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School Leadership Preparation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands

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2018

Abstract

School Leadership Preparation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands

by

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MA, Framingham State University, 2006

BS, University of Santo Tomas, 1994

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

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Abstract

The perceptions of school leaders on the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program (SLPP) in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) public school system have not been examined. Highly qualified teachers are selected and trained for administrative and leadership roles through the SLPP. This qualitative case study was conducted to evaluate the level of effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. The conceptual framework was the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar. The theoretical frameworks were transformational leadership as articulated by Burns and instructional leadership. The research questions involved how aspiring leaders and their mentors described the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system and how aspiring leaders' field experience helped them learn essential skills associated with transformational and instructional leadership. A purposeful sampling of 4 participants was used, consisting of current school administrators who had completed the SLPP. Interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. Interview data were transcribed, and transcripts were examined, organized, and synthesized to develop codes and themes. Member checking was used to validate transcriptions and findings. Findings from this study show that relevant courses, knowledge and experience in curriculum and instruction, internship and mentoring, leadership skills gained by participants, and relationship and collaboration are among the components that must be included in the SLPP. The social change can be derived from this study is that the findings from this qualitative case study are meaningful for policymakers, district leaders, and school leaders in the CNMI public school system..

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my husband, Jonathan Liwag, who has been very supportive of me throughout my studies. I also dedicate this project study to my children: Blesilda, Asia, Autumn, Nathaniel, and Amber, who became my inspiration in completing this study.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem was that the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) public school system, the only school district in the CNMI, lacked a program evaluation specific to the school leadership preparation program (SLPP). District leaders were challenged to recruit highly qualified school administrators because the only community college in the island did not offer a leadership program for school administrators. Between 2014 and 2016, the CNMI public school system began to build local capacity to support interim school administrators through the Principal Pipeline initiative and implemented a SLPP. Several highly qualified teachers were selected to participate in the preservice preparation and on-the-job training elements of the SLPP using the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards as the framework of the program. This 3-year leadership preparation program was designed to prepare candidates to become highly qualified school administrators and ensured the effectiveness of school leadership in the district.

Leadership is vital to the success of an organization (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). An ineffective SLPP has caused a high rate of turnover or transition among school leaders, which has created a challenge to the sustainability of the school (Copland, 2003). In the CNMI, out of 34 candidates enrolled in the SLPP, only 16 interim administrators decided to stay in the system and serve as school leaders (CNMI PSS Human Resource Office, 2014).

Educational leadership policymakers mandated that the current administration of the school district understand how newly trained school leaders perceive their leadership role and how they embrace the associated tasks of leadership expected of them (Rebora, 2017). Higher expectations to improve the education system have significant implications for educators,

particularly educational leaders (Goodwin, Cameron, & Hein, 2015). The demand to increase student learning has created a change in the overarching role of school leaders (Goodwin et al., 2015). Therefore, there has been a need for the accountability of quality leadership training to prepare leaders to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in the school (Martensson & Roxa, 2016). Effective SLPPs help aspiring leaders to integrate their learning about leadership and their field experience in schools so that they learn what is needed for the job, use their learned skills, apply their learning in meaningful ways, and receive feedback from their mentors (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Genao, 2016; Rhines-Cheney, Davis, Garett, & Holleran, 2010).

Although scholars have examined the effectiveness of SLPPs, questions continue to arise about what comprises effective leadership (Voelkel, Johnson, & Gilbert, 2016). There has been growing concern in school districts in the United States and other parts of the world about how best to define quality school leadership preparation and how to improve its effectiveness to ensure that school leaders are ready and prepared for their tasks (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2009; Schleicher, 2012). Despite evidence that leadership training is a common feature among effective SLPPs (Baxter, Thessin, & Clayton, 2014; Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005), the program was not commonly accessible to the school leaders who have the full-time job as school administrators (Baxter et al., 2014; Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2009).

CNMI public school system district and school administrators have acknowledged the importance of effective school leadership. The district superintendent had a plan to revamp the current SLPP to ensure that the system continues to provide an effective program for aspiring leaders to develop the leadership skills needed for their jobs (HRO, personal communication,

June 16, 2017). The gap in practice was the lack of a program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. Therefore, there was little evidence to determine the effect of the training program in developing effective school leaders. The only way to determine the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system was to conduct a program evaluation through case study research.

Rationale

The SLPP should continue to keep its pace in ensuring that school administrators are prepared for the challenges of today's schools (Germain, 2013). The results of the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that there was a correlation between student performance and the responsibilities of school principals in relation to the implementation of curriculum, resources, admission, assessment, and disciplinary policies (Gurria, 2016). The changing profile of school leadership requires for the higher quality of school leadership preparation program provided for the school leaders (Schleicher, 2012).

The effectiveness of school leaders is vital to the "effectiveness of our nation's public schools, especially those serving the children with the fewest advantages in life" (Manna, 2015, p. 5). School district leaders have recognized that leaders who are being trained in SLPPs have a direct impact on student achievement (Barnet, 2004). As district leaders have continued to respond to this challenge, it has become essential to evaluate SLPPs in a timely manner.

Ineffective SLPPs may cause a high rate of school leader turnover or transition, which could create a challenge to the sustainability of a school (Copland, 2003). The National Center for Education Statistics conducted a national teacher and principal survey in 2016 concerning the characteristics of public elementary and secondary school principals in the United States. Survey results indicated that public-school principals had an average of 6 years of experience as

principals and an average of 4 years as principals in their current schools (Taie & Goldring, 2017). The data showed that many of the school principals were new. Doyle and Locke (2015) stated, "The principalship is becoming more and more demanding, just as an increasing amount of data highlight its critical role, especially in struggling schools" (p. 9). School leaders need field experience from SLPPs to develop their leadership skills to withstand the overwhelming tasks given to principals.

Lack of evaluation may result in ineffective SLPPs. Research in the last 10 years has indicated that traditional and alternative preparation programs have failed to prepare school administrators for their leadership roles (Quin, Deris, Bischoff, & Johnson, 2015). The CNMI public school system's initial implementation of the SLPP certified 22 interim administrators, 16 of whom served as school administrators throughout the district. According to the Commissioner of Education, there was concern that these individuals, who might still lack leadership skills, were responsible for the daily operation of the school and the education of students. A vice principal was also apprehensive about her lack of preparation and leadership skills to meet the demands and challenging tasks of school leadership, despite her completion of the SLPP.

Definition of Terms

Aspiring leader: An individual who is enrolled in the principal preparation program and who aims to hold a position in the school as a principal, assistant principal, or program manager (CNMI Public School System, 2014).

Clinical learning internships: Two years of field learning experiences or on-the-job training given to aspiring leaders (Zavala, 2014).

Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands public school system: The school district in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). CNMI has a political union with the United States (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).

Commissioner of education: "The head of a state's education department" ("Commissioner of Education," n.d.).

Field experience: The activities that interim administrators are engaged during their hands-on leadership training at a school site (Taylor-Backor & Gordon, 2015).

Instructional leadership: A leadership theory by Smith and Andrews (1989). Instructional leadership is a leadership style that is focused on defining the school mission, managing instructional programs, and promoting the school learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987).

Mentor: An experienced principal who shares ideas, knowledge, and leadership experiences with aspiring leaders for the enhancement of their leadership skills (Carr, Herman, & Harris, 2005).

Mentoring: Involves a supportive learning relationship between an experienced principal and an aspiring leader (Carr et al., 2005).

Preservice preparation: Leadership training and courses offered to aspiring leaders before their on-the-job training (CNMI Public School System, 2014).

School leadership preparation program (SLPP): A leadership preparation program provided for aspiring leaders (Barnet, 2004).

Transformational leadership: A leadership style introduced by Burns (1978), who defined transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers work together to enhance motivation, morale, and performance.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of aspiring leaders on the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system based on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs. The effectiveness of the SLPP was important to the success of new school leaders who assumed critical roles in decision making for the school (Zavala, 2014). Without an established, high-quality, effective SLPP, the school district may continue to struggle to recruit and retain effective and efficient school administrators. Constant change in school administration may create instability in the school environment, which is likely to affect teachers' morale and students' academic performance (Versland, 2013). The results from this case study provided the CNMI public school system with evaluative information that administrators may find useful in their efforts to improve the SLPP in the school district.

This study is significant because school leadership has an impact on student achievement (Goodwin et al., 2015). Educators and others who hold key positions in society are expected to be intellectual leaders who respond to trends in education and prepare students for the future (Marx, 2006). Educational leadership preparation programs offered to aspiring leaders must provide courses that develop participants' leadership skills, which they need to become successful in their school roles (Peters, Gurley, Fifolt, Collins, & McNeese, 2015). Although numerous studies have been conducted in regard to SLPPs in the college setting, this study was unique because the program was conducted by the school district outside the university, and no study had ever been conducted in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands to support the effectiveness of

the SLPP in preparing new and aspiring leaders. A study to investigate the effectiveness of the educational leadership preparation program in the CNMI was developed to address the need to improve the SLPP.

This study has significance for policymakers in the CNMI for decision-making purposes, in that it may support continued funding of leadership training and professional development in the public school system. Findings from this research may provide policymakers with general understanding of the importance of the SLPP in the public school system and how to best serve the program's purpose.

This study is also significant for district leaders in the CNMI public school system. Through this study, district leaders can identify the need to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP and develop a better plan to ensure the readiness of school leaders. The findings helped the commissioner of education to develop a better plan as he learned the strengths and weaknesses of the current program. The findings also helped school administrators to reflect on their leadership practices and to apply effective leadership skills to challenging tasks.

Research Question(s)

Lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system was a concern, given the impact of school leaders on the stability of the school instructional environment. Heck and Hallinger (2014) determined that the effects of school leadership on student learning were fully interceded by the quality of the school's instructional environment. Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) provided evidence of how transformational and instructional strategies were used for school principals to achieve and sustain improvement over time, both directly and indirectly. An SLPP specifically targets the most effective leadership strategies (Shatzer, Caldarella, Halam, & Brown, 2014). The purpose of the study was to evaluate the

effectiveness of the CNMI public school system's SLPP in preparing school leaders to become highly effective school administrators. The research questions for this project study were the following:

RQ1: How do the school leaders describe the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system based on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs?

RQ2: How has preservice preparation and field experience helped the school leaders learn the essentials skills associated with transformational and instructional leadership?

RQ3: What recommendations do the school leaders in the CNMI public school system have for improving the SLPP?

Review of the Literature

Several types of research are related to educational leadership and the effectiveness of leadership preparation programs. A review of literature is necessary to define the components of effective leadership and explore research relative to the effectiveness of SLPPs. As indicated in the problem statement, there was a need to evaluate the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. School leadership in the 21st century involves high-stakes accountability in an increasingly complex society (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). School leaders who assume more complex leadership roles need to meet demands for accountability for student learning while providing support to teachers and meeting the individual needs of students (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). Due to the complexity of the school leadership role in today's society, there is a need for rigorous SLPPs for school leaders to equip them with knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles. This section of the study provides a conceptual framework based on the Seven Habits of Effective

Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005), a critical review of research on essential skills for effective school leadership, and transformational and instructional leadership theories.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005). Davis and Jazzar examined 14 leading principal preparation programs and identified seven habits of effective principal preparation programs: (a) curriculum and instructional experiences, (b) clinical learning internships, (c) providing mentors, (d) collaborative experiences, (e) authentic assessment, (f) research-based decision making, and (g) turnkey transitions. These seven habits have been acknowledged as a foundation to increase the competency level of school leaders.

Davis and Jazzar explained that it is crucial to provide aspiring leaders with opportunities to acquire knowledge and reflect on curriculum and instructions to improve teaching and learning. Aspiring leaders must be provided with relevant, standards-based, and meaningful curricular and instructional experiences during a principal preparation program. Aspiring leaders must develop a vision that reflects the instructional leadership role in encouraging instructional innovations and that articulates performance standards for teaching and learning (Lemoine, Greer, McCormack, & Richardson, 2014).

A clinical learning internship is a field experience provided to aspiring leaders to solve real problems onsite and apply effective leadership strategies to make sound decisions. These internships are designed to engage aspiring leaders with intensive learning experiences at schools and other educational sites (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). Dodson (2014) conducted a study to identify the best field learning experiences for aspiring leaders. The findings showed that field

experiences during a clinical learning internship are beneficial. Based on Dodson's findings, the field experience engaged aspiring leaders to work on curriculum and instruction, budgeting, discipline, decision making, and school improvement planning. He explained that the complex mandate of leading a school cannot effectively be taught without real-world practice.

Providing mentors for aspiring leaders is also critical to the success of a principal preparation program (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). Mentors serve as coaches and guide aspiring leaders to become reflective and authentic about their leadership. Professional relationships between aspiring leaders and mentors have potential roles in building and supporting learning organizations (Klinge, 2015). Lochmiller (2014) conducted a case study about leadership coaching in an induction program for novice principals. The aspiring leaders went through three phases of mentoring and coaching for 3 consecutive years. Three years of mentoring resulted in the aspiring leaders becoming instructional leaders within the dynamic context of schools. Mentoring also provided collaboration and peer support for both mentors and aspiring leaders (Lochmiller, 2014).

Davis and Jazzar (2005) explained that aspiring leaders must have collaborative experiences through a principal preparation program. Networking, teamwork, and cooperative learning are essential in developing learning communities. Evidence has shown that collaboration improves student outcomes (Anrig, 2015). Mourshed, Chijoke, and Barber (2010) analyzed various school systems in 20 diverse countries to understand how the most improved school systems kept getting better. Based on their research findings, they concluded that collaborative practices and leadership continuity were two effective elements for sustaining continuous improvement (Mourshed et al., 2010, p. 24).

Aspiring leaders must also be involved in the use of authentic assessments (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). Authentic assessment engages learners in real-world issues or tasks. Authentic assessment requires the application of knowledge and skills to real-world situations, not only to measure student learning, but also to motivate learners to maximize their capabilities (Zmuda, 2011). Student ownership of learning and peer support "can occur in an ongoing way as learners make the important shifts in power to owning their learning and becoming problem-based inquirers in future courses" (Barber, King, & Buchanan, 2015, p. 59). Kaufman (2013) concluded in his study that schools should no longer provide tests with multiple-choice questions but should engage learners in authentic assessments that require hands-on experiences. Authentic assessment activities for aspiring leaders might include engaging in the preparation of the school budget; writing a formal letter to parents; preparing for various meetings; preparing and finalizing student, parent, and staff handbooks; and other culminating activities (Davis & Jazzar, 2005, p. 20).

An effective principal preparation program prepares aspiring leaders to become effective decision makers (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). In such a program, aspiring leaders are taught to make sound decisions based on research through opportunities to collect and analyze data to guide the school improvement process (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) encouraged leaders to practice shared decision making among the stakeholders, which could result in improved decisions for the success of an ongoing improvement process. Many leaders, however, may be challenged by sharing decisions with others. Schusler, Krasny, and Decker (2017) conducted a study on shared decision making in youth environmental action. They found that educators are concerned about challenges and dilemmas that may arise in shared decision making (Schusler et al., 2017). One of the themes that emerged from the study was providing a structure that involved "creating a process framework for youth decision making"

(Schusler et al., 2017, p. 540). Aspiring leaders in an educational leadership preparation program should be given the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills to confidently apply shared decision making among other stakeholders of the school.

Turnkey transitions are focused on "strong leadership skills, grounded with in-depth knowledge of leadership theory and best practices" (Davis & Jazzar, 2005, p. 20). The transformational leadership theory of Burns (1978) and the instructional leadership theory of Smith and Andrews (1989) are two effective leadership theories that have been proven to have an impact on school improvement processes when applied. A large body of literature shows evidence of the effectiveness of the use of transformational leadership and instructional leadership in educational organizations. Intxausti, Joaristi, and Lizasoain (2016) concluded that characteristics relating to instructional and transformational leadership include "motivating the leaders and fostering their commitment to improving the school" (p. 415). Duta and Sahney (2016) conducted a study to examine the role of school climate and teacher job satisfaction of school leaders. The findings showed that transformational and instructional leadership have indirect relationships with student outcomes. Significant relationships were found for both instructional and transformational leadership dimensions with the social and affective climate (Duta & Sahney, 2016). Day et al. (2016) conducted a study on how successful leaders used transformational and instructional leadership to improve the school's culture. The findings showed empirical evidence concerning how principals, directly and indirectly, achieved and sustained improvement over time through combining both transformational and instructional leadership approaches (Day et al., 2016). School leaders who applied transformational and instructional leadership contributed significantly to the school improvement process, particularly in promoting a healthy school climate and supporting the school's goals (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013; Gray & Lewis, 2013; Hallinger, 2003; Tobin, 2014).

Transformational Leadership

School leaders may be able to explain the definition of transformational leadership, but many may lack confidence and experience to apply and practice transformational leadership skills in their school organization. Money (2017) conducted a study on the effectiveness of the transformational leadership style in secondary school. The findings showed that although principals had knowledge about transformational leadership, they did not successfully and significantly transform teachers in the school organizational setting due to the principals' lack of experience and unwillingness to apply the skills associated with transformational leadership (Money, 2017). He recommended that principals authentically practice the skills associated with transformational leadership by identifying and promoting shared values, creating a caring and trustful school environment, and encouraging professional growth and development (p. 139).

Aspiring leaders need to develop and practice interpersonal skills associated with transformational leadership through a leadership preparation program. Aspiring leaders will have a better chance of becoming more prepared and comfortable in applying the skills associated with transformational leadership when these skills are taught in an educational leadership preparation program. Transformational leadership was developed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1999) and is defined as a style of leadership that uses collective visions and effective communication to highlight the mission and goal of the organization (Kim, 2006). He explained, "transformational leadership refer[s] to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration" (p. 11). According to Bass, idealized influence and inspirational leadership are demonstrated when a leader sets and articulately delivers a desirable outcome by setting a high standard of performance and showing confidence and determination to deliver the outcome successfully. He explained that

intellectual stimulation is demonstrated by a leader who leads others toward innovation and creativity, and individual consideration is displayed when a leader identifies and supports the developmental needs of followers through coaching. The stakeholders of a transformational team usually show care for each other, help each other to become intellectually stimulated, inspire each other, and work collaboratively toward a goal (Bass, 1999). Bass, Avolio, and Binghamton (1993) described the model of transformational culture as having a general sense of purpose and a long-term commitment to shared leadership. Leaders serve as mentors, coaches, and role models to help members become successful in meeting personal and organizational goals (Bass, Avolio, & Binghamton, 1993).

The transformational leadership theory of Burns (1978) is focused on developing social values and individual purposes. Transformational leadership has four components that describe the transformational leader's behavior (Burns, 1978). These components include individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Leithwood, 1994). Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) believed that the transformational leader practices the behavior of individual consideration by being aware and supportive of the individual's needs. The school leader practices intellectual stimulation by allowing individuals to be reflective on their current practices related to innovation and to become critical thinkers who solve challenging problems (Marzano et al., 2005). Inspirational motivation is about challenge and meaning through effective communication to support and deliver the organization's mission (Bass, 1999). A transformational leader influences other through modeled behavior.

The components of transformational leadership are among the leadership skills indicated to have a correlation with student academic achievement (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015; Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016; Karadağ, Bektaş, Çoğaltay, & Yalçın, 2015; Marzano et al., 2005; Nash,

2010). Marzano et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis study about 21 leadership responsibilities that have a significant impact on student academic achievement. Marzano et al. showed that intellectual stimulation has a substantial influence on student achievement. Allen et al. (2015) indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership component of inspirational motivation and reading achievement. The findings suggested that a principal's confidence, optimism, enthusiasm, and vision for the future have a positive impact on students' reading achievement (Allen et al., 2005, p. 12). A meta-analysis study on the effect of educational leadership on student achievement conducted by Karadağ et al. (2015) revealed that educational leadership has an effect on student achievement, with the most comprehensive effect among the educational leadership styles found in transformational leadership. Boberg and Bourgeois (2016) conducted a quantitative study on the effects of integrated transformational leadership on student achievement. The findings indicated that refining transformational leadership behaviors to include instructional leadership can enhance a leader's impact on student achievement.

School leaders' practices of transformational leadership achieved job satisfaction among stakeholders and motivated teachers to perform highly in schools (Al-Roussan, 2015; Griffith, 2004; Haj & Jubran, 2016). The transformational leadership style could develop intrinsic motivation through inspiration, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Griffith, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Ling & Ling, 2016; Minckler, 2014; Webb, 2007). In a qualitative study conducted by Ling and Ling (2016), the components of transformational leadership, including inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, were found to be strong components of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Sufficient evidence was also found by Allen et al. (2015) to justify a significant relationship between all components of transformational leadership and school climate. Findings indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration of school leaders and the school climate dimensions. Allen et al. suggested that a principal's ability to exhibit respect and power; to consider the group's welfare; to express a sense of goal and purpose, confidence, optimism, enthusiasm, and vision; to solve problems; to think critically; and to recognize strengths in others influence teachers' perceptions of the overall school climate. There was a statistically significant relationship between components of transformational leadership and school climate dimension (McCurley, Peters, & Deckman, 2016; Sagnak, Kuruoz, Polat, & Soylu, 2015). Transformational leadership showed a significant link with idealized attributes and school climate, idealized behavior and school climate, inspirational motivation and school climate, and intellectual stimulation and school climate (McCurley et al., 2014). Consistent with the findings of Eshbach and Henderson (2010), a significant correlation was found between transformational leadership components and authentic principal behavior and active teacher behavior. According to Sagnak et al. (2015), transformational leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles. School leaders who applied their knowledge and skills in transformational leadership were authentic, collegial, and supportive, thereby building a positive school climate.

Yang (2014) concluded that transformational leadership is the key to rapid school improvement. The transformational leadership skills of a school principal can be perceived in developing ideas, establishing a shared vision, engaging in collaborative decision making, achieving collective efficacy, and celebrating success (Yang, 2014, p. 287). Aspiring leaders

should acquire knowledge and develop skills related to the components of transformational

leadership through an educational leadership preparation program.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989) is probably the most important

component that aspiring leaders must learn from the SLPP. Instructional leadership is defined as

the "integration of the tasks of direct assistance to teachers, group development, staff

development, curriculum development, and action research" (Blase & Blase, 2000, para 2). Smith

and Andrews (1989) identified four dimensions or roles of an instructional leader. The first role is

the resource provider. The aspiring leader as the resource provider must ensure that teachers are

provided with resources and materials needed for teaching students. The second role of an

instructional leader is an instructional resource. As an instructional resource, the aspiring leader

provides support and prioritizes instructions by providing teachers with coherent curriculum,

provides professional development for teachers, and supports programs that help increase student

learning. The third role is the communicator in which the aspiring leader communicates the goal

clearly to all stakeholders. The last role of an instructional leader is the visible presence in which

the aspiring leader is engaged in classroom observations and is highly accessible to faculty and

staff (Marzano et al., 2005).

Taylor-Backor and Gordon (2015) and Range, McKim, Mette, and Hvidston (2014)

emphasized the importance of the integration of instructional leadership into principal preparation

program. Ross and Cozzens (2016) reported that there is a relationship between the effectiveness

of the principal leadership program and the positive school climate as perceived by the teachers.

The five most observed core competencies for instructional leadership were professionalism,

curriculum and instruction, diversity, collaboration, and assessment (Ross & Cozzens, 2016).

Ross and Cozzens recommended these core competencies be included in the leadership

preparation program.

Other Essential Skills for Effective School Leadership

Baxter, Thessin, and Clayton (2014) found in their research that communication,

relationships, values, and beliefs are the common skills that we must look for when recruiting

candidates for future leaders. These skills could be developed and learned through an effective

leadership program. Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, and Warren (2015) conducted a study to

develop an understanding of the perceptions of assistant principals of their current leadership

skills and practices. Using the 21 McRel responsibilities as a framework for understanding the

idiosyncratic nature of assistant principals' perceptions on the leadership skills, the result of the

study showed that the essential leadership skills in curriculum and instruction, discipline,

monitoring and evaluation, communication, relationship, and visibility are the expected practices

of the assistant principals (Militello et al., p. 216). Skills in the use of technology are also

important in today's school leadership (Marcos & Loose, 2014; LaFrance & Beck, 2014).

LaFrance and Beck (2014) recommended to be proactive in updating the leadership preparation

program and infused technology throughout coursework and in field experiences to maintain

relevancy (p. 183).

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Many research studies were conducted to understand what makes an effective leadership

preparation program and what were the skills needed to become effective school leaders. Various

research studies results suggested that the university-based leadership preparation program should

not be the only means of development for aspiring leaders who wanted to take the leadership role

(Miller, 2015). Genao (2016) and Versland (2013) described the effective principal preparation

program and how the participants' hands-on experiences through grow-your-own leadership

preparation program helped improve the leadership skills needed to become effective school

leaders. Peters et al. (2015) and Lochmiller (2014) emphasized the importance of integrating the

coaching and mentoring in the leadership preparation program. Leadership program at the local

level was able to contribute to the educational development and was able to balance the

discrepancies between the formal organization and local teaching culture (Martensson & Roxa,

2016). Friend and Watson (2014) recommended strengthening the requirement of internship

experience and principal mentoring and examining the impact of the leadership program on

student achievement and school improvement. A study on the principals' perceptions of the

effectiveness of the leadership preparation programs in the universities revealed that the programs

prepared the school administrators for their current roles; however, the job-embedded roles could

have been more meaningful (Johnson, 2016). Johnson (2016) stated that there is a need for an

alignment for the leadership preparation program based on the needs of the local school district

and individual leaders. Findings showed that acquiring leadership skills is paramount to the

success of becoming an effective school leader. Redesigning the leadership preparation program

is proposed, to help the school leaders become abreast of effective leadership skills and be

prepared for the next generation (Deschaine & Whale, 2017; Marcos & Loose, 2014).

Implications

Programs including the leadership preparation program must be in a cycle of self-

evaluation to ensure its relevance and effectiveness (Peters et al., 2016). The program

evaluation for the SLPP is necessary to allow the participants to be ready and prepared to

embrace the complexity of their leadership role as school leaders. The findings from this

study suggested several implications to the researcher with the improvement of the school leadership preparation program under review.

The district leaders were well informed about the possible gap between the leadership skills learned from the program and the actual leadership skills needed to be applied in the actual school setting. For example, the school leaders needed technology skills in accessing and implementing the different online programs offered to the students in the school setting, which was not a part of the school leadership preparation program. The findings from this study were helpful in determining the importance of the clinical learning internship in the continuous development of the leadership skills needed by the aspiring leaders. The district leaders were also informed of how well the aspiring leaders applied the transformational and instructional leadership skills while in the clinical learning internship. The findings served as the evidence for helping the aspiring leaders to make connections between their knowledge of the conceptual framework to a practical application of their knowledge in the school setting. The district leaders were provided with the data from this study about the aspiring leaders' gained knowledge on the curriculum and courses offered in the SLPP and how their learning was aligned to their actual practices and experiences.

The mentors of the aspiring leaders were able to use the findings on how much involvement was needed to guide the aspiring leader in becoming an effective school leader. The findings justified the importance of mentoring as the support to the aspiring leaders during the clinical learning internship. The professional relationship between the

aspiring leaders and the mentors during the mentoring process within and beyond the classroom setting proved to be an effective strategy to address the learning gaps. The mentors were informed about the collaboration of the aspiring leaders with the other school leaders. The findings from this study were used to inform the mentors and the district leaders about the effective collaboration and shared decision making between the aspiring leaders and the school leaders, which resulted in improved decisions for the success of the ongoing improvement process. The findings also determined if there were challenges with sharing decisions with the aspiring leaders during the clinical learning internship.

The school administrators used the findings to reflect on their leadership practices. School administrators used the results in the application of the instructional, transformational, and other leadership skills necessary to strategically deliver their challenging tasks in the school. For example, the use of the transformational leadership skills was efficiently applied to change the "status quo" of the school. The school leaders used their instructional leadership skills when assisting the novice teachers for delivering the curriculum and instructions in the classroom.

The policymakers of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands including the Board of Education was well advised on the findings from this study. The findings were used in making decisions for sustaining and supporting the program as an integral part of the school leaders' continuous professional development. The policymakers used the result of this study to understand the importance of leadership

preparation program to the school leaders of the CNMI public school system. The findings

helped the policymakers to secure more funding for the improvement of the program based on the

grounded theories of transformational leadership and instructional leadership.

The result of this study was useful for the researchers who have the common

interest in evaluating their leadership preparation program in their area. This case study

of the educational leadership preparation program contributed to the other body of

research on the perception of the school leaders on the effectiveness of the leadership

preparation program conducted in the local setting. Measuring the effectiveness of the

new and aspiring leadership preparation program was necessary for the continuous

improvement of the program to ensure the readiness of the future school leaders. The

collected data identified the strengths and the weaknesses of the program. The findings

resulting from the evaluation of the educational leadership preparation program resulted

in the revision, improvement, and restructure of the program. The confirmation of the

validity of the results was used for the recommended skills necessary to become an

effective school leader. The results of the study confirmed the transformational and

instructional leadership skills needed for school leadership positions were learned and

practiced during the program.

Summary

The school district lacked a program evaluation specific to the SLPP in the CNMI public

school system. As the school leaders played an integral part in the school's success, the system

had to be in placed to ensure that aspiring leaders who completed the educational leadership

preparation program were prepared to take the tremendous amount of leadership responsibilities and apply the essential leadership skills learned from the program.

This case study provided a clear understanding of the perceptions of the aspiring leaders and their mentors about the educational leadership preparation program conducted in the CNMI. The Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis & Jazzar (2005) were used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The interviews with the aspiring leaders about their experience during the pre-service preparation and clinical learning internships helped identify the essential transformational and instructional skills learned during the program.

This qualitative study was significant because school leadership has an impact on student achievement (Goodwin et al., 2015). This study was significant to the policymakers of the CNMI for decision-making purposes and funding support for the leadership training and professional development. The findings from this study helped the district leaders plan for a better leadership preparation program. The findings from this study also helped the school leaders to reflect on their current practices and applied the effective leadership skills in their daily tasks.

The conceptual framework for the study was based on Davis' and Jazzar's (2005) Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs. Davis and Jazzar (2005) identified seven leadership components of the effective leadership preparation program. These components included curriculum and instructional experience, clinical learning internships, mentoring, collaborative experiences, authentic assessment, research-based decision making, and turnkey transitions. Various studies have established evidence that these components were crucial to the leadership preparation program. The transformational leadership practices were proven to correlate with student academic achievement (Marzano et al., 2005; Nash, 2010; Allen et al., 2015; Karadağ et al., 2015, Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016). Instructional leadership by Smith and

Andrews (1989) believed to be the most important component in the school leadership

preparation program. Other skills of the school leaders included relationships, values and beliefs,

discipline, curriculum and instructions, monitoring and evaluation, and visibility (Baxter,

Thessin, & Clayton, 2014; Militello et al., 2015). The skills in the use of technology were also

important (Marcos & Loose, 2014; LaFrance & Beck, 2014).

The methodology used for this qualitative research is a case study. A case study was

needed to collect detailed information about the effectiveness of the school leadership program in

the CNMI public school system. This case study contributed to the body of research on the

perception of the school leaders on the effectiveness of the leadership preparation program in the

local setting. The findings were useful for the district leaders, mentors, policymakers, and school

administrators as they reflected on the program effectiveness and leadership skills needed by the

aspiring leaders to become successful school leaders.

The purposeful sampling was used to select the four participants. The participants were

the principals and vice principals at the CNMI public school system. Permission to conduct the

study was obtained by submitting the proposal to the Commissioner of Education. A permission

letter was given to the participants upon the approval of the permission to conduct the study. A

formal letter was sent to the participants followed by a school visit. The informed consent was

provided to the participants and explained that their participation was voluntary, and data

collected is confidential.

Data were collected through interviews. Member checking was used to validate the

transcriptions and findings. Fifteen semi-structured questions were asked to the participants.

Interviews were conducted during the participants convenient time and setting. An audio

recording device was used with the permission from the participants to record data from the

interviews. The collected data was transcribed. The original transcription was given to the participants for member checking. Any error or misinterpretation was corrected before finalizing the transcription for data analysis. The NVivo software was used to analyze the collected data. The situation codes were gathered to develop themes.

The limitation was the number of participants. The limited number of participants may not be enough to give me the true perceptions of the school leaders on the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. Despite the limitation, the findings from this project study was still beneficial to the system by improving the SLPP given to the aspiring leaders. The school leaders also used the findings to identify the effective leadership skills and used them for their school practices. This study contributed to the body of research that seeks for the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The qualitative case study method was used to collect the data. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined a case study as an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 37). A "case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a case within its real-life context" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37). Creswell (2012) explained, "Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon" (p. 626). Case study was an appropriate approach to inquire about the preparation experiences of aspiring leaders and their thoughts on how to improve the preparation program. Zavala (2014) conducted a study on principals' perceptions as the most important components in an effective leadership preparation program and stated that the participants in the principal preparation program "have had the time to construct understanding and meaning from their experiences" (p. 51) in the natural setting. The participants shared their stories as they expressed their concerns and experiences in a comfortable manner (Zavala, 2014).

Case study was an approach that allowed me to collect meaningful data from aspiring leaders in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences at the SLPP. Case study gives the researcher an opportunity to access rich descriptions of participants' complex experiences in real-world context (Yin, 2014). Other research methods limit participants' provision of detailed responses concerning their experiences. For instance, using a quantitative approach, I could never have described the personal experiences of the participants in depth. The research questions on the interim administrators' experiences, the importance of the leadership program, and the application of the participants' learned skills were best explored through qualitative case study. Individual statements from the interim administrators about their real experiences, assumptions,

and feelings concerning the success of the SLPP were more meaningful when personal interviews were conducted. As Yin (2014) explained, the "most important sources of case study evidence" derive from interviewing (para 1). Interviews in case study research are conducted through guided conversation rather than structured queries (Yin, 2014). A case study interview is also likely to be more fluid than rigid (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Case study interviewing allows a researcher to gain full access to the details of participants' experiences, in contrast to providing participants with limited response choices using a survey.

Other qualitative approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry would not have been appropriate for this study. A phenomenological study depicts the essence or basic structure of the experiences of people. Phenomenology is appropriate for studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ethnography also was not an appropriate approach for this study because ethnography is applied when a researcher intends to study an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time (Creswell, 2009). Narrative research is used to study the lives of individuals through stories about their lives rather than a program or event (Creswell, 2009). Grounded theory is a "strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). Case study, which I selected for my approach, is a "strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity of one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13).

Participants

The participants were school principals and vice principals from the CNMI public school system. The CNMI public school system has nine elementary schools, five middle schools, and

five high schools. Purposeful sampling was used to select current school administrators from the CNMI public school system, including elementary, middle, and high school principals and vice principals, who had enrolled in and completed the educational leadership preparation program. These critical case samplings were important to collect rich descriptions of participants' experiences in the SLPP.

The intent of qualitative research is to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon rather than to generalize to a population (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, for this case study, I used purposeful sampling to select individuals and sites that would allow me to understand and collect rich information on participants' experiences (Creswell, 2012). In purposeful sampling, the researcher selects particular individuals who can provide rich information about the topic (McMillan, 2004). Creswell (2012) stated, "The most important consideration in sampling for any qualitative study is that the individuals have information or experiences related to the research questions that they are willing to share" (p. 206). There are different types of purposeful sampling. *Typical-case purposeful sampling* involves choosing individuals who will be representative of most others in a group of interest (McMillan, 2004). *Extreme-case purposeful sampling* is used for choosing participants who are atypical or extreme cases. *Maximum variation sampling* is used to select participants who represent the extreme values of the phenomenon being studied. *Snowball sampling* is used to select participants based on the recommendation of other participants. *Critical case sampling* is used to select the most important participants to understand the case being studied (McMillan, 2004, pp. 114-115).

For this qualitative research study, I used critical case purposeful sampling to select participants who were most important in the context of the case (McMillan, 2004), in order to provide a rich description of the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system

based on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs. In this study, critical case sampling afforded an opportunity to learn and understand aspiring leaders' experiences in the SLPP through preservice preparation and field experiences.

Sample Size

There were 19 school principals and 23 vice principals who served in the elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools of the CNMI public school system. The sample size for this qualitative study was four participants. Sample size is an important consideration in judging the credibility of research (McMillan, 2004). Although findings from Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) showed that there is no appropriate sample size for qualitative research, it is imperative to consider the amount of data needed to reach saturation for the credibility of research. As Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) noted, "Sample sizes in qualitative research should not be so large that it is difficult to extract thick, rich data" (p. 242). In that the purpose of sampling is to provide in-depth information, sampling is considered complete when saturation is reached, in terms of the quality of the interviews and the number of interviews per participant (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). For this qualitative study, the sampling of four participants out of 16 aspiring leaders was sufficient to represent a rich description of participants' experiences in the SLPP in the CNMI public school system.

Sampling From Aspiring Leaders

The participants in this study were aspiring leaders who now serve as school principals and vice principals in the CNMI public school system. The aspiring leaders were enrolled in the SLPP and now hold leadership positions. Principals and vice-principals were chosen from the elementary, middle school, and high school levels to allow for broad and diverse coverage of the system's school settings (Zavala, 2014). Drawing a sample from the population of aspiring

leaders was critical in determining the effective components of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. The aspiring leaders answered the research questions about transformational and instructional leadership skills learned from their preservice preparation and field experiences.

Procedure for Gaining Access to the Participants

A researcher needs to establish certain procedures to gain access to participants. According to Creswell (2012), asking for permission from several individuals and groups is necessary before conducting data collection. I obtained permission from the CNMI public school system's commissioner of education to have access to the setting and the participants. The commissioner of education had authority to approve research studies conducted in the CNMI public school system, as well as authority to evaluate the nature of the study and to determine whether the study was permissible or not. Upon receiving permission from the commissioner of education, I obtained permissions from the school principals and vice principals. A formal letter and a copy of the proposal were hand delivered to the commissioner of education. After receiving permission from the commissioner of education, I personally delivered a formal letter to each research participant. The formal letter included the purpose of the study, the amount of time required for the interview with the participants, and how the collected data would be used. The formal letter also included a statement indicating that the school leaders' participation was voluntary. No work email addresses were used to communicate with the participants to protect the confidentiality of the conversation between the participants and myself. All notes and recordings were kept in a locked location, with only me having access to the data.

Researcher–Participant Working Relationships

Establishing relationships with the participants was necessary to obtain access to the data needed. I conducted case study research in the CNMI public school system, in which I am

currently working as a school principal. In order to establish working relationships with

participants from the CNMI public school system, I submitted my proposal to the Office of the

Commissioner. I explained the nature of my study and how data would be collected. I obtained

permission to visit the schools and met with the target participants. I was then able to set up an

appointment with each individual who wished to participate in the study. During the meeting, I

explained the study and answered all questions the participant had about the study. The

participants were given an agreement form. I finalized the interview schedule with the

participants and held each interview at a time convenient to the participant.

Ethical Protections

As a researcher, I needed to protect the participants from harm while addressing "the

right to privacy, the notion of informed consent, and the issue of deception" (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016, p. 261). The participants were asked to sign an informed consent form. The participants

were assured of the confidentiality of their identities and were informed that the collected data

would be protected and would only be used for the research study for Walden University. I was

the only person who had access to the data. The identities of individual participants were not

included in the report. Details that might identify participants, such as their assigned schools, also

were not shared. Any personal information with any purpose outside the research project was not

used or disclosed. Data have been secured in a password-protected file and locked file cabinet.

Codes were used instead of names to conceal participants' identities.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were most appropriate for this study. Qualitative data are descriptive. A

researcher conducting qualitative research collects data in the form of words or pictures rather

than numbers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The written results of qualitative research may contain

quotations from the data to elucidate and authenticate the findings. Researchers may use pages of narration to analyze data with richness, remaining as close as possible to the form in which the data were recorded or transcribed. The written word in qualitative research is used for both data collection and dissemination of the findings (p. 5). Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) used qualitative data to examine the role of the principal in school change during the era of high-stakes accountability. Data sources came from interviews with the principals. Open-ended questions were used to explore the leadership experiences of the participants and to gain an in-depth understanding of the principals' actions, attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of the topic (p. 46). Peters et al. (2016) used focus group