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Education Management Organizations' Collaborative Leadership Practices for Low-Performing Urban Charter Schools

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MBA, Walden University, 2011

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Educators have regarded building leader-member relationships using collaboration as a fundamental component to successfully improve students' academic achievement. Ineffective collaborative leadership practices may lead to achievement deficits particularly for many urban charter schools operated by educational management organizations. The purpose of this case study was to explore collaborative leadership practices educational management organization leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. Guided by Fiedler's contingency theory, this case study explored the successful collaborative leadership practices of educational management organization leaders and school principals in a midwestern urban charter school to improve academic achievement. Data collection included semistructured interviews with 3 educational management organization leaders and 5 urban charter school principals and reviewing archival company documents. Data analysis involved coding and theming significant phrases and emerging patterns related to successful collaborative leadership practices until reaching data saturation. The emerging themes revealed included collaborative practices; academic achievement; implementation to change; school improvement; professional development; compliance and regulations; organizational culture, and community involvement. Findings from this case study resonated with Fiedler's contingency theory and indicated the significance of collaborative leadership practices. A significant positive social change implication is that the awareness of collaborative leadership practices in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools can enhance student academic achievement.

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Dedication

I must give praise to my Lord for providing the spirituality and blessing regarding the completion of my doctoral journey. There are numerous supporters throughout my doctoral journey, who have provided support, love, and guidance. I am dedicating this milestone achievement to my late parents, Rose and Calvin Sr, who lasting love, and a nurtured educational envrionment allow me to pursue my initial higher education degree completion. Lastly, my late sister, Joyce for her everlasting love, when coupled with my parents established a strong foundation of character, pride, and perservance within me.

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I want to give thanks to my Lord and Savior for his spirituality and his presence throughout my doctoral journey at Walden University. There are numerous family members, who have accended to our heavenly kingdom. I will recognize their collective roles for providing love and character growth. I am grateful for my departed grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, and departed family's friends for their collective love, critical influence in the development of my wisdom, and independence during my youth into adulthood.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

In 1974, Budde created the charter school concept to meet the unfulfilled educational needs of students (Erickson, Larwin, & Isherwood, 2013). Hung, Badejo, and Bennett (2014) argued that reasons for the establishment of charter schools were the quality of student learning and student achievement in public schools. The introduction of charter schools was an appealing school choice option for teachers, parents, and activists who were frustrated by the multiple failures of the public education system (Rubin, 2014).

Definition of the Problem

The research problem for this qualitative case study was that some Education Management Organizations (EMOs) leaders lacked collaborative leadership practices to assist school principals in improving academic achievement in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools. EMOs are operators of charter schools in 35 states and accounted for 94.6 % of students of managed charter schools in the academic year 2011-2012 (Miron & Gulosino, 2013, p. i). For-profit EMOs managed more than 800 public schools across the country and served more than 460,000 students nationwide (Miron & Gulosino, 2013, p. ii). Some authorizers exhibited a limited capacity to oversee an EMO's activities regarding the accountability for effective student achievement outcomes (Gustafson, 2013).

The most pressing leadership issues in schools are the advancement of student achievement, management of stringent testing, accountability requirements, and

achievement of accountability requirements that required a combination of management skills and collaborative leadership practices (Davis & Leon, 2014). Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) defined collaborative governance in public administration as the engagement of people across the boundaries of public agencies to promote decision-making processes. Some attributes of collaborative leadership are interaction, expertise, flexibility, commitment, responsibility, and negotiation (Jäppinen, 2014). Ljungholm (2014) added that additional aspects of collaborative management are leadership behaviors in which the leaders concentrate on building partnerships and influencing social processes, subordinate relationships, and effective leadership practices.

The responsibilities of charter school authorizers include evaluating charter school applications, overseeing charter schools, and deciding whether to renew or revoke the schools' charters (Gustafson, 2013). Goenner (2012) asserted that alpha authorizers have many responsibilities including the oversight and accountability of charter schools, development of innovative processes for groups to replicate their record of accomplishment, and assurance that charter contracts are conflict-free performance agreements. The introduction of charter schools as an education reform initiative created a completive dynamic that prompted low-performing districts to improve their leadership practices (Holley, Egalite, & Lueken, 2013).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In the state of Michigan, some EMO leaders lacked collaborative leadership practices to assist school principals in improving academic achievement in low-

performing K-12 urban charter schools (M. Shields, personal communication, March 2016). Educators used the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) assessment to measure achievement levels. MEAP is a statewide proficiency assessment test administered annually to evaluate students in math, reading, writing, social studies, and science (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). The 2014 Michigan's Charter School Authorizer Report included an analysis of students' proficiency 2013 test scores. Based on the 2014 Michigan's Charter School Authorizer Report, 24 of Michigan's authorizers underperformed (Mao & Landauer-Menchik, 2014).

Education stakeholders continue to have concerns regarding accountability and student achievement standards for underperforming schools. The Michigan Department of Education in 2013 issued a report titled Charter School Program Monitoring Report, which indicated there were 256 charter schools in Michigan serving over 119,000 students or approximately 8% of the state's total enrollment (Michigan Department of Education, 2013, p. 4). The City of Detroit Public School System authorizes 14 charter schools (Michigan Department of Education, 2013, p. 4). In Fall 2011, there were 52 charter schools operating in Detroit with an enrollment of 33,812 students accounting for nearly 34% of that city's students (Michigan Department of Education, 2013, p. 4). Charter schools operated by EMOs exhibited lower MEAP scores when compared with traditional schools within a Midwest urban region (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). Moreover, charter schools in the Midwest United States ranked below the 25th percentile on the MEAP statewide test during the school year 2012-2013 (Mao & Landauer-Menchik, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore

collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Limited research exists regarding collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders need to possess to be able to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools in a Midwest urban school community. For example, Farrell, Nayfack, Smith, and Wohlstetter (2014) conducted a qualitative study to explore how 25 Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) approached growth. Farrell et al. found that EMO leaders developed strategies to mitigate challenges based on their external policy environment and internal organizational capacity. According to Smith (2012), external barriers to the growth of CMOs in Milwaukee included the scarcity of facilities required to create purchase or leasing opportunities for charter schools.

The EMOs' intervention role includes assisting district and school leaders in developing leadership practices for improving academic achievement (Gustafson, 2013). Charter school authorization, academic disparities, and charter schools' student outcomes are policy issues that garner significant attention (Carlson, Lavery, & Witte, 2012; Santamaría, Santamaría, Webber, & Pearson, 2014). Researchers (e.g., Bandur, 2012, Bickmore & Dowell, 2011, and Carlson et al., 2012) conducted studies to explore the EMOs' intervention role further within school districts. For example, Bandur (2012) examined school-based management policy reform in Indonesia. The findings revealed how decentralization of authority can create partnerships in participatory decision-making and school mission and vision development (Bandur, 2012). Bandur also found

that devolving power and authority in schools often lead to enhanced teaching-learning environments and student achievements. Carlson, Lavery, and Witte (2012) analyzed the relationship between authorizer types and student achievement. Although the relationship was not statistically significant, a significant relationship existed between nonprofit authorizers and student achievement (Carlson et al., 2012).

Applying the critical success factors of knowledge management could improve school strategic planning, leadership, student support, and assessment of academic achievement (Cheng, 2013). Furthermore, Bickmore and Dowell (2011) examined two principals' priorities and practices of charter school leadership by using a multiple case study. The six themes identified by Bickmore and Dowell from the principals' interviews were accountability, personnel, student-related concerns, management matters, school promotions, and instructional problems. According to Bickmore and Dowell, the charter school principals focused on state testing, which may have limited their involvement in other leadership practices such as student achievement and knowledge management. Knowledge management and student achievement are important factors for successfully achieving the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This qualitative case study may aid in closing the gap in the literature because previous research did not explore the collaborative leadership practices to assist school principals in improving academic achievement in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban

charter schools to improve academic achievement. I explored the collaborative leadership practices exhibited by EMO leaders and urban charter school principals assigned to the EMO located in the Midwest region of the United States. In addition, I gained insight regarding the school principals' perceptions of the established collaborative leadership practices by using semistructured interviews.

Definitions

The following terms were central to understanding the discussion presented in this e study.

Accountability systems: Accountability systems are instruments used to ensure that all educational stakeholders meet the education reform guidelines and their obligations (Hatch, 2013).

CMOs: Charter management organizations are nonprofit organizations that operate networks of charter schools with a common mission overseen by a home office (Farrell, Wohlstetter, & Smith, 2012).

Charter school: Charter school is a state-supported public school that operates independently under an EMO or charter management organization (Arsen & Ni, 2012). Charter schools are public schools with leaders empowered to design their curriculum, create the learning environment, and create the school culture (Dempster, 2013). Charter schools are independently operated public schools within school districts to add innovative programs to the district (Gustafson, 2013).

Differentiated curricula: Differentiated curricula are the comprehensive high school aptitude and intelligence tests administer to elementary school students to determine whether each student is college bound (Groen, 2012).

Distributed leadership: Distributed leadership is an alternative to the conventional top-down leadership hierarchy, which involves attributes such as democracy, a collaboration involving communities of practice, ongoing learning, and capacity building (Margolin, 2013).

EMOs: Education management organizations are for-profit organizations overseeing the charter schools within a district (Farrell, Nayfack, Smith, & Wohlstetter, 2014).

Individual authority: Individual authority is the principal's leadership and expertise to facilitate effective and comprehensive school reform (Patterson, Campbell, Johnson, Marx, & Whitener, 2013).

Institutional authority: Institutional authority is the district's influence on the pace, form, and quality of school restructuring efforts (Patterson et al., 2013).

Magnet school choice: Magnet school choice is an alternative option for parents and students for school integration and specialized public educational opportunities in urban areas (Kim & Hwang, 2014).

Normative authority: Normative authority is leadership practice that allows teacher participation in the decision-making process regarding comprehensive school reform (Patterson et al., 2013).

Public-private partnerships: Private-public partnerships are agreements between private organizations and government agencies to meet a public need (Halqachmi, 2013).

School choice: School choice refers to parents' options in determining the nature, conduct, and content of their children's education (Dempster, 2013). School choice is the existence of alternatives to public education (Gross, 2014).

School districts: School districts are local governments with elected boards and professional management (Snow & Williamson, 2015).

School vouchers: School vouchers are public funds allocated to families assisting with payments of tuition and fees at a public or private school their children attends (Dempster, 2013).

Student oversubscription: School oversubscription is the self-selection enrollment process for charter schools when more children want to attend than there are spaces available (de Sousa, 2013).

Significance

For this study, I used a case study design to explore the role of EMOs regarding the implementation of collaborative leadership practices required to assist principals at low-performing urban-based charter school. One result may be that this study will contribute findings that may influence collaborative leadership practices for low-performing K-12 urban charter schools. The findings of this study may also provide insight into leadership practices that might help increase educator effectiveness in improving academic achievement for low-performing K-12 urban charter schools. The findings of this case study may provide an awareness of leadership strategies for EMOs

and district leaders can develop to ensure sound educational practices and enhance student learning.

The study findings may also encourage authorizers to improve collaborative leadership practices in education that could yield greater collaboration and communication methods among various stakeholders of low-performing urban schools. The results of this study may contribute to education groups and community stakeholders implementing positive changes within the educational district, urban communities, and the United States education arena. Additionally, policymakers could create legislation that could increase greater accountability standards for charter schools authorizers and EMOs, among potential legislative actions for helping low-performing urban-based charter schools enhance student achievement outcomes. This study may contribute to existing research regarding collaborative leadership practices for improving student achievement in low-performing districts and schools.

Research Question

The research questions for this case study were as follows:

RQ1: What collaborative leadership practices do EMO leaders believe they need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement?

RQ2: What collaborative leadership practices do school principals believe EMO leaders need to assist principals in low-performing K-12 urban charters schools to improve academic achievement?

Review of the Literature

The review of literature on the collaborative leadership practices of EMO organizations in low-performing urban charter schools included the following databases: (a) Education from SAGE, (b) Education Research Complete, (c) ERIC, (d) Academic Search Complete, (e) Google Scholar, and (f) ProQuest Central database. The search strings used to gather literature on the research topic consisted of using the following keywords: *history of United States education, United States education system, education reform, No Child Left Behind, adequate yearly progress, school reform, school choice, public schools, charter schools, educational management organizations, charter school authorizers, educational leadership strategies, educational leadership, school leaders, school principals, academic achievement, charter school effectiveness, accountability, student achievement,* and *charter school advancement.*

The first search for relevant literature consisted of using EMOs in each database. Charter school authorizers represented the second key search phrase descriptor utilized, which produced a significant amount of literature on EMOs and charter schools. United States education system represented the third key search phrase resulting in several topics such as a history of the education system, education reform, and school reform. The literature search included select topics regarding charter schools: (a) accountability issues for charter schools, (b) leadership in regards to charter schools, (c) education reform for charter schools, (d) student achievement issues regarding charter school, and (e) the future of charter schools. I set parameters to limit the results to peer-reviewed articles between 2011 and 2015. The fourth search consisted of reviewing articles referenced in

the initial periodicals. As a result, the literature review includes citations of 100 peer-reviewed journal articles published from between 2010 and 2016 in this literature review. The literature search strategy used consisted of peer-reviewed journals as the primary source.

The literature review begins with a detail discussion of the contingency theory relevance to this study. Following the discussion on the contingency theory is the brief overview of school reform and school choice initiatives. The next section consists of an in-depth discussion regarding charter schools including the establishment, governance, funding, and student enrollment. I provide a brief overview of the history of the development of the United States education system and a synopsis of the changes within the United States education system such as education reform, school performance, accountability measures, standardized testing, and academic achievement. Inclusive in the literature review is a detail discussion regarding EMOs and leadership in education, as well as information regarding the linkages between EMOs, educational leadership, and student academic achievement. The literature review ends with a summarization of the identified key topics and concepts from the literature.

Conceptual Framework

Many charter school authorizers and state departments lack an understanding of the leadership role of education management organizations to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. Fiedler's (1964) contingency theory served the conceptual framework for this study. The holistic view of the contingency theory is that leaders use different leadership styles in different

situations, whereas leadership effectiveness depends on the situation and the nature of the task determines the leadership modeling (Fiedler, 1964). According to Ahmed, Zgheib, Carraher, and Kowatly (2013), Fiedler began his work on the contingency theory of leadership in 1953. Altmäe, Türk, and Toomet (2013) defined Fiedler's leadership theory as the measures to analyze processes leaders use to manage individuals and conflicts. Fiedler developed the contingency theory of leader's effectiveness based on situational contingency (Altmäe, Türk, & Toomet, 2013). Fiedler believed that the organizational situation influences the preferred leadership style and organizational effectiveness (Ahmed, Zgheib, Carraher, & Kowatly, 2013).

The findings from contingency research could contribute to the understanding of the interaction between EMOs and the district and school leaders of low-performing urban charter schools. Fiedler (1964) argued that effective leader-group relations are the most important determinant of group processes, which affect team performance. For instance, Waters (2013) used the contingency theory's classification of leaders to examine how public relations leaders integrate relationship-building tactics into their public relations programs. Waters (2013) revealed that the concepts of the contingency theory link to the leadership styles enacted by individuals using stewardship strategies during public relations programming. Smirat, Abdullah, and Shariff (2014) examined the effects of organizational structure on performance and competitive strategy to extend the body of literature on the strategy-structure-performance paradigm in comparison to the resource-based view with the contingency theory.

Fiedler (1964) created the least preferred coworker scale to measure leader-member relations and a set of four traits that the leader can ascribe to the co-worker. The least preferred co-worker scale addresses the leader-follower relationship and the nature of the task at hand, in which the followers rank the leader's power as strong or weak (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2013). The most positive situations for leaders based on the least preferred coworker are when good leader-member relations, high task structure, and high position power exist (Gregoire & Arendt, 2014; Tyssen et al., 2013). Fiedler's least preferred co-worker test, which consists of 18 bipolar choices ranging from one to eight, is a tool to measure the leaders' task- or relationship-orientation (Altmäe et al., 2013). Altmäe et al. (2013) analyzed the relationship between Thomas-Kilmann's conflict management modes and Fiedler's least preferred co-worker measures. Altmäe et al. found that based on Fiedler's contingency theory and least preferred co-worker measures, task-oriented leaders tend to use more competition as the dominant conflict management modes. In contrast, relationship-oriented leaders were accommodating, and women were more competitive than the men were (Altmäe et al., 2013). According to Fiedler (1967), the achievement of job-related goals motivates a task-oriented leader, whereas task-oriented leaders emphasize task-oriented performance.

Relating to the contingency theory, EMO leaders may use their power and positions to enforce policies for achieving accountability. The three situational components of the contingency theory are the leader's influence, which is the power and authority that the position provides, the personal relations with members of the group, and the degree of structure of the task the group performs (Fiedler, 1964). EMO leaders,

school principals, and teachers may apply the key concepts of the contingency theory to build relationships with stakeholders. Based on the contingency theory, the effectiveness of organizational design arises from an alignment between the context or contingent factors and the organizational structure (Smirat, Abdullah, & Shariff, 2014).

Review of the Broader Problem

Government officials have continued to establish policies and guidelines to improve the United States education system. Many of the policies included school reform, school choice, education reform, and leadership practices. Previous researchers have found changes in educational policies and guidelines, school reform, and effective leadership practices affect student academic achievement.

School Reform

Politicians and education policy makers believe corporate school reform is an obvious solution to close the achievement gap between groups, raise test scores, and prepare students to compete in the global market corporate (Arthur, 2013). Gustafson (2013) noted that state legislators pass comprehensive school-reform laws each year because each state's charter law may create a supportive environment for professional charter-school operations. Therefore, educational leaders have embraced school reform and programs such as Teach for America's School Leadership Initiative, the New Leaders for New Schools Fellowship, and the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship designed to prepare school leaders working in the nation's lowest-performing schools (Perilla, 2014).

To implement whole school reform, stakeholders must communicate the vision consistently and clearly (Patterson et al., 2013). Gomez-Velez (2013) asserted that most people agree a need exists to strengthen and improve public education. Patterson, Campbell, Johnson, Marx, and Whitener (2013) argued district administrators, principals, and teachers should use authority including *institutional authority, individual authority,* and *normative authority* to support, implement, and monitor comprehensive school reform. Brighouse and Schouten (2014) mentioned some educational leaders use strategies for moving away from the traditional model of public education toward charter schools to reform the system. For example, New York City reorganized the existing school district structure (Gomez-Velez, 2013).

School Choice Initiatives

A prominent education reform policy in the United States is school choice (Ghosh, 2013). The choice movement for school reform provided parents with the power to choose and increased market competition (Gross, 2014; Ratliffe, 2012). Gray (2012) argued that proponents and opponents have different views regarding school choice policies; whereas proponents contend that school choice enhances learning for all children, but opponents fear that charters might drain resources from traditional public schools. Merrifield and Gray (2013) asserted that school choice advocates argue that school choice, including access to better private and public schools, could help improve the issue of socioeconomic segregation between inner city and suburban addresses. Gross (2014) added school choice reform enhanced parental choice by standardizing attendance and curriculum standards. In addition, advocates for school choice emphasize that

parental choice emphasizes improvements in school quality and parents' satisfaction with the schools (Kim & Hwang, 2014).

School choice options compel school leaders to differentiate curriculums to attract students and enhance educational programs for improving academic achievement (Kim & Hwang, 2014). Attributes many parents consider when making a school choice include the child's age, the education of the parents, the type of school, school quality, school costs, and school location (Gómez, Chumacero, & Paredes, 2012). Nor (2014) argued, regarding school choice options, that parents tend to choose schools with high achievement records.

Public school choice consists of an open-enrollment policy, in which the schools do not have a maximum limitation on the number of students attending (Kim & Hwang, 2014). Many school districts in the United States assign students to public school through manipulation via capacities and manipulation via prearranged matches (Kesten, 2012). For example, the local and state legislative officials mandated priorities for student placement in the Boston public school system, which is a one-sided school choice program (Kesten, 2012). Ghosh (2013) mentioned that Massachusetts instituted the open enrollment program allowing parents to voluntarily participate and enroll their children in public schools outside their home district to foster competition between districts and enact strategies for increase student enrollment and revenue.

Students' school choice affects long-term outcomes and influence student welfare (Green, Navarro-Paniagua, Ximénez-de-Embún., & Mancebón, 2014). For instance, Michigan's school choice policies include charter schools and interdistrict choice

programs that could promote competition and increase accountability (Arsen & Ni, 2012; Ghosh, 2013). Halqachmi (2013) asserted that charter school choice provides parents and students with a prospect to enroll in institutions with a unique learning environment, as well as providing teachers and administrators with higher levels of decision-making authority. Although Detroit parents may choose from charter schools, magnet schools, and district schools, parents tend to not have many high-quality options (Lake, Jochim, & DeArmond, 2015). Furthermore, taxpayers, parents, and policymakers need to understand the effect of the competition between charter schools on traditional public schools because the government spends billions of dollars to educate K-12 students (Gray, 2012).

Establishment of Charter Schools

The early 1990s creation of the charter school educational model was intended to support school-based reforms regarding student achievement. Although Minnesota passed the first charter law in 1991, the first charter school did not open until 1992 (Smith, 2012). Michigan was the eighth state to embrace a charter school by law (Arsen & Ni, 2012).

Charter schools are independent publicly funded schools, which are free to accept funds from public and private sources and serve as an alternative to traditional public schools (Halqachmi, 2013; Kim & Hwang, 2014). Filer and Münich (2013) noted that charter schools are hybrid institutions that public authorities own and nongovernmental agents manage. Some individuals characterize charter schools as institutions from which traditional public schools may follow for best practices and lifeboats for disadvantaged students attending failing schools (de Sousa, 2013). Kretchmar (2014) argued that charter

schools are institutions where educators can use innovation to convey successful practices back to the public school system. Charter schools provide a free education similar to traditional public schools and promote school choice (Stetson, 2013).

Several urban communities have embraced charter schools to improve the quality of public education (Erickson et al., 2013). In 2003, many Ohio educators, in the poor performing districts, became more accepting of having charter schools within the district because of the changes to the Ohio charter school law (Gray, 2012). Fishman (2015) argued that rural community's' leaders have not embraced charter schools instead rural schools use Teach for America and KIPP programs to work toward new solutions to improve school performance. Boyd, Maranto, and Rose (2014) indicated that the focus of No Excuses schools is to help disadvantaged students excel and move to an appropriate grade level, academically, by employing strict discipline, an extended average school year, and wise teacher selection. Angrist, Pathak, and Walter (2013) added that the most prominent difference between urban and nonurban charters is the no excuses approach to education that includes an emphasis on student behavior, reading and math abilities, and teacher excellence.

