Epstein (2019) model on school, family, and community collaborations suggested that college officials strongly agree on the importance of teachers understanding effective practices of family and community engagement. Studies have revealed that courses on partnerships using videos and interviews increased future teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward parents and community members as partners in students' education (Epstein, 2019).

Summary

Former research studies have restricted the viewpoint of community leaders but have offered a lot of knowledge on the role of school leaders in establishing relationships with the community (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Green, 2017). School-community partnerships have the potential to strengthen, assist, and even transform individual partners, resulting in higher program quality, more efficient resource usage, and better alignment of goals and curricula (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). Research of these partnerships provides much information on the school leaders' role to establish connections with the community, yet the former research studies limited the community leader perspective. Community leaders may lack the same respect that school leaders receive. For this reason, this study focused on the experiences of community and school leaders who collaborate in schools located in concentrated poverty neighborhoods. The following chapters unfold the literature and history of collaborations between schools and communities and the methodology used to perform this review.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Collaborations between schools and communities have become an integral component of urban school system education reform projects. In 2018, Suh noted that schools and community-based organizations are collaborating like never before; nonetheless, questions remain about how school and community leaders engage in such collaborations (Zuckerman, 2020). Partnerships between families, schools, communities, and outside providers are critical in ensuring the success of all children, according to growing literature from national groups such as the National Network of Partnership Schools (as cited in Griffiths et al., 2021). However, there are gaps in the literature about studies on school-community collaboration that do not identify community leaders' leadership styles and experiences but instead focus entirely on the school leaders' positions and responsibilities (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

The issue is that little is understood about how leaders in schools and community-based organizations cultivate trustworthy connections and equitable leadership in order to maintain effective collaboration in low-income regions. For this reason, the purpose of this basic qualitative interview study was to discover the dual leadership roles that are inclusive of the school and community leaders' collective voice for building trustworthy relationships and equitable leadership to serve families and children from communities with high poverty concentration. Adding to the research, the community leaders' point of view allows for a more holistic picture of building trusting relationships in full scope of school-community partnerships for education reform in urban school systems.

In this chapter, I provide the literature search strategy and key related variables. I discuss the conceptual framework with a focus on three main concepts: Shields's (2020) transformative leadership, Valli et al.'s (2013) family and interagency collaborative model, and *Ubuntu* philosophy, along with an analysis of the challenges of community and school leaders when partnering with urban schools. Lastly, this chapter includes an extensive review of the current literature on the strengths and weaknesses in school-community partnership approaches from community leaders' perspectives.

Literature Review Saturation

The electronic education databases examined include literature retrieved from Walden Library ERIC, EBSCOhost, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar. This study applied descriptors for the knowledge and history of school-community partnerships using such keywords as *school-community partnerships, school-community relationships, community-based organizations, community leaders, nonprofit leaders, civic leaders, urban education, turnaround schools*, and *elementary schools*. Most of the literature was dated between 2016 and 2021. However, literature outside of this publication time frame was included to provide contextual background to the current literature and to support framework development.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework includes elements of Shields's (2020) transformative leadership, Valli et al.'s (2013) family and interagency collaboration model, and the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Transformative leadership criticizes inequitable behaviors and promises not only higher individual performance but also a better life shared with others

(Shields, 2020). The family interagency model proposes better coordinating education, social, and health services by offering them at the school site (Valli et al., 2013). The *Ubuntu* philosophy encourages bonding together with shared vision and goals to address the overall needs of the community, inclusive of schools, families, and children. The premise of this basic qualitative study was to gain greater knowledge and understanding of the experiences of community and school leaders in building trusting relationships when collaborating with schools located in concentrated poverty communities. Schools located in concentrated poverty areas undergo diverse challenges, usually lacking the social connections, health, and additional educational opportunities present in schools located in more affluent or less impoverished neighborhoods.

Transformative Leadership Theory

The ideas formalized for this study include Shields's (2020) transformative leadership. The transformative leadership theory hypothesis is the fundamental method that highlights the importance of organizational and societal change in improving people's and communities' lives (Shields, 2020). School-community collaborations with a transformative focus have an impact on education from community leaders to administrative levels from the school district and even the state level. To be clear, transformative leadership is not synonymous with transactional leadership, which focuses on the interactions between leaders and their followers. Transformative leaders, on the other hand, engage others in a relational way, building connections that motivate both the leaders and the followers.

The transformative leadership theory recognizes that traditional reform attempts have not been successful in alleviating the ongoing inequities, injustices, and disparities evident in educational and other sectors of social life. In comparison, school districts in the United States and around the world use standardized exams to highlight the substandard education provided in regions with high poverty rates; the majority of this population is made up of Black and Hispanic pupils and families.

The transformative leadership theory originated from James Burns in 1978 where he coined leadership terms transactional and transformational leader (Shields, 2020). While transactional leaders exchange desirable services, in 1978, Burns intentionally declared a theory of action that engages leadership to actively transform an entire social system. Community leaders, grassroots leaders, and school leaders who seek change in the community by ensuring every child receives a quality education engage school leaders with a purpose to respond to the human need of that community. Researchers have also described transformative leadership as fostering capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals (Shields, 2010).

In this study, I embraced the community and school leaders' experiences and behaviors and their commitment to the organizational goals in alignment with the school partnership. These concepts, in the mind of transformative leadership theory, leave one to question whom the community and school leader transforms: the school, the students, or the community. This study allowed me to receive a better understanding of these leaders' experiences and how they define their leadership roles in transforming education in their field.

Family and Interagency Collaboration Model

The family and interagency collaboration model (Valli et al., 2013) theory of action encompasses the notion that students' educational opportunities will improve when community and family become more involved. Epstein (2019) defined school, family, and community partnerships as a shared responsibility among parents, educators, and others in the community for students' learning and development. Community involvement in schools is a critical component of student achievement (Gross et al., 2015). Schools partnering with community-based organizations increase student test scores, increase student attendance, and provide connections for students to learning opportunities outside of school. This paradigm for family and interagency collaboration is based on educational theories such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the zone of proximal development (Eun, 2017), and Bronfenbrenner and Comer emphasized the various and interconnected elements of human development (as cited in Valli et al., 2013). Leaders of school-community collaborations must also comprehend the community and social constructions that obstruct children's education. Schools that operate in silos, ignoring or dismissing the crucial necessity of their community partners, create a gap in the statistics for student progress. The transformative leadership theory engages leadership to transform communities, which under the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is the humanistic bonding coming together to recognize one another, much like the family interagency model uses community involvement to improve student achievement.

Ubuntu Philosophy

Ubuntu, an ancient African term meaning humanity, is the philosophy that embraces the belief that humans cannot live without each other and that humans are dependent upon connection, community, and caring for one another. The concept of *Ubuntu* is expressed as, "I am because we are, therefore, I am" (Ngomane, 2020). The philosophy evolved to address tensions caused by a divided economic, political, and cultural instability system, and it was adopted from South African apartheid (Ngomane, 2020). The premise of the *Ubuntu* philosophy rests on the core belief that education is the fundamental right of all children around the world, encompassing inclusivity and equality (Biraimah, 2016). *Ubuntu*-oriented education is a revolutionary approach to restore students' humanity in the practice of education and the act of incorporating culturally responsive and caring classrooms (Biraimah, 2016; Ukpokodu, 2016). Ukpokodu (2016) defined the process and educative practice of *Ubuntu* as relationship, community, curriculum, and instruction. Complementary to the *Ubuntu* philosophy is the ethics of *Ubuntu* pedagogy, including the ethic of humanism and *Ubuntu* competence, the ethic of relationship and learning community, the ethic of humanism in the curriculum, the ethic of pedagogical and instructional excellence, and the ethic of community collaboration and partnership. The ethical premise for this study focuses on the ethic of community collaboration and partnership and the ethic of relationship and learning community in reference to the RQs that ask community and school leaders to describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty

areas to share leadership. Figure 1 showed the conceptual framework with overlapping spheres of the interconnectivity of school-family-community leadership.

There is also a gap in the literature about the leadership required to make these school-community partnerships work. Researchers have highlighted that school leaders should seek greater support from their community partners who could provide school leaders with advice and professional development training on how to engage with families from disadvantaged communities (Böse & Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz, 2021). However, researchers have yet to completely disclose the community and school leaders' leadership styles, as well as how both leaders collaborate to properly connect school challenges with community resources. Community leaders have become advocacy coalitions or joined forces with philanthropists in a significant role as education reform agents lobbying against policymakers (Lenhoff et al., 2019). The function of school-community collaborations has not been shown to provide the best results due to the quality of leadership, according to Lenhoff et al. (2019). As a result, the focus of this research adds the perspective of community leaders, studying their roles and best practices when engaging in a school-community partnership through the development of trusted relationships.

Literature Review

Youn et al. (2019) provided strong evidence that community-based partnerships are needed to address challenges when implementing evidence-based models of community collaborations in low-income neighborhoods. As research tends to focus on how school leaders incorporate community partnerships in their schools, I examined both

community and school leaders' experiences. Understanding community leaders' perspectives on their roles and responsibilities when engaging school partnerships in concentrated poverty areas enhances the research with a broader scope of school-community partnerships as an education reform strategy.

Poverty Schools

Historically, the U.S. Department of Education developed school turnaround models to encourage states and districts to enact a school-improvement model as a strategy to improve the achievement gap in poor neighborhoods (Clifford, 2013). Using the Epstein (2019) school, family, and community partnership articles as the foundation for this study, evidence of true school-community collaboration impacted students and families from high-poverty neighborhoods. Urban education and urban reform occur when family and community members become active in students' lives (Valli et al., 2018). The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act was the result of years prior to monitor and document adequate academic annual performance (Anderson, 2016). Anderson explained how advocates insisted that without the sustained involvement of families and community social service agencies, schools would be unable to overcome the negative effects of poverty. School leaders were motivated to connect with external human service agencies like community-based organizations to address the impossible circumstances of poverty suffered by the students served.

The Institute for Educational Leadership declared that schools and communities work together in a collaborative and comprehensive approach as schools alone cannot close the achievement gap (as cited in Jacobson et al., 2016). Spring (2011) explained in

the Politics of American Education how historical organizations with social power in the late 19th and 20th centuries used their funding to impact social conditions such as poverty through social change efforts by giving directly to the cause of the issue rather than directly to the person. Spring also categorized education foundations as shadow think tanks for educational policymakers. These economic and social changes, associated with poverty, led politicians to study OST support for children who live in poverty. Monarrez (2018) proposed that schools in urban communities that are racially segregated are deprived of opportunities to achieve education equality and that neighborhood factors impact the in-school experiences of children who attend urban schools. Green further explained that the connection between urban school reforms to equitable community development efforts is more sustainable.

Low school enrollment, chronic absenteeism, and poor test scores have raised accountability measures among local, state, and federal governments, making school reform efforts critical in many legislative agendas (Thompson & Jocius, 2017). With concerted effort, former presidents released federal education reform acts with collaborative efforts such as No Child Left Behind and School Improvement Grants such as the 21st CCLC (McCullick & Tomporowski, 2018). This reform required schools to increase parental involvement and collaborate with community-based organizations to address the vast need to turn around these urban schools, including health, OST programs, and academic and behavior improvement (Peck & Reitzug, 2017). More recently, the ESSA introduced requirements for more stakeholder engagement among states, districts, and schools (Wood & Bauman, 2017).

Fifty-six percent of children fail to attend an after-school program due to a lack of availability in urban neighborhoods (Afterschool Alliance, 2016). School-community partnerships, such as after-school programs and school reform initiatives, have evidence of successful practices resulting in academic improvement for low-income families and high-needs communities (Gross et al., 2015). For example, Smith et al. (2019) explored a district-community partnership, including seven nonprofit community organizations serving five elementary schools in an urban neighborhood, which provided insight into how a collective impact improved student literacy. Moreover, Groundwork Ohio (2018) advocates for children in Ohio to receive quality early education to ensure kindergarten readiness that leads to successful postsecondary options. This advocacy group has found success collaborating with community-based organizations to educate key decision-makers on the importance of early learning as the most transformative strategy for increasing school improvement. In addition, Casto et al. (2016) revealed the success of a school-community partnership relates to the increasing vitality of a community, implying that thriving communities have more substantial community support than developing and high-risk neighborhoods.

Roles and Experiences of School-Community Partnerships

Through school-community partnerships, federal and national policies and initiatives have become popular, such as Promise Neighborhoods and the National Network of Partnership Schools' model framework. These models apply a shared influence and responsibility among schools and communities so that everyone receives support and, most importantly, a sustainable structure for student success. Schools have

become plagued with the perils of U.S. cities infused with trauma, poverty, violence, and health issues, in addition to social-emotional challenges (Rawles, 2010). The efforts of educational leaders to influence their institutions only provide a temporary solution to the problems. Students bring their communities to schools on a regular basis; thus, school-community collaborations help the student while also leveraging the obligation to raise the complete child. The researchers of school-community partnerships have focused on educational leadership in school-community collaborations (Green, 2015). However, the research has limitations in that it solely represents the perspectives of school and district administrators. The highlighted gap in the literature addressed community leaders' perspectives on collaborating with schools and the impact on the community.

Green (2017) examined the relationship between principal leadership at an urban high school and improving community conditions to reform schools. Urban schools have low student achievement and lack resources and learning conditions in the community impact children's learning capacity. Green elaborated on the importance that the school-community relationship includes partnerships through businesses, universities, service-learning partnerships, outreach from the school to the community, and full-service community schools (p. 113). For this study, Green defines community development as involving structural changes in the community, the use of resources, the functioning institutions, and the distribution of resources. Primarily, community social change issues focus on improving economic, social, and housing programs intended to support the community's rebuilding.

Moreover, the link that serves between school and community is the principal. Principals intentionally engage in community partnerships by building community alliances to improve local neighborhood conditions; however, Green (2017) advocates that the community leader has influential power just as much as principals and teachers (p. 8). The author used social capital theory to understand how principals supported urban school reform linked to community improvement. Green collected data, interviews, and field notes for the study.

Green (2017) found that principal leadership skills led to school and community impact on student achievement. As such, the principals in Green's study positioned the school as a social broker in the community, linked school culture to community revitalization projects, and connected instruction to community realities. These findings suggest that urban school leaders should possess transformative leadership skills to create strong community partnerships. With the many challenges present among urban school leaders, this study lends to the research the principal leadership qualities required to impact a school not solely in the classroom but also in connecting the classroom to the community. Connecting the community to the classrooms can serve as a vehicle to offer students and families more opportunities due to the inequities in resources and quality educational attainment in these dire communities. However, Green's study limits to only one principal's view on school-community partnership. Further studies are needed to address the leadership from the community in addition to the school leader.

My research contributes to the body of knowledge on urban educational leadership. My research also assists current administrators and aspiring leaders in

building relationships with their school community to integrate school and community cultures in order to reach children. More information is required to address the existing constraints and how community-based organizations can be integrated into the educational framework.

Gross et al. (2015) communicated the importance and effectiveness of strong school-community partnerships in successful schools. School-community partnerships provide support and resources to meet staff, family, and student needs beyond what is typically available through the school. Gross et al. recommended that school-community partnerships must be reciprocal, allowing both entities to benefit from the relationship. Serving one another benefits school-community partners by strengthening, supporting, and even transforming individual partners, resulting in overall enhanced quality programming, more efficient use of resources, and greater alignment of goals and curricula. By school and community leaders collaborating their efforts, they remove education barriers more swiftly, allowing them to achieve optimal levels. This article identifies various community partnerships that schools could host to improve the social-emotional needs of students. The findings include literature supporting school-community partnerships to build strong school leadership, inviting school culture, educator commitment to student success, and collaborating and communicating with community partners. Also, Gross et al. (2015) emphasized how ensuring that all students receive an excellent education changed the perceptions others had about disability and how they used their resources to support all learners equally.

Gross et al. (2015) analyzes successful school-community partnerships using Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT). Six schools were nominated to review their application of SWIFT evidence-based practices. The study asks what kinds of community partnerships successful schools develop and what factors support strong community partnerships in these schools. The SWIFT framework of five domains: (a) administrative leadership, (b) multi-tiered system of support, (c) integrated educational framework, (d) family and community engagement, and (e) inclusive policy structure and practice. Gross et al. (2015) conducted focus groups among the six schools to analyze the types of community partnerships fostered. The article reports schools partnering with universities and colleges, social service programs, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and local municipality agencies such as firemen and police officers, aid in the support to ensure student success.

The benefits of this study may promote strong school leadership principles through community collaboration. Often, the principal's role is deemed as superior in school-community collaborations as a successful model. The principal must have a vision that embraces all students, including those who have disabilities. The principal must have the capacity to motivate others and establish friendly and trusting relationships among community partners (Gross et al., 2015, p. 23). Additional research could elaborate on how the school-community partnerships have an overarching impact on community and school enhancement. More studies could also provide teacher interviews to learn their perceptions and commitment to partner with the community.

Krumm and Curry (2017) conducted a qualitative case study to focus on the school administrators' role that initiated and sustained successful partnerships. The study proved relevance to the schools seeking professional development for administrators to improve and sustain their community relationships. Unlike the other studies, Krumm and Curry (2017) discussed cross-collaborative leadership with shared goals and responsibilities. The responsibilities of this massive education reform are leveraged by a school-community network and not a single administrator. The authors define the practice of leveraging a shared network as a shared influence which creates a culture of shared decision making, listening to others' ideas, and supporting open dialogue during team meetings. Shared influence affords all stakeholders to contribute, including parents and students. Even students take responsibility for their role in their education. Communicating shared goals and visions of the school-community partnerships is crucial and essential for sustainability (p. 115).

Krumm and Curry (2017) endorse diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources available in their school communities. The authors defended shared partnerships as a way to value the assistance of the community. However, there is a gap in research on how the community, residents, and non-partnering organizations perceive or affect such shared partnerships. Shared influences among school and community leaders have proven positive results, but there is no mention if the challenging communities are better off after this shared responsibility of student achievement.

Krumm and Curry's analysis served as a resource to school districts and community leaders for improving and sustaining successful schools. Community leaders

seeking new opportunities to impact their community can apply this study when initiating partnerships. School leaders and teachers receive various offers of support for students, which become burdensome to manage. However, crossing boundaries to establish shared responsibilities and influence envelops a community-wide impact of change.

Gap in Research on Community Leaders' Perspective

Research on the growing topic of school-community partnering and external collaborations highlights the fact that community-based organizations and businesses are vital to the success of public school reform. The research also makes known the studies' limitations which reflect a lack of the leadership perspective of involvement from the community organization leader. This section identifies various studies that mention the absence or need for the community leader's scope to better understand the holistic approach of the school-community partnership model.

Schools team with external community partners to raise funds, assess the school's performance, provide professional development, and increase student services. When schools face multifaceted challenges experienced by their students and parents, policymakers and researchers believe these factors overwhelm schools requiring much-needed support from their community stakeholders (Suh, 2018). Like foundations and other corporate partnerships, external partners provide abundant opportunities for both the organization and school. Suh (2018) warns that these partnerships require several careful steps, with communication as the most crucial step for success. Suh noted that one of the significant challenges of partnering includes making time to reflect and learn when evaluating partnerships. Too often, the community partner's voice is left unheard, while

schools solely focus on meeting the needs of the school and sharing the achieved goals with the external partner.

In another study of stakeholders in community schools, Scanlan and Park (2020) discussed the Gardner Academy narrative. Researchers examined the transformation of the Gardner Academy from a traditional public school to a community school of practice. They employed sociocultural learning theory as the conceptual framework for establishing their community of practice, which includes people who are mutually engaged in defining visions and goals for the school. The study examined how educators learned to establish, grow, and sustain Gardner as a community school using a case study method. Researchers interviewed 11 educational leaders from Gardner and over two years observed how they fostered authentic partnerships among community organizations leaders, such as expanding the after-school program and meeting the students' complex needs. The method applied allowed community-based organizations to share in the decision making and even shared staff. For example, the YMCA and Boston College faculty lent Gardner Academy staff members for its school. Although researchers found great success with the community of practice model for the Gardner Academy, unfortunately, the research lacks the comprehensive perspectives of interviews from the YMCA director, teachers, parents and community stakeholders. On the contrary, this study suggests that educational leaders seeking school transformation must analyze how the adults within the school learn how to transform their institution.

Further suggestions from other researchers like Anderson (2016) advised future researchers to beware of the various challenges that confront school-community

collaborations. Anderson cited issues, including schools' resistance toward outsiders, difficulties maintaining effective communication with and among stakeholders, particularly in the most impoverished schools, outcome variables related to program goals, and studying interagency collaborations. Reasons mentioned for difficulties interviewing community stakeholders are due to the evolutionary process of changes such as a newly hired school superintendent, numerous stakeholders' leadership changes, and the constant change of leadership locally and nationally. Any changes within these sectors could delay or end the collaboration with budget cuts or altering the direction of the school district or community organization (Anderson, 2016, p. 17).

Summary and Conclusions

Communities suffering from poverty have been the least successful at school-community engagement due to a lack of leadership to develop active family and community partnerships (Peck & Reitzug, 2017). Meeting the high demands of students living in poverty requires a multidisciplinary approach to education, and the education system cannot do it alone. Community-based organizations that partner with schools provide support and additional resources for a holistic approach to education (Casto et al., 2016). The literature on school-community partnerships has presented a one-sided leadership view omitting the instances of successful models when school and community leaders work together from a trusted relationship. Further research warrants the community's perspective rather than solely the perspective of school leaders in order to better understand school-community partnerships.

In the following chapter, I focused on the core qualitative data methodologies used for this study which includes interviews with school and community leaders involved in school-community collaborations. The description of the applied methodology consists of the research design, the researcher's role, the selection process, data collection and analysis plan; issues of trustworthiness and ethics are included.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative interview study was to discover how leaders in schools and community-based organizations build trustworthy relationships and share leadership to serve families and children from communities with high-poverty concentration. In this study, I observed the experiences and behaviors of school and community leaders when they collaborated in high-poverty areas. Although the scope of the literature review reflected school leaders as the primary leaders and initiators of school-community partnerships, I explored the experiences of both school and community leaders using interviews. To address the gap in the school-community partnership literature from the community leader perspective, I used the storytelling method to allow directors of community-based organizations and school leaders to share an in-depth narrative of how they partner with schools to impact the education of students in concentrated poverty communities. Through this qualitative method, community leaders were able to narrate their stories, elaborating on their experiences in allowing their voices to become counternarratives added to the research as educational and community leaders advocating for viable school-community partnerships (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015).

In this chapter, I provide detailed information on the research method and the rationale for using the basic qualitative study method. The first section includes the research design, the role of the researcher, and methodology. I conclude this chapter with the procedures for recruitment, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The main topic of this basic qualitative study is the relationship established between school-community partnership leaders and how they share leadership roles. Previously, researchers focused primarily on the school leaders' experiences in school-community partnerships, overlooking the leadership roles within the community-based organizations. The study centered on three questions:

RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership?

RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

In my qualitative study, leaders of community-based organizations and schools described their experiences in their leadership roles and the services rendered to schools or within the community for youth and families, while elaborating on how to develop

trusting relationships to lead effectively and accomplish their shared goals and objectives. I gained interest in this study after extensive literature review and knowledge of the current challenges among school-community partnerships in poverty-concentrated neighborhoods. The popularity and demand for school-community partnerships have increased among schools located in dense populations of high-poverty communities (Kremer et al., 2015). However, the rise in school-community partnerships has not yielded successful results for high-poverty schools; researchers have concluded that deficits in leadership lead to incomplete connections with families and communities (Peck & Reitzug, 2017). On the contrary, community leaders have practiced community organizing as a grassroots leadership, a bottom-up approach, to involve parents, forsaking waiting for school leaders to initiate contact in order to hold educators accountable for improving education in their communities (Sheldon, Turnver-Vorbeck, & Olivos, 2019).

Patton and Patton (2015) defined basic qualitative research as the study of revealing experiences or a process. To investigate the school-community collaboration relationship, I used the basic qualitative technique, allowing school and community leaders to describe their experiences. Individual interviews were held with school and community leaders to discuss their perspectives. Responses from their interviews and dialogue allowed me to discover any social patterns based on the information provided by the participants.

Other research used for similar studies in school-community partnerships applied different methods and rationales for understanding the relationship phenomenon between school and community leaders (see Krumm & Curry, 2017; Peck & Reitzug, 2017).

Researchers often use case studies to understand the leadership roles of school leaders when partnering with families and communities. Case studies define a bounded time and place (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Community and school leaders' experiences lack a specific moment in time, but rather continual practices with schools and school administration. Ethnography emphasizes in-person field observations focusing on institutions and society in a broader capacity associated with cultural, social, economic, and political assumptions. Similar to narrative research, phenomenological studies focus on a group of individuals' lived experiences of a phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

In my role as the researcher, I interviewed four community leaders and four school leaders who partnered with schools in concentrated poverty neighborhoods. Community and school leaders for this study included executive directors, school principals, program managers, and program coordinators. I scheduled interviews with the community and school leaders to design an interview plan for the best times to talk about their leadership roles and experiences working with schools with a high poverty rate. The interviews were conducted with four individual school leaders and four community leaders to learn their partnering roles, relationships, responsibilities, experiences, and effects on program participants. The hope was to identify a pattern scheme to determine the best practices or challenges and solutions when partnering with schools in concentrated poverty. The interview questions were designed to address the experiences of community and school leaders, establishing a trusting relationship when working with schools in concentrated poverty. The questions were open ended, allowing me to code

patterns of their successes and challenges and to identify best practices of effective leadership in school-community partnerships.

As someone with more than 20 years of experience working in the community, I was familiar with the community-based organizations and schools; however, I was unfamiliar with the leaders. My connection to these organizations and schools was only based on my knowledge of the missions and services they provide.

My initial meetings and schedule were to build trust to ensure participants' comfort with me as the interviewer. Researcher bias management consisted of using open-ended questions, allowing program leaders to review their interview notes and interpretations.

The Interview Process

Due to the current context of a global coronavirus pandemic, in-person meetings were waived in favor of virtual meetings. As a result, the interview process was done virtually using WebEx. Individual interviews were conducted on different days, with additional days scheduled for follow-up questions and feedback.

Transcribing Interviews

With the permission of the participants, interviews were audio recorded. I transcribed all the dialog from the recordings to develop a coding scheme aligned with the RQs about leadership and activities offered and received. School leaders and organization leaders elaborated on the value of the services they administer or receive.

Methodology

A basic qualitative method was employed for this research. The basic qualitative research focuses on how the experience of a circumstance, a program, or context is described or explored. Researchers using basic qualitative research also explore the meaning of process, program, or event to target the individual interest (Saldaña, 2015; Worthington, 2013). While quantitative research analyzes the relationship between variables through numerical data, qualitative research is the understanding of human behavior from the participant's perspective. Accordingly, the qualitative method was applied to describe community leaders' experiences and leadership participation when partnering with schools located in concentrated poverty communities. School-community partnership research generally focuses on the school leader's role in the collaboration.

In preparation for this study's interview process, I used a semistructured interview (see Lloyd-Walker et al., 2016) with constructed questions aligned to the RQs allowing probing opportunities when necessary. Interview queries include the following:

- Describe how the school-community partnership was established.
- List some character traits about the school/community leader that you enjoy in this relationship.
- Define how you measure the success of a school-community partnership.

Creating open-ended questions and space for leaders to share their partnership experiences allows prompting for more items to investigate the unique qualities they bring to the collaboration (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Discussions about school leadership and school-community collaborations may result in further professional development

training for both school and community leaders. Examining the interviews with community-based organizations and school leaders can provide them an opportunity to express their needs and any modifications that are required to improve the best practices of school-community partnerships.

My aim was to explore the relationship experiences and meaning of the program structure from literature highlighting definitions and suggested responsibilities of leaders of school-community partnerships. The goal of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community-based organization stems from its history and track record of working in neighborhoods where poverty substantially impacts school progress. Interviews with the leaders of these organizations provide insight into how to develop partnerships with schools by providing the most significant activities and programs for schools and how the leaders manage them. Furthermore, I investigated the actions of community leaders to concretely analyze the theoretical idea of reforming education for children of color in low-income communities and what leadership characteristics exist among school and community leaders. The outcomes focused on three elements from the perspective of the organization's leaders:

1. The purpose of partnering with a school in a high-poverty area.
2. How the school and community leaders build trusting relationships.
3. How equal leadership and shared goals influence school-community partnerships.

The community organization and school leaders were interviewed during the spring semester. The participants described the development of their relationship with the

partnering organization, their individual experiences working with them, and the outcomes of the collaboration. Researchers have recommended that while utilizing an inquiry approach to determine a theme, it is best practice to correctly organize the experiences in order to repeat the actual stories gathered by participants (Gilstein, 2020).

Participant Selection Logic

The criteria for participation in this basic qualitative study required community and school leaders who presently collaborated in an impoverished neighborhood in the northeast region. Ravitch and Carl (2015) suggested using snowball sampling to create a chain of interviewees to provide good sources on the area of focus. I used snowball sampling by starting interviews with relevant community leaders and asking them to refer relevant school leaders. Two of the recommended school leaders were unavailable; therefore, I used purposeful sampling to select two other school leaders. There were four leaders from different community-based organizations. Executive leadership and any staff they deemed necessary had to be willing to engage with the school in order to participate. Four community leaders and four school leaders from organizations or schools serving a high-poverty community were chosen. Community and school leaders shared their perspectives on their roles as leaders.

Instrumentation

I used a basic qualitative inquiry method to apply a semistructured interview (see Lloyd-Walker et al., 2016) with constructed questions aligned to the RQs, allowing probing opportunities when necessary. For my study on school and community leaders' perceptions about collaborating in concentrated poverty communities, I conducted a

practice interview with a family member and a friend, who both serve as a leader in a school or community-based organization. Both interviews were conducted via virtual platform on Webex. Interview questions inquired about the partnering activities that exist between the community organization and school and the role the community leader plays in the community and school to impact student achievement. Creating open-ended questions and space for leaders to share their partnership experiences allowed for more in-depth questions for investigation, identifying the unique qualities they bring to the collaboration. I used Microsoft Excel to create a coding scheme for the study. I highlighted common trends or traits from participants.

Researcher-Developed Instruments

The interview protocols consisted of various queries allowing participants to describe their lived experiences when working with schools in concentrated poverty areas. These questions aligned with the RQs to understand best practices of partnering with schools, personal background experiences of their leadership, and actions that support and uplift student achievement. For validity purposes, all agency personnel had the same questions. Interview queries for all affiliated school leaders also centered around identifying best practices, the leadership qualities they admire of the community leaders, and the community organization's actions that support student achievement.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, Data Collection and Analysis

The community leaders received a request to participate in interviews to learn more about their partnering roles with school leaders situated in concentrated poverty. The community leaders were gatekeepers of their organizations, serving as the

intermediary between me and the participants (themselves or others they permit to participate). The gatekeeper—the community organization leader—has the right to share or refrain from documents used for this study. I uploaded all data into a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet. Community leaders that were selected had a standing history with the organization and the knowledge to share their experiences over an extended period.

Participants signed the interview document consenting to participate and to allow opportunities to return for follow-up interviews for clarification or to add to the study. Upon completing the interviewing process, I repeated the purpose of the research study and discussed how their answers would be applied. Because there was a national pandemic with restricted interactions of social distancing, participants were interviewed using a virtual platform that allows recording, video, and voice capabilities.

Interviews commenced once all participants signed consent forms allowing me to interview them for the study. To protect personal information obtained during interviews, all data were stored on a password-protected computer. Participants' privacy was protected during the data collection procedure.

Data Analysis Plan

Rubin and Rubin (2012) defined coding as finding and labeling the concepts, themes, events, and examples in transcripts that speak to the RQs. My initial meetings and schedule fostered trust, allowing participants to feel at ease with me as the interviewer. Open-ended questions were asked to manage researcher bias and allow program leaders to review their interview comments.

The interview queries, found in the appendix, aligned to the RQs by inquiring how community and school leaders established trusting and equal leadership roles when working in poverty-stricken communities. The inquiries posed delved into leadership delegation and responsibilities, established relationships between the school and community-based organization, and identified best practices that have proven impact on their students and families.

To uncover best-practice themes, I asked leaders to highlight the differences and similarities in their leadership styles compared to the leadership styles of the collaborating school or community-based organization. Furthermore, the interview questions focused on the qualities of school and community leaders and determine who these leaders were in the school and community-based organizations. The interview coding tracked the *Ubuntu* philosophy of practicing humanism to achieve an ultimate aim shared by the school and community leaders.

I used an Excel spreadsheet to record and hand code the transcription process. The interviews were transcribed by taking notes during the interviews and by listening to the recordings ensuring word-for-word information. I used coding with both human and computer processing to capture the full essence of the interviews. There were many nuances to code from the interviews, such as common phrases, quotes, people, places, and things (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In Excel, the Find function was useful in locating key words and phrases. Coding software can identify patterns with the press of a button.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Connelly (2016) defined a study's trustworthiness as the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality. I followed the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

As a researcher, I established credibility by introducing myself, explaining my background and experiences, and ensuring that participants understood the scope of the study before conducting interviews. I asked the participants about their experiences as leaders in school-community collaborations using the interview questions in Appendix C. I also gave close attention to the participants and used a recorder to capture the details that helped me detect any trends or themes and monitor relevant information given. Participants were able to review the transcripts to ensure that their interview comments, thoughts, and expressions were appropriately stated. Participants also reviewed my initial interpretations for member checking. I kept a separate journal for my personal notes in which I recorded my personal thoughts, questions, and concerns that required further explanation or reframing for a better description. The data gathering procedure was discussed in-depth to allow the reader to see this study through a clear lens.

Dependability

Data dependability relates to data consistency (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The study's reliability was increased by using the same interview questions to maintain the study's focus and purpose. Peer debriefing and member checking aided in the reduction of prejudice. The audit trail included thorough notes of all study activities, such as

decision making, modifications to the schedule or questions, and who was interviewed when and on what day. I reviewed the recorded interviews and analyzed the data using a computer-assisted program. In the event of an audit trail, data analysis is available for examination.

Confirmability

Confirmability determines the consistency and repeatability of the study (Connelly, 2016). Though the interview questions were semistructured, the collected data and procedures followed were very structured. Interview questions aligned to gain knowledge of the leadership roles of community and school leaders. The scheduled interviews allowed for appropriate pacing so participants could answer more efficiently. Participants were offered follow-up interviews for deeper dialog or to clarify their statements.

Transferability

The application of transferability was applied through the descriptive analysis of each interview. The conversations from the interviews were as descriptive as possible for others to follow. Triangulation was addressed by interviewing organization and school personnel who have differing lenses.

Ethical Procedures

Human participants are influenced by ethical principles, federal rules, local laws, institutional policies and procedures, and the knowledge and integrity of researchers and research staff (Slutsman & Nieman, 2018, p. 47). The institutional review boards (IRBs) ensure that all subjects' rights and welfare are considered and managed effectively. The

IRB approval number for this study is 03-16-22-0474697. Participants completed consent forms and were encouraged to participate at the levels with which they were comfortable.

For this project, I kept all data gathered from participant interviews in a closed file cabinet and private locked computer files. All files will be stored for at least 5 years in case they need to be reviewed. Participation in this study was confidential. The data were collected using pseudonyms and saved separately; the data sets were given a new name.

Summary

For this study, I conducted an in-depth analysis of four leaders from nonprofit community-based organizations and four leaders from schools located in high-poverty communities using a basic qualitative inquiry approach. Qualitative inquiry allowed participants to share their perspectives on the inner workings and interactions of the community and school leaders in order to better understand best practices for positive school-community partnerships. The data collection tools helped provide answers to the research topic of how community and school leaders characterize their leadership responsibilities and experiences when working with schools in high-poverty communities.

Leaders of community-based organizations and schools described their leadership positions, services provided to schools or the community for adolescents and families, and other parameters agreed upon in a contract. As a result, the transformative leadership theory was applied to comprehend the behaviors connected with community leaders who collaborate with schools located in areas of concentrated poverty. Families and

communities impact students and schools; thus, the importance of this collaboration between schools and community-based organizations is critical to understanding how to improve urban education and turn around low-performing schools. Using *Ubuntu* as an educational strategy, community and school leaders must incorporate relationship, community, curriculum, and instruction into their school-community collaboration. My objective was to build an honest and trustworthy study that illustrates aspects of collaborative partnerships between schools and community leaders as they harness the power of shared goals and vision to create a community voice with the intent of impacting students and families in high-poverty communities. The purpose of this basic qualitative interview study was to learn the dual leadership responsibilities that come with building trusting relationships and sharing leadership among school and community leaders.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to understand the dual leadership roles that are inclusive of the school and community leaders' collective voice for building trustworthy relationships and equitable leadership within school-community partnerships to support families and children from communities with high poverty concentrations. I used purposeful and snowball sampling to recruit school and community leaders to participate in semistructured one-on-one interviews to explore three RQs:

RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership?

RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

Before agreeing to participate, interviewees were provided an email outlining the purpose of the study as well as an informed consent form to review. After participants submitted their "I consent" statements, I planned the virtual interviews using Webex. Each interview was videotaped, transcribed, and analyzed using Atlas.ti Scientific Software Development Gmbh (2022), a coding software that recognized codes and categories to group thematic concepts. In this chapter, I examined the gathered data,

which includes a description of the location, demographics, data gathering methodology, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results.

Setting of the Study

I conducted eight individual semistructured interviews from my home office using Webex video conferencing as the safest precaution during the COVID-19 pandemic. Four community leaders and four school leaders were chosen for this study using purposeful and snowball sampling. Each participant held a position of leadership in a school or community-based organization and had prior and current experience working with a school-community partnership in a concentrated poverty neighborhood. School leaders completed the interview during out of school time hours. Community leaders met with me during their break time, late afternoon, or the early evening part of their workday. All interviews were carried out as planned with no unforeseen circumstances influencing the participants' responses. The Webex interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, with participants' consent, using the Webex recording and transcribing system.

Demographics

Four community leaders and four school leaders took part in this study. Of the community leaders, there were two executive directors, a childcare administrator who was also a 21st CCLC coordinator, and one OST regional coordinator. Two principals, an assistant director, and a program coordinator served as school leaders. Participants shared their personal leadership experiences and expertise on how to establish equitable and trusting leadership roles and relationships when collaborating in a school-community partnership. To ensure confidentiality, demographic information such as participants'

identities, workplaces, and cities were described using pseudonyms. Table 1 outlines the demographics of the participants including the organization type, the median family income, persons living below poverty, children living below poverty, and predominant race to define communities of poverty.

Table 1

Research Participants and Community Demographics

Participants	Position and years of experience	Community median household income	Persons living below poverty	Children living below poverty (ages 0-17)	Majority race
CL1	Regional after-school program coordinator with over ten years of youth programming expertise	Under $15,000	Approx. 70%	Approx. 80% children	90% Black/Afr. Am
CL2	Childcare administrator and coordinator of 21st Century Community Learning, with over 5 years of experience in early childhood	Under $20,000	Approx. 50%	Approx. 70% children	90% Black/Afr. Am
CL3	After-school program executive director with over 15 years of experience	Under $25,000	Approx. 40%	Approx. 50% children	90% Black/Afr. Am
CL4	Executive director of a community center and after-school program with over ten years of experience and a background in youth mental health	Under $25,000	Approx.40%	Approx. 50% children	90% Black/Af. Am
SL1	Principal of a Pk-8 school with over 15 years of experience in school administration, including high school principal, and working in low-income school districts	Under $20,000	Approx. 50%	Approx. 70% children	90% Black/Afr. Am
SL2	Pk-8 school-family coordinator with over 6 years of experience and prior social work experience	Under $15,000	Approx. 70%	Approx. 80% children	90% Black/Afr. Am
SL3	Over 20 years of experience as an assistant director of a K-8 school, former teacher assistant, and former family childcare owner	Under $25,000	Approx. 50%	Approx. 60% children	75% Afr.Am
SL4	Principal with under 10 years of experience	Under $27,000	Approx. 30%	Approx. 50% children	95% Afr.Am

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected from eight participants—four community leaders and four school leaders from low-income regions. Concentrated poverty areas are characterized as census tracts with an overall poverty rate of 30% or more (see Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Concentrated poverty* n.d.). Each of the community leaders had over 10 years of experience working in nonprofit and community organizations. I emailed each participant an invitation to participate in the study including the Informed Consent Form, and they all confirmed their participation by replying to the email stating "I consent." The educational careers of the school leaders ranged from less than 10 years to more than 20 years. Each participant's interview was scheduled individually for 45 minutes to 1 hour. The school officials were interviewed outside of school hours, whereas the leaders of community-based organizations accepted my interview as a private meeting, or during a break in their day, or after work hours. Snowball and purposeful sampling were used to select participants, which began with community leaders who then referred partnering school leaders. Because two of the referenced school leaders were unavailable, I conducted purposeful sampling to select two other school leaders who served CBO programs in concentrated poverty communities. Each participant answered all interview queries.

WebEx was used to conduct, record, and transcribe virtual interviews. I reviewed the recording and transcription of each interview to make sure there were no inaccuracies. Participants were given a copy of the video recording as well as my transcription of their interview to validate the accuracy of their responses. None of the participants proposed

any changes or edits. The data collected were used to construct codes, categories, and themes. Participants received a personalized thank you note and a $25 gas gift card.

Data Analysis

Semistructured interviews were used to investigate the leadership perspectives of school and community leaders who participated in school-community partnerships in high-poverty communities. The same questions were asked of all four community leaders about their experiences as a community partner, and all four school leaders were asked the same questions to share their experiences as a school partner. Saturation was established by the third interview with both the community leaders and the school leaders.

I assigned each participant a pseudonym to protect their identity. For data analysis, I identified codes, categories, and themes by reading, rereading, and relistening to each participant's transcriptions and video recording. Using the coding software Atlas.ti, I applied open coding to identify similar key terms and quotes linked to the RQs and conceptual framework. I used the codes and categories to generate an Excel spreadsheet that corresponded to the three RQs. The main themes derived from the codes and categories are as follows: a) establishing strong school-community relationships; b) funding out-of-school time opportunities; c) system coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation; and d) partnership leadership styles. Samples of the themes, categories, and codes are represented in Table 2 pertaining to the first two RQs.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure the study's rigor and quality, as well as to provide proof of trustworthiness (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015), I made sure participants could affirm that their responses were true to their experiences. Researchers must comply with a set of qualitative study requirements that include credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. In the following sections, I described each of these principles through interviews with participants on their experiences as leaders.

Credibility

Credibility is best defined as the inseparability of methods and findings by using triangulation or member checking for validity purposes (Merriam, 2009; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). I used triangulation by applying multiple methods during my data collection, like using video recording and software transcription, and taking my own anecdotal notes during the interview process to make certain every detail was accurately represented. When reviewing the data, I also compared the video recording to the transcription and made the proper corrections to misinterpretations made by the software. For further credibility, I allowed the participants to review the video recording and transcriptions to solicit their feedback to affirm that I represented their experiences truthfully.

Transferability

Another type of trustworthiness evidence for this study was accomplished by providing sufficiently rich descriptions of the interviews and data collection process so that anyone interested would have a solid framework for comparison (see Creswell, 2009). I ensured transferability by outlining the data collection and analysis thoroughly

so that it could be easily transferred by future researchers. The findings and data analysis, as well as a full description of the study's environment and participants, were also described for easy representation.

Dependability

Dependability relates to the consistency and stability of the data across time (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). It was critical that I used the most appropriate data collection strategy that was consistent with the study's research topics. I demonstrated dependability by ensuring that each community leader and each school leader participated in interviews using identical interview questions. An audit trail, triangulation, and member checking were also used to maintain dependability.

Confirmability

Qualitative researchers assure consistency by evaluating their own biases while interpreting data, allowing interpretation to be subjective (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). I practiced confirmability during the interviews by maintaining a reflective journal and taking notes. I kept notes in my journal while examining the transcriptions and coding the data. After the interviews and transcriptions, I reviewed my notes to make relevant research linkages identified in the data.

Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative interview study was to discover the dual leadership roles that are inclusive of the school and community leaders' collective voice in schools and community-based organizations to create trusting relationships and share leadership to assist families and children from high-poverty communities. The data

coding was organized using the conceptual framework from this study, which included the transformative leadership theory, the family and interagency model, and the *Ubuntu* philosophy, which all summarize the essence of system coordination by connecting schools and communities to work together toward a common goal and vision. Community and school leaders of this study answered RQs to describe how they foster and share trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating in a high-poverty community, as well as to explain differences and similarities in their leadership. I combined RQs 1 and 2 to identify three themes and codes exhibited in Table 2. A fourth theme emerged from RQ3 as shown in Table 3. The themes identified were as follows:

RQ1 & RQ2: How do community and school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership?

- Theme 1: Establishing strong school-community relationships
- Theme 2: Funding out-of-school time opportunities
- Theme 3: System coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation

RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders, and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

- Theme 4: Partnership leadership styles

In the following sections, I discuss each theme with representative excerpts from the data collected from the eight participant interviews.

Theme 1: Establishing Strong School-Community Relationships

Establishing partnership was the topic of the first question participants answered during the interviews, and each participant described how the initial meeting occurred and with whom they met from the collaborating community-based organization or school. The data collected from this question revealed a common theme when establishing strong school-community relationships. Identifying the leaders who serve as gatekeepers to the schools and community organizations was important to the initial meeting when establishing partnership. This initial meeting was important in the discussion of leadership roles and responsibilities. The common response to the question of how the school and community partnership was established was that community leaders either sought partnerships with the schools, or the schools were aware of the community-based organizations' programming and requested the community-based organization to host a program at the school. Participants additionally shared that the most common contact persons named to initiate the discussion on partnering for the schools were the school principal, wraparound coordinator, dean of engagement, and assistant principal or assistant director. The contact persons named to initiate discussions at the community-based organizations were the program director or the chief executive officer. Table 2 references the talking codes, categories, and themes of the initial meeting and contact persons.

Table 2

Theme 1: Establishing Strong Partnerships - Categories, Codes, and Excerpts

Category	Code	Excerpt
Grant and after-school programs	School requested to have their after-school program	…the contact was made by West Community from their program director at the time and the program director made us aware that they were in the process of writing a grant to partner with an elementary school, particularly Haley School to provide after-school programming. (SL1)
	CBO leader offered grant opportunity to school	
	CBO offered grant opportunity for after-school and summer camp	It was actually established through our after-school program at first. (CL1)
	Relationship with school district and offering services	I researched the department of education, found the grant, and approached the superintendent of the school district for the program. Worked with the woman who was over federal programs and became a provider. (CL3)
Community and school positions	Program director	The contact was made by the community-based organization from their program director. (SL1)
	Youth director	
	Regional coordinator	Sometimes the organizations came and found us and asked what they can do for us because they wanted to offer help in the community, 'We want to know what we can do for you.'(SL2)
	Principal	
	Assistant director	
	Wraparound coordinator	
	Family support specialist	
	Curriculum instruction specialist	
	Dean of engagement	

Note. RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership? RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

Theme 2: Funding Out-of-School Time Opportunities

The original meeting discussion between the collaborating school and community-based organization also revealed a commonality that generated the second theme, funding out-of-school time opportunities. Community and school leaders revealed that community leaders reached out to schools while writing a grant or after receiving a grant to support after-school OST programming, such as the 21st CCLC grant, Supplemental Education Services (SES), or a regional community grant serving youth in an after-school program. One of the grant requirements was to produce a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to clarify each agency's obligations, the extent and authority of the program, and establish the project's goals and action plans.

According to community leaders, most grants include a standard MOU for both sides to review and sign. It was intriguing to see how the two agencies shared responsibilities and how much authority the schools provided to the community-based organizations. Once the provisions of the MOU were agreed upon between the school and the community leader, the schools provided the space for the children, and the community-based group staffed and organized the program. Community-based organizations were sought after for their programming, or community-based organizations sought school partnerships to provide after-school programs, tutoring, mental health services, or extracurricular activities. The programs targeted adolescents from low-income communities, exposing them to the arts such as music and dance, academics such as reading and math assistance, and social activities such as attending a professional basketball game, visiting local museums, or college tours.

Table 3

Theme 2: Funding OST Opportunities - Categories, Codes, and Excerpts

Category	Code	Excerpt
Funding for out-of-school time opportunities	After-school program Mycom 21st century community learning center (21st CCLC) Supplemental education services (SES) Summer camp grant opportunity Student mentoring program	When we first started with the 21st Century Community program, we received the grant to go into the schools. (CL2) I received funding from a nonprofit organization to start a summer camp to provide services to K-6 students for one summer. The school district needed providers for elementary school students. I researched the Department of Education, found the grant, and approached the superintendent for the program. (CL3)
MOU through CBO	Grant program has established MOU School partnership agreements	We have a partnership agreement that we created. They list out what their services will be and what they need from us. We provide space and the targeted population observation. The CBO in turn provides all the other resources especially when it's a paid service. Volunteer service support with materials. Contracted services, legal services, have a partnership agreement that is updated annually. (SL1) With the SES program, there was a contractual agreement established by the department of education that served as the MOU. (CL3) Yes, we use an MOU. Our center creates the MOU because less is more. The less a school district has to do, the better because the principals are so busy, so the more you can keep them from doing is better. I create the MOU not to make more work for them. You can't go in bulldogging to tell them what to do. (CL4)

Note. RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership? RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

Theme 3: System Coordination and Alignment, Delegation, and Evaluation

The third theme stressed the school-community partnership agreement's system coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation. During the first meeting, school and community officials established a shared vision and goals for the community program or resources made available to the school. The school and community leaders were responsible for ensuring that all parties involved were on the same page and understood the program and school goals. When the provisions of the school-community partnership are agreed upon, the principal appoints a school leader to support the community leader in meeting the program goals. A school wraparound coordinator, for example, may collect permission paperwork from students or gather students from class to attend an after-school activity.

The participants were asked how the school and community leaders delegated the leadership roles of the partnership. Those who delegated tasks were generally the same leaders that signed off on the MOU. The community leaders were the chief executive officer (CEO), executive director, and chief operating officer. The superintendent, principal, or director were the acknowledged school leaders. CL1 shared, "Anything youth related is delegated to me by the executive director." CL2 stated,

> In the role of checking on the children, it's mainly the role of the staff of the CBO because we let them know this is what we're going to do and make sure we follow through. We may make suggestions to the school, but it's the role of the CBO to make sure the program is carried out because it's our program, 21st Century.

Some community and school leaders admitted the willingness to delegate. Two community leaders highlighted an intriguing issue in explaining why they continue to supervise and oversee the school partnership. They shared the lack of trust in their staff's skills to properly communicate with school leaders. The community leaders noted how challenging it can be to establish school partnerships. They also stressed the necessity of maintaining relationships with schools by ensuring that community leaders have the necessary skills, knowledge, and cultural understanding and sensitivity, when working with school leaders and student populations. For example, CL3 and CL4 stated reasons for taking the lead when collaborating with the schools. CL3 claimed,

> I [executive director] determine who and how the staff engages with the school based on the skills and experiences, interest, and desire of staff. They need to have a passion to work with youth, and self-confidence, because kids will say and do things that they may take personally.

CL4 explained,

> Me [executive director]. I establish the relationships with the schools because I know the dynamics of the school. I know the school culture. Oftentimes, people are not aware of or have the skill set to understand how school works or understand school language. I guard those relationships because I know how hard it is to establish.

As for the school leaders, the principals delegate different responsibilities to their support leaders like the wraparound coordinator, dean of engagement, or assistant

director. For instance, here's how the school leaders responded to the question of delegation. SL1 commented,

> The immediate supervision comes from the wrap coordinator. The principal makes initial meetings to discuss how the program will operate. I have my wraparound coordinator as a support person, and then I and my administrative team are all assigned to different partners relative to what they're assigned to. Like my dean works with athletics, so for anything athletic, he's the point person. I have my assistant principal working with City Volunteers because City Volunteers is one of our partners. My wraparound coordinator works with West Community Center. It also is good when distributing leadership.

SL2 explained,

> The school principal must approve the things that I do with others, so I review everything with her and run it by her to make sure we have approval. She [the principal] comes to the meetings when she can and approves all partnerships. When she's deciding who we should work with, I think she considers the needs of the students and the district mandates.

I also documented the fact that the more veteran school leaders with more than 10 years of experience (SL1, SL2, SL3) were more comfortable with delegating than the school leader (SL4) who only had 5 years of experience as a school administrator. One school leader's comments were similar to the two community leaders with limited delegation. This school leader placed emphasis on the importance of establishing and maintaining community relationships and believed that it was the school leader's primary role to

maintain and cultivate those partnership connections. SL4 stated, “I am the oversight. I ask them [the CBO] to bring data every month and to meet with me. Yes, there is some collaboration with some of the staff, but oversight is still on me.”

School administrators emphasized the need of maintaining program alignment with the school’s building plan or overall student achievement goals. Both community and school officials attested to the importance of outlining the partnership’s aim and vision during the introductory meeting. Using the MOU also helps to establish the obligations and expectations of the two agencies. According to the school administrators, a lack of communication to ensure relationship alignment could be detrimental to student success. Failure to discuss alignment of the collaboration could result in an ineffective partnership. For example, SL3 shared the following experience:

> As a school leader, you know the student body that you’re serving. You know their needs. You’ve set goals for them, and you have a pretty good idea of how the students can meet those goals. If someone comes in with an alternate thought, with a different way of thinking or a different way of looking at something, I’m open to hear what they’re saying. But if you come in from a whole different ball game and say, “No this is not quite what these children need. They need this,” then you tear down the structure. You tear down the foundation that has been built and laid by that school leadership. You alter the structure of it.

Participants were asked how they measure success or define an effective school-community partnership. The community and school leaders’ responses were separated into two categories—most successful school-community partnerships and measure of

success. The leaders described a partnership they believed was the most effective and explained why they believed it worked well for the community-based organization and the school.

I found it intriguing that comments from two community leaders serving the same neighborhood to the question regarding the most effective collaborations were remarkably similar. According to the study, the sense of being acknowledged by the school leaders and community was described by both community leaders as the most effective school-community partnership. CL3 said,

> The principals of those schools got to know me and my staff. Kudos to Ms. Jones because we just really connected. If I called her about anything she was on it and responded. She even responded to the parents too. Now Ms. Jones is in the classroom as a kindergarten teacher, no longer a principal. It was a success based on the relationship, but not only that, I believe Ms. Jones genuinely cared about the children socially and emotionally. She really demonstrated that she cared for the students at the school. The principal of that school really got to learn more about the program.

CL4 commented,

> Donald City Schools was the most successful partnership. I had relationship capital as a native of Donald. People knew who I was when I started the behavior program, mental health services, and it went on for months. I created a teen summit to talk about mental health. We built on the relationships of 60-150

> students. If you build it and they can relate to it, it will work. Cultural competency is huge when talking about leadership.

The school leaders' responses also aligned with this sentiment on relationship and collaboration. SL3 shared,

> They come in and we as the school help identify students who may need the extra mentoring program or need that extra role model to help give them strategies and coping skills. Mr. John, I always applaud, even when I'm talking to families. I introduce him to the families and say, "He's excellent at helping the kids have coping skills."

Another category of success was identified by asking each leader how they measure partnership success. Table 4 reveals the codes and excerpts expressed to define measures of successful partnership.

Table 4

Measures of Successful Partnership

Category	Code	Excerpt
Measures of successful partnership	Youth buy-in Youth attendance Youth answering questions Student growth Increased number of children Excitement from children Grade improvement on report cards Parent engagement Parent buy-in Academics Meet the goals Student impact Grade level competency Relationship with the students Dependent upon partnership goals	I measure success by the youth buy-in. Getting feedback from the youth who participate in the program because they are the ones who are actually participating in the program. (CL1) Because of our numbers – growth and increase in our number of children enrolled in our program, excitement from the children who want to be in the program, the data collection from report cards to see it's helping a lot of our youth in reading and math. Parent engagement surveys and their feedback. Parents like the program or are glad it exists for their children. Parents state how it provides the help for their children. (CL2) Measure success based off the success on the relationship, and the school leader really cared for the child academically and social-emotionally. She demonstrated care and concern for students. (CL3) I define success based on the end result for kids. … I believe if we've impacted one, we're successful. (SL1) I define success if I see growth, then it's success. The child may not grow as much as someone else, but if they grow at all, it's success. I think the measures we use like grade level competency also measure success. I think it's also success just to have relationships with the students for them to know they can come to you if they need something. And if you want to measure it, you can use my notes and referral system to measure it. (SL2) Did this event, program, or organization meet the goal that we set out to meet? (SL3) I think every partnership I would measure differently based on the mutual goals established. (SL4)

Note. RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership? RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

Theme 4: Partnership Leadership Styles

The final theme of the study focuses on the leadership styles of school-community partners. This theme resulted from RQ3 which inquired about the similarities and differences in leadership styles as exhibited in Table 5. Leaders answered this question by naming ideal leadership qualities they desire and expect when collaborating and by describing what makes their personal leadership style different from their school or community partner leader. Both community and school leaders described the leadership qualities they enjoy when partnering and other qualities that may influence the decision to partner or not partner.

Table 5

Theme 4: Partnership Leadership Styles - Categories and Codes

Category	Code
Community leaders' leadership style	Team player, motivated, positive role model, flexibility, effective communication, address the whole child, address personal needs of students, resourceful, exposure, understand the bigger picture, unorthodox, not by the book
School leaders' leadership style	Open minded, directive, willing to have tough conversations, advocate for kids, have a mission, be a visionary, must work well with others, relational, you have to be trusted, working in the community, communication is key, understand Maslow's Hierarchy of Learning, compassion and sympathy, empathy, patience, tools and resources to change the cycle, have a strong core because of so much tragedy, stable
Community leaders' desired school leader qualities	Trustworthy, dependable person, Ubuntu, see past their behaviors, patience, caring, love unconditionally, understanding the bigger picture, compassion for children, student growth and development, emotional and spiritual investment, looking past the behaviors, relationships and listening
School leaders' desired community leader qualities	Understanding of school culture, principals are facilitators and coordinators, open and creative in solving problems, good listener, relational, cooperative, community driven, attend community meetings, supportive, vested, commitment and dedication, CBO delegates tasks
Shared responsibilities	Help the youth, have the same goal, outgoing, down to earth, good relationship with kids, making things happen, helpful, responsive, Johnny-on-the-spot, honest, integrity, recognize community partners and parents as partners, working together, connected to students, celebrate student success, inclusive, accountability, straight forward, empathy, culturally proficient, live in the community, intelligent. know the staff, passionate, innovative, both parties have buy-in, collaborate, pull together

Note. RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders, and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the study's setting as well as the demographics of its participants. The findings were revealed through several charts displaying codes, categories, and themes. Four community and four school leaders, all of whom were leaders of a school-community partnership in a high-poverty neighborhood, took part in interviews. The findings were directly related to the primary RQs of understanding how school and community leaders foster equitable and trusting relationships in school-community partnerships in high-poverty communities, as well as describing their leadership styles in terms of similarities and differences. The interview queries, found in the Appendix, were used for all interviews. The interviews were conducted during the spring of 2022 with each interview lasting 45 minutes to an hour. The data results were generated from the participants' responses to RQ1 and RQ2:

> RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership?
>
> RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

Using the responses from participants to RQ1 and RQ2, I formed three themes:

- Theme 1: Establishing strong school-community relationships
- Theme 2: Funding out-of-school time opportunities
- Theme 3: System coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation

The third RQ investigated the variations and similarities in the attitudes of community and school leaders, as well as how those beliefs inform the establishment of partnerships. Community and school leaders not only stated their leadership style but also the leadership abilities and traits they valued in the organization leaders with whom they collaborated.

RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders, and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

Their responses were categorized which identified desired leadership characteristics and shared responsibilities formulating the fourth theme:

- Theme 4: Partnership leadership styles

The abovementioned themes were coded and categorized using Atlas.ti from the participants' responses. The codes and categories were analyzed to define the themes charted and presented in this chapter.

In the section on Evidence of Trustworthiness, I described implementation and adjustments to the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. To ensure the credibility of this study, I practiced reflective note taking during the interviews to review along with the transcriptions, I conducted member checking by allowing the participants to review their transcribed interviews in writing and view the recording, and I kept an audit trail in case any follow up or fact checking is required in the future.

In Chapter 5, I interpreted the results by comparing them to what was found in the peer-reviewed literature discussed in Chapter 2. Concluding the study are my

recommendations for future research on the leadership perspectives of those who participate in school-community collaborations in high-poverty areas.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative interview study was to understand the dual leadership roles that are inclusive of the school and community leaders' collective voice for building trustworthy relationships and sharing leadership to support families and children from communities with high poverty concentrations. In this chapter, I described the study's key findings, implications, and limitations, as well as recommendations for future research based on the data analysis. For this study, eight people were interviewed: four school leaders and four community leaders. The interview responses to the three RQs were classified and grouped to create four themes. Themes 1 through 3 originated from RQ1 and RQ2 which prompted both sets of leaders to describe how they build trusting relationships and share equitable leadership positions while collaborating in a school-community partnership. The fourth theme emerged from the third RQ which investigated the differences and similarities in the partnership leadership styles of school and community leaders. This study had four themes: a) establishing strong school-community relationships; b) funding out-of-school time opportunities; c) system coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation; and d) partnership leadership styles.

This chapter contains recommendations for future research based on the study's core results, including a study program for school-community partnership leaders who work in high-poverty regions, a school-community coordination system, and advocacy for policymakers to sustain OST funding. I also explain the study's limitations and implications.

Interpretations of the Findings

School-community partnerships continue to serve as a vital urban school turnaround model resource for students, families, and communities, especially those from concentrated poverty areas, and successful leadership of this urban education reform is essential. For this study, school and community leaders participated in a semistructured interview developed from three RQs:

> RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high-poverty areas to share leadership?
>
> RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?
>
> RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders, and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

From these RQs, I developed interview queries that included additional prompts and probes about the leaders' interactions between the two agencies–school and community-based organizations. In alignment with the conceptual framework and literature review in Chapter 2, the responses to two of the RQs confirmed the knowledge and practice from the literature. Using the school and community leaders' responses, I identified three themes that emerged from RQ1 and RQ2:

- Theme 1: Establishing strong school-community relationships
- Theme 2: Funding out-of-school time opportunities

- Theme 3: System coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation

The fourth theme emerged from RQ3 which focused on the similarities and differences of the school and community leadership styles.

- Theme 4: Partnership leadership styles

Theme 1: Establishing Strong School-Community Relationships

As discussed in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework of this study applied the transformative leadership theory, family interagency model, and the *Ubuntu* philosophy as depicted in Figure 1. These three concepts framed the significance of relationship development. When prompting the school and community leaders to describe how they establish trusting relationships between the school and community-based organization, the responses were synonymous on the importance of the initial meeting to establish relationship, expectations, and creating shared vision and goals. CL2 and SL3 both emphasized, "Communication is key!" when establishing partnership. Both school and community leaders' responses confirmed the school-community partnership research, that no one agency has all the resources and knowledge required to meet the complex needs of students and families (see Casto et al., 2016; Griffiths et al., 2021). The school and community leaders described their initial meetings as two entities seeking what they lacked as the other agency offered what was needed. For instance, CL1 said,

> We have an after-school program [at Franklin Community Center] and a lot of the kids from the school come over to participate in our after-school program. Then we developed a more meaningful partnership through ABC School District. ABC reached out and wanted us to be a coordinating partner for Abraham School.

The school principal, wraparound coordinator, dean of engagement, or director attended these initial meetings, as did the executive director or CEO, program manager, or program coordinator from the community. It is important to note that the collaborations were initiated by the community leaders, as stated by both school and community leaders. SL2 stated that when community leaders approach the school they tend to say, "We want to know what we can do for you." By attending school-community meetings which are usually held by the local school, community leaders can learn about a need of a school or of family residents and offer their support resources. SL3 described one of the initial meetings with a community leader like this:

> There was a representative from Franklin Community Center who was visiting the area or surrounding schools in our community, and he came into the school to introduce himself and what the program offered. We thought it would be a great fit for our school and the student body we serve, so we tried them out that first year. It [the partnership] was established by trying some of the services they provided. During the winter season, they informed us about being in touch with an organization that could provide us with hats and gloves for our students and I think that was our first partnering event. I forget the organization they received the hats and gloves from, but they did come into the school to assist with handing out gloves and hats. He met with me and my principal initially to tell us about the program.

While Green (2017) recommended principals to intentionally engage in community partnerships and serve as the school's link to the community, the role of the

community leader should not be disregarded. Green described principals as social brokers between the two agencies; however, according to the responses in this study on establishing trusting and equitable partnerships, the partnership was initiated by the community leader, and both leaders play critical roles in maintaining the relationship in order to meet the multiple needs of children and families. These relationships started with community leaders providing a service and school leaders embracing their offer by allowing them to undertake one task at a time, creating trust one project at a time.

The transformative leadership theory and practice, as well as professional development, could benefit both school and community leaders. Transformative leadership theory emphasizes "the better lived in common with others" rather than "individual achievement" (Shields & Hesbol, 2019). The notion that relationships improve with a shared coordinated mission is a common theme from both the transformative leadership theory and the family interagency model. The relationship between a person and his or her community can be improved by adopting the *Ubuntu* philosophy of humanism. During the semistructured interviews, participants were briefed on the *Ubuntu* philosophy and asked how they might implement this philosophy in a school-community cooperation.

Two of the community leaders expressed their disappointment in the lack of the practice of *Ubuntu* when building a relationship between the school and their organization. CL4 said, "This doesn't happen! Trust isn't there. If there isn't a strong relationship, you can't get them [parents]." The other community leader expressed dismay that the schools only contact the community center when the child has a

behavioral challenge. School and community leaders described experiences of the school contacting the community organization for support with behavioral challenges. One of the community leaders described their utopia of solving issues by collaborating with the schoolteachers, coaches, parents, and community programs to make sure everyone is on the same page to meet the needs of the child. CL3 explained,

> To be involved with other team members like schoolteachers and coaches, what can we do together realizing that this is a concern observed in a child in the after-school program and another way at school or in sports, how can we come together to put things together as a team and what will we do with students in school and out of school. The student will need support, inclusion, and encouragement makes a difference in a kid's life. When I try to address something here at the center and don't know what else happens when the child leaves, I don't believe that I'm doing the child justice.

Cited often and broadly, collaboration has become recognized as a vital 21st century skill set (Evans, 2020; Maier et al., 2017). When it comes to developing equitable relationships in a school-community cooperation, trust and communication are critical. One of the community leaders also expressed her disappointment at not being recognized as an active partner by the school. The community leader mentioned that she would like school leaders to notify families about the community partnership in order to encourage collaborative family engagement. "It takes a village to raise a child" or "Together, we achieve more" is more than a catchphrase promoting school-community partnerships; it is a learned practice.

Theme 2: Funding Out-of-School Time Opportunities

School-community partnerships are the catalyst for providing additional resources and supports to schools serving low-income and concentrated poverty communities (Gross et al., 2015; Maier et al., 2017). With the continual rise in poverty, a changing economy experiencing inflation and a possible recession, schools serving low-income students are not only providing an academic service but also partner with multiple organizations to address the layered needs of its students and families. The school leaders mentioned that they partner with multiple organizations to connect their students and families to the necessary resources.

Community-based organizations, typically nonprofit organizations serving youth, are subsidized by multiple funders—government, foundations, and private funders at local, state/regional, and national/federal levels (Afterschool Alliance, 2021). In their most recent report, the Afterschool Alliance (2021) reclaimed the 21st CCLC as the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to supporting local after-school, before-school, and summer learning programs. The community leaders in this study each reported that programming offered to the schools was all funded by grants. CL2 stated, "We established that partnership with Hawthorne School by going into the school to set up a meeting to become a 21st Century community partner." CL3 added,

> I received a grant with No Child Left Behind as a Supplemental Education Services provider for the school district. I received dollars from another nonprofit organization to start a summer camp to provide services to K-6 students for one summer. I wanted to extend the summer camp to an after-school program. The

> school district needed providers for elementary school students. I researched the Department of Education and found the grant, approached the superintendent of the school district for the program, and worked with a school board administrator who was over federal programs.

Moreover, SL1 shared, "The program director made us aware that they were in the process of writing a grant to partner with an elementary school, particularly our school, to provide after-school programming."

The findings from the explanations provided by the community and school leaders indicate the need for sustainable funding. Local, state, and federal government funding is not guaranteed. For instance, in 2017 during the Trump Administration, the FY2017 budget proposed education cuts in the amount of $9.2 billion that could have possibly eliminated 21 education programs, which included the 21st CCLC (Brown et al., 2017). Without grant funding of these programs, extracurricular activities and exposure opportunities like visiting museums and participating in art programs offered by community-based organizations would not be available. The community-based organizations in this study offered cultural and exposure activities, creative arts like dance and African drumming, mentoring, mental health awareness, family supports like resume writing, and community events and resources. For instance, SL3 explained,

> Franklin Community Center brings us tickets to NBA games for our children who may not have had the opportunity to go otherwise, but now you have these students with these tickets for them and their families to go to an NBA game. That was pretty cool.

Theme 3: System Coordination and Alignment, Delegation, and Evaluation

System Coordination

System coordination and alignment, delegation, and evaluation defined the third theme. The participants were prompted and probed to explain how they share leadership roles and delegate responsibilities to fulfill the goals and vision of the partnership. During the interviews, school and community leaders stated that shared goals were identified during the initial meeting of the partnership. School leaders, with the responsibility of planning and implementation for academic success, explained the high importance of establishing shared goals and alignment when partnering with community-based organizations. For instance, SL1 said,

> The great thing is that their goals are aligned to our AYP. For instance, if our goal was to increase the number of proficient scholars in Grades 3 through 8 in ELA, then their focus when doing the after-school tutoring program, is to make sure they refer to the state assessment practice and that they're making connections with the classroom teacher to find out if there are any deficits that the teacher has already identified that the kids need extended practice on. So, it's already naturally aligned.

The community leaders confirmed the school leaders' desire to establish clear goals and expectations of the school-community partnership. CL1 commented,

> We sat down with school leaders to identify what problems the students were having or what type of programs they wanted to see for students. The school gave us a list of things that they wanted their students to have or children's programs

> best for the school. If it was dance programs, they gave us a list of those things that their students were interested in and those were the programs that we tried to bring in for our program.

The MOU, most often mentioned as a grant requirement, was referred to as a great tool to help establish alignment and expectations for the partnership. CL2 claimed,

> We had a teacher do a garden program and partnered with the school last summer who did an MOU. [We] make a list of programs that we offer and through our proposal, we list how services promote the program, families, or children and take it to the school. We make the proposal to the school stating what we can offer. The school partner signs and then establishes a date and time to start the program. We even have our own consent forms that are signed by the parents for things we may need to collect from the school such as report cards.

Delegation

While discussing their experiences with establishing common goals and program alignment, community and school leaders were asked how they distribute responsibility for program service execution. Both community leaders who held the post of executive director voiced reservations to their staff about delegating responsibility for communicating with school officials. This is what CL4 said when asked how they assign the point person to oversee the partnership:

> Me. I establish the relationships with the schools because I know the dynamics of the school. I know the school culture. Often, people are not aware of or have the

> skill set to understand how schools work or understand school language. I guard those relationships because I know how hard it is to establish.

CL3, another community leader executive director, described how they delegate responsibilities to their staff based on the staff's expertise and social-emotional skills: "I determine who and how the staff engages with the school based on skills and experiences, interest, and desire of staff." The program managers usually handle all things related to the program. For example, CL1 said, "Anything youth related is delegated to me."

School leaders freely delegate responsibilities to their leadership staff, identified as the dean of engagement, wraparound coordinator, family support coordinator, assistant principal, or assistant director. Additionally, school leaders made mention of shared leadership responsibilities for successful partnering. Principals typically lead schools by controlling and supervising or by involving the community and parents through open house meetings, parent-teacher conferences, or scheduled professional development (Boudreaux, 2017; Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Principals, assistant principals/directors, family support workers, and a recently appointed superintendent who previously served as principal, were among the school leaders questioned for this study. According to the views of school leaders, principals have a very heavy load and often shift the responsibility of who oversees the community-based organization programming to their leadership team. The following excerpt from SL1 explains why delegating is necessary when partnering with other programs:

> I leave that to the point person, and they report back to me. We meet twice a week during the day as a standing admin meeting. We have an assistant principal, a curriculum instruction specialist, a dean, and a wrap coordinator, and they have all been identified as part of the administrative team. For instance, if you need help in reading and math, the leader is the CIS [curriculum instruction specialist] person, then you have someone well versed in curriculum, so they are able to get that immediate support. I have a unique model that I've tried to preserve here over the years, and I've been able to do so with the funding that was provided through my grant funds, but, now that we're getting kind of trimmed in funding, we have to advocate even more to make sure we have the funding. Every last one of those pieces [leadership roles] are an important part of the puzzle. It may not be that need at every school, but I know for a school like our population with a high level of poverty and ACES [Adverse Childhood Experiences], we're talking systemic poverty and generational poverty. It's more than a one-principal job. It's more than a one-leader job. There has to be a leader that can facilitate the process, but the leader also has to be versed in what those adverse effects do to kids and the services need to support to do both SEL [social-emotional] but we still have the academic responsibility because we're an academic institution. You can't put one over the other. It's like putting two moving vehicles at one time.

The newest principal, who recently transitioned to a charter school superintendent, was the only school leader who did not delegate tasks. Like the community leaders, this

school leader was very protective of the relationships developed with the community, ensuring establishment of trust and social capital in the community.

Evaluation

When explaining their similarities and differences, participants were asked how they evaluate the success of the partnership and to describe their most successful partnership. The community and school leaders related the most effective partnership with the partnerships that had the best relationship with the students. For example, CL1 explained a partner's evaluation of success:

> I would say that group is most successful because it got the kids motivated and wanting to learn. When we get over there, the kids are in the classroom before we are so that shows you that they really want to be there.

SL2 described success by stating, "I think it's also success just to have relationships with the students for them to know they can come to you if they need something."

The school leaders shared the relational and culturally relevant experiences they found most impactful for their schools. SL2 described an impactful community partner experience by stating the following:

> A college has a tutoring program that is mutually beneficial as a particular institution that is big on social justice. They are intentional about having programs that meet the needs of those in poverty. They come to us every year with a group of students that they pay a stipend, which I think is their work study. About 10 tutors come to work with students one-on-one for about 30 minutes, twice a week with the early years for kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade. It's needed because in

> poverty, impoverished areas, the families have stress and we're not always sitting down with our kids at home reading, like doing the 20-minute practice that's needed. So having them come in to tutor makes a difference and it kind of levels the playing field.

The definition of success was explained broadly. For example, SL1 said, "I can't rate one over the other because they all do different stuff. They all have been successful. Because I think we do a lot of intentional work at the beginning that they all end up being very successful." According to the community leaders, success is measured by the terms they agreed upon in their grants like report cards or student engagement and attendance. School leaders defined success as observing student growth in relation to the program in which they participated, such as improved self-confidence after participating in a reading tutoring program or being able to manage their behavior using a skill learned from a mental health mentoring program. SL1 gave the following definition, "I define success based on the end result for kids. Some people define success as by the number of people assigned to a program, but I don't, because I believe if we've impacted one, we're successful."

SL2 defined success as,

> I define success if I see growth, then it's success. The child may not grow as much as someone else, but if they grow at all, it's success. I think the measures we use like grade level competency also measure success. I think it's also success just to have relationships with the students, for them to know they can come to you if they need something.

It's important to note that CL1 also defined success similarly to SL1 and SL2 by saying, "I measure success off the youth and youth buy-in. As adults, we may think this program is a great program, but the youth may think it was a bad program."

The measure of success was also defined using the benchmarks defined in the grant programs. For instance, CL2 commented,

> Because of our numbers, growth and increase in our number of children enrolled in our program, excitement from the children who want to be in the program, the data collection from report cards to see it's helping a lot of our youth in reading and math. Parent engagement surveys and their feedback. Parents like the program or are glad it exists for their children.

SL3, on the other hand, said,

> I would say at the end, looking at the end to see if it met the goal that was set in the beginning. Did this event, program, or organization meet the goal that we set out to meet, like an evaluation of the program?

For the most part, when coding the responses of these leaders, their responses indicated this:

> Youth buy-in, youth attendance, youth answering questions, student growth, increased number of children, excitement from children, grade improvement on report cards, parent engagement, parent buy-in, academics, meet the goals, student impact, grade level competency, relationship with the students, dependent upon partnership goals.

The results of these findings confirmed *Ubuntu*; we are all connected by bonding with others. While researchers (Peck & Reitzug, 2017) defined school-community success in relation to academic and community improvement, the leaders in this study defined trusting relationships as the highest level of success.

Theme 4: Partnership Leadership Styles

The final theme developed from RQ3 focused on the partnership leadership styles. Interview queries related to this theme inquired about the school and community leaders' similarities and differences in their leadership styles as school-community partnership leaders. When asked to define their personal leadership roles and responsibilities, participant responses are included in Table 6.

Table 6

Community and School Leaders' Leadership Similarities and Differences

Community leader	Response
CL1: Program Manager and Regional Coordinator for countywide youth program. More than 10 years' experience	I'm a team player, motivated to get the task done. I just like being a resource for the youth and families, being a positive role model for the youth, and someone they can look up to.
CL2: Childcare Administrator, 21st CCLC Coordinator, more than 10 years' experience	A leader in the school may have a lot of paperwork as well. Both are very demanding, but as a CBO leader and childcare center director, we may have more time and flexibility than a leader in a school. The school administrator may miss a lot of things. The communication level may not always be as clear and effective, but I think that's because of the volume of work they have to do versus an administrator at a center. Even though the administrators have a lot of paperwork, the organization and structure are better at a center. School administrators probably have more meetings and more bodies they are responsible for. School communication may seem not as effective from our view, but I'm sure they may have some type of effective leadership.
CL3: Executive Director/CEO, more than 20 years' experience	We address the whole child. We don't look at just one specific thing like academics. We address the personal needs of students. We have a storage room that includes hygiene materials, socks, clothes, and coats.
CL4: CBO Executive Director, more than 20 years' experience	I'm a little unorthodox. I don't try to do everything by the book. I have space to think outside the box. The principal has more restrictions. I don't have a lot of rules and regulations.
School leader	**Response**
SL1: Principal Pk-8, more than 20 years' experience	CBO leaders can have a narrow vision on what school is. They have the "save the world complex" - whatever they got is going to be the "it." Principal, a facilitator of collaboration and no co-location; not over duplicating services; intentional about what we're providing; making sure we don't have all these resources in this area, and no one is speaking with each other. School is the connector of the community because they are the residents that make up the community census; The principal is a collaborator that brings all the pieces together to leverage the community resources that we have in the neighborhood.
SL2: Family Service Worker, social work background, more than 15 years' experience	I try to be open and creative when it comes to problem solving. There's more than one way to solve a problem by leveraging whatever someone is offering to meet whatever the need may be. A good listener to determine if the partnership will be good to share the resource with other people. Relational. Cooperative and understanding. Community driven, attend the community meetings and knowing which resources to share with the students and families. Works well with both school and community. Supportive. Servant leader, work alongside people, will walk with the person until a connection is made.
SL3: Charter school Assistant Director (aka Asst. Principal), childcare background, family service worker background, more than 20 years' experience	I think it would be different because I'm more vested. Those are my kids. Their success almost means my success. I don't have a choice if the grant runs out to walk away from them. Those are my kids and I have to come up with an ultimate plan of how we're going to make it happen. My commitment and dedication to those kids is to bring in different organizations because *'I gotta make it happen for them'* and sometimes without the resources. Just gotta make it happen for them, I gotta do this for them.
SL4: Charter school Superintendent, less than 10 years' experience	Similarities in leadership style are that we carry everything with us. We wake up in the middle of the night and say, '*I was thinking about this one parent.'* That's why I vet the organizations the way I do because we're always thinking about the families we're serving. We see the struggles the families are facing and we're all about fixing it and positive change. We're all passionate and driven to make a change. We're all hands on. We don't just end at a 9-5 day.

According to the school and community leaders' responses, the similarities in leadership styles indicate their passion for children and community, desire to problem solve, and resourcefulness to meet the needs of the children and families. Both sets of leaders shared carrying the burden of the challenges their students and families endure, academically and wholistically.

The primary differences between school and community leaders were the ways in which community leaders have more flexibility in their schedules and are less restricted in their programming and operation. School leaders are held to higher standards of convening and engaging the community, informing the community of the resources, and meeting academic benchmarks for students. As SL3 said, "I don't have a choice if the grant runs out to walk away." Schools are historically-trusted institutions where residents expect to receive information and resources. Community-based organizations serve the community residents who choose their programs and organizations, whereas schools in concentrated poverty communities serve the residents assigned to their schools and some students and families who travel from different communities.

School-community partnership leaders share visions and goals to meet the needs of children and families, and by doing so, they also share responsibilities. Such partnerships among schools and communities located in high-poverty concentrated regions have been found to enhance student learning, strengthen schools, and support struggling neighborhoods (Valli et al., 2014). The leadership roles and character traits of the leaders managing and coordinating these roles share major responsibilities. In this

study, the leaders were asked to list the required abilities for the role as a school-community partnership leader. The codes for this prompt are listed below.

Desired School-Community Leader Partnership Characteristics

The codes for desired school-community leader partnerships characteristics included the following: help the youth, have same goal, outgoing, down to earth, good relationship with kids, making things happen, helpful, responsive, Johnny-on-the-spot, honest, integrity, specialty with children, recognize community partners and parents as partners, working together, connected to students, celebrate student success, inclusive, accountability, straight forward, empathy, culturally proficient, live in the community, intelligent, know the staff, passionate, innovative, both parties have buy-in, collaborate, and pull together.

Shared Responsibilities Among the School and Community Partners

The shared responsibilities among the school and community partner codes included the following: communicate, identify problems, making sure we're on the same page (alignment), coordination, engage, intently listening to what's needed and follow through, working together to solve issues, solve problems as a team, engage community and parents, goal alignment, shared needs, set goals together, share talents, skills, resources to reach goal

School-community collaboration leaders are relational, responsive, resilient, and reliable according to the participants. Both sets of leaders emphasized the significance of leaders demonstrating empathy and compassion for children and families. In a poor community, resourcefulness is a necessary skill for responding to families who may

experience issues such as eviction, the need for furnishings, or food pantries. Both school and community leaders must be quick and dependable anytime they are needed. The leaders in all of the roles need to be culturally competent in order to engage families and listen intently in order to work together to tackle the overwhelming situation of the moment.

Limitations

With any research study lies the possibility of limitations, unforeseeable barriers, and challenges. Anderson (2016) cautioned future researchers of possible limitations when interviewing school and community leaders due to the evolutionary process of changes such as a newly hired school superintendent, numerous stakeholders' leadership changes, and the constant change of leadership locally and nationally. Any changes within these sectors could delay or end the collaboration caused by budget cuts or by altering the direction of the school district or community organization (Anderson, 2016, p. 17).

For this study, the limitations were very minimal. Seeking participants from school districts and community organizations, it was possible to have interference from the bureaucracies of the school district and lack of cooperation from the community leaders to share their experiences working with schools. On the contrary, the schools and community leaders were very receptive to this study. There were no school bans or official protocols to address for this study due to the fact that the school leaders were sharing their personal leadership experiences without relaying details about the school district overall. Likewise, the community leaders shared their personal leadership

experiences liberally, knowing their information would remain anonymous and confidential. Generally, basic qualitative studies using interviews as a research method indicate limitations to trustworthiness as each response is unique to the participants' personal experiences that may not be reproduced or duplicated in future studies. The responses were limited to the experiences and perceptions of each of the participants.

Recommendations

The findings of this study contribute to the literature on school-community partnership leadership by demonstrating how school and community leaders develop trusting and equitable leadership positions when engaging in a school-community partnership in a high-poverty area. Although this study only interviewed eight school and community leaders, future studies could include more participants or use a different data collection method, such as focus groups. Within the focus groups, leaders can be separated into two categories to explore the overlaps and the gaps, the individual leadership styles, and their knowledge and best practices.

Furthermore, all the community leaders in this study said that their collaboration came about as a result of an OST grant for youth. Grants are feasible for schools and communities to provide more programs and resources, but they are not self-sustaining. More research is needed to determine the length of the award, its sustainability, and what happens after the grant financing expires. As mentioned in earlier chapters, funding sources for education result from a political agenda with each new presidential administration.

In more recent studies, the disruption in student learning from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 caused an emergence of full-service community schools (d'Orville, 2020). A community school is defined as a high-level coordination system of school and community partners to engage students and families to accelerate student success (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2022). Community schools have become popular and found as effective evidence-based models in cities like New York, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, and more (Johnston et al., 2020). Unlike the No Child Left Behind Act, the reauthorization of the ESSA led to new strategies to approach low-performing and high-poverty schools in urban communities by encouraging schools to seek community partnerships to meet the needs of the whole child and the whole family. Under ESSA came the expanded development of community schools, Promise Neighborhoods, and the continuation of 21st CCLC.

Implications for Positive Social Change

One of the gaps identified at the beginning of this study acknowledges the lack of research on the community leader's perspective within the school-community partnership. When schools face challenges, the schools as well as state and federal policymakers seek assistance from community leaders (Anderson, 2016; Scanlan & Park, 2020; Suh, 2018). As described by both SL2 and community leaders of this study, community leaders engage school leaders to inquire of their needs. Scanlan and Park investigated Gardner Academy's community school collaboration, emphasizing the importance of allowing community-based organizations to participate in decision-making and sharing staff. Regardless of this concept of including community leaders, the

researchers of the Gardner study did not interview nor mention the perspective of the YMCA director, teachers, or parents. It is worth revisiting the conceptual framework used in Chapter 2 of this study, which includes the transformative leadership theory, the family interagency model, and the *Ubuntu* philosophy, and calls for the inclusion of all leaders involved in the school and community partnership. The transformative leader engages leadership to transform communities. The family interagency leader creates community involvement to impact student achievement. Moreover, when school and community leaders bond to acknowledge each other's assets and resources, they engage in the practice of the *Ubuntu* philosophy.

I recommend that higher education leaders investigate the educational landscape of school-community collaboration leaders to add to urban education undergraduate and graduate programs or to construct a professional development program for continuing education courses on leadership partnership. Participants identified the desirable and necessary leadership attributes when collaborating with schools and communities in low-income neighborhoods. According to Peck and Reitzug (2017), school-community partnerships are least effective in low-income communities. Providing a college-level school-community partnership course or program to train leaders to work in high-poverty neighborhoods only improves the leaders' ability to fulfill the high needs and multiple demands of the school and community to become successful leaders. As Burns coined the term "transformational leadership" (as cited in Shields, 2020) with the focus on improving organizational qualities, dimensions, and effectiveness; transformative leadership, on the other hand, focuses on the inequities and injustices of education,

transforming schools into what they might be (Hewitt et al., 2014). Even though the former research focused on the principal leader (Green, 2015; Peck & Reitzug, 2017), this study identified other leaders that support and uplift the heavy task of transforming schools and community, and that includes community-based organization program leaders, youth leaders, wrap-around specialists, deans of engagement, and assistant principals. Creating a collaborative professional development training or continued education course for these leaders is recommended to impact more school-community partnerships. In preparing for the future school leader of tomorrow, according to the responses in this study, leaders must be equipped to be relational, responsive, reliable, resilient, and most importantly, transformative.

Rethinking Measures of Success

Based on the results of this study, OST grant makers and funders need to reexamine and redefine their measure of success. While personnel in programs like 21st CCLC evaluate students' academic improvement, grant program personnel have learned that much of their success is within the qualitative data of building trusting relationships. The *Ubuntu* philosophy applied in this study highlights the importance of humanism, the idea that as we are all connected by bonding to see each other, we see ourselves.

According to school and community leaders, success is measured by youth buy-in, youth participation, and youth personal human development growth, such as boosting reading confidence or learning to control conduct. If grant evaluators measure quantitatively and programs are measuring qualitatively, there is misalignment, which may affect future funding to programs with leaders who are fulfilling the requirements

relationally. As SL4 said, “Community partnership is to be focused on people, not things.”

Education Policymakers and Community Schools

The final recommendation of this study is for education policymakers. Grants are good while they last; however, they cause limitations of trustworthiness among the grant recipients and their clients, the families, children, schools, and communities they serve. Currently, the 21st CCLC program continues as the only federal funding source for local before-school, after-school, and summer learning programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2021). Reportedly, each 21st CCLC program averages nine community partner organizations while serving 68% of their student population who are from low-income households. To overcome this lack of sustainability, community schools have become effective solutions for urban schools and communities. Education leaders seeking to address rising economic and racial inequalities are turning to community schools as a viable option for assisting children and families in low-income neighborhoods (Maier et al., 2017). Community schools bring together a variety of community institutions that provide a range of resources such as health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement, all while including academics and collaborative leadership. During the pandemic of COVID-19, while schools across the world closed, community organizations fought to sustain themselves to continue to serve the youth as a safety hub and academic link reconnecting the students to their teachers due to the vast academic divide in low-income communities.

Community organizations remain afloat from grant to grant and change with almost every local, state, and federal leadership change. Small to medium-sized CBOs with budgets ranging from under $100,000 to under $10 million provide critical social and economic community support, community services such as housing assistance, food pantries, workforce training, and cultural programming, since in many cases, these organizations serve low-income families, often Black and other people of color (Zimmerman et al., 2022). Unlike education, CBOs have not been explicitly tied to a category in the federal budget but have been linked to the Community Development Block Grant, which causes inconsistencies in their budgets that influence the services they can provide to the community. For small to medium-sized CBOs, applying for competitive federal grants can become challenging due to the lack of capacity to submit the required documentation or to hire a grant writer (Zimmerman et al., 2022). More funding is needed for the Community Development Block Grant to reach the CBOs with significant and extended grant periods. Most grant awards fund the programming but not the dedicated staff. Smaller grants create staffing challenges for CBOs, ultimately impacting the school-community partnership. SL1 mentioned that one of the CBOs had undergone multiple staff turnovers before they finalized the partnership. As grassroots organizations, the initiators who engage residents, youth, and even school leaders, CBOs also triage the community and provide emergency assistance, early childhood, and senior care. CBO's sustainability is the heartbeat of the community, and the loss of CBOs due to funding and policies jeopardizes the most vulnerable populations, which again are generally families of color (Durfey et al., 2021). I recommend that education

policymakers continue to research more opportunities to sustain school-community partnerships, not only by grants but also in the conceptual framework of community schools.

Conclusion

Leadership in school-community partnerships necessitates collaborative leadership practice. The collaborative practice of leaders becoming one another's helpmate can aid in filling gaps in academics, resources, and community connections. When working in concentrated communities of high poverty, there is no ego or single leader at the school or community-based group that leads, but rather, the collective voice of several leaders recognizing the value of each other to achieve success for students. These leaders both have restless nights worrying about the perils that plague the community experienced by their students and families. They carry the attitude that SL3 described as "I just gotta make it happen" and as CL1 commented, "We never say no" in order to accomplish the high demand attached to concentrated poverty communities, poor education, poor health care, social determinants of health, low-income, high dropout rates, and so much more. There is no one answer to education nor a simple solution to community transformation; therefore, there is no one leader to organize, transform, or turn around a school and community in a concentrated high-poverty region. Yet, it can be done. To address the call of transforming schools and communities requires the collective, to humanly see each leader as a partner to fulfill the shared goals and vision needed for that community. The well-known proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," is apt for school-community partnerships. The most critical factor of school-community

partnerships ensures that when collaborating with other villagers to impact a community and school, everyone must walk in unison with a shared vision and goal to help each other uplift and overcome the multifaceted perils of poverty-stricken communities. As the *Ubuntu* philosophy goes, “I am because we are, therefore, I am;” this is the spirit of building trust and shared leadership among school-community partnerships.

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Appendix: Interview Queries

Interview Queries: Community Leaders

RQ1: How do community leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with schools in high poverty areas to share leadership?

1. Prompt: Tell me about how the partnership was established.
    - Probe: Please describe the initial contact and how the partnership was formed.
    - Probe: Who were the contact persons involved and what are their roles?

2. Prompt: What are some qualifications a school must have when deciding to collaborate to better serve students and families?
    - Probe: Why do you feel those qualifications are needed to better serve students?
    - Probe: How do you choose the schools you partner with? What need does the organization fulfill for the school?

3. Prompt: Explain the process between school and community leaders when developing a memorandum of understanding for partnership.

4. How do the leaders of this community-based organization determine who leads the project?
    - Probe: Define a leader or what is the leader's role. Who determines who leads the project?
    - Probe: Who assigns you your duties to work with the school?

5. Prompt: Describe how leaders delegate leadership roles or a point person to oversee the partnership.

6. Prompt: *Ubuntu* is an ancient African philosophy that states when people come together for the common good, they will solve problems with the power and voice of a group (Ngomane, 2020). Describe how you may apply the *Ubuntu* philosophy when partnering with community leaders.
    - Probe: Describe how you engage the school leader and how you share leadership roles and responsibilities.

7. Prompt: How do you work with the school leader to accomplish a goal?

8. Prompt: Tell me about most the effective school-community-based organization partnership. What made it successful? What would have made it even better?

9. Prompt: How do you measure the success of the partnership?

10. Prompt: List some character traits about the school leader that you enjoy about this relationship.
    - Probe: Why are these character traits important?
    - Probe: What about his/her personality or behaviors do they exhibit that make this partnership enjoyable?

Interview Queries: School Leaders

RQ2: How do school leaders describe the way they foster trusting and equitable leadership when collaborating with community-based organizations in concentrated poverty communities to share leadership?

1. Prompt: Tell me about how the partnership was established.
    - Probe: Please describe the initial contact and how the partnership was formed.
    - Probe: Who were the contact persons involved and what are their roles?

2. Prompt: What are some qualifications a community-based organization should have when choosing to partner?
    - Probe: Why do believe those qualifications are expected of the community-based organization to best serve the students and families at your school?

3. Prompt: Do you use a memorandum of understanding when partnering with community-based organizations?
    Probe: Please describe the process of drafting the memorandum of understanding with community-based organizations.

4. Prompt: How does the school leader determine who leads the project?
    - Probe: Define a leader and what is the leader's role.
    - Who assigns you to work with the community-based organization?

5. Prompt: Who is responsible for engaging and coordinating services of the community-based organization?
    - Probe: Is this person considered a leader? Describe the leader's role and responsibilities.

6. Prompt: *Ubuntu* is an ancient African philosophy that states when people come together for the common good, they will solve problems with the power and voice of a group (Ngomane, 2020). Describe how you may apply the *Ubuntu* philosophy when partnering with community leaders.
    - Probe: Describe how you engage the school leader and how you share leadership roles and responsibilities.

7. Prompt: How do you work with the community-based organization leader to accomplish a goal?

8. Prompt: Tell me about most the effective school-community-based organization partnership? What made it successful? What would have made it even better?

9. Prompt: How do you measure the success of the partnership?

10. Prompt: List some character traits about the community-based organization leader that you enjoy about this relationship.
    - Probe: Why are these character traits important?
    - Probe: What about his/her personality or behaviors do they exhibit that make this partnership enjoyable?

Interview Queries: Community and School Leaders' Leadership Similarities and Differences

RQ3: What differences and similarities are there across the perceptions of these groups of leaders, and how do those inform the development of partnerships?

1. Prompt: What distinguishes your leadership style in a school-community partnership?

2. Prompt: What leadership abilities are required when working in a school-community relationship with a student and family group that lives in a high concentration of poverty?
    - Probe: Describe the leadership skills required for school and community-based group leaders.
    - Probe: Why do you believe the talents you indicated are required for the collaboration?

3. Prompt: Does your perception of what a school leader or a leader of a community-based organization needs for school-community collaborations influence how you engage in the partnership?
    - Probe: Describe how you work with the differences and similarities of the school leader or community leaders.