Charter school growth is an indication of a change in the United States public school system (Arsen & Ni, 2012). Charter-school portfolios have expanded in Cincinnati, Detroit, Memphis, Milwaukee, and Washington, D.C because of the school choice movement (Arce-Trigatti, Harris, Jabbar & Jane, 2015). For instance, New Orleans, in the 2012–13 school year, had the highest number of charter schools, Washington, D. C. had the second highest, and Detroit had the third-largest charter sector

in the United States (Lake et al., 2015, page). Pearson, McKoy, and Kingsland (2015) asserted the expansion of charter schools helped fuel discussions among advocates regarding the capitation of the number of urban charter schools in each district and state. Since 2011, several states, including Hawaii, New Mexico, Georgia, and Rhode Island, have lifted caps on charter school growth and created independent statewide charter authorizers to strengthen accountability (Gustafson, 2013). Lake, Jochim, and DeArmond (2015) noted that Michigan charter advocates believed that Detroit had too many low-performing charter schools compared to schools managed by national nonprofit charter management organizations.

Governance of Charter Schools

Management of non-state or private schools is by religious organization, a for-profit firm, or a non-profit organization (Filer & Münich, 2013). Carlson et al. (2012) explained key entrepreneurs or charismatic people initially govern many charter schools. Charter schools contract with an authorizer, which may be a private group who has oversight responsibility of a charter school and operates the charter schools (Halqachmi, 2013); Stetson, 2013).

One concern for policymakers and charter advocates is the variances in the approval process of charter schools (Goenner, 2012). In 35 states, state boards of education authorize the chartering process and adjudicate rejected charter school appeals for authorization (Carlson et al., 2012). For example, seven states employ independent state chartering boards, Minnesota and Ohio allow chartering by nonprofit organizations, and Indiana allows the mayor of Indianapolis to grant authorization of charter schools

(Carlson et al., 2012). The Minnesota department of education created an authorizer application to improve the state's ability to authorize charter schools, whereas, for Cuyahoga County, Ohio, legislators created the Cleveland Plan for establishing charter school authorizer-standards (Gustafson, 2013). Peyser (2014) stated in Boston, Massachusetts, charter school authorizers approve Horace Mann type schools, but Commonwealth charter schools receive authorization from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Davis and Raymond (2012) asserted the fate of individual charter schools is a responsibility of policymakers, in which policymakers evaluate the school effectiveness as a tool for improving student achievement. DeJarnatt (2012) noted that authorizers and overseers of charter schools are good-hearted individuals with good intentions. Preston, Goldring, Berends, and Cannata (2012) noted that charter schools have an exemption from many of the rules that public schools must follow that allow charter school principals and teachers greater autonomy. Furthermore, leadership and stakeholders throughout the education community implement a variety of other governance reforms on charter schools to improve student achievement and patron engagement (Garda & Doty, 2013).

Authorizers

A vital step in establishing charter schools is the identification of authorizers who oversee charter contracts, assess student achievement and goal fulfillment of the charter contract, renew charter contracts, and close schools with low performance (Goenner, 2012). Authorizers of charter schools include postsecondary institutions, independent

charter boards, or nonprofit organizations, and intermediate regional school agencies under state legislation with (Carlson et al., 2012; DeJarnatt, 2012). Gustafson (2013) noted as of 2011–2012 academic school years, 957 agencies served as charter school authorizers, in which 92% were within the educational establishment.

EMOs are for-profit entities, in contrast to their nonprofit counterparts known as CMOs, which operate without the demands of shareholders to generate profits (Farrell et al., 2012). Holley, Egalite, and Lueken (2013) noted the number of schools operating under CMOs increased approximately 20% annually between 1999 and 2009. Both prospective authorizers and discretionary investors recognize the average number of CMO is more than the average number of EMO charter schools (Farrell et al., 2014). Approximately 86% of charter school authorizing agents have less than five charter schools in their portfolios, and non-school-district and district authorizers have more than ten schools in their portfolios (Gustafson, 2013).

In Michigan, charter school authorizers include public universities, intermediate school districts, and all traditional K--12 districts (Lake et al., 2015). For example, Central Michigan University requires their charter schools to administer MEAP testing (Goenner, 2012). Additionally, Michigan had more than 250 charter schools educating 8% of the state's public-school students, in which Central Michigan University serves as an authorizer to 56 of the schools (Goenner, 2012). Lake et al. (2015) asserted that Detroit Public Schools is the only local charter school authorizer.

Many charter authorizers may face challenges related to governance and oversight. Farrell et al. (2014) argued that CMOs experience pressure from authorizers

and policymakers to promote rapid grow, as well as serious consequences for rapid growth and expansion in ways not outlined in the CMO's mission. Farrell et al. noted EMOs institutions such as Edison Schools face controversy over for-profit organizations running public schools. In contrast, nonprofits encounter problems with conflicts of interest between organizational leaders and board members (DeJarnatt, 2012). Some charter school authorizers, with fewer than ten charter schools in their portfolios, often failed to receive adequate training and support (Gustafson, 2013). In addition, some authorizers may lack the required resources to adopt external reviewers, performance management systems, or a demanding application process (Gustafson, 2013). Smith (2012) noted a constraint for charter school authorizers is the availability of facilities to open charter schools because the ownership of the majority of the school buildings belongs to traditional public-school districts.

The Relationship between EMOs and School District Leaders

The three most common constructive responses regarding school choice are partnerships with CMOs or EMOs (Holley et al., 2013). Halqachmi (2013) stated that public-private partnership charter schools are a factor in the development of a public entrepreneurial strategy. For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation brokered several nonaggression pacts and cross-sector partnerships with district-run institutions and charter schools (Peyser, 2014). Another example of cross-sector partnership is the partnership between Boston Public Schools and the Boston Alliance for Charter Schools for providing improved schools and broader school choices (Peyser, 2014).

Although authorizers are an essential component for the conception of charter schools, some proponents stress that charter schools need independence from a centralized management team (Carlson et al., 2012; Farrell et al., 2012). Peterson and Petrilli (2014) argued charter school authorizers have significant autonomy over their operations; therefore, charter school leaders have the freedom to innovate and take action to lead the school to achieve success. Moreover, the school district's central office is no longer the epicenter of the district's decision-making, which resulted in the decentralization of the educational landscape (Lashley, 2014). For instance, the school reforms in New York City and other cities shifted from a centralized management model to a centralized control of a decentralized model (Gomez-Velez, 2013). Furthermore, restructuring of New York City school districts facilitated a centralized school-based budgeting model of education management and decentralized uniform curriculum, and lockstep standardized testing (Gomez-Velez, 2013). Howell (2014) argued that a critical contributor in shifting the New York City central office's culture from instruction-based to accountability-based was the lack of consistent practices for interoffice networking. In contrast, Massachusetts has a highly centralized public education structure that legislators rationalized as a temporary protective structure to create competition between charter schools and locally controlled school boards (Rubin, 2014). Snow and Williamson (2015) suggested decentralization does not relieve school boards of their legal responsibilities to meet accountability to the electorate.

Decentralized budgeting has become a strategy to reform education by giving school principals and stakeholders more responsibility for allocating resources to

activities (Snow & Williamson, 2015). Gustafson (2013) added decentralized budgeting has become a strategy to reform education by giving school principals and stakeholders more responsibility for allocating resources to activities. Fishman (2015) noted large urban districts may employ staffers and consultants to focus on compliance reporting; however, rural school districts administrators often shoulder these burdens themselves. Therefore, political decentralization occurs in rural fiscally stressed school districts regarding school- level budget decisions (Snow & Williamson, 2015).

Charter School Student Funding

Some charter school authorizers charge the schools in their portfolio a fee, yet most charter school authorizers rely on private and government funding (Gustafson, 2013). In the United States, charter schools receive governmental funds, private finance, tuition income, or state aid allocation in the form of education vouchers (Filer & Münich, 2013; Halqachmi, 2013). DeJarnatt (2012) stated regulators do not focus on the financial accountability of charter schools. Arsen and Ni (2012) stated that student enrollment is a determining factor for allocation of funding to school districts and charter schools.

Charter School Student Enrollment

One in five students in United States cities attends charter schools (Pearson, McKoy, & Kingsland, 2015). In 2014, approximately 2 million students attended more than 6,000 charter schools (Peterson & Petrilli. 2014). Gustafson (2013) asserted approximately 5% of the nation's public-school students attend public charter school, and an estimated 600,000 students are on waitlists for seats to attend oversubscribed charter schools. Halqachmi (2013) stated charter schools have a median enrollment of

approximately 242 students in comparison to traditional public schools with approximately 539 students. During the 2011-2012 academic school year, one-quarter of Philadelphia's students attended charter schools instead of public schools (DeJarnatt, 2012). Carr and Decker (2015) asserted a contributor to charter student enrollment is the decline in United States Catholic schools that reopen as public charter schools. Furthermore, charter student enrollment is an opt-in process that requires the parents to apply on behalf of their child (de Sousa, 2013). Goodman (2013) mentioned that many urban minority children attend public schools run by CMOs.

School choice policies include inter- and intra-district traditional public school choice, vouchers, and charter schools (Gray, 2012). Chakrabarti (2013) argued that the most debated implements of public school reform are school choice and enrollment voucher programs, which influence parents' school choice during the application and enrollment phases. However, a detailed voucher system does not positively affect educational quality when parents ignore the information regarding school performance (Gómez et al., 2012). Michigan's school choice participation varies and occurs in the central city and low-income suburban districts (Arsen & Ni, 2012). Furthermore, some cities such as Milwaukee provide parents with school enrollment voucher plans to expand the range of choice options for low-income families (Kim & Hwang, 2014).

Butcher (2013) stated in 2011, thirteen states enacted new voucher programs for enrollment that allowed school choice for K--12 students. Moreover, Milwaukee, Wisconsin's governor expanded the city's voucher program, which is the oldest United States program (Butcher, 2013). Gómez, Chumacero, and Paredes, (2012) argued three

challenges associate with school enrollment voucher programs include: (a) the administration, (b) financing, and (c) student selection. Milwaukee and Florida publicly funded enrollment voucher programs incorporate the absence of voucher topping up, in which parents only remit the voucher for payment (Chakrabarti, 2013).

Davis and Raymond (2012) stated in most states charter schools may select students using a random lottery because of oversubscription of students. De Sousa (2013) asserted charter schools use the lottery selection to select randomly the student body from the names of students registered by their parents when student oversubscription occurs. For instance, admission to high-commitment charter schools is usually by choice or lottery selection (Brighouse & Schouten, 2014). In contrast, private schools receiving publicly funded United States vouchers must accept all students unless oversubscribed (Chakrabarti, 2013).

The United States Education System

All fifty states have compulsory schooling laws requiring that children in K–12 receive appropriate schooling (Dempster, 2013). Kivunja (2015) stated the responsibility of leaders in early childhood education settings is to ensure all educators adequately deliver high-quality services. Many school reformers argue that every student should have an equal opportunity to develop their human capital abilities (Arthur, 2013).

The focus of school instructional leadership, which emerged in North America in the 1980s, is leadership practices directly related to teaching delivery systems (Nedelcu, 2013). Mintrop (2012) argued educators have first-hand knowledge of students' needs; therefore, educators should guide students' youthful energy toward official school

knowledge. For example, a key factor in the academic success of students is a nurturing and healthy school climate such as the early childhood education setting in elementary education (Kivunja, 2015; Smith and Kearney, 2013). Cheng (2013) added a school's vision, which is the goals that stakeholders desire the school will reach in the future, provides an overview of the school's strategic plan to achieve the set goals.

Educational Leadership

The different types of leadership present in general management theory used in education include: (a) transactional, (b) transformational, (c) classical, (d) visionary, and (e) organic (Dorczak, 2012). Transactional leadership occurs when educational leaders create conditions for reaching organizational objectives through rewards and punishments, as well as develop practices to meet accountability guidelines (Dorczak, 2012). Transformational leadership inspires others to work together to create conditions for developing the organization's vision (Dorczak, 2012). Hilliard and Newsome (2013) argued principals should use transformational and distributive leadership styles by sharing leadership responsibilities with the assistant principals. Nedelcu (2013) stated the focus of distributed leadership is the co-performance of leadership practice, in which formal leaders inspire creative actions among members of the leadership group. Leadership geared towards change involves leaders and teachers working together to accomplish the organization's core objectives (Hauge Norenes, & Vedøy, 2014).

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) identified four core practices of leadership: (a) setting direction, (b) developing people, (c) redesigning the organization, and (d) managing the instructional program (Bennett, Ylimaki, Dugan, & Brunderman, 2014). To

demonstrate the core leadership practices; first learner principals provide teachers with the resources needed to avoid disturbing the status quo (Bennett et al., 2014). Leadership enables followers to implement change by setting up organizational structures within the education organization (Kivunja, 2015). Hannay, Sonia, and Earl (2013) noted district leaders have the responsibility of constructing operational strategies for managing workers' continuous organizational learning. For example, educators might enhance school leaders' quality by developing principals' leadership abilities (Goff, Edward Guthrie, Goldring, & Bickman, 2014). In addition, Hannay et al. argued a responsibility of senior management is cultivating this organizational environment. For example, the superintendent must reconfigure the role of the central office and hold the district's schools leaders accountable to the established goals in their charter contracts (Lashley, 2014). Hameiri, Nir, and Inbar (2014) argued educational leaders should place emphasis on the training of school leaders, educational policy setting, and the design of daily school routine. Moreover, school leaders should ensure that the knowledge management initiatives fit the school culture (Cheng, 2013).

The school leader's role has changed because of the increased bureaucracy structure of public education (Perilla, 2014). According to Margolin (2013), the school leader's chief role is to establish infrastructures and develop distributive leadership that allows all stakeholders to share the practice of leadership. Onorato (2013) mentioned school leaders face the same managerial tasks (e.g., managing personnel, controlling budgets, setting goals and collaborating with parents) practiced by leaders of businesses in the private industry. The superintendent of charter schools must assume

responsibilities of a chief executive officer and relinquish control regarding many operating practices to school leaders (Lashley, 2014). In contrast, Lashley (2014) stated leaders in traditional schools focus on managing the school's day-to-day operations while charter school leaders manage both the daily operations and shaping the school's trajectory of innovation. Ahmad, Salleh, Awang, and Mohamad (2013) advocated the two responsibilities of the school's principals and leaders are the development and success of a school.

Nir and Hameiri (2014) argued principals are important leaders in developing organizational behaviors within the schools because educational leaders influence school outcomes. For instance, the principal assigns teachers the responsibility to fulfill the overall objectives of the school; however, implementing an extended institutional approach to leadership is difficult (Hauge et al., 2014). Slater (2013) noted the leadership role of principals is to match resources to the needs of the school.

Effective and wise school leaders should have the ability to prepare teachers and students to deal with diverse situations (Ahmad, Salleh, Awang, & Mohamad, 2013). Jean-Marie and Sider (2014) noted a challenge that educational leaders in underdeveloped countries face the propensity to replicate policy and practices such as teacher performance appraisal, curriculum priorities, and standardized testing used in the developed countries. Future educational leaders in an accountability culture should have knowledge, leadership skills, and analytical tools to be effective leaders (Bennett et al., 2014). Ahmad et al. (2013) argued effective leaders possess social and interpersonal skills, communication skills, goal setting, and conflict resolution.

Perilla (2014) stated a prerequisite to having a successful school is an effective principal in to improve academic achievement, whereas the principal's actions attribute to 25% of students' academic outcomes. Onorato (2013) stated leadership and effective principals are vital components for the success of the schools and behaviors that influence teachers, thus affecting student achievement. Although the principals' influence does not directly affect student learning, principals have an effect on teacher motivation (Slater, 2013). Therefore, future researchers should conduct a study using a leadership development model to test the links between leadership and student achievement for Tier III schools (Bennett et al., 2014). Effective educational leadership may require stakeholders such as EMO administrators, superintendents, principals, teachers, and students working as a team using collaborative leadership practices.

Collaborative Leadership Practices

A principle of leadership is to promote and align values among members of the organization for achieving the organization's core mission (Davis & Leon, 2014). However, traditional leadership development, which consists of leaders focusing on leading within the bounded hierarchy, must change to incorporate collaborative problem-solving (Getha-Taylor & Morse, 2013). Educational administrative leaders should build relationships, empower faculty, and support innovation among faculty, staff, and students to demonstrate collaborative leadership practices (Burnette, 2015).

The collaborative governance regime may include securing endorsements, educating constituents, educating the public, enacting policy measures, deploying staff, and developing new management practices (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

Collaborative management and governance include oversight, providing resources, participatory governance, and systems thinking (Getha-Taylor & Morse, 2013). Furthermore, collaborative leadership is a process an emergent process when the stakeholders such as leaders or teachers create synergy using shared and collective endeavors, as well as teams cocreating novel leadership thinking and working practices (Jäppinen, 2014).

Education Reforms Affecting Educational Leadership

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was the most noteworthy federal education reform act, in which the federal government involvement in funding increased (Groen, 2012). Two education reforms that evolved from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act were NCLB and Race to the Top. Peterson and Ackerman (2014) mentioned that NCLB and Race to the Top rely on standardized tests for students to determine whether schools will receive rewards or financial penalties for low performance.

Lashley (2014) mentioned that the traditional structure and power of the educational landscape has changed because of education reforms. Prescher and Werle (2014) noted that before the enactment of Race to the Top and NCLB, state governments had more authority over school policies; however, the federal government acquired more authority for governing public education policy after the execution of both education reform laws. However, in public K–12 education, district leaders no longer have domination of education programming (Smith, 2012). Cheng (2013) argued school

leaders should consider enhancing their capacity in strategic planning to survive in the competitive market during educational reforms.

No Child Left Behind. President Bush envisioned NCLB as an educational reform act to address inequality in America's schools (Laursen, 2015). The most fundamental provisions of the NCLB Act was the accountability requirement all schools achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by 2014 (Bennett et al., 2014; Finnigan, Daly, & Che, 2013, United States Department of Education, 2015). Hamilton, Schwartz, Stecher, and Steele (2013) argued that the basis for the education accountability system is standards and targets for performance such as NCLB's AYP targets.

Although many states tried alternative-education governance structures, NCLB requires all states implement governance reforms for failing Title I schools and school districts (Garda & Doty, 2013). Furthermore, the guidelines of NCLB mandate schools failing to achieve AYP for 3 years face reconstitution or turnaround status resulting in district officials employing new administration and 50% of the teachers (Bennett et al., 2014). A provision of NCLB allows chronically underachieving schools to reopen as a charter school managed by a charter school operator, CMO, or EMO (Farrell et al., 2012). Meylani, Bitter, and Castaneda (2014) stated, if the school does not achieve NCLB standards basic skills assessments, the schools face punishments such as decreased funding, job losses, and management by school district administrator. For example, after four consecutive years of failure, the school must implement the corrective phase and undergo one of the NCLB listed reforms (Garda & Doty, 2013). Under the NCLB accountability provisions, states with high proficiency standards endure penalties for

having more underperforming schools, whereas schools with low standards do not receive penalties (Groen, 2012).

Race to the Top. In 2009, the Obama's administration implemented Race to the Top because of changes in the NCLB provisions (Gomez-Velez, 2013). Gomez-Velez (2013) stated Race to the Top is an educational funding initiative issued that incorporates several goals outlined in the blueprint. For instance, many states have committed to implementing the Common Core State Standards in exchange for receiving a waiver from many NCLB regulations (Peterson & Ackerman, 2015). According to Derrington (2014), K–12 leaders in a southeastern state implemented four collaborative practices to achieve meeting the Race-to-the-Top guidelines: (a) increased instructional leadership, (b) supportive superintendent strategies, (c) time and training tensions, and (d) unintended consequences. Hamilton et al. (2013) argued many states and districts developed their school rating systems because of the limitations of the guidelines of Race to the Top and NCLB. Halqachmi (2013) stated charter schools with lower performance than comparable public schools usually have 3 to 5 years to achieve academic performance.

School Performance

School performance is a national problem that has increased for low-performing schools with a concentrated population of children from low-income families (Reyes & Garcia, 2014). Cheng (2013) stated that many changes in education have dramatically influenced schools performance and the flexibility of teaching, whereas teaching has become more analytical. Filer and Münich (2013) argued that some private schools' performance have increased whereas some similarly situated public schools have

demonstrated a worse achievement rate in their primary educational mission. For example, Filer and Münich (2013) found that public schools that face competition from private institutions improve their performance. In contrast, Dobbie and Fryer (2013) provided evidence relating to the determinants of school effectiveness such as classroom size, per-pupil expenses, and teacher training. According to Dobbie and Fryer, there was no correlation between the determinants and school effectiveness.

Methods to measure school performance include achievement in additional subjects, longer-term measures of college, instructional quality, and career readiness (Hamilton, Schwartz, Stecher, & Steele, 2013). For instance, the Arizona Department of Education uses a letter grade system (Bennett et al., 2014). Hamilton et al. (2013) stated The Consortium on Chicago School Research developed a performance rating system to determine whether students are *on track* to complete high school. Hamilton et al. noted under the Consortium on Chicago School Research performance policy for high schools, the classification of *on track* referred to first-time freshman students who accumulated, at least, five-course credits and failed no more than one semester in a core subject. Hemmer, Madsen, and Torres (2013) noted the expansion of alternative education concurred with the move toward accountability.

Accountability Measures

During this era of accountability in education, a need exists for better understanding the importance of student, teacher, and school data (Gullo, 2013). Many countries around the world have embarked on initiatives such as specific educational outcomes, a national test system, and school performance evaluations to increase

accountability (Hatch, 2013). Hamilton et al. (2013) stated the four categories of school-level measures are monitoring, diagnosis and prescription, signaling, and accountability. Educational stakeholders continue to search for strategies to encourage positive school accountability and student achievement (Smith & Kearney, 2013). For example, Hart and Figlio (2015) examined the effect of Florida's accountability policies on the kindergarten student body composition in which school grades and new information may affect student sorting. However, US educational leaders have not embraced the idea to close schools failing to meet accountability standards instead the initial school turnaround by removing the principal and requiring teachers to reapply for their positions (Louis, 2013).

Districts' legislators and board members in the United States have taken a different perspective on low-performance by combining accountability with support for improvement (Louis, 2013). For instance, the new accountability policies include performance rewards through new teacher and principal evaluations and compensation systems (Hamilton et al., 2013). Onorato (2013) noted educational leaders administer leadership evaluations to assess educational leaders' performance and schools' accountability. Teachers do not find accountability attractive; therefore, school leaders and teachers may conspire to hinder the implementation of educational reform regarding accountability (Bonesrønning, 2013). Nunes, Reis, and Seabra (2015) stated accountability policies vary from the low-stakes policies to or consequential systems, whereas school funding and teachers' salaries depend on student performance. Furthermore, educators assume that a one-size-fits-all assessment model is the most appropriate method for formal assessments and educational decision-making (Gullo,

2013). Ratliffe (2012) argued that many educators complain about the inadequacies of standards-based practices and standardized tests to measure school success.

Standardized Testing and Student Academic Achievement

Gullo (2013) stated that American's education system has a long history of testing, which began during the colonial period when student demonstrated academic preparation and mastery of the curriculum orally. Since the late 1990's, the evaluation of schools for accountability based on student performance on standardized tests has grown in the United States public education system (Craig, Imberman, & Perdue, 2015; Mintrop, 2012). Nunes et al. (2015) asserted many countries and the United States have introduced accountability in schools to increase their performance because of inadequate student achievement results on internationally comparable exams.

The test-based accountability reforms have a profound influence on the cultures and practices of the United States' school districts (Hamilton et al., 2013). States have the right to set their accountability standards, and assessment test has lowered the proficiency bar to avoid penalties for low-performing schools, whereas school district leaders have established accountability measures to monitor the performance of schools (Carlson et al.; Groen, 2012). Mintrop (2012) added the weightiest component of California's accountability system is the California Standards Tests, in which the state computes the academic performance index. In 2012, Excellent Schools Detroit began grading publicly funded schools, whereas the coalition graded 16% of the city's public schools a C+ or higher in 2014 based on academic status, academic progress, and school climate (Lake et al., 2015).

Green, Navarro-Paniagua, Ximénez-de-Embún, and Mancebón (2014) mentioned one significant factor for the comparing the performance between school students attending public, private, or Catholic schools has been standardized test scores. Furthermore, charter schools and traditional schools have to demonstrate effective student achievement, leadership management, and accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Halqachmi (2013) added that regulations regarding accountability differ for charter schools from the traditional public schools. To ensure charter schools meet accountability, charter school authorizers limit the time for licensing, and renewal depends on the results of an assessment of goal achievement (Halqachmi, 2013).

Schoolteachers administer statewide tests near the end of the year to determine which students advance to the next grade level or remain at the current grade level (Hamilton et al., 2013; Meylani, Bitter, & Castaneda, 2014). Classroom teachers with access to student data systems face barriers to attaining the data they need for student assessment, whereas some teachers with access may lack the training to use data queries to extract pertinent data from the systems (Gullo, 2013). Teachers face substantial pressure to raise students' test scores because the students' test scores impact school's success rating and major decisions relating to teacher and student retention, funding, accreditation, and administrative governance (Meylani et al., 2014).

Adequate Yearly Progress

District leaders in the United States use comprehensive school reform providers because many schools continue to struggle to achieve AYP targets (Patterson et al., 2013). Each state receives a grade based on the differential between the percentages of

students identified as proficient and the percentages identified by National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) on the 4th- and 8th-grade math and reading exams (Peterson & Ackerman, 2015). In 2011, NAEP identified only 35% of the United States 8th graders as proficient in math (Peterson & Kaplan, 2013). District officials notify parents and the community of which schools fail to achieve adequate yearly progress (Reyes & Garcia, 2014).

School districts failing to achieve AYP become an institution in need of improvement and face a series of progressive sanctions (Finnigan et al., 2013). Garda and Doty (2013) explained Title I schools that receive funding and do not achieve AYP face increasingly harsh sanctions each year they fail. The school leaders must develop a revised 2-year school improvement plan to avoid dismantling in the summer of year two of failing when schools fail to meet AYP consecutively (Reyes & Garcia, 2014). Parents and stakeholders have high expectations regarding AYP; therefore, school leaders and education authorities should want the schools in their communities to receive high achievement ratings (Nor, 2014).

Charter Schools and Academic Achievement

The 1960s War on Poverty programs laid the foundation for altering curriculum and assessment practices of American educational institutions (Groen, 2012). According to Hung et al. (2014), motivating factors for student achievement consist of flexible school structure, support systems, rewards, and positive student-teacher relationships. Rice, Trafimow, and Kraemer (2012) added that systematic factors such as strategy, knowledge, and motivation might influence student performance.

Under Title I, states must create academic content standards for reading and mathematics (Groen, 2012). Shaha, Glassett, Copas, and Ellsworth (2015) noted Title I students are the most challenging group for achieving academic performance. According to Angrist et al. (2013), minority students that reside in high-poverty areas have the potential to excel academically at urban charter schools. Erickson, Larwin, and Isherwood (2013) argued that charter schools might contribute to improved students' performance by providing effective classroom environments, hiring effective teachers, or attracting motivate students. For instance, high-commitment charter schools embrace an educational mission to provide a first-rate education to disadvantaged students (Brighouse & Schouten, 2014). Erickson et al. (2013) suggested that charter school students score higher on math and reading standardized tests than students in traditional public schools perform.

Hilliard and Newsome (2013) emphasized that schools do not receive a vote of confidence when students' performance is below national standards, because of the demand for high-level performance and improvement of higher student achievement. According to Nor (2014), when schools in their districts receive a grading as an effective school, members of the community and parents show pride. In contrast, parents express emotions such as anger and displeasure when the school's achievement is below the national average (Nor, 2014).

Literature Review Summary

Researchers have conducted studies regarding the efficiency of leadership practices employed in education. For example, Ahmad et al. (2013) investigated the

efficacy of principals' leadership wisdom. The Senior Assistants' had high perceptions of the principals' practices of leadership wisdom and the principals' application of knowledge to benefit the staff and school (Ahmad et al., 2013). Dorczak (2012) described different ways of understanding leadership and educational leadership as a central value of educational organizations. Educators have used the concept and paradigms of leadership to build an understanding of leadership in educational contexts (Dorczak, 2012).

Menon (2014) investigated the link between transformational leadership behaviors, teachers' perceptions of leader effectiveness, and teachers' job satisfaction. Menon used the multifactor leadership questionnaire to measure leadership behaviors based on the full range model of leadership. According to Menon, a significant relationship existed between the teachers' perceptions of leader effectiveness and leadership behaviors identified based on the full range model of leadership. Pounder (2014) conducted a study to indicate that transformational classroom leadership has considerable benefits regarding enhancing the quality of the students' classroom experiences. The research findings revealed that transformational classroom leadership was beneficial to both teachers and students in the classroom (Pounder, 2014). Duignan (2014) asserted although there is no coherent body of literature on the development of the concept of authentic leadership, authentic leaders operate in a world of standards, assessments, and accountability. Duignan investigated the evolution of the concept of authentic leadership in educational administration. Hameiri et al. (2014) examined the extent public school principals experienced role uncertainty and risk on the job.

According to Hameiri et al., on the job risk and role uncertainty were significant characteristics of the public school environment, whereas leaders using a transformational leadership style promote school effectiveness.

Researchers focused on the importance of leaders and management relationships. Brooks and Sutherland (2014) conducted a case study to explore the school leaders in the Southern Philippines' perspectives on local dynamics that facilitate and impede meaningful educational change. The principals' ability to establish a meaningful relationship with both school system and government officials was a significant factor to facilitate positive change (Brooks & Sutherland, 2014). Sider and Jean-Marie (2014) research focused on the importance of social and professional networks, barriers, and opportunities to innovative practice, as well as educational partnerships within Haiti. To encourage and facilitate innovation, Haitian principals build a trusting climate with all stakeholders (Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014).

Ghosh (2013) examined the factors that influence school districts leaders' decision to participate in Massachusetts' open enrollment program. The results showed the participation decisions of neighboring district leaders positively affect other leaders' probability of participation (Ghosh, 2013). Gómez et al. (2012) assessed the effect of public information of school quality on the school choice by parents. Gómez et al. indicated that school performance is an important determinant of school choice.

Holme, Carkhum, and Rangel (2013) illustrated that competition between traditional public schools and alternative schools do not always result in a productive change in low-performing schools. According to Holme et al., traditional public schools

lose a significant number of students because of the competition with choice high schools in the urban school cluster. According to Arsen and Ni (2012), the competition between charter schools and public schools does not affect the standard measures of district resource allocation in Michigan schools. Craig, Imberman, and Perdue (2015) examined the resource reallocation process that school administrators may use in response to marginal changes in accountability ratings. Craig et al. found evidence suggesting that administrators rewarded schools with higher ratings more funds and reprimanded lower performing schools.

Farrell (2014) examined the process school district leaders and CMOs use to allocate organizational resources. According to Farrell, leaders make decisions regarding the patterns of data use based on accountability and other organizational conditions to determine the systems' mobilization of resources. Adeyemi (2014) compared the academic performance of private and public primary schools using a structured questionnaire and Pupils' Achievement Test in three core subject areas. Adeyemi found that students in the private primary schools performed better than in the public schools. According to Adeyemi, educational leaders need to improve the public schools to enhance the learning opportunity. Bennett, Ylimaki, Dugan, and Brunderman (2014) conducted a mixed-method study to examine Arizona principals' leadership practices in Tier III schools. Bennett et al. found that schools were not at high levels of the capacity building. Klar and Brewer (2014) present a case study of successful school leadership at a rural, high-poverty school in the Southeastern United States to identify how educators adapted to particular leadership practices and beliefs to increase student achievement.

The practices, which lead to students achieving significantly higher on state standardized tests, were bonding as a family and repeatedly participating in service learning activities (Klar & Brewer, 2014).

Implications

Understanding leadership strategies that EMOs' exhibited to prove success in the turnaround of low-performing urban-based charter schools may benefit administrators, educators, parents or guardians, and community stakeholders. Additionally, policymakers can provide legislative support to aid student accountability outcomes within an urban-based charter school based on best practices, including student achievement outcomes that may validate effective leadership strategies exhibited by EMOs and school principals for low-performing urban schools. Further, professional development leadership training can benefit school leaders, whom may benefit from the observations and findings from this project study for the 21st Century global learning community.

Summary

The study project methodology presented in Section 1 addressed the study problem from a local and national perspective regarding EMOs' leadership strategies for low-performing urban-based charter schools. Section 1 consisted of a discussion of the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the guiding research questions. Inclusive in Section 1 is a review of supportive literature about the EMOs' collaborative leadership practices to assist school principals of low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. Additionally, I provided a brief synopsis of the significance of the study in Section 1.

Section 2 comprises the rationale for research approach and design. Section 2 also includes the procedures for participants' identification, procedures for recruitment participation, the role of the researcher, and ethical research measures. In Section 2, I discuss the data collection instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. I conclude Section 2 with the data analysis, reliability, validity, ethical measures, and a brief summary.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The intent of this case study was to explore the collaborative leadership practices to assist school principals in urban charter schools to improve academic achievement in low-performing schools. Section 2 consists of the rationale for the study, a restatement of the problem, and the research questions. The subsections of Section 2 include the research design, research method, role of the researcher, study participants selection criteria, and the rationale for the selection of participates. Included in Section 2 are the details regarding the data collection instruments, data collection technique, data analysis technique, data organization, informed consent, and ethical research. Section 2 will conclude with subsections regarding reliability and validity.

Qualitative Research Approach and Design

The three research methodologies are the qualitative approach, quantitative approach, and mixed methods approach (Merriam, 2015). Researchers use qualitative methods to focus on the participants' perspective (Knoblauch, 2013). Although qualitative research moved to the mainstream, some researchers have biases about using qualitative methods to address important research questions (Bailey, 2014). Quantitative studies contain research questions that include regarding variables often as regression equations (Stake, 2013). The research questions for this study were as follows:

RQ1: What collaborative leadership practices do EMO leaders believe they need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement?

RQ2: What collaborative leadership practices do school principals believe EMO leaders need to assist principals in low-performing K-12 urban charters schools to improve academic achievement?

Research Approach

I used the qualitative methodology for this case study. The implementation of the qualitative methodology allowed me to explore the collaborative leadership practices implemented by EMOs and address the study research questions from the participants' perspective. Qualitative studies allow researchers to capture participants' experiences and perceptions (Bristowe, Selman, & Murtagh, 2015). Qualitative methods often explored participants' perceptions from participants to gain insights and claims regarding the phenomenon (Carrera-Fernandez, Guardia-Olmos, & Pero-Cebollero, 2013). Qualitative research is a methodology where the researcher anticipates analyzing how people use a particular concept, the underlying ideas through which people understand, and explain their world and get examples of how they are used (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Qualitative research is inductive and exploratory (Patton, 2015). One assumption regarding qualitative methods is that researcher should only use qualitative data in areas of nascent theory when studying an imperative perspective (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2014).

Other research methods considered for this study were quantitative and mixed methods. Quantitative research methodology requires the manipulation of variables and a deductive reasoning based on a hypothesis (Bernard, 2013). The quantitative method was inappropriate because, I chose to explore and understand the phenomenon under review from the participant's perception. Quantitative researchers gather empirical data for a

statistical generalization to a specific population and sample (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Qualitative researchers prioritize depth and quality of data collected, whereas quantitative investigators emphasize numerical statistics (Anyan, 2013).

I chose not to use the mixed methods, which includes both quantitative and qualitative research. Mixed method integrates the most appropriate techniques from qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the phenomenon of interest more thoroughly (Zohrabi, 2013). A distinction between qualitative and quantitative methodology is the use of less structural and homogenous tradition (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). A comparison between quantitative and qualitative research a key difference is that qualitative researchers elaborate upon pattern and meaning within the collected data, whereas quantitative researchers investigate predictor variables within a sample of the population (Bristowe et al., 2015). Therefore, the mixed method approach was unsuitable for this study.

Research Design

I conducted a qualitative case study. The case study research is appropriate to understanding in-depth a social, organization, or individual phenomenon associated with a research issue within real-life content (Yin, 2014). Case studies are an analysis of persons, events, policies, institutions, or other systems (Merriam, 2015). Case studies are a unit of analysis in qualitative research (Bristowe et al., 2015). A single case study in theoretical or practical terms entails researching issues of general public interest (Yazan, 2015). Case study consists of understanding social phenomena, real life experience of individuals, and existential situations (Almutairi, Gardner, & McCarthy, 2014).

Furthermore, the case study researcher significantly departs from designs of experiments and tests, and focus on studying the participants' perceptions regarding of the phenomenon under study (Stake, 2013). Researchers often use the case study approach to gather information on a phenomenon to address how or why questions (Singh, 2014). The implementation of the case study design addressed the study research questions from the participants' experiences in a real-life context as situations occurred.

Qualitative methods consist of five research designs are case study, phenomenology, narrative, ethnography, and grounded theory (Bernard, 2013). The second research design considered appropriate for this study was the phenomenology approach. The phenomenology design is to discover the essence of the phenomenon from the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology research design is the study of lived experiences of individuals (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013). Phenomenological researcher seeks the discovery of the meaning of a particular phenomenon with acknowledging that there is a need to understand a particular phenomenon from the lived experience of the participants (Bevan, 2014). A phenomenology design was inappropriate because this study's focus is the participants' experiences in a real-life context versus lived experiences.

I also considered the narrative design. The narrative research represents a form of qualitative design for exploring one or more individuals' personal reflection of chronological events (Potter, 2013). Researchers employ the narrative design to explore the stories of events from the participants' perspectives (Khan, 2014b). Using a narrative design offers researchers an innovative and holistic approach to a better understand socio-

ecological systems (Paschen & Ison, 2014). Narrative research was not applicable for this study since the research did not focus on storytelling recollection.

Ethnography researchers examine the shared patterns within cultural groups through actively engaging with the participants using observations and interviews (Astalin, 2013). The ethnographic research intends to analyze a culture understudied and the key event affecting the culture studied (Owen, 2014). Ethnographies consist of exploring specific sub-groups' perspectives within the individuals' cultural setting (Higginbottom, Pillay, & Boadu, 2013). I chose not to use the ethnographic design because the design's focus is a cultural group's shared patterns observed over a long timeframe in a group setting to explore the group's interactions (Hampshire, 2014).

The last design considered was the grounded theory approach. Qualitative researchers use grounded theory to generate a theory from collected data rather than empirical theory testing (Khan, 2014a). Grounded theory is the qualitative approach where theories emerge inductively from the research process (Bendassolli, 2013). Qualitative researchers use grounded theory to study a phenomenon and generate new or uninvestigated theories in settings that lacked ecological validity (Bristowe et al., 2015). The grounded theory design was not relevant to the study because the focus was not to explain and develop a theory from the viewpoint of the participant.

Participants and Sampling

The population available within the urban charter schools included EMO leaders and school principals. The study's participants included three leaders from an EMO and five school principals under the leadership of the EMO organization. The participants

meet the following criteria: (a) EMO leaders at an EMO organization and (b) principal at an urban charter school authorized by the EMO located in Detroit, Michigan. Thus, the selection process did not target vulnerable populations. Qualitative research requires the participants to be activity engaged during the research process (Cairney & St Denny, 2015).

The selection process consisted of purposive sampling. I researched the state department of education website for a listing of EMOs in Michigan. Researchers use purposeful sampling in qualitative research to identify and select individuals that can provide rich information related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2013). Purposeful sampling is a non-random technique to ensure the selected cases or participants represent the general population (Robinson, 2014). Qualitative researchers may use purposeful sampling for gathering in-depth information applicable to a specific population and issue (Higginbottom et al., 2013).

A four-point approach to qualitative sampling includes defining a sample, the sample size, the sampling strategy, and recruitment of participants from the sample size (Robinson, 2014). The rationale for selection of three leaders from an EMO and five school principals under the leadership of the EMO was that EMO's leaders and school principals would provide information for in-depth understanding regarding this study's research questions. Single cases should typically contain five or more participants (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2013). The qualitative researcher uses a small sample size of five to more individuals because they do not focus on generalizability

(Johnson, 2014). When conducting qualitative research, both theoretical and practical considerations influence the sample size (Robinson, 2014).

To gain access to the participants, I contacted the leadership at the EMOs' central office via telephone to explain the intent of the study and their role as a community partner. The EMO official received an e-mailed letter of permission (a) explaining the intent of the study and the manager's role as a community partner, (b) requesting permission to perform research and (c) seeking confirmation of the agreement (see Appendix B). Effective communications exhibited by researchers contribute to the understanding of the study's purpose (Siriwardhana, Adikari, Jayaweera, & Sumathipala, 2013).

Upon approval of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research, the leadership at the EMOs' central office received a hand-delivered copy of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter. The IRB's job is to assure researchers employ ethical research practices relating to human subjects' (Musoba, Jacob, & Robinson, 2014). The leadership at the EMOs' central office provided a listing of the names and contact information of five EMO leaders and eight school principals under the EMO supervision.

To establish a relationship with participants, I visited the EMO leaders and school principals to explain the intent of the study and hand-deliver invitations of participation to the EMO leaders without interrupting daily workflow process (see Appendix C). When the researcher relies on interviews, building a trusting relationship with the interviewees is important (Singh, 2014). The researcher discusses

methodological issues and establishes trust and confidentiality to obtain significant data during the interview (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014). The researcher establishes trustworthiness by using dialogue to discuss the intent of the research and process with the participants (Siriwardhana et al., 2013). Participants had my contact information if they needed additional information or to withdraw from the study. I received responses from three EMO leaders and five school principals expressing their interest in participating.

I interviewed participants until data saturation occurred by conducting follow-up interviews and analyzing data during the collection process. Researchers achieve saturation when data collection ceases to produce any new information or emerging themes (Bernard, 2013). Qualitative researchers typically conclude the adequacy of their sample is dependent on saturation (Morse, 2015). Saturation is a measure used to ensure the researcher has adequate and quality data to support the study's reliability (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Ethical Research with Participants

After receiving Walden's IRB approval (2016.10.1717:37:57-05'00') to conduct research, the EMO key official received a hand-delivered copy of Walden University's IRB approval letter. The leadership at the EMOs' central office provided a listing of the names of organizational leaders and principals. I visited EMO leaders and school principals to explain the intent of the study and the process for participation without interrupting daily workflow process. IRBs supervise the ethical and regulatory aspects of research involving human subjects (Lee et al., 2013). External ethical engagement refers

informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity, which researchers address when submitting their application for ethical approval (Lunnay, Borlagdan, McNaughton, & Ward, 2015). Important components for the researcher to include are the significance of the study, agreement from management, and the importance of data to the respondents (Singh, 2014). EMO leaders and schools principals of low-performing urban charter elementary schools within the EMO key officials' district received an invitation for participation (see Appendix C). The researcher prepares a research information package to share at the introductory meeting or send beforehand in an email (Wahyuni, 2012). I explained to all individuals that participation is voluntary and they have the option to withdraw without penalty via email or telephone. Provisions for voluntary participation and withdrawal were inclusive in the letter of permission to perform research (see Appendix B), an invitation to participate (see Appendix C), and consent form. Participants did not receive any incentives for participation.

After receipt of individuals' responses to participate, I scheduled face-to-face semistructured interviews. Participants received and signed the consent form before the interview proceedings. The informed consent form included details of the research topic, selection criteria, risks, and benefits of the study. Participants should read the consent before the interviews (Killawi et al., 2014). Informed consent document represents the study participant's voluntary consent to participate in research that is fundamental to the principle of autonomy (Ghooi, 2014). Review of archival documents obtained from the president at the EMOs' central office occurred after the semistructured interviews.

I informed participants stating the intentions to maintain their confidentiality and protect their identity in the study, as well as the need to internally protect the rights and privacy of individuals and the EMO. The qualitative researcher depends on building trust with the participants based on the researcher's promise of confidentiality as a core commitment (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013). Participants' gender, race, ethnicity, and personal demographic information were not factors in this research study; participants did not provide this information. To hide their identities, pseudonym names such as *P1* to *P3* for school principals and *EML1* to *EMLT3* for the EMO's key leaders. I retained the connection between the identifier link such as the pseudonym P1 and EML1 and the data until completion of member checking to identify those participants who withdraw from the study. The letter of permission, an invitation to participate, and consent forms included a statement about the rationale for maintaining a linkage between the identifier and interview data until completion of member checking. If a participant withdrew, I destroyed all data and identifiers linking the participant to the study. Replacing the names of case organizations with pseudonyms is important to ensure confidentiality (Wahyuni, 2012). The use of pseudonyms helps to maximize researchers' abilities to conduct ethical research (Lahman et al., 2015).

I will maintain and store collected data using a password-protected external drive and archival documents for 5 years in a locked file cabinet at my office. After 5 years, I will destroy the data by employing a professional shredding company and erasing all information on the external drive. Ethical research practices include storing collected data

in a secured location such as a locked file cabinet or password-protected computer (Wahyuni, 2012).

Qualitative Data Collection

The main task when conducting research is a selection of the data collection method (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). Qualitative data collection methodologies represent iteratively and a constant comparison of data analyses (Rimando et al., 2015). The iterative methodologies of qualitative research consist of framework collection, data collection, and data analysis (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013).

Data Collection Instruments

As the researcher, I served as the primary instrument of data collection interacting with participants by conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing archival company documents. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the instrument for data collection and the completion of data analysis (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Qualitative researchers use multiple sources for data collection. As the primary data collection instrument, I conducted this case study using face-to-face semistructured interviews and reviews of archival school documents. Qualitative studies data collection techniques include interviews, focus groups, and observations (Rimando et al., 2015). Data collection instruments may include a recruitment script, an interview guide, and a written consent (Killawi et al., 2014). Data collection for a case study collection included semistructured interviews, the researcher's journal, documents, and archival records (Astalin, 2013).

The data collection process included a review of archival documents and semistructured interviews for 4 weeks. Face-to-face semistructured interviews using open-ended questions served as the second data collection instrument. Using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions (see Appendix D) assisted with gaining an in-depth understanding of the collaborative leadership practices of EMO leaders' experiences in a real-life context. Semistructured interviews incorporating open-ended questions (see Appendix E) with the school principals provided insight into the understanding of EMOs collaborative leadership practices to assist district and school principals from the participants as the situations occur. Interviews are a means of data collection in qualitative research (Harvey, 2015). Researchers use individual interviews to explore in-depth the experiences or views of participants (Pierre & Jackson, 2014).

The qualitative study typically applied open-ended and less structured questions in seeking to understand the phenomenon from the participant's perceptions (Merriam, 2015). Semistructured interview data collection provided for a prepared list of questions, in addition to probe add-on inquires (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The EMO leaders answered the following open-ended interview questions:

1. What is the most significant challenge you have encountered as an EMO leader regarding student achievement in low-performing urban charter schools?
2. What collaborative leadership strategies have the EMO officials implemented to assist school principals of low-performing urban charter schools to improve student academic achievement?

3. What collaborative leadership strategies have you implemented to assist low-performing urban charter school principals to improve student academic achievement?
4. How would you describe the changes in academic achievement based on the implemented initiatives?
5. What additional leadership practices have you implemented to focus on student academic achievement?
6. Would you like to add any additional information regarding collaborative practices or student achievement?

The school principals answered the following open-ended interview questions:

1. What is the most significant challenge you have experienced as a principal in low-performing urban charter school relating to student achievement?
2. What collaborative leadership strategies have EMO leaders implemented to assist you to improve student academic achievement?
3. How would you describe the effectiveness of the EMO implemented strategies or programs to improve student achievement?
4. What collaborative leadership practices have you implemented to improve student achievement at your school site?
5. How would you describe the changes in academic achievement based on your implemented initiatives for improving academic achievement at your school site?

6. Would you like to add any additional information regarding collaborative practices or student achievement?

As the researcher, I followed the study's designed interview protocol (see Appendix F). The interview protocol served as a guide for conducting semistructured interviews. According to Stake (2010), qualitative researchers using interviews need marginal experience when using an interview protocol. Researchers use the interview protocol as a guide (De Ceunynck, Kusumastuti, Hannes, Janssens, & Wets, 2013).

An additional data collection instrument was the review of archival documents such as archival documents such as policy procedures manuals regarding leadership practices. I requested a copy of policy procedures manuals from the leadership at the EMOs' central office. Document review incurred approximately 3 hours after completion of interviews and member checking processes. The review of archival documents assisted with corroboration of the data from the participants' interview responses. According to Yin (2014), researchers use archival documents in a case study to corroborate the themes from interviews. Physical materials and documents artifacts provide a good check on information obtain from interviews or surveys (Merriam, 2015). Researchers use both public and private documents while conducting the single-case study research as a primary or secondary source of data collection (Merriam, 2015). The use of documentation serves a threefold purpose in qualitative research, (a) verification of the collected data, (b) documents reviews can corroborate information from other sources, and (c) documentation reviews can assist in generating additional research questions regarding organizational and communication relations (Yin, 2014).

Data Collection Technique

Data collection began after the submission of documents for Walden's IRB approval to conduct research. Ethical procedures require researchers to present relevant information to the IRB about the study for obtaining approval to conduct research (Johnson, 2014). After receiving Walden University's IRB approval to conduct research, I hand delivered a copy of the IRB approval with the leadership at the EMOs' central office. The leadership at the EMOs' central office provided a listing of the names of organizational leaders and principals, as well as archival documents for review. I visited the EMO leaders and principals to explain the intent of the study and hand-deliver invitations of participation without interrupting daily workflow process (see Appendix C). The invitation letter included a statement of approval from the leadership at the EMOs' central office to recruit EMO leaders and school principals.

During the visit, the potential participants expressed that gratitude for having the opportunity to assist me with my research. For instance, an EMO leader stated: "I am glad someone is providing a forum for charter school management to increase individuals' awareness about the governance of charter schools." Two school principals immediately agreed to participate once they received the official letter of invitation.

I utilized multiple techniques to include semistructured interviews and review of archival documents. Researchers using the case study approach employ multiple sources such as semistructured interviews, document review, archival records, and observations for data collection (Singh, 2014). Case study researchers use interviews and document to collect data and gain an understanding of the case (Born & Preston, 2016; Cleary et al.,

2014). The use of responsive interviewing and document analysis represents a blended methodology to gain a rich understanding (Owen, 2014). The main purpose of the interview is to allow the interviewees to share their perspectives and experiences (Wahyuni, 2012). The interview machine as an epistemological apparatus works in a systematic and orderly fashion while using the question-answer format; this mechanism regulates the flow of conversation (Jamshed, 2014). Researchers use documentation as secondary data to gather information relevant to the topic (Wahyuni, 2012).

Data collection occurred for 3 weeks for interviews and 1 week for archival document review. Once EMO leaders and school principals responded to the letter of invitation via email or telephone, I scheduled semistructured face-to-face interviews. To accommodate the participants, they provided the best dates and times for interviews to avoid interference with workflow. Researchers conduct interviews either face-to-face, by telephone, or via the internet (Namageyo-Funa et al., 2014). When conducting a case study, the primarily collected data is typically semistructured interviews (Wahyuni, 2012). Qualitative researchers collect data using semistructured interviews with questions relevant to the research questions (Higginbottom et al., 2013).

I conducted interviews in the natural settings of the participant's work area such as at the EMO's corporate office or principal's office without disruptive regarding work climate for each participant. Interviews with two EMO leaders occurred in their offices while one EMO leader rescheduled to meet offsite. The interview setting for the principals was a small conference room at the principals' campus location. Researchers conduct participants' interviews at the participants' worksite for the convenience of the

participants (Phiri, Mulaudzi, & Heyns, 2015). The interviewer may look at the interview situation from several perspectives to control for the power imbalances in data collection (Anyan, 2013). The study's interview protocol will serve as a guide to the data collection (see Appendix F). When conducting semistructured interviews, researchers use predetermined areas of interest and a guide (Platt & Skowron, 2013).

The key to establishing a favorable interview climate is trust and full study disclosure explanations before the initiation of the interviews. Before commencing the interview, I informed participants that the purpose of audio recording of interviews with the participants' approvals was to ensure capturing of all the interviewees' responses and the accuracy of the information. Researchers record interviews to allow ease of verbatim transcription and review during data analysis (Higginbottom et al., 2013). Researchers may record interviews with the participant's permission (Wahyuni, 2012). The audio-recorded interviews may last between 30 to 60 minutes in duration with appropriate follow-up probes. Researchers record interviews because semistructured interviews may take 30 and 90 minutes to complete (Newenham-Kahindi, 2015).

Face-to-face semistructured interviews consisted of using open-ended questions to explore EMO leader's' experiences regarding collaborative leadership practices for improving academic achievement with low-performing urban charter schools (see Appendix D). School site principals' answered open-ended questions to provide insight into their perspective of EMO leaders collaborative leadership practices (see Appendix E). Qualitative data consist of open-ended, concrete, and vivid perceptions of the phenomenon (Yilmaz, 2013). The interview question format typically consists of the

main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Owen, 2014). The interviewer asks questions that allow the subject to embellish on a previous story, or to give more detail on the meanings of an important experience (Jansen, 2015). The semistructured interview is flexible in formatting and designed to understand and explore the study research questions (Merriam, 2015). Participants signed the consent form at the time of the interview. Interviewees receive a consent form that both the person and researcher sign before the interview (Wahyuni, 2012). I informed participants stating the intentions to maintain their confidentiality and protect their identity in the study, as well as the need to internally protect the rights and privacy of individuals and the EMO. To build trust, I began the interview recording by identifying each participant using the assigned pseudonym for the person. For instance, the principals relaxed and freely shared information knowing I was using a pseudonym versus their actual names.

To protect the confidentiality and identity of participants, I used pseudonym names such as *P1* to *P3* for school principals and *EML1* to *EMLT3* for the EMO's key leaders. Participants' gender, race, ethnicity, and personal demographic information are not factors in this research study; participants did not provide this information. Leaders and principals received notification that participation was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. I retained the connection between the identifier link such as the pseudonym P1 and EML1 and the data until completion of member checking to identify those participants who withdrew from the study. If a participant withdrew, I destroyed all data and identifiers linking the participant to the study. The letter of permission, an invitation to participate, and consent forms included a

statement about the rationale for maintaining a linkage between the identifier and interview data until completion of member checking. In accordance ethical standards, the interviewees may withdraw their data from the study at any time (Hadidi, Lindquist, Treat-Jacobson, & Swanson, 2013). Before commencing the interview, the researcher explains the purpose of the interview, measures to protect participant's confidentiality, and participation is voluntary (Wahyuni, 2012).

I conducted member checks for the study participants to provide feedback regarding the preliminary findings from the interviews. The member checking interviews occurred within 2 days following the initial interviews. During the member checking interviews, each participant elaborated on their initial interview responses. Member checking is a process researcher use to ensure the credibility of collected data and eliminate contradictions in data (Singh, 2014). Member checking confirms the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the participants' responses (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2014). The stakeholders including chief executive officer, EMO leaders, and principals will receive a one-page summary of the findings via email.

Review of archival documents obtained from the president at the EMOs' central office occurred after the semistructured interviews and member checking for approximately 1 week. Although the EMO leader provided me with the requested documents, two principals provided additional documents from their respective schools. According to P1, "the leadership team and the EMO leaders collaborated on the development of processes to analyze data digs." I reviewed archival documents including EMO policy manual, teacher and administrator evaluation handbook, Marzano Center

Teacher and Leader Protocol Evaluation Model, The Leadership Academy manual, curriculum instructional assessment guidelines, and elementary school improvement plan to identify collaborative leadership practices for assisting school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. My review of archival documents served as information to corroborate the data from the participants' interviews. Document review is a method for collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Owen, 2014). A researcher collection of a variety of documents may include project proposals, reports, presentations, email communications, minutes of meetings, abstracts, policies, and manuals (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013). Qualitative document analysis is the examination of various document sources (Born & Preston, 2016).

Data Organization

Data consisted of archival documents, recorded reflection memos, an audio recording of interviews, and the interview transcripts in Microsoft Word format. Researchers record their reflections throughout the research process by writing journal notes and audio-recording field notes (Lahman et al., 2015). The researcher maintains reflective notes to capture lessons learned and reflexive thoughts from interviews notes (Boblin et al., 2013). I created folders and labels for the interview transcripts on a password-protected external drive. The folders consisted of labels *EML1* to *EMLT3* for the EMO leaders and *P1* to *P3* for the school principals. During the data collection process, researchers use a distinctive coding number to serve as identification for each

participant (Siriwardhana et al., 2013). I will be the only person with access to the external drive and data.

I explained to all participants that I would maintain their confidentiality in the study. Participants' gender, race, ethnicity, and personal demographic information were not factors in this research study; participants did not provide this information. To hide their identities, pseudonym names such as *P1* to *P3* for the school principals and *EML1* to *EML2* for the EMO leaders. Pseudonyms represent vital methodology to increase confidentiality in human research (Lahman et al., 2015). Using specific coding such as firm one (F1) of collected data allows for participants confidentiality and identification of the participant or organization (Wahyuni, 2012). I will maintain and store collected data using a password-protected external drive and archival documents for five years in a locked file cabinet. After 5 years, I will destroy the data by employing a professional shredding company and erasing all information on the external drive. Data management in qualitative studies encompasses data storage, transcribing audio sources, and cleaning the data (Wahyuni, 2012).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I identified the selection criteria for participants, collected data through face-to-face semistructured interviews, and reviewed of archival documents such as policy procedures manuals regarding leadership practices. Qualitative researchers should clarify their roles when conducting studies to ensure credibility (Greene, 2014). The researcher's role in qualitative research includes the observation of details, facilitation of in-depth interviews, and reflection on the meaning of collected data

(Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). For this single case study, I researched the state department of education website for a listing of EMOs in Michigan. I contacted the leadership at the EMOs' central office via telephone to explain the intent of the study and their role as a community partner. The EMO official received an e-mailed letter of permission (a) explaining the intent of the study and the manager's role as a community partner, and (b) requesting permission to perform research and (c) seeking confirmation of the agreement (see Appendix B).

I am an educational consultant to schools and educational focus groups in Detroit, Michigan. I have served as a school superintendent of a mid-sized urban K-12 district in Pontiac, Michigan. The participants are EMO leaders and charter school principals providing leadership over student populations within an urban community in Detroit, Michigan. I do not have a relationship with intended participants in the study. Therefore, I did not foresee any potential conflicts or adverse effects with data collection. If an adverse event had occurred, I would have stopped the study at the point, which the event occurred. I would have notified the Chair of my committee. I would have completed and submitted an adverse event notification form to the IRB. I would have then sought the counsel of the Chair regarding the appropriate course of action to take.

For the ethical protection of the participants' rights, confidentiality, informed consent, and protection from harm, I adhered to the Belmont report protocol. To adhere to the Belmont protocol, I completed an ethics course and received a certificate of completion in ethical training from the National Institute of Health (1319949). The Belmont Report of 1979 mandates ethical principles: (a) principle of respect for persons,

(b) beneficence, and (c) justice when the IRB's members review and evaluate research projects (Thomson, Elgin, Hyman, Schrag, Knight, & Kreiser, 2013). The Belmont Report governs three principles for all IRBs to evaluate ethics of specific research proposals for persons, beneficence, and justice (Nouwen, 2014). The bioethical principle of justice builds on fairness and equality (Haahr et al., 2014). The principle of beneficence stipulates that the purpose of the research should benefit participating individuals and the community (Lunnay et al., 2015).

I sought IRB approval to conduct this study. The IRB application includes details of the proposed research aims, research method, and the investigator's qualifications, as well as the process for disseminating the results to key stakeholders (Namageyo-Funa et al., 2014). After receiving Walden University's IRB approval to conduct research, I hand delivered a copy of the IRB approval with the leadership at the EMOs' central office. The leadership at the EMOs' central office provided a listing of the names of organizational leaders and principals. I visited the EMO leaders and principals to explain the intent of the study and hand-deliver invitations of participation without interrupting daily workflow process (see Appendix C). The invitation letter included a statement of approval from the leadership at the EMOs' central office to recruit EMO leaders and school principals. The first principle within the Belmont Report is the researcher informs the subjects about the intent of the study and persons voluntarily consent to participate (Nouwen, 2014). In addition, researchers share with individuals that they will protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality (Nouwen, 2014).

Before commencement of semistructured interviews, I advised the study's participants of the consent approval process. Ethical issues include potential emotional harm to participants and participants' informed consent and confidentiality throughout the process (Mealer & Jones, 2014). The consent form requires that the consent must be free from any coercion, intimidation, falsehood, physical, psychological, or economic pressure (Ghooi, 2014). I disclosed the human rights protocols to protect their privacy and confidentially and their choice to withdraw without penalty via e-mail or telephone to the study's participants. Researchers should protect the participants' confidentiality by omitting information that can identify both the individuals and the case organizations (Wahyuni, 2012). Review of archival documents obtained from the leadership at the EMOs' central office occurred after the semistructured interviews and member checking. I will maintain and store collected data using a password-protected external drive and archival documents in a locked file cabinet at my office for 5 years.

I recorded reflective memos after conducting participants' interviews to avoid bias. Reflective notes may include feelings, impressions, and thoughts in a research journal (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Researchers must avoid bias tendencies when conducting interviews and other data collection methods (Yin, 2014). Researchers often experience ethical questions throughout the research; therefore, ethical reflection is necessary throughout the process (Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015). Strategy for mental preparation includes the researcher's ability to bracket personal knowledge during the research procedures (Chan et al., 2013). The interviewer achieves neutral objectively by

using structured or semistructured interview schedules and attempts to gather information without influencing the participants' responses (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

Data Analysis

The purpose of data collection and analysis is to explore the antecedents associated with the phenomenon from the participants' perceptions (Khan, 2014a). I analyzed data to determine an understanding of the collaborative leadership practices exhibited practices by EMOs leaders regarding low-performing K-12 urban-based charter schools. Data analysis consisted of method triangulation of multiple sources. When conducting rigorous data analysis, an important consideration is the selection of the research methodology (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Triangulation is the best strategy for testing data evidence within qualitative studies (Stake, 2010). Further, triangulation fosters convergence of multiple data sources adding credibility to the study findings (Yin, 2014).

I applied the inductive approach to analysis of the collected data from the interviews and school district documents. The case study consists of designing, collecting evidence, and analyses of collected data leading to the study report (Yin, 2014). Qualitative data analysis includes the following steps: (a) coding for descriptive labels; (b) sorting for patterns; (c) identification of negative cases; (d) generalizing with constructs and theories, and (e) memos that included reflective remarks (Higginbottom et al., 2013). Qualitative case study outcome comprises case-based themes; researchers have indicated the case study approach represents a contextually base tradition (Boblin et al., 2013).

After transcribing the responses from the semistructured interviews and member checking using Microsoft Word, I designed a coding assignment protocol to capture both themes and descriptions for inclusion in the study report. After the transcribing task, the researcher will check against the voice recording for accuracy (Wahyuni, 2012). Through a qualitative case design, the readers will gain insight into an issue and redraw a generalization (Merriam, 2015). Coding of data involved the identification of keywords and phrases to develop emerging themes. Coding methodology represents a system for categorizing similar codes and grouping them into themes (Owen, 2014). Data analysis consists of coding key terms with grounded theory methodology, where the researcher applies codes to sections of text relevant to the identification of themes (Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Data analysis involves coding data by allocating labels to participants' responses by comparing similarities within the data set (Glaser & Laudel, 2013).

To categorize coded data into themes, I used NVivo11™ software. Using computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) such as NVivo11™ assisted with the efficient management of large amounts of data (Pierre & Jackson, 2014). According to Fielding, Fielding, and Hughes (2013), researcher uses CAQDAS to undertake the coding process to consolidate the data to an ease of use format. Software such as NVivo11™ is resourceful data management tool for data analysis because transcription that can take up to ten times the length of the interview (Franzosi, Doyle, MClelland, Putnam Rankin, & Vicari, 2013). Data analysis for qualitative research can include the use of Nvivo data analysis, a supplementary software tool, for coding and categories of collected data (Owen, 2014). Data analysis included the summarization and

presentation of the research findings. To ensure the protection of the respondents, the presentation of the findings consisted of categorizing the participants by a general leadership role rather than specific job title.

Evidence of Quality

Reliability

The establishment of reliability is when the study evidence enables an external reader to follow argumentation (Singh, 2014). To establish dependability, I designed the study's interview procedure to ensure other researchers can conduct the replication of this case study. The criterion of reliability or dependability in qualitative research refers to the probability that other researchers can duplicate the study and produce the similar findings (Yilmaz, 2013). Dependability in qualitative research requires the researcher to provide rich details about the research process enabling future researchers to replicate the research framework (Wahyuni, 2012).

I attempted to minimize errors be adhering to interview procedures to apply for each participant's interview. Participants reviewed the interpretations of their interview responses to incorporate member checking. Member checking or respondent validation entails the participants reviewing the researcher's interpretations of their responses for accuracy (Singh, 2014). Member checking consists of members reviewing the interview transcripts and agreeing with the researchers' interpretations (Reilly, 2013).

Validity

Researchers may demonstrate validity by using multiple sources to corroborate the evidence from collected data (Greene, 2014). To address validity and credibility, I

used member checks and triangulation. Participants received a transcribed copy of my interpretations of their interview responses to review for accuracy. To ensure credibility, the researcher must demonstrate the accuracy of the data collected from the participants' perspective (Wahyuni, 2012). Member checking is the process for enhancing credibility (Jansen, 2015). The respondent review process consists of researcher interviewing participants, interpreting their responses, and discussing the researcher's interpretations with the interviewees (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Yin (2014) stated that member checking allows researchers to ensure the accuracy of their interpretation of the participants' responses during data collection.

To establish the credibility of the collected data, I employed method triangulation. Data collection included semistructured interviews and archival document review for methodological triangulation. Researchers collect data from multiple sources to ensure that the data is rich and to confirm the findings (Boblin et al., 2013). Case study researchers utilize multiple methods to verify the data and strengthen the significance of the study findings (Cronin, 2014). Researchers use multiple data sources for triangulation to ensure the validity of the case study findings (Singh, 2014).

To address transferability, I provided a detailed description of the research process. Transferability refers to the transpiration of the understanding obtained to explain the phenomena in other contexts (El Hussein, Jakubec, & Osuji, 2015). To satisfy transferability, researchers use (a) rich, thick descriptions to convey findings, (b) clarify research bias, and (c) ensure data saturation (Singh, 2014).

Qualitative researchers ensure confirmability by using reflectivity regarding personal feelings, biases, and insights and the evolving results of the study from experiences of observed participants (Wahyuni, 2012). To address confirmability, I will use reflexivity by recording reflect memos after each interview. Reflexivity represents a key element to identify the potential researcher influence during the research procedure (Chan et al., 2013). Reflexivity helps researchers to perceive and adjust their views, feelings, and actions (Steen, 2013). At each stage of qualitative research, the researcher uses a reflexive methodology to reflect implicit theoretical assumptions versus an ex-post facto approach (Knoblauch, 2013).

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. I used a case study design to answer the research question: what collaborative leadership practices do EMO leaders believe they need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. In addition, this study addressed the following second research question: what collaborative leadership practices do school principals believe EMO leaders need to assist principals in low-performing K-12 urban charters schools to improve academic achievement.

Data collection involved recruitment, consent, semistructured interviews, and document review. Upon receiving IRB approval number (2016.10.1717:37:57-05’00’), the leadership at the EMOs’ central office received a hand-delivered copy of the IRB

approval letter to gain access to the research site and permission to recruit participants. The participants for this case study consisted of a purposeful sample of three leaders from an EMO and five school principals under the leadership of the EMO organization. During the semistructured interviews with the EMO leaders and school principals, I was able to build a trusting relationship with the participants. The three EMO leaders shared insights regarding collaborative practices during the semistructured interviews, which the school principals confirmed. Because I employed continuous coding and no new information emerged by the end of the eighth semistructured interview, I perceived that data saturation occurred and ceased data collection.

Method of Analysis

Upon completion of data collection including a review of archival documents, semistructured interviews, and member checking interviews, I applied the inductive approach to analysis the collected data from the interviews and school district documents. The researcher data analysis often consists of examining, categorizing, tabularizing, recombining evidence, and interpreting evidence for conclusions (Yin, 2014). I followed Higginbottom, Pillay, and Boadu's (2013) process for case study data analysis. According to Higginbottom et al., case study analysis involves: (a) coding for descriptive labels; (b) sorting for themes; (c) identification of discrepant cases, and (d) generalizing with constructs and theories. The final step for data analysis was memoing including reflective remarks, which I present in Section 4.

Coding for descriptive labels. Data analysis began with transcribing semistructured interviews using Microsoft Word and member checking; I designed a

coding assignment protocol to capture both themes and descriptions for inclusion in the study report. According to Yin (2014), the researcher can glean meaning from textual data when using CAQDAS to develop codes and themes. I used NVivo10 qualitative data software for coding and theming the EMO leaders and school principals interviews. For example, I coded keywords academic, achievement, student, collaboration, practices, implementation, and changes to emerging themes such as academic achievement and collaborative practices. Table 1 shows the frequency of the emergent themes from the EMO leaders' interview responses, and Table 2 shows the frequency of the emergent themes from the school principals' interview responses.

Table 1

Emergent Themes from EMO Leaders Interviews

Name	Participants	Number of Responses
Collaborative Practices	3	23
Academic Achievement	3	17
Implementation to Change	3	12
Organizational Culture	3	10
Professional Development	3	10
Community Involvement	2	9
School Improvement	3	7
Compliance and Regulations	2	4
Total	3	92

The analysis indicated all EMO leaders designated the theme collaborative practices as the highest responded theme. The second highest responses generated from all EMO leaders had designated the theme academic achievement. Lastly, the top third numbered responses that all EMO leaders' participants responded included the theme implementation to change. Therefore, collaborative leadership practices are significant

elements for EMO leaders to use to assist school principals to improve academic achievement in low-performing urban charter schools.

Table 2

Emergent Themes from School Principal Interviews

Name	Participants	Number of Responses
Collaborative Practices	5	40
Academic Achievement	5	37
Implementation to Change	5	24
School Improvement	5	21
Compliance and Regulation	5	18
Professional Development	5	15
Organizational Culture	4	10
Community Involvement	3	4
Total	5	169

The data analysis revealed that the perspective of the school principals was collaborative practices were important for improving academic achievement. The second highest responses generated from the school principals' perspective was the theme academic achievement. The school principals' responses indicated that implementation to change is fundamental for developing collaborative practices. Therefore, the school findings indicated that principals' perspective was that collaborative leadership practices are fundamental for enhancing academic achievement in low-performing urban charter schools.

I reviewed the archival documents including the EMO procedures manual, Marzano Center Teacher and Leader Protocol Evaluation Model, the leader's academy handbook, school improvement plan, student-parent handbook, and school calendar. The coding of the archival documents for descriptive labels involved compiling a list of

keywords. The next step consisted of manual coding of keywords for theming in Microsoft Excel (see Table 3).

Table 3

Coding of Archival Documents

School District Document	Key Codes	Theme
EMO procedures manual	indicators of excellence, instructional leadership, time on task, learning environment, classroom, partnership, student achievement, policies and procedures, data driven assessment	Collaborative practices, Academic achievement, Implementation to change, Compliance and regulations, Organizational culture, Community involvement
Marzano Center Teacher and Leader Protocol Evaluation Model	instructional strategies, training, support service	Academic achievement, Professional development
Leaders academy handbook	professional learning community, curriculum, student achievement, leadership, training, professional development, meetings, data results, evaluations, innovation	Collaborative practices, Compliance and regulations, Organizational culture, Professional development
School improvement plan	stakeholders, meetings, parents, instructors, student learning, academic achievement	Collaborative practices, Academic achievement, School improvement
Student-parent handbook	learning environment, partnership, district, community, parents, student achievement	Collaborative practices, Academic achievement, Community involvement, Compliance and regulations
School calendar	professional development, annual assessment, evaluations, testing dates	Collaborative practices, Academic achievement, Compliance and regulations, School improvement plan, Professional development

The data analysis revealed that the EMO leaders and school principals developed collaborative leadership practices within the organization. Furthermore, the participants'

strategies to implement the established collaborative leadership practices. Data analysis of the various archival documents provided evidence to corroborate the codes and themes from the semistructured interview responses.

Sorting for themes. Using NVivo11, data analysis continued to identify patterns by reviewing the repetitiveness of refining the key phrases to emerging themes. Coding of the collected data including interview responses and document review revealed the following emerging themes: (a) collaborative practices, (b) academic achievement, (c) implementation to change, (d) school improvement plan, (e) professional development, (f) compliance and regulations, (g) organizational culture, and community involvement (see Table 4).

Table 4

Emergent Themes from EMO Leaders and School Principals Interviews

Name	Participants	Number of Responses
Collaborative Practices	8	61
Academic Achievement	8	52
Implementation to Change	8	36
School Improvement Plan	8	28
Professional Development	8	24
Compliance and Regulations	7	22
Organizational Culture	7	21
Community Networking and Outreach	5	12
Total	8	256

Presentation of Themes

Data analysis of the collected data from the interviews and school district documents using an inductive approach resulted in eight emerging themes. In this section,

I presented a description of the emerging themes. In addition, supporting evidence includes quotations from the participants' interviews, as well as data from document review, which corroborated the codes and themes from the participants' responses.

Collaborative practices. The first emerging theme based on the interview responses from the EMO leaders and school principals was collaborative practices. Collaboration is a process in which teams work together (Bennett et al., 2014). According to two EMO leaders, collaboration is an essential element in the organization among all stakeholders. EML1 mentioned that the EMO leaders collaborate with the board of directors by providing the board of directors with information regarding decisions to implement required changes. P2 shared "The EMO leaders are hands-on, open with the school principals, and willing to offer help and support". "For example, I sent an e-mail to an EMO leader and received an immediate response to meet to discuss suggestion" (P2, personal communication, October 28, 2016).

Collaborative leadership involves all stakeholders creating synergy through collective efforts and activities (Jäppinen, 2014). P3 stated "The EMO leaders, superintendent, and instructional coordinator work one-on-one with staff members such as principals and data coordinators and give the staff members strategies to implement within the school". EML1 shared that the EMO leaders assign a director of school leadership to each school leader based on the training needs of the school staff. P1 stated "the EMO leaders have provided support by assigning a director of school leadership, which is a curriculum person in their organization that assists with academic coaching".

For example, P4 shared “I worked for the first 6 months with the director of school leadership”.

P3 stated “Some collaborative practices include the establishment of the Leaders Academy, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), professional development programs, and meetings for data digs”. EML3 used the Leaders Academy to help school leaders establish professional development programs for teachers. A critical goal for local education agencies is to provide school leaders with professional development to effectively lead and turnaround academic achievement in low-performing schools (Brown, 2016). To restructure a turnaround school, educational leaders will need financial, policy, and political support from all stakeholders (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). P1 implemented professional development programs and provided the teachers with assistance in the classrooms to create student assessment folders and cooperative learning groups. Jones and Thessin (2015) found that PLCs work at various stages, whereas leaders need to constantly monitor and make adjustments to ensure continuous improvement. “The implementation of PLCs has been a significant collaborative leadership practice” (P4, personal communication, October 30, 2016). Using PLCs may be a valuable option for preparing teachers to understand, interpret, and use testing data (Lashley & Stickl, 2016).

Principals and teachers usually have a large amount of data about student achievement to review because of the required standardized testing processes (Lashley & Stickl, 2016). EML3 stated “I have guided the school leaders on developing teacher goal-setting and evaluation processes, as well as reviewing data. For instance, P5 implemented

data meetings in which P5 meets with the assistant administrator and each grade group to discuss Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (MSTEP) or Northwest Educational Association (NWEA) data. P1 shared the EMO leaders provide extra workers and resources from the central office to support the staff when conducting data dig.

The participants' responses revealed information regarding collaborative leadership practices some leaders implemented within each school. According to EML2, the EMO and school leaders have to build collaborative teams to ensure consistency in daily operations in your absence. The EMO authorizer assists with the development of Tier 1 curriculum (P4, personal communication, October 30, 2016). For collaboration among the staff, EML2 implemented a practice in which the leaders used lazier faire leadership to develop strategies for assisting the students achieves established goals. P1 stated "Bi-weekly, I provide the teachers with information on strategies focused on closing the academic achievement gaps and identifying low-performing students". P5 stated "Everyone should understand that to truly succeed all stakeholders must work collaboratively and hold each other accountable for improving academic achievement".

My review of archival documents including the Leaders Academy handbook, school improvement plan, student-parent handbook, and school calendar provided evidence to corroborate the findings from the interview responses. For example, the school improvement plan provided information regarding the monthly meetings for the school improvement team to discuss the progress of existing processes and new strategies. Furthermore, I noticed the scheduled activities and meetings such as teacher

professional development programs, test schedule for NWEA, NWEA data dig meetings, and the Leaders Academy meetings for the 2015-2016 academic year on the school calendar. The Leaders Academy handbook illustrated the collaborative practices for the Teacher Support Team Program as a school-wide model for planning and monitoring student progress in ten-week increment.

Academic achievement. Academic achievement was the second emerging theme based on the interview responses from the EMO leaders and school principals. P1 stated "We really want our kids to learn". In consensus, P2 stated "They want to see our students succeed because they want to see us succeed as well". I found information relevant to academic achievement during my review of a student growth summary report aggregated by school and grade level to validate student data-driven assessment within the EMO procedures manual. The school improvement plan provided the math assessment guidelines, measurement indicators, and evaluation improvement plan designed to align to student academic achievement in math during the 2016-2017 school calendar year.

The participants shared information about the measures used to improve academic achievement such as training teachers to manage instructional practices in the classroom. A tool the EMO leaders and school principals use to assess academic achievement is the NWEA. P5 shared "Previously student assessment using MEAP was at the beginning of the school year, whereas changing to NWEA allows the teachers to assess students twice a year". P2 stressed "Teachers administer standardized test including NWEA, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) to

assess students' academic achievement in reading and math". Furthermore, P4 mentioned that overall six out of eight grade levels from K-12 dramatically improved on the NWEA.

Additional measures included focusing on the guidelines of Lezotte (1993) for effective schools, as well as Marzano instructional strategies. In alignment with Marzano's instructional practices, the EMO leaders and authorizers focus on training teachers regarding time management and effective instructional practices, because many teachers are culturally sensitive to the students' needs in an urban school. EML1 stated "Our company leaders focus on the seven indicators of excellence based on Lezotte's research of school effectiveness and Marzano's instructional practices. Designing systems that facilitate improvement in instructional practices is a challenge for both local education agencies and district leaders (Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015). P3 emphasized that students' academic achievement success begins with instructional practices in the classroom. The EMO leaders believe the seven correlates of effective schools established by Lezotte lead to a high-performing school. My review of the EMO procedures manual provided evidence that the EMO leaders and principals use Lezottes' seven correlates of effective schools to collaborate leadership practices. In addition, the EMO leader provided me with a copy of the Marzano Center Teacher & Leader Protocol Evaluation Model book. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) found that a correlation exists between principal leadership behaviors, student academic achievement, and school culture. I reviewed the Marzano Center Teacher & Leader Protocol Evaluation Model book and found information that aligned with the various instructional strategies the school principals use to prepare students for meeting college and career readiness standards.

To improve academic achievement, the teachers offer Response to Intervention (RTI) program for students, which are at least 60-70% of the students that are three to four grade levels behind (P1, personal communication, October 28, 2016). RTI consist of the following three tiers: (a) teacher support in the classroom, (b) math and reading tutoring sessions with small groups, and (c) individualized math and reading tutoring sessions with a specialist (P1 stated). The EMO procedures manual outlined the measures for monitoring student achievement through data-driven instruction, whereas each school leader must use the handbook to provide instructional leadership. Teachers and educators that share a sense of confidence in all students create learning environments in which students can achieve high academic standards (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). An important strategy for improving academic achievement is time on task in which teachers focus on measurable tasks and what needs to happen during the day to facilitate the learning in the classroom (P4, personal communication, October 30, 2016). Furthermore, the student-parent handbook provided information regarding the charter school's operational goals to create a student-learning environment.

Implementation to change. The EMO leaders and school principals indicated strong support from the interviews for the implementation of change practices. EML2 stressed "You cannot have the same practices that have existed for the last hundred plus years". "Changes usually consist of discernment the first year and implementation during the second year" (EML1, personal communication, October 25, 2016). EML1 added "The first step is to change leadership within the school; however, the board may suggest reevaluating the leader after one year before implementing the change". P4 shared "A

responsibility of the EMO leaders and principals is to create innovative strategies and implement those strategies; therefore, I restructured the administrative team by allowing them to be site based management".

EML2 stated "To implement change, EMO leaders must allow flexibility for the school leaders to successfully do their jobs as a principal and instructional leader". EML3 stated "To change some practices, EMO leaders may allow one leader or teacher to implement a change and report the results to the other staff members". P1 shared "Previously tier one of RTI was not an element across the K-12 grade levels; therefore, the school principals collaborated on a strategy for the teacher to implement tier one services with fidelity". P3 stated "For example, teachers will create student folders to individualize reading and math activities targeted at each student's specific needs as a tier one process". P2 stated "In addition, the EMO leaders allowed the school leaders and teachers to implement project-based learning in which a project may be to complete a novel and write a report about the novel". Some *no excuses schools* tend to have more teacher turnover than *project-based schools* because of the difference in autonomy granted regarding instructional planning (Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015).

The principals shared that the most significant change to improve academic achievement was shifting to NWEA. P1 stated "A recent change was the data digs on a district level, which allowed the teachers to understand the NWEA data and the importance of developing new strategies in the classroom". P4 stated "We use data to drive our decision-making". Relying on data to make decisions about school improvement provides the basis for school improvement team to consider both the

regulatory and social-educational accountabilities (Lashley & Stickl, 2016). P5 stated "The EMO leaders and leadership teams collaborated on strategies to implement across the district for improving reading scores". In addition, data analysis can produce issues about equity that the leaders must address to provide students with a high-level proficiency education (Lashley & Stickl, 2016).

School improvement plan. The fourth emerging theme from the EMO leaders and school principals interviews was school improvement. EML3 shared "As the director of Leaders Academy, I provide both research and anecdotal evidence of highly successful urban schools to *push* leaders to adopt new practices". Educational leaders can provide instructional leadership by using collaborative practices to yield strategies for school improvement, as well as address educational excellence and school equity (Lashley & Stickl, 2016). Regarding the school improvement plan, P2 expressed "I believe the school district will succeed by using the new project-based learning practices in the classroom".

Challenges for educators are to turnaround low-performing schools and improve academic achievement (Reyes & Garcia, 2014). P4 stated "A practice for school improvement such as changing to NWEA is collaboration on meeting the student needs within in the district, because each district has a particular set of needs". "To improve student academic achievement, the curriculum and instructional coordinator have implemented data digs in which everyone meets to discuss the results" (P3, personal communication, October 28, 2016). A collaborative relationship between the leaders and teachers may enhance the use data as a significant component to foster student academic achievement (Lashley & Stickl, 2016).

EML3 stressed “The expectations are that our schools will persistently perform better each year to show improvement in academic achievement and growth”. P2 shared “The EMO leaders want all the schools to succeed by improving the testing scores of the bottom 30% of the students to the target guideline established by the state of Michigan”. Although educational leaders may recognize achievement gains at the base level during the first 3 years, they do not realize achievement gains at the school level until after 7 years (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). P1 stated “The expectation is that the NWEA winter scores will indicate growth and success, because we have aligned our strategies to incorporate individualized instruction”. “Furthermore, at least 85% of the teachers overall and 68% of the middle school teachers use the strategies within the classroom” (P1, personal communication, October 28, 2016). P5 mentioned “Evidence of school improvement was in the previous MEAP, NWEA, and MSTEP scores”.

The archival documents use to review the school improvement plan included the 2016-2017 school improvement plan and school curriculum. I found relevant information about the plans to increase proficiency goals for reading math, writing, science, social studies using technology during the school year 2016-2017. For example, the EMO leaders and school principals will provide students access to computers for completing homework during the homework help sessions. EML1 shared that sometimes students do not achieve their academic goals because of the lack of access to personal computers at home. Furthermore, the school curriculum showed the instructional assessment guidelines for teachers to corroborate the interview response regarding the expectations to use the strategies within the classroom.

Professional development. The fifth theme from the EMO leaders and school principals interviews responses was professional development. School and district leaders are an integral component in the planning and implementation of professional development of staff members (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). P3 stated "The superintendent presents the staff concerns about academic achievement to the EMO leaders which result in the EMO leaders authorizing specific professional development programs". Some factors that contribute to teachers' professional development include leadership support, motivation, leadership support, and organizational culture (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). My review of the leader EMO procedures manual and the Leaders Academy handbook revealed significant data about the professional development programs such as curriculum planning, understanding your data results, and designing a teacher support team.

The EMO leaders expressed that providing the school leaders with training and specific tools for instructional practices in the classroom is an important aspect within the organization. Two EMO leaders shared that the objective for establishing the Leaders Academy was to focus on developing the school principals and teachers skills using Lezotte's seven correlates of effective schools and Marzano's instructional practices for the classroom. In reviewing the handbook, I noticed the Leaders Academy handbook focuses policies for the hiring process, employee training, staff meetings, teacher evaluations, and creating a vision statement. EML3 mentioned "For professional development, the EMO leaders encourage the school leaders to build relationships with school leaders from successful charter schools". District networks consist of principals

engaging in social relationships with each other to exchange information, advice, and collaborate on specific concerns within the district (Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2015).

Leaders must professionally develop their staff by motivating the staff members to learn more (Puckett, 2014). P1 shared "Some of the leaders attended a leadership academy meeting and received additional training regarding our NWEA data to determine the gaps, as well as building levels to close those gaps". "For example, the coordinator showed the leaders a process call instructional learning cycle that Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) and Intermediate School District (ISD) used to give the teachers a laser lens for assessing achievement" (P1, personal communication, October 28, 2016). P2 shared "I have attended multiple training sessions to obtain strategies the staff can use as instructional practices to help students succeed". In addition, the EML3 provided me with copies of the professional textbooks that school leaders receive while attending the professional development programs through the Leaders Academy. I reviewed the following professional textbooks that corroborate the findings regarding Lezotte's seven correlates to effective schools: (a) *Leadership on the Line*, (b) *Learning and Leading with the Habits of Mind*, (c) *School Leadership that Works*, and (d) *Transformative Teaching*.

PLCs and professional learning networks are helpful resources to motivate professionals (Puckett, 2014). In consensus with Puckett, P4 emphasized "Using PLCs actually allows the leaders and staff to grow and use best practices in each situation". Furthermore, EML2 stated "Through the PLCs, the leaders have developed teams to help solve problems and improve teachers' instructional strategies". Teachers must engage in

collaborative learning fostered through the principal's leadership to develop and implement PLCs (Jones & Thessin, 2015). I identified specific scheduled professional development activities and PLCs meetings during my review of the school calendar. The success of leaders and teacher depend on the effectiveness of PLCs and shared decision making within an education institution (Angelle & Teague, 2014).

Compliance and regulations. The sixth significant responses from the EMO leaders and school principals interviews was the theme for compliance and regulations. P4 mentioned "The EMO leaders allow the school leaders to create policies and procedures following the format and guidelines established by the EMO central office and the board of education". P5 noted "I believe the district leaders and school leaders who are accountable for improving academic achievement need information regarding new laws and changes in a timely manner to meet compliance regulations that". The EMO procedures manual and the Leaders Academy handbook were instrumental tools for identifying compliance guidelines and regulations for school leaders, teachers, and students. Some of the guidelines were school leaders must use the handbook as a guide for providing opportunities for time on task in the classroom setting, as well as policies and procedures for regular education students and special education students.

Peurach and Neumerski (2015) stated that identifying the educational needs for turnaround is a school-by-school proposition, whereas many state and district leaders provide support to underperforming schools to achieve the accountability provisions. EML1 stated "We do a lot of the compliance in-house using a checklist, because the state of Michigan set high regulations for charter schools". P3 stated "The focus of school

leaders and EMO leaders is to implement new practices in the classroom by using different resources for achieving Michigan's compliance expectations and regulations". P1 mentioned "Meeting compliance and regulation guidelines are important; therefore, the leaders use a compliance checklist to ensure they meet the accountability guidelines of the EMO and EMO leaders". In addition, the EMO authorizers provided the accountability guidelines for all stakeholders in the EMO procedures manual and student-parent handbook. "To ensure each school meets compliance guidelines, the school leaders have data digs with the district leaders periodically" (P1, personal communication, October 28, 2016).

Organizational culture. Both EMO leaders and school principals from the open-ended interviews provided the seventh theme of organizational culture. P2 expressed "The organization has a family atmosphere within the district and open environment within the organization". Although the organization has a team-oriented culture, one EMO leader stated some school leaders encounter challenges when changing a turnaround school embedded with failure to a positive organizational culture. According to Peurach and Neumerski (2015), educators encounter challenges when addressing the educational needs of students in turnaround schools. The most notable challenges are designing the educational infrastructure, weaknesses in the system-level infrastructure, and the lack of professional preparation of educational leaders to perform a task associated with school turnaround (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015).

P1 stated "The elements that form the organizational culture are principal and teacher accountability, research-based strategies, professional development programs,

and collaboration". To make sustainable improvements in the school culture, leaders need to carefully plan and orchestrate practices involving human, cultural, and technological resources (Hauge et al., 2014). EML2 stated "The school leaders must increase the awareness of the different values and experiences shared among the leaders, administration, and teachers within an organization that affect the organization's culture".

Vaara and Lonka (2014) stated that implementation of a learning environment requires the leaders to create an innovative organizational culture in which the leaders use collaborative leadership practices. Two principals shared that all stakeholders focus on one mission across the district, which is to create a safe learning environment for the students. Evidence to corroborate the interview response relating to the mission statement was within the EMO procedures manual. EML3 stated "The leaders at the EMO central office do not prescribe a method or specific practices for developing the organizational culture, whereas EMO leaders rely on the school leader to create a learning culture at the schools". Having quality principals and teachers is the most important element for school turnaround in low-performing schools (Reyes & Garcia, 2014). EML3 added "The EMO leaders provide the school leaders with autonomy to structure the work environment for teachers to master effective practices in the classroom using educational and noneducational sources".

Community involvement. Community involvement was the eighth theme based on the interview responses from the EMO leaders and school principals. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) defined schools as service providers that develop relationships with members of the community. EML1 stressed "Charter schools should represent the

community which they serve and should be unique, different, and creative to meet the needs of that community". EML1 shared "Some school leaders provide meals for the students and their families during school breaks, for example, the Gleaners and members of the local communities offer meals three times a day during the summer". School leaders build social relationships with all stakeholders within and outside their school district (Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2015). EML2 stated "I am definitely a pusher of collaboration within the community and the intermediate school district". The charter school's operational goals in the EMO Procedures Manual encompassed create collaborative partnerships with all stakeholders within the district.

Community involvement also included parental involvement in practices to improve academic achievement. P1 mentioned "The school leaders and teachers involve the parents with strategies to improve academic achievement". Parental involvement is a fundamental aspect of their children education, because parental support has a positive effect on learning outcomes (Bray, Pedro, Kenney, & Gannotti, 2014). P2 noted "The school leaders provide the parents with weekly progress reports in a format the parent can understand". P3 stated "Community involvement with the parents such as parents participating in the homework help program, would help close some of the achievement gaps". The charter school's operational goals in the student-parent handbook included building a strong home to school partnerships with parents to improve student academic achievement. School leaders that build relationships within the community can depend on the parents and community members' involvement, participation, and support in planning for school improvement (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

Identification of Discrepant Cases

The participants shared experiences and perspectives to provide insight into the collaborative leadership practices implemented to assist school principals in low-performing urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. The EMO leaders and school principals had discrepancies in their responses. Regarding academic achievement, P5 stated "I would say the effectiveness of allowing us to be creative in meeting the academic achievement of our students. I believe that has been effective". However, P4 mentioned, "We have teachers who spend a little time talking about things that have to do with learning and more time about things that have nothing to do with learning." In addition, P1 stated, "Now we have instituted our students to come into our response to intervention (RTI) program right at the onset of school instead of waiting for further test data to come out like our benchmark data."

Furthermore, the participants provided evidence of an effective school improvement plan for success. P3 shared "Sometimes it is highly effective if we are able to stay the course if we see that something is working". P5 indicated "It's not our school improvement team; it's a strategic planning team. We create a team on what we are going to implement or why we need to address the deficits in each area". P3 stated "Sometimes suggestions are provided to us if we don't stay the course all of a sudden if another great strategy comes out, and we drop what we were trying to do and all of the sudden we are on to the next best thing.

Evidence of Quality and Procedures

The processes to strengthen the reliability and validity of this study included member checking and method triangulation of different sources of data. Member checks are used in qualitative research to ensure validity regarding the interview data collection methodology (Merriam, 2015). After completing the transcriptions of my interpretations of each interview, I contacted the EMO leaders and school principals to schedule follow-up interviews. During member checking, five participants provided additional rich information for the reliability and validity of my interpretations of the initial interview responses. For example, three school principals provided information regarding the collaborative practices for Response to Intervention (RTI), professional development, and Northwest Educational Association (NWEA) reading test to improve academic achievement. In addition, two EMO leaders shared information regarding the importance of collaborative leadership to assist the principals and teachers through professional development to prepare students to succeed on the NWEA reading test.

Methodological triangulation included reviewing archival documents provided by the EMO president for corroboration of the data from the semistructured interviews. Triangulation of the data from interviews and archival document review showed that leadership behaviors validated the principals' perceptions. The EMO procedures manual and the Marzano Center Teacher and Leader Protocol Evaluation Model showed that many of the policies were consistent with the collaborative leadership practices discussed. The emerging themes from the archival document review were consistent with

the data from the semistructured interview responses, thus establishing evidence of quality.

Generalizing with Constructs and Theories

Fiedler's (1964) contingency theory served as the conceptual framework for this case study. According to Fiedler, situational leaders use different leadership styles that best fit the nature of the task based on three situational components. Chang (2015) stated the contingency theory includes the following three variables: contingency variables (environmental situations), response variables (organizational leaders actions), and performance variables (evaluation of the best action that fit the situation). Ndubueze and Akanni (2015) added that Fiedler (1964) propounded the contingency theory based on the belief that no single style of leadership is appropriate in all situations. Furthermore, the contingency theory contends that effective management depends on the unique characteristics of each situation, whereas effective leaders do not rely on the philosophy that one rule fits all situations (Omran & El-Galfy, 2014; Thomé, Sousa, & Scavarda do Carmo, 2014). The findings from this study provide an understanding of the interaction between EMO leaders and school principals relating to the contingency theory.

Leaders' influence. Position power or leaders' influence relates to the leader's authority to reward and punish employees (Ndubueze & Akanni, 2015). Relating to the contingency theory, the EMO leaders shared information regarding how they use their authority to influence decision-making processes. According to two EMO leaders, they give their perspective of the best strategy to implement the changes while allowing the school leaders and principals to provide input. EML1 stated "Although the EMO leaders

provide the basic elements, which we think are the building blocks for any good school, we give the school leaders autonomy to be a Montessori school, alternative high school, traditional school, or college prep institution." For instance, EMO leaders meet with the school leaders and principals to discuss new policies and procedures and the expectations for the implication of the changes. P4 mentioned "The EMO authorizer and EMO leaders work with the board of education to help write the policies and procedures for the academy".

Leader-member relationships. Leader-member relations deal with the trust, loyalty, and confidence employees have toward the leader (Ndubueze & Akanni, 2015). EMO leaders and school principals expressed that an important aspect of collaborative leadership is having positive relationships with all stakeholders. EML1 emphasized the importance of relationships as the number one priority to successfully implement change. EML2 stated "Real relationships are built between individuals". EML3 stated "We have tried to create opportunities for leaders to get together to discuss their issues and their plans". For example, P4 have discussed with the director of school leadership concerns about addressing the particular needs of my school, because each charter school has different challenges. The consensus among the principals is that the EMO leaders provide support and resources to assist them with implementing strategies.

Organizational structure. The basis for the contingency theory is effective leaders do not rely on one strategy to make decisions (Cross & Backhouse, 2014; Rundh, 2015). Relating to the contingency theory, EML1 stated "Our model is not to have a model, because we are not a control and command from the central office to the

principals." EML1 added "The EMO leaders collaborate with the school leaders, because we rely heavily on the leadership of the principal in the different communities". Organizational leaders use different practices relating to environmental and organizational constraints rather than one unique way of structuring an organization (Kaminskiene, Rutkiene, & Trepulė, 2015; Omran & El-Galfy, 2014). "The EMO authorizer has a very interesting model for the organizational culture, for instance, the EMO leaders rely on the school leaders to develop policies and procedures to present to the board of education" (P4 shared). According to Wang, Wu, & Zhang (2016), many leaders realized that the choice of leadership style must change to fit the environmental conditions.

Wadongo and Abdel-Kader (2014) argued that contingency variables such as organizational size, structure, culture, and leadership effect the adoption of a performance management system; therefore, a general performance management system does not fit all organizations. Educational leaders may match situational variables to leader characteristics to determine if the leader is task oriented or relation oriented (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015). P5 shared that some teachers have the knowledge and understanding to prepare lesson plans for the classroom, but lack the proper training to implement instructional practices in the classroom. P1 mentioned "The school leaders have noticed an improvement in teacher efficacy because of the professional development programs".

Fiedler posited that the effectiveness of task oriented and relations oriented leadership is contingent on the situation (Ndubueze & Akanni, 2015). EML3 stated

"Really successful leaders know how to coordinate, prioritize, and respond to change". For example, EML3 shared the school principals and teachers administer two preidentified performance series test, which are NWEA for grades K-8 and the MSTEP for grades 9-12, to assess student academic achievement". In addition, two school principals mentioned the EMO leaders, school leaders, and teachers conduct data dig meetings to discuss the test results. P4 shared "During the data digs, we found that the students' scores exceeded NWEA target scores for academic achievement". EML1 stated **"**It is not just about test scores it is about instruction, because without effective teachers and instruction you are not going to have positive results. According to Lok and Baldry (2015), leaders in education institutions can employ the concepts of the contingency theory when making decisions about the strategies that best fit each situation. According to P2, the EMO leaders have implemented project-based learning at some schools to improve student academic achievement. EML1 stated "One of our seven correlates of an effective school is the requirement to be innovative and creative in ways to serve the whole child". For instance, "I had one student that drew a 12-page comic book about Brazil and two students that wrote a rap song about their country for an assignment" (P2 shared). P2 added "Using project-based learning allows students to express their views in a comfortable and familiar method". Bouta and Retalis (2013) illustrated that using a 3D virtual environment can have a positive effect students' behavioral and cognitive engagement in a collaborative learning classroom.

Summary of Data Analysis Results

The study's findings provided evidence regarding how collaborative leadership practices were a fundamental element to improving student achievement, as well as developing effective strategies for school improvement for low-performing urban charter schools. The findings further indicated that EMO leaders should build relationships with school leaders; superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant school principals to achieve organizational goals. To demonstrate the use of collaborative leadership practices, the EMO organization prefered to use an unstructured organizational model instead of a hierarchical structure. Although the EMO procedures manual provided policies for school leaders, the EMO leaders provided school leaders with autonomy to implement change through innovative ideas. The EMO leaders used Lezotte's seven correlates of effective school to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative leadership practices.

EMO organizations and charter school authorizers may use various leadership practices to achieve the student assessment requirements of Michigan Department of Education. EMO leaders and school leaders were responsible for implementing practices to train principals and teachers to assess students' academic achievement. The findings of this study revealed that EMO leaders provided the school principals and teachers with various professional development opportunities to enhance their leadership and instructional skills. In addition, EMO leaders employ an open-communication policy and schedule meetings to discuss leadership practices to create a pleasant learning environment. EMO leaders and school principals use the Northwest Educational

Association (NWEA) data to determine gaps and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) assessments to measure student academic achievement. To improve academic achievement, the school principals used RTI and Project Based Learning (PBL).

The findings of this study also indicated that EMO leaders and principals agreed that building relationships within the community are important to improve academic achievement in low-performing urban charter schools. Collaborative relationships between principals, teachers, and parents help to shape students' attitudes about annual standardize testing and achieving academic goals. Furthermore, this research expanded the body of research that explored both EMO leaders and school principals' perspectives of the collaborative leadership practices needed in low-performing K-12 urban charters schools to improve academic achievement.

Conclusion

Section 2 described the justification for a qualitative research approach and design. Section 2 also included the detailed procedures for participants' identification, procedures for recruitment participation, the role of the researcher, and ethical research measures. In Section 2, I outlined the data collection instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis procedures for the research. Section 2 concluded with the descriptions and anticipated method tools for data analysis, reliability, validity, and ethical measures for the design of the qualitative singe-case study. The methodologies and procedures outlined supported both the research problem and research questions.

In addition, I provided a detail description of data collection and analysis procedures to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. Section 2 included a discussion of the themes relating to Fiedler's (1964) contingency theory and successful collaborative leadership practices, which emerged from the participants' responses and archival documents in this study.

Collaborative leadership practices revealed in the data analysis served as a guide for the development of the project study: name of project here. Section 3 comprises a brief description of the proposed professional development project. Section 3 also includes a review of literature related to professional development, the project description, and the project evaluation plan. I conclude Section 3 with the project implications to social change.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In Section 3, I present the project, A Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations (see Appendix A). Section 3 comprises a description of the proposed project based on this case study's findings. Inclusive in Section 3 is the rationale for proposing a professional development project and the project goals. Section 3 also includes a review of literature related to professional development of leadership skills and the transformational leadership theory. In Section 3, I discuss the resources needed, barriers, the timetable for implementation, and evaluation plan for the project deliverable to key stakeholders. Section 3 ends with the conclusion outlining the implications to social change.

Description and Goals

The project, Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations, will be a 3-day workshop. Based on the research findings, the focus of the project was the need to assist EMO leaders and school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools who may be implementing programs to improve academic achievement. The project includes research evidence and conclusions based on the findings and leadership practices used to successfully improve academic achievement at charter schools in the Midwest. The project, Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations, is a strategic planning tool for development of effective leadership practices to address the need to improve student achievement. The project includes descriptions of professional development topics including collaboration

using a transformational leadership style, implementation of change through transformational leadership, and improvement of student achievement employing project-based classroom instruction plan. The goal of this project is the enrichment of transformational leadership skills of educational leaders to promote collaboration, networking, learning exchanges, and professional development of school leaders' skills.

Rationale

EMO leaders and school principals shared that a high priority is a need for more structured professional development, which was the fifth emerging theme from data analysis. The participants' also emphasized that to enhance academic achievement in highly successful urban schools, EMO and school leaders will need to continue professional development programs and push teachers to adopt new practices for school improvement. During the semistructured interviews, the participants emphasized the need for implementation of best leadership practices, development of leadership skills, support from leadership, and quality academic programs.

This project may address the problem by providing EMO leaders and school principals with relevant information regarding effective leadership practices for implementation of best leadership practices, providing professional development, and developing quality academic programs. The EMO leaders expressed that providing the school leaders with training and specific tools for instructional practices in the classroom is an important aspect within the organization. The review of guidelines in the leader's academy handbook revealed teachers are required to complete 15 credit hours of continuous education and recertification courses annually. Therefore, the genre of

professional development is the most appropriate approach to address the problem and the needs of the EMO leaders and school principals.

Review of the Literature

The review of literature related to professional development of leadership skills and the transformational leadership theory for EMO leaders and school leaders of low-performing schools included the following databases: (a) Education from SAGE, (b) Education Research Complete, (c) ERIC, (d) Academic Search Complete, (e) Google Scholar, and (f) ProQuest Central database. The search strings used to gather literature on the research topic consisted of using the following keywords: *professional development*, *charter schools*, *education*, *professional development theorists*, *transformational leadership*, *transformational leadership theorists*, and *school leadership*.

The first relevant search was professional development for leadership skills, which resulted in a significant amount of literature. The second relevant search was transformation leadership strategies for EMO leaders and school leaders for improving student achievement results. The literature searches included several topics regarding the impact of transformation leadership skills for professional development for school leaders. The search results concluded with 45 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2013 and 2017.

Transformational Leadership

The chosen theory used to guide the development of the project was the transformational leadership theory. For example, a school leader referenced the leadership term *transformational* when referring to a discussion with an EMO leader

about collaborative leadership strategies. In addition, the EML3 provided a copy of Lezotte's (year) seminal work *Seven Correlates to Effective Schools*, which the leaders use in the Leaders Academy program. Lezotte's seven correlates to effective schools include (a) leadership on the line, (b) learning and leading with the habits of mind, (c) school leadership that works, and (d) transformative teaching (Hvidston, Range, McKim & Mette, 2015).

Bass developed the transformational leadership theory to distinguish differences between transformational and transactional leadership styles. According to Bass, transformational leaders motivate their followers to perform beyond expectations through inspiration and promotion of the subordinates' feeling of pride. Transformational leaders offer intellectual challenges and pay attention to subordinates' individual developmental needs (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership is an extensively used leadership theories (Arthur & Hardy, 2014). Since the introduction of the transformational leadership theory, Bass evolved the theory to describe four dimensions of leader behavior (Bacha & Walker, 2013). The four transformational leadership behaviors include: (a) idealized influence, (b) individualized consideration, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) inspirational motivation (Bass, 1998; Caillier, 2014). In addition, EML2 indicated EMOs must transform from traditional instructional practice of 100 years ago to a more transformative instructional leadership practice. Leaders use transformative leadership practices to motivate, inspire action, and create a shared vision for followers to pursue the organization's goals and mission (Yang, 2014).

Idealized influence refers to the behavior of leaders as a strong role model (Bass, 1998; Emmanuel & Ugochukwu, 2013). Idealized influence, which is the highest level of transformational leadership, involves the creation of an ethical vision and high ethical standards to achieve the vision (Bacha & Walker, 2013). Leaders utilized transformational leadership practices to create intellectual and inspirational team building for subordinates (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Individualized consideration includes the provision of support, encouragement, and feedback for use in the followers' personal development (Bass, 1998). For instance, some district educational leaders may support the use of transformation leadership practices for professional development (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Implementing transformational leadership practices may result in building the follower's confidence and intrinsic desires to succeed (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016).

Intellectual stimulation is the leader's behavior to challenge their followers to be creative and innovative (Bass, 1998). According to Jyoti and Dev (2015), transformational leaders are a catalyst of employee creativity resulting in efficiency, performance, and sustainability. Afsar, Badir, and Saeed (2014) added many leaders may employ the transformational leadership style to influence employees' innovative work behavior for team-based activities.

Inspirational motivation is the behavior used by the leader to develop and articulate the organization's vision (Bass, 1998). Transformational leaders raise their follower's consciousness levels about the value of designated organizational mission and vision (Bass, 1985; Emmanuel & Ugochukwu, 2013). Leaders possessing

transformational skills provide clear communications and goals with members (Yang, 2014). Leaders apply transformational leadership skills to influence followers to motivate followers and instill a shared vision on behalf of the organization (Asan, 2015; Effelsberg, Solga & Gurt, 2014).

Transformational leaders motivate employees to transcend self-interest, work long hours, and increase productivity for the sake of achieving organizational goals (Bass, 1985; Jyoti & Dev, 2015). For instance, a transformational leader may achieve growth and goals through enriched school culture and relational trust among subordinates (Dartey-Baah, 2016; Kershner & McQuillan, 2016). In addition, educational leaders may use transformational leadership practices to facilitate sustainable social practices (Mandikonza & Lotz-Sisitka, 2016). Educational leaders may use transformational leadership and professional development to enhance school leaders' job satisfaction outcomes, which in turn improve student achievement and (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). Yang (2014) argued that principals must improve their transformational leadership skills because staff members have different expectations about professional development and school development.

Continuous Professional Development

Professional development is the process whereby individuals acquire knowledge or enhance their skills for improved practices, whereas continuing professional development is the engagement in extensive training to enhance a person's qualifications (Mitchell, 2013). Professional development is a continual process that requires the integration of reflection, evaluation and critical structuring (Hourani & Stringer, 2015).

Educators and administrators can enhance personal growth and career achievement goals by offering employees professional development (Ahuja, 2015). Furthermore, professional development can enhance principals' knowledge and skills (Hourani & Stringer, 2015). In addition, P1 indicated the EMO had increased the professional development training opportunities. P2 described training sessions regarding leadership strategies for enhancing student achievement results. Leaders using high quality designed professional development projects encourage participants to achieve goals (Adams, 2014). Educators' use of professional development programs requires recognition of its impact on leadership regarding both organization leadership and instructional leadership purposes (Hvidston et al., 2015).

Quality professional development includes the following fundamental components: (a) content focus, (b) active learning, (c) collective participation, (d) duration, and (e) coherence (Barlow, Frick, Barker, & Phelps, 2014). In addition, P3 referenced professional development services initiated by EMO leaders regarding curriculum development for the school site administrators and teachers in support of student achievement. Professional development should be intensive, continuing, and linked to practice (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). Stevenson, Hedberg, O'Sullivan, and Howe (2016) argued that school leaders encounter many challenges when pursuing support for professional development. For example, a challenge for school leaders and administrators is the recognization of the value-added component regarding the implementation of a professional development project (Walton, 2014).

Professional development coordinators should research the participants' profiles when implementing a professional development program (Barlow et al., 2014). Schools leaders, when designing professional development projects, are required to consider the participants' needs (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). For instance, Hourani and Stringer (2015) explored the design elements of Abu Dhabi public schools professional development programs for principals. Hourani and Stringer revealed the professional development programs require improvement in areas such as content and processes that did not focus on the principals' needs.

Lange and Meaney (2013) stated that professional educational development usually occurs in physical settings such as schools. Although continuous professional development has different forms such as face-to-face and online contexts, school leaders should facilitate effective professional development models (Stevenson, Hedberg, O'Sullivan, & Howe, 2016). For instance, Stevenson et al. (2016) found that many school leaders prefer professional learning using technology and informal methods rather than traditional structured forms.

Professional development should align with school improvement goals and focus on student learning (Marrongelle et al., 2013). Earley & Porritt (2014) agreed that school leaders should focus on student learning to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development (PD) programs. According to Earley and Porritt, some components of an evidential baseline to determine the impact of the PD programs are setting goals, planning, organizational support, implementing new learning practices, and pupils' learning outcomes. Some school leaders' use blended learning systems such as project-

based learning to enhance student learning and implement school improvement (Boone, 2015).

Project-based Learning

Project-based learning, which first initiated in the Education discipline, is a learning approach in which learners work in groups to learn (Siritararatn, 2015). Project-based learning is pedagogy to create student-centered learning experiences that allow students to enhance their knowledge and learn critical-thinking skills (Behizadeh, 2014). Equally important, P2 stated the expansion of project-based learning instruction in the classroom had relatable benefits for elementary students. Hao, Branch, and Jensen (2016) added that project-based learning is one of the best approaches for student self-regulated learning and development. Project-based learning, which is a student-centered learning program, has a positive impact on teaching methods (Lattuca, Bergom, & Knight, 2014).

The process of project-based learning entails teachers asking questions regarding a topic and the students engaging in a research project to answer the teacher-generated questions (Behizadeh, 2014; Ezquerra, Manso, Burgos, & Hallabrin, 2014). In project-based Learning, the students build knowledge and develop cross-curriculum skills through exploring problems and working in collaborative groups (Hopper, 2014). Lee, Huh, and Reigeluth (2015) added that collaborative project-based learning is an innovative approach to engage students in classroom projects. In addition, Han and Carpenter (2014) examined student attitudes toward science, technology, engineering, and mathematics project-based learning (PBL). The five factors relating to the student's perceptions of project-based learning were self-regulated learning, collaborative learning,

interdisciplinary learning environment, technology-based learning, and hands-on activity (Han & Carpenter, 2014). Han and Carpenter added the two factors with the highest internal consistency were technology and hands-on activity. Using project-based learning allows educators to promote communication and collaboration among students to share different ideas (Ezquerra et al., 2014).

Some school leaders consider project-based learning a necessary instructional curriculum (Buchanan, Harlan, Bruce, & Edwards, 2016). For example, Lin, Ma, Kuo, and Chou (2015) found that project-based learning was beneficial for fostering learning community practices and 21st-century skills for high school students. Siritararatn (2015) conducted research to investigate how using project-based learning would help to improve and stimulate students' oral linguistic and non-linguistic performances. Wang, Teng, and Lin (2015) focused on using project-based learning in a Taiwanese junior high school English classroom to develop students' creativity and cooperative learning. Students acquired knowledge to complete the assigned project in a group, improved communication skills and increased English learning achievement through project-based learning (Wang, Teng, & Lin, 2015). Futhermore, Siritararatn (2015) found that employing project-based learning enhanced the students' linguistic ability, leadership skills, and work skills such as time management. In addition, most students gained self-confidence because project-based learning provided them with opportunities to engage in oral interactions using English (Siritararatn, 2015). According to Martelli and Watson (2016), project-based learning benefits the students, because they become an active investigator and problem solver of complex questions. Moreover, project-based learning

requires students to identify a problem, define a real project, and create an artifact that represents their understanding of the problem (Mann & Pynes, 2016; Sepahkar, Hendessi, & Nabiollahi, 2015). Students need the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century (Ayodo, 2016).

Project Description and Implementation

I will create the project, Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations in Microsoft PowerPoint format. Implementation of the power point presentation will be as part of a 3-day professional development workshop for EMO districts leaders, school principals, and teachers (see Appendix A). In addition, I will format the power point presentation with provisions for adjustments for different audiences, districts, school sites, and time allocations. The workshops will serve as the model for a formal approached to leadership development for entry-level both EMO leaders and school leaders to share in the organization. Therefore, the project includes the professional development programs to endorse leadership learning, training, and strategy development to address low-performing students and usage of best leadership practice.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The most significant resource required to implement the professional development project is the acceptance of the project by the charter school authorizer and EMO leaders. Once the charter school authorizer and EMO leaders grant approval, the second potential resource will be sufficient financial resources for the workshop location site, professional speakers, audio-visual equipment, and classroom materials. Additional

resources may be catering services for meals, hotel accommodations for speakers, and coverage for staff members attending the workshop.

The charter school authorizers will need to understand the importance of providing professional development programs to support the project and provide funding. EMO leaders will need to recognize that professional development is a fundamental element for school improvement to support the project. In addition, the charter school leaders such as superintendents, principals, and lead teachers will need to realize the significance of professional development to promote collaborative practices, more robust learning opportunities to support the EMO and school leaders' vision for teaching, learning, and providing quality classroom instruction.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers include allocation of time, financial resources, and workshop location site. The charter school authorizers and EMO leaders usually have restraints on their time because of the 12-month work calendar in which they focus on strategies for school improvement. Most educators have a 10-month work schedule and school activities for the academic year that may pose a scheduling conflict. During my review of school documents, I noted the EMO leaders and principals had allotted time for the leadership academy meetings, parent-teacher meetings, and school activities such as spring carnivals, prom, and community outreach events. To address the potential barrier of time restraints, I will propose a 1-day seminar for individuals who cannot attend the full 3-day workshop. The 1-day seminar will focus on the fundamental strategies for development of transformational leadership skills and implementation of project-based

classroom instruction. Furthermore, the timing for the professional development training can be flexible to accommodate the availability of the potential attendees.

Financial resources may be a potential barrier because charter schools rely on private and government funding based on student enrollment quotas. Many charter schools receive funding by charging students tuition or the schools in their portfolio a fee. To address the concern of having sufficient financial resources, I would suggest employing professional speakers from local universities with expertise in leadership development and curriculum development. The charter school authorizers and EMO leaders will need to understand that providing support and funding for professional development can lead to improved academic achievement. Therefore, I would suggest offering the professional development workshop as an alternative to one of the leadership academy professional development requirements. The 1-day seminar for individuals who cannot attend the full 3-day workshop will serve as an alternative to address financial funding concerns also.

The final potential barrier is the workshop location site, which will depend on the number of attendees. The location for the professional development workshops may be the school site locations such as the auditorium, cafeteria, or multiple classrooms for a smaller number of attendees. To accommodate a larger number of attendees, the EMO corporate leaders should have the flexibility to provide off-site locations such as the corporate office conference rooms.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The proposed plan is to use the project as a guide for a 3-day Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations during the winter break or summer. For the 1-day seminar, the timetable would be during the summer for individuals who cannot attend the full 3-day workshop. Registration will begin from September of the academic year. I provided an outline of the itineraries for the 3-day workshop and 1-day seminar in Appendix A.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

My roles and responsibilities include communicating with the charter school authorizers and EMO leaders to ensure the project meets the needs of the leaders. Initially, I will present the salient planning framework for the three-day workshop to EMO leaders and school principals as part of the introduction to the planned project. I will utilize a collaborative leadership approach to assist all stakeholders that include, authorizer, EMO leaders, assigned school principals and educators in the development of a strategize plan to engage all stakeholders in the support for improve student achievement results. Furthermore, I will lead a small ad hoc project-planning group to outline the benefits of the project to EMO leaders and authorizers for assisting school principals on best leadership practices to improve low-performing urban charter schools.

Effective implementation of the project will require support from the charter school authorizers and EMO leaders. Furthermore, detailed planning is a requirement with roles and responsibilities prioritized for a professional development project. The planning with include participant recruitment, budget development, site location

consideration, timelines for each presentation, equipment requirements, and date consideration for a 2017-2018 scheduled event, for 3-day workshop before school opening.

Project Evaluation

An evaluation is the assessment of the effectiveness of an activity or program against the planned outcomes (Linzalone & Schiuma, 2015). An outcome-based evaluation will serve as the tool to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of the 3-day professional development workshop or 1-day seminar for enhancing the transformational leadership skills of EMO leaders and school principals. According to Mehrani and Tatari (2016), the outcome-based evaluation is an important model for evaluating programs.

The rationale for using the outcome-based evaluation was to focus on changes in the leadership behaviors and practices of the EMO leaders and school principals attending the professional development workshop. The outcomes-based approach requires individuals to demonstrate achievement of specified learning outcomes at the end of a learning program (Tam, 2014). The types of evaluation mostly used in education are the formative and summative approach. The formative evaluation is to help the individual master the knowledge and skills to demonstrate competence, whereas summative provide a basis for creating shared meanings from different contexts (Bell, 2015; Venable, Pries-Heje, & Baskerville, 2016).

Stavropoulou and Stroubouki (2014) defined outcomes as factors that are the yields of antecedents and transactions. The outcome-based evaluation will be to measure

three types of outcomes: cognitive, skills, and affective. Cognitive outcomes refer to the content knowledge leaders can comprehend and apply, whereas skills outcomes refer to the capacity to perform task including problem-solving and communicating effectively (Tam, 2014). Tam (2014) defined affective outcomes as the individuals' attitudes toward changes in beliefs and development of values such as behavior and respect for others.

The evaluation will be a questionnaire administered at the end of each day (see Appendix G). The participants will answer questions regarding the professional development workshop effectiveness (see Appendix H). Participants will provide additional feedback about the presenters, presentation format, and the activities. I will analyze the evaluation data to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of the project as a strategic professional development tool. Based on the specific feedback, I will make adjustments to meet the needs of different audiences, districts, school sites, and time allocations. Furthermore, the key stakeholders including the charter school authorizers, EMO leaders, school principals, and school district representatives will receive a summary of the data.

The overall goals of the evaluation are to determine how effective the professional development workshop was for implementing change for school improvement. The long-term evaluation will be a questionnaire administered 3 months following the workshop to evaluate the changes in leadership behaviors and practices to improve student academic achievement (see Appendix I). The basis for the overall outcome measures will follow the Marzano school leader evaluation model. During the interviews, both the EMO leaders and school principals shared the leadership team used Marzano's evaluation

model to measure the level of school improvement each year. The Marzano school leader evaluation model includes five domains: (a) a data-driven focus on student achievement; (b) continuous improvement of instruction; (c) a guaranteed and viable curriculum; (d) cooperation and collaboration; and (e) school climate (Marzano, 2013). The evaluation questionnaire will address all aspects of the usefulness of informational from the professional development workshop and the implementation of transformational leadership practices (see Appendix I). In addition, the questionnaire will include questions regarding the implementation of change employing transformational leadership practices to improve academic achievement and the school.

Various stakeholders which include policy supporters of choice, deregulation, and accountability, have driven charter schools to seek to achieve a series of goals that included creating autonomous environments that employ instructional innovations for student achievement. Charter school leaders are accountable for student achievement in exchange for having more autonomy in deciding how to achieve those results (Gawlik, 2015). Furthermore, education systems across the globe face similar challenges in developing infrastructures that support school improvements to leadership and teaching practice (Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015).

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Students will receive quality instructional practices from knowledgeable and effective educators to enhance the students' academic achievement in turn achieving the state accountability goals. Instructors may gain enhanced leadership skills from a

professional development action plan to address student achievement goals for low-performing students. The professional training workshops may prepare EMO leaders and school leaders to be transformational leaders when addressing student achievement goals for low-performing urban charter schools. Professional development workshops might assist veteran leaders to develop mentoring programs for entry-level educators. Stakeholders may gain an understanding of the value of building community partnerships with charter school authorizers and EMO leaders to enhance opportunities to improve student academic achievement.

Far-Reaching

The professional development project may enhance the leadership practices for charter school principals and teachers. I will provide a district-wide presentation to other EMO leaders and school leaders to promote the values, benefits, and expected results of the opportunity to stage the 3-day workshop. The project workshop may require expansion to larger participants grouping of more than one EMO organization. In addition, proper design and programming may find a quarterly professional development more palatable. In addition, other charter schools may benefit from the findings and the professional development workshop tool to address leadership practices for positively enhancing student achievement within urban-based charter schools. This project may serve as a discussion template among all school districts in the state of Michigan seeking to address school reform concerns and enact effective leadership skills for school reforms.

Conclusion

Section 3 included a detailed description of the project, A Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations, to assist assigned school leaders to improve academic achievement at low-performing urban charters schools located in the Midwest. Inclusive in Section 3 is the rationale for developing a professional development project, the project description and goals, and a brief literature review. Following the literature review, I provide details regarding the implementation of the project, evaluation method, and implications of social change based on the project. Section 4 will contain my reflections, project strengths and limitations, scholarship and project development and leadership and change and conclusion.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Section 4 begins with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the professional development project. I include reflections of the insight gained regarding scholarship, project development, and leadership. In addition, I provide a brief discussion of my reflections about the importance of the research and my experience as a novice researcher. Section 4 includes the potential implications of social change based on the research findings, recommendations for application of findings in education, and directions for future research. Finally, I conclude Section 4 with the summary and study conclusion.

Project Strengths

The project, a professional development program, has strengths based on the ability to address the lack collaborative leadership practices and the procedures to implement the project. Considering the purpose of the project, the focus was on the need to assist EMO leaders and school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools who may be implementing programs to improve academic achievement. Each of the EMO leaders and school principals provided information about the leadership practices based on the needs of the school culture and community. The strength of the project is that it provides research-based and evidence-based data. The study findings indicated that collaborative leadership practices are fundamental for enhancing academic achievement in low-performing urban charter schools. Furthermore, the project may contribute to increasing the current knowledge base regarding best leadership practices

between EMOs and school leaders to improve student achievement. The project is appropriate for advocating the implementation of educational leadership practices to enhance student learning in low-performing charter schools.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

Limitations relate to the acceptance of the project by the charter school authorizer and EMO leaders. I will prepare a presentation of the project, Professional Development for EMO Leaders and School Principals, with alternative approaches to meet the specifications of the authorizers and EMO leaders. Communication with the charter school authorizers and EMO leaders via conference calls, Skype technology, and other related interaction exchanges can be a solution during the planning stages.

Educators and administrators have busy schedules during the day; therefore, a significant challenge is the scheduling of a professional development workshop outside or within a school calendar. For example, planning the workshop requires the allocation of time without interrupting normal school schedules. Creating a flexible scheduling arrangement for planning purposes may eliminate the limitation of time restraints.

Financial funding and access to sites are significant limitations for the professional development project. A possible resolution for funding is the intermediate school district may provide use of Title I funds for school improvement activities such as professional development workshop. The EMO leaders and school principals may collaborate to implement strategies for using school facilities as the location and local vendors that offer discounted services for setup consultant services. Furthermore, scheduling of presenters' is a limitation for the workshop scheduling. A recommendation

is to contract presenters from local universities that authorize charter schools and school leaders from successful charter schools.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative for addressing the research problem is a policy recommendation with details. The policy recommendation with detail may provide stakeholders with information to engage in a discussion to create legislation for supporting leadership guidelines for EMO and school leaders to improve student achievement. The emerging theme compliance and regulation indicated school leaders have a concern regarding the state of Michigan guidelines and mandates for measuring and reporting student achievement. In addition, my review of the parent-student handbook revealed a section dedicated to compliance and regulations for school leaders.

An alternative approach to address the problem is to focus on the collaborative practices implemented by principals to assist teachers to improve student academic achievement at the local level. School principals play a key role in demonstrating transformational leadership to assist teachers in their assigned schools to deliver effective student-learning engagement. Principals and teachers can collaborate shared goals through establishing trust, focus, and respect for a professional development workshop (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016). Daily engagement with classroom student-learning experiences to data-driven assessments may lead to a collaborative partnership for principals and teachers to address effective leadership strategies for low-performing students. “EMOs, authorizers, principals, and educators must share the same goals and mission to improve students’ achievement results” (Shields, M., personal communication,

March 2016). In addition, “parents and guardians should be supportive of the school and EMO organization strategy for students’ improvement results from a community perspective (EML2, personal communication”, December, 2016). The development of collaborative partnerships may assist with creating strong alliances for effective school leadership, particularly where diversity is an issue.

Alternative ways for future researchers to address the study problem is to study different leadership styles and practices EMOs implement low-preforming K-12 urban charter schools. For example, researchers may focus on participatory and distributive leadership styles in which the leader encourages a team-based culture. Participative leaders consider their subordinates’ opinions when making decisions (Khaliq, Ashraf, Chattha, Haroon, & Aslam, 2016). Participative leaders also combine their ideas and suggestions from followers in the decision-making process (Naureen, Awan, & Noshaba, 2015). Having a participatory leadership system allow employees to influence organizational strategies and hold leaders accountable (Park, Miao, & Kim, 2015). For instance, Naureen, Awan, and Noshaba (2015) investigated the relationship between four leadership styles including participative leadership of school heads and their teachers’ job satisfaction. Naureen et al. found that a direct relationship exists between participative leadership and employees’ job satisfaction.

Distributive leadership is a flexible combination of bottom-up and top-down management in organizations in which distributed leaders collaborate with their employees to stimulate innovation, communicating ideas, and identifying concerns (Abankwa & Kangaslahti, 2014). The central principle of distributed leadership is the

direct involvement of all members of an organization in management processes (Pelser & Wyk, 2016). Leadership in a distributive workplace setting consists of leaders that depend on the interaction between all members of the organization (Jalovcic, McCloud-Bondoc, & Ralston, 2014). Miskolci, Armstrong, and Spandagou (2016) argued that distributive leadership in an educational setting counter the broader interests of school inclusion, because the school leaders empower individuals with inadequate skills to lead school change. Using different leadership styles and practices within the school environment may influence positive academic outcomes.

Reflective Analysis of Scholarship

Engaged scholarship permits collaborative distribution of research across different disciplines and communities (Paynter, 2014). As a former urban-based superintendent, I began with my interest in independent research of educational based topics that provided both a local and national perspective, as well as a societal impact for community stakeholders. The review of the literature and development of the professional development project provided opportunity to expand my knowledge of the leadership practices needed to improve student's achievement.

The case study design provides the researcher the opportunity to explore the process or phenomenon from the participant's perception (Yin, 2014). I improved my understanding of research methodologies and designs and scholarship skills through the qualitative research process. Based on the interviewees' responses, I gained insight about the gap in leadership practices for assisting principals of low-performing school through professional development activities. In addition, I collected statistical assessment data

regarding charter schools and student proficiency assessments for the Midwest area at the State Department of Education website. As a researcher, I learned one must be prepared in advance and guided by developing a procedural protocol to provide reliability and validity for other researchers to duplicate the research methodology. The research findings provided new information to contribute to the existing literature research on leadership practices and professional leadership development programs that the EMO leaders and charter school principals can implement within low-performing schools.

Although I am a Walden MBA graduate, I was uncertain about the level of scholarly writing required to complete the doctoral program. To develop scholarly writing skills, I relied on the assistance and feedback from my chair and committee members, as well as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 6th edition. Using the EdD project study qualitative checklist as a guide, I was able to compose a quality doctoral study. The project study checklist is a valuable tool for key headings guidance, contents expectations, and document formatting for meeting the project study rubric.

Reflective Analysis of Project Development and Evaluation

The development of the project and evaluation plan began with a review of the data collected during the semistructured questions and emerging themes during data analysis. The emerging themes included collaborative practices; academic achievement; implementation to change; school improvement; professional development; compliance and regulations; organizational culture, and community involvement. Based the collected

data and emerging themes, I concluded that a professional development project was appropriate for this study.

I reviewed literature regarding transformational leadership, which formed the conceptual framework for the professional development project, from scholarly journals. My literature review consisted of researching articles from scholarly journals about professional development and project-based learning. In addition, I composed a literature review to support the significance of the transformational leadership style, professional development, and project-based learning to improve academic achievement in low-performing schools.

The planning of a professional development project requires a careful procedural protocol for design, implementation, and evaluation. I learned that professional development project outcomes should meet the goals and objective of the organization, including the support EMO leaders and assigned school principals. The project required description details; local and wider scope implication statements; evaluation plan component, and project strengths and limitations analyses. The actual workshop design requires planning for participants, presenters, site location, and agendas for formation for 3-day professional development workshop. The entire research methodology process has contributed to furthering my dedication and understanding of leadership practices, as a school administrator, when preparing a professional development project for schools leaders and educators.

Reflective Analysis of Leadership and Change

The role of educational leaders is to oversee the best practices for achieving accountability goals, monitoring school success, and improving academic achievement (Hvidston et al., 2015). EMO leaders and school principals often forge collaboration for best student learning curriculums. School leaders and educators collaborate when developing school improvement strategies for low-performing schools. I learned from the literature review and research findings that school administrators and leaders must instill trust, motivation, and ethical value to achieve the organization's mission and goals.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

The rationale for pursuing this project study was my interest in exploring accountability and oversight measures of EMO leaders at charter schools. In addition, I desired to understand what leadership practices EMO leaders and school principals used to improve academic achievement in low-performing charter schools. During the research process, the compulsory courses prepared me for writing a proposal, applying for IRB approval, establishing a proper protocol for participants' consent, respecting the participants' rights, and preparing the full disclosure of the research study. As a scholar, I reflect on the insight gained regarding the use of scholarly voice and structuring the manuscript by following the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 6th edition. Through the search for literature, I gained and in-depth understanding of documented research regarding key aspects of my research topic and leadership theories for the conceptual framework. In addition, I learned various approaches for conducting research.

I appreciated the designing of a research procedure protocol to minimize errors and adhering to tasks for review of key timelines, methodologies for data collection, and data analysis procedures. I appreciated the data collection methodology while posing semistructured questions including contributing probes to solicit further explanation of the topic. In addition, I gained a better understanding of performing member checking, which is a fundamental element for confirming transcriptions from audio tape interview sessions, as well as ensuring reliability and validity. I am prepared to engage in future research based on the knowledge and skills acquired during my research, my doctoral journey, and the Walden University EdD program foundation.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Conducting a qualitative case study provided me with the opportunity to gain knowledge to develop my researcher skills**.** Furthermore, I learned that a researcher must eliminate personal bias and allow the participants to share information while conducting research. My initial thoughts were that using the interview protocol would limit the participants' responses, as well as collection of additional information during member checking. I found the interview protocol was an effective guide during the interview process. Data collection included semistructured interviews with three educational management organization leaders and five urban charter school principals and reviewing archival company documents. After gaining the participants' trust, the EMO leaders and school leaders exhibited a willingness to participate. Furthermore, I gained confidence as a practitioner with each scheduled interview meeting. Member checking was an efficient process to ensure the accuracy of my interpretations, data saturation, and research

reliability. The most valuable lesson learned as a practitioner was the requirement for flexibility during data collection. For example, one school leader requested an adjustment in the interview schedule because of a work emergency or other school-based priorities. The second experience was a request to change the venue for the interview. I learned that conducting research requires an understanding of appropriate research methodologies and designs, which are the important components to aid the researcher to provide documentation of research processes, the study findings, and reliability and validity measures.

Data analysis was an insightful process because of the knowledge gained regarding the value of using CAQDAS. For practice, I attempted to identify key terms and codes manually after transcribing the first interview resulting in 2 hours of work. I found by using CAQDAS that I could analyze collected data to identify codes and themes in less time. Although research requires diligent work, discipline, and extensive time in the field, conducting this research study has been one of the most exciting and rewarding journeys as a scholarly researcher and practitioner.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer preparing Section 3, I was able to demonstrate learned experiences and processes as a scholar and practitioner. I learned developing a professional development project requires patience, focus with purpose, prerequisite planning, and establishment a procedural protocol. An important lesson learned was that the research has to rely on the findings and outcomes to determine which project is

appropriate. Furthermore, I developed the professional development project based on the participants' responses and research findings.

During the process of developing the project, I learned that using transformational leadership can affect individuals' behaviors towards achieving organizational goals. Administrators exhibiting transformational leadership traits engage subordinates by providing followers with the shared roles and responsibilities to achieve the organization's vision (Yang, 2014). Through the project development, I enhanced my knowledge and appreciation of a school administrator's implementation of the core practices of leadership: (a) setting direction, (b) developing people, (c) redesigning the organization, and (d) managing the instructional program. The goal of the project study was to adopt the professional development workshop and enrich transformational leadership skills of educational leaders to promote collaboration, networking, learning exchanges, and professional development of school leaders' skills.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Leadership strategies for achieving best collaborative leadership practices between EMO leaders and school leaders is an important measuring matrix regarding student achievement. Many EMOs may need leadership practices to engage school leaders of low-performing schools. Data analysis indicated that collaborative practices and student achievement were a priority for low-performing urban charter in a Midwest region of the United States. The study findings contribute to existing literature regarding the emerging societal issue of identifying effective leadership practices to improve student achievement in low-performing urban charter schools.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

An implication of social change is EMO leaders and school leaders may gain an understanding about the potential benefits of employing multiple leadership practices and professional development programs. Parents and students may gain knowledge regarding education choices and key deliverables in terms of best leadership practices affecting student achievement from this study. Families may benefit from improved schools that can demonstrate effective student learning results emulating from transformative school leaders. In addition, participants' shared the importance of being a community partner, focusing on the students' needs, and providing a student-focused learning environment for academic improvement. The development of collaborative partnerships can create strong alliances for effective school leadership, particularly where diversity is an issue. Furthermore, the sustainability of the school district is a key component in terms of generating high school graduates with proven ability for career or higher education options as future community civic leaders.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The most recent education reform act is Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced NCLB. The Every Student Succeeds Act reduces the federal government's role in school accountability while placing more responsibility on state and local government officials (Ogletree & Robinson, 2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act provides state government officials with substantial freedom to restructure their accountability systems (Bush, Hough, & Kirst, 2017). Florida adopted a letter-grade system with a focus on student achievement on the annual statewide test, whereas

California developed a dashboard-style system encompassing multiple measures (Bush et al., 2017).

Many education reformers and leaders have embraced a child-focused reform agenda resulting from the expansion of parental choice, growth in charter schools, and the enactment of ESSA (Garnett, 2017). Some school district leaders use portfolio strategy in which the district leaders negotiate performance agreements with public school leaders to structure the school to fit the needs of the students (Osborne, 2016). Portfolio strategies are a combination of efforts to improve urban public school and efforts to increase the opportunity for low-income students in the charter sector to attend high quality schools (Garnett, 2017). In 2014, New Orleans replaced the traditional school district structure with the recovery school district in which CMOs opened charter schools (Harris, 2015). Additional cities pursuing the portfolio strategy include Camden, New Jersey, Denver, Colorado, New York City, New York, and Washington, D.C. (Garnett, 2017; Osborne, 2016). Osborne (2016) added the portfolio strategy empowers school leaders with substantial autonomy.

EMO leaders, school leaders, and educators may apply practices identified in this research study to develop a process to develop professional development workshops for collaborative leadership strategies and instructional best practices. Policymakers may use the findings from this study to consider potential legislation regarding accountability and oversight components for charter schools nationwide. Michigan's school systems both traditional public schools and charter schools are expected to implement accountability

systems, under a statewide mandate that schools produce improvement initiatives, the creation of a core curriculum, and learning outcomes for all students.

The implications for future research is to address the research problem by exploring the concept of building partnerships and subordinated relationships among EMO leaders and school leaders to improve student achievement. Leader-member exchange involves followers developing a unique relationship with their leader (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & van, 2015). Senior leaders' behaviors influence the behaviors of their subordinates in turn shape employee behaviors (Hirst, Walumbwa, Aryee, Butarbutar, & Chen, 2016). Kahrobaei and Mortazavi (2016) examined the effect of leader-member exchange on a teams' creative involvement in creative projects. According to Kahrobaei and Mortazavi, leaders indirectly affect involvement in creative projects through affective, cognitive, and behavioral energies. Walthall and Dent (2016) asserted that leaders and followers benefit when they develop mature relationships in which leaders form differentiated relationships with each follower.

I chose a case study design to explore collaborative leadership practices to assist school site leaders of low-performing urban charter school to improve students' achievement located in the Midwest region of the United States. An alternative consideration for my research problem is the multiple case study design. A multiple case study involves the use of two or more case may present a stronger case study design to explore the phenomenon under review (Yin, 2014).

I recommend that future researchers conduct a study regarding the perceptions of authorizers regarding accountability and oversight issues over state identified low-

performing urban charter schools. Educational leaders are responsible for providing vision, direction, and day-to-day management of educational activities such as setting educational goals and establishing policies (Ayodo, 2016). Charter school leaders must meet the accountability standards of NCLB and Race-to-the-Top, as well as accountability guidelines set by the authorizers (Gawlik, 2015). The basis of the No Child Left Behind was standardized-test accountability guidelines as the fundamental element to improving schools (Deming, Cohodes, Jennings, & Jencks, 2016). Annually under the accountability guidelines of NCLB and Race-to-the-Top, the state educators and government officials released students' performance reports from the standardized testing results (Peterson, 2016).

Conclusion

Schools leaders face challenges of organization's policies for inclusion and diversity, when attempting to implement school improvement goals (Lightfoot & Thompson, 2014). Charter schools have demonstrated creativity and innovative instructional practices, in spite of policies regarding deregulation and accountability (Gawlik, 2015). School leaders have exhibited decentralized networks have contributed to school reform (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016).

School leaders' collaborative leadership learning strategies is highly regarded in several organizations (Tombaugh & Mayfield, 2014). School leaders' development of a sound professional program can assist collaboration among teachers in an organization (Luo, 2014). School administrators' use of leadership change strategies may include outside experts (Boone, 2015). School leaders of traditional schools and charter school

leaders embrace collaborative instructional compacts as an option beneficial for their respective organizations (Whitmire, 2014). Educators' implementation of school reforms for 21st century may require more emphasizes for inquiry-based learning competencies (Walton, 2014).

The single case study allowed for the in-depth study of one EMO from the Michigan, which has maintained collaborative leadership practices to assist school principals in improving academic achievement in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools. The study used the lens of Fiedler's contingency theory. Based on the contingency theory, organizational leadership refers to the leader's style of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating employees, whereas some leaders incorporate leadership styles depending on the situation (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools to improve academic achievement. Semistructured interviews with three EMO leaders and five school principals assisted with capturing details from each participant. A review of school documents including EMO policy manual, teacher and administrator evaluation handbook, Marzano Center Teacher and Leader Protocol Evaluation Model, The Leadership Academy manual, curriculum instructional assessment guidelines, and elementary school improvement. Data analysis revealed eight themes relating to collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders and school principals could implement to improve student academic achievement and develop the school improvement plan.

In conclusion, the study provided an approach to capture knowledge from EMO leaders about their collaborative leadership practices and school principals about their perspectives regarding the collaborative leadership practices. A leader influences subordinates to contribute efforts for accomplishing organizational goals and objectives (Emmanuel & Ugochukwu, 2013). Furthermore, school leaders may have a direct effect on staff members' professional development and school improvement (Mitchell, 2013). Knowledge from the study could help other charter school authorizers and EMO leaders increase their effectiveness and student academic achievement, as well as school improvement. In addition, future studies focusing on EMOs could continue to create knowledge to assist other charter school leaders.

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Appendix A: The Project

The purpose of this project was to convey the findings with a professional development tool for educational leaders to address the need to improve student achievement by using effective leadership practices. The goals of this project are to facilitate educational leaders' knowledge of transformational leadership, enrich educational leaders' skills, and develop effective leadership practices. Additional goals are to enhance professional development of school principals' leadership skills, help EMO leaders and school principals implement change using transformational leadership, and assist school principals develop a project-based classroom instruction plan. The objective is to focus on changes in leadership behaviors and practices to enhance academic achievement through quality academic programs.

- **Learning Outcomes**
  - Educational learners will become familiar with the transformational leadership style.
  - Educational leaders will understand how to develop effective leadership practices employing the transformational leadership.
  - As a result of professional development, school principals will understand the benefits of transformational leadership to motivate teachers and students.
  - EMO leaders and school principals will collaborate to develop strategies for implementation of change employing the transformational leadership style.
  - As result of professional development, school principals will create a project-based classroom instruction plan.

- **Target audience**
  - EMO leaders and charter school principals
- **Outlines components, timeline, activities, trainer notes, & module formats**

I will create the project, Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations, as part of a 3-day professional development workshop. The proposed timeline is to offer the workshop during the winter or summer break as a continuing education requirements. The 3-day workshop will begin at 8:00 AM each day and end at 3:00pm with one 15-minute break and a 1-hour lunch break. The daily workshop will consist of check-in and welcome including breakfast. The sessions will begin with a guest speaker, instructional presentations, role-play exercises, breakout sessions, and conclude with evaluation survey. The module formats will be handouts on transformational leadership, professional development, and project-based instruction.

- **Power Point Presentation and Handouts**

3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- **Project Purpose:**

To convey the findings with a professional development tool for educational leaders to address the need to improve student achievement by using effective leadership practices.

3

3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- Project Goal:
- facilitate educational leaders' knowledge of transformational leadership
- enrich educational leaders' skills
- develop effective leadership practices
- enhance professional development of school principals' leadership skills
- help EMO leaders and school principals implement change using transformational leadership
- assist school principals develop a project-based classroom instruction plan.

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3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- Objectives
- to focus on changes in leadership behaviors and practices to enhance academic achievement through quality academic programs.

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3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

Learning Outcomes:

- Educational learners will become familiar with the transformational leadership style.
- Educational leaders will understand how to develop effective leadership practices employing the transformational leadership.
- As a result of professional development, school principals will understand the benefits of transformational leadership to motivate teachers and students.
- EMO leaders and school principals will collaborate to develop strategies for implementation of change employing the transformational leadership style.
- As result of professional development, school principals will create a project-based classroom instruction plan.

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3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

Key Development Themes:

- Transformational Leadership
- Professional Development
- Project-Based Learning in the Classroom

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3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- **Transformational Leadership**:
- Leaders use of transformative leadership practices can motivate, inspire action ,and create a share vision for followers in pursuit of the organization's goals and mission (Yang, 2014). For example, transformation change is accomplished when technology and classroom learning instructional methods promote student engagement (Boone, 2015).

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3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- **Professional Development**:
- Schools leaders, when designing professional development projects, are required to consider the participants' needs (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015).

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3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- **Project-Based Learning in the Classroom:**
- The project includes a implementation of change through transformational leadership, and improvement of student achievement employing project-based classroom instruction plan. Project-based learning is pedagogy to create student-centered learning experiences that allow students to enhance their knowledge and learn critical-thinking skills (Behizadeh, 2014). In project-based Learning, the students build knowledge and develop cross-curriculum skills through exploring problems and working in collaborative groups (Hopper, 2014). Some *no excuses schools* tend to have more teacher turnover than *project-based schools* because of the difference in autonomy granted regarding instructional planning (Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015).

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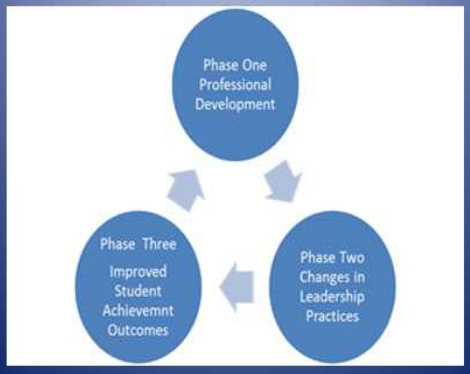
3-Day Professional Development
Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals



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Day One Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- Check-in/Breakfast
- Welcome
- Keynote Presenter: EMO Leaders and School Principals as Transformational Agents
- Discussion of Transformational Leadership Behaviors
- Role-play activities and Breakout Sessions
- Evaluation Survey

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Day Two Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- Check-in/Breakfast
- Welcome
- Keynote Presenter: Professional Development
- Discussion of Professional Development of Transformational Leadership Behaviors
- Role-play activities and Breakout Sessions
- Evaluation Survey

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Day Three Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- Check-in/Breakfast
- Welcome
- Keynote Presenter: Project-based Learning in the Classroom
- Discussion of Project-based Learning Instruction and Student Achievement
- Role-play activities and Breakout Sessions
- Evaluation Survey

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3-Day Professional Development Project for EMO Leaders and School Principals

- **Project Evaluation:**
  - An outcome-based evaluation will serve as the tool to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of the 3-day professional development workshop or 1-day seminar for enhancing the transformational leadership skills of EMO leaders and school principals. According to Mehrani and Tatari (2016), the outcome-based evaluation is an important model for evaluating programs.
  - Short-term: determine how effective the professional development workshop was for implementing change for school improvement.
  - The long-term evaluation will be a questionnaire administered 3 months following the workshop to evaluate the changes in leadership behaviors and practices to improve student academic achievement based on the Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model.

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A Professional Development 3-Day Workshop for Education Management Organizations and School Principals

EMO leaders and School Principals as Transformational Agents

Organization

Learning Outcomes:

- Educational learners will become familiar with the transformational leadership style.
- Educational leaders will understand how to develop effective leadership practices employing the transformational leadership.
- As a result of professional development, school principals will understand the benefits of transformational leadership to motivate teachers and students.
- EMO leaders and school principals will collaborate to develop strategies for implementation of change employing the transformational leadership style.
- As result of professional development, school principals will create a project-based classroom instruction plan.

- **Implementation plan and Evaluation Plan**

Implementation will involve providing a summary of the research findings and a PowerPoint presentation for review. I will seek acceptance and approval from the charter school authorizers and EMO leaders to proceed with implementation. Planning for the *Professional Development Workshop for Education Management Organizations* will begin 1 year before implementation. After receiving approval, the professional development coordinator will begin developing the agenda and schedule for the 3-day workshop. In addition, the professional development coordinator will select guest speakers, coordinate logistic arrangements, procurement of supplies and materials.

Implementation of the 3-day professional development workshop for EMO districts leaders and school principals will be during the winter or summer break. For the 1-day seminar, the timetable would be during the summer for individuals who cannot

attend the full 3-day workshop. The evaluation plan will be outcome-based questionnaire regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the professional development workshop for enhancing the transformational leadership skills of EMO leaders and school principals. Participants will complete the questionnaire at the end of each day. The long-term evaluation will be a questionnaire administered 3 months following the workshop to evaluate the changes in leadership behaviors and practices to improve student academic achievement.

Timeline

3-Day Professional Development/Training Workshop for Education Management Organizations and School Principals

Day One Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- 8:00- 8:30 Check-in/Breakfast
- 8:30-9:00 Welcome/Power Point
- 9:00-10:00 Keynote Presenter: EMO Leaders and School Principals as Transformational Agents
- 10:00-10:15 Break
- 10:15-11:00 Topic: Transformational Leadership Behaviors/Power Point
- 11:15-12:00 Topic: Best Transformational Leadership Practices/Power Point
- 12:15-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-2:30 Role-play activities and Breakout Sessions-Handouts
- 2:30-3:00 Evaluation Survey-Handouts

Timeline

3-Day Professional Development/Training Workshop for Education Management Organizations and School Principals

Day Two Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- 8:00- 8:30 Check-in/Breakfast TBA
- 8:30-9:00 Welcome/Power Pt. TBA
- 9:00-10:00 Keynote Presenter: Professional Development
- 10:00-10:15 Break
- 10:15-11:00 Topic: Professional Development of Transformational Leadership Behaviors/Power Point
- 11:15-12:00 Topic: Professional Development to Implement Change/Power Point
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-2:30 Role-Play Activities and Breakout Sessions-Handouts
- 2:30-3:00 Evaluation Survey-Handouts

Timeline

3-Day Professional Development/Training Workshop for Education Management Organizations and School Principals

Day Three Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- 8:00- 8:30 Check-in/Breakfast
- 8:30-9:00 Welcome/Power Point
- 9:00-10:00 Keynote Presenter: Project-based Learning in the Classroom
- 10:00-10:15 Break
- 10:15-11:00 Topic: Project-based Instruction
- 11:00-12:00 Topic: Project-based and Student Achievement/Power Point
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-2:30 Topic: Role-play Activities and Breakout Sessions-Handouts
- 2:00-3:00 Evaluation Survey-Handouts

Timeline
1-Day Professional Development/Training Seminar for Education Management

Organization's Leaders and School Principals

1-Day Seminar Itinerary (EMO Leaders and School Principals)

- 8:00- 8:30 Check-in/Breakfast
- 8:30-9:00 Welcome/Power Point
- 9:00-10:00 Topic: Transformational Leadership Behaviors/Power Point
- 10:00-10:15 Break
- 10:15-11:00 Topic: Professional Development of Transformational Leadership Behaviors/Power Point
- 11:00-12:00 Topic: Project-based and Student Achievement/Power Point
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch with Key Note Speaker Topic: Collaborative Leadership for Student Achievement
- 1:15-2:30 Topic: Role-play Activities and Breakout Sessions-Handouts
- 2:30-3:00 Evaluation Survey-Handouts

Appendix B: Letter of Permission from Research Partner

Community Research Partner Name
Contact Information

Date

Dear Educational Management Organization Official(s),

Calvin Cupidore, a doctoral student at Walden University, requests your permission to conduct his doctoral research study at an education management organization and charter school within your district. The study title is *Education Management Organizations' Collaborative Leadership Practices for Low-Performing Urban Charter Schools*.

The doctoral study focus is to explore collaborative leadership practices do EMO leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools improve academic achievement.

As part of this study, I hope you will authorize me assess administrative offices and charter schools within your district to conduct this research study. I hope you will grant permission to recruit participants and conduct face-to-face interviews with educational management organization leaders (i.e. chief executive officer, president, and school performance team) and school principals for 2 weeks at your organization. Additionally, I hope you will provide a listing of the names of organizational leaders and principals, as well as school district documents such as policy procedures manuals relating to collaborative leadership practices.

If approval is granted, education management leaders and school principals' participation in research will entail an audio-recorded interview and follow-up interview. Calvin Cupidore will maintain information linking the participant's identifier and data until completion of member checking or the participants withdraw from the study in which Calvin Cupidore will destroy all information. Participants will be asked to internally protect the rights and privacy of individuals and Insert Community Partner. I, Calvin Cupidore, will not share information from individual participants' interviews with other parts of the managing organization in an identifiable manner or outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Your authorization is voluntary as well as your staff members' participation in this study is strictly voluntary and any information they will provide is confidential. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. The participants are advised that no penalties are enforced if they choose not to participate or would like to withdraw at any time during the researchers study.

Your approval to conduct this research study is appreciated. I will call or speak to you in person and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have at that time. If you agree, kindly sign below and return this agreement to me acknowledging consent and permission for me to conduct this research study at administrative offices and charter schools within your district.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Calvin Cupidore
Walden University Doctoral Student

Authorization of permission

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Education Management Organizations' Collaborative Leadership Practices for Low-Performing Urban Charter Schools* within the Insert Community Partner. We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: (a) assess administrative offices and charter schools within your district, (b) recruit participants, (c) conduct face-to-face interviews with educational management organization leaders and school principals for 2 weeks at your organization, (d) provide a listing of the names of organizational leaders and principals, and (e) provide school district documents for review. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies. I understand that education management leaders and school principals' participation in research will entail an audio-recorded interview and follow-up interview. I understand that Calvin Cupidore will maintain information linking the participant's identifier and data until completion of member checking or the participants withdraw from the study in which Calvin Cupidore will destroy all information. Participants will be asked to internally protect the rights and privacy of individuals and Insert Community Partner.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

_____
Authorization Official (print your name here)

_____
Authorization Official (signature and date here)

Appendix C: Invitation of Participation

Dear _____

My name is Calvin Cupidore. In the journey to complete my Doctor of Education degree, I am completing a study about the collaborative leadership practices. The primary focus of my research is to explore collaborative leadership practices EMO leaders need to assist school principals improve academic achievement.

I have received permission from the leadership at the EMOs' central office to assess the organizational facilities, contact individuals, recruit individuals, and conduct audio-recorded interviews. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation includes your consent to participate in a 30 to 60 minute face-to-face interview and 10 to 20 minutes follow-up interview that will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy. You will be asked to answer six interview questions regarding leadership practices and student academic outcomes. Participants will be asked to internally protect the rights and privacy of individuals and Insert Community Partner.

Calvin Cupidore will maintain information linking the participant's identifier and data until completion of member checking or the participants withdraw from the study. If you decide to withdraw, Calvin Cupidore will destroy all information you provided. I, Calvin Cupidore, will not share information from individual participants' interviews with other parts of the managing organization in an identifiable manner or outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

If you decide to participate, contact the researcher Calvin Cupidore via email (calvin.cupidore@waldenu.edu) or telephone [redacted]. You will be asked to sign the consent form at the time of the interview. Participation is voluntary and confidential and you have the right to withdrawal at any time without penalty.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Calvin Cupidore

Doctor of Education-Student

Appendix D: EMO Leaders Interview Questions

The EMO leaders answered the following open-ended interview questions:

1. What is the most significant challenge you have encountered as an EMO leader regarding student achievement in low-performing urban charter schools?
2. What collaborative leadership strategies have the EMO officials implemented to assist school principals of low-performing urban charter schools to improve student academic achievement?
3. What collaborative leadership strategies have you implemented to assist low-performing urban charter school principals to improve student academic achievement?
4. How would you describe the changes in academic achievement based on the implemented initiatives?
5. What additional leadership practices have you implemented to focus on student academic achievement?
6. Would you like to add any additional information regarding collaborative practices or student achievement?

Appendix E: Principals Interview Questions

The school principals answered the following open-ended interview questions:

1. What is the most significant challenge you have experienced as a principal in low-performing urban charter school relating to student achievement?
2. What collaborative leadership strategies have EMO leaders implemented to assist you to improve student academic achievement?
3. How would you describe effectiveness of the EMO implemented strategies or programs to improve student achievement?
4. What collaborative leadership practices have you implemented to improve student achievement at your school site?
5. How would you describe the changes in academic achievement based on your implemented initiatives for improving academic achievement at your school site?
6. Would you like to add any additional information regarding collaborative practices or student achievement?

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

Interviewee_____

Location_____

Date_____

Time_____

Greetings Protocol:

Hello. Thank you for your participation. My name is Calvin Cupidore and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University conducting my doctoral study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Education.

Case Study Introduction:

I appreciate your participation in today's interview session, which shall take approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour, in which you will answer six questions regarding your experiences and the collaborative leadership practices of education management organizations in urban charter schools. I would like your permission to tape record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please let me know. All of your responses are confidential. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the collaborative leadership practices do EMO leaders need to assist school principals in low-performing K-12 urban charter schools improve academic achievement.

At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. I am the responsible researcher, specifying your participation in the research project: *Education Management Organizations' Collaborative Leadership Practices for*

Low-Performing. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy, and I will store the other copy securely in my home, separate from your reported responses.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

Ending Statement:

Again, I appreciate your voluntary participation in my research.

Appendix G: Daily Professional Development Workshop Evaluation

1. How helpful was the content presented by the keynote speaker?
   - Extremely helpful
   - Very helpful
   - Somewhat helpful
   - Not so helpful
   - Not at all helpful

2. How engaging was the speaker at the professional event?
   - Extremely engaging
   - Very engaging
   - Somewhat engaging
   - Not so engaging
   - Not at all engaging

3. How helpful was the content presented on transformational leadership/professional development/project-based learning?
   - Extremely helpful
   - Very helpful
   - Somewhat helpful
   - Not so helpful
   - Not at all helpful

4. How helpful was the role-play activities for transformational leadership/professional development/project-based learning?
   - Extremely helpful
   - Very helpful
   - Somewhat helpful
   - Not so helpful
   - Not at all helpful

5. What is your perspective of transformational leadership practices/professional development/project-based learning as a benefit to improve academic achievement?

6. What would you add or change to the transformational leadership/professional development/project-based learning materials?

7. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Appendix H: Professional Development Workshop Evaluation

1. How likely is it that you would recommend the professional event to a coworker or other educators?

Not at all likely
Somewhat likely
Neutral
More likely
Extremely likely

2. Overall, how would you rate the professional event?

Excellent
Very good
Good
Fair
Poor

3. How helpful was the content presented at the professional event?

Extremely helpful
Very helpful
Somewhat helpful
Not so helpful
Not at all helpful

5. How likely are you to attend the professional event again in the future?

Extremely likely
Very likely
Somewhat likely
Not so likely
Not at all likely

6. What would you add or change to the workshop materials?

7. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Appendix I: Professional Development Workshop Long-Term Evaluation

Scale	Ineffective (1)	Consistent (2)	Developing (3)	Effective (4)	Highly Effective (5)

Transformational Leadership

1. The EMO leaders and school principals employ transformational leadership practices to communicate the charter school vision.
2. The EMO leaders and school principals support and retain teachers who continually enhance their pedagogical skills through professional growth plans.
3. The district leaders evaluate school principals' transformational leadership practices strengths and weaknesses based on multiple sources of data related to student achievement.

Professional Development

1. The EMO leaders are the leader of the school who continually improves their professional development.
2. The school principals and teachers continually enhance their transformational leadership skills through professional develop programs.
3. The school principals ensure that teachers receive job-embedded professional development directly related to instructional growth goals.
4. The school principals ensure that collaborative groups interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and student achievement.
5. The school principals evaluate the teachers' pedagogical strengths and weaknesses based on multiple sources of data and student achievement data.

Project-based Learning in the Classroom

1. The EMO leaders and school principals ensure the school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards.
2. The EMO leaders and school principals establish clear and measurable goals focused on the critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement and school improvement.
3. The EMO leaders and school principals ensure data analysis and interpretation occurs to monitor progress toward academic achievement goals.
4. School principals ensure the teachers implement the appropriate school-level and classroom-level programs and practices to help students meet academic achievement goals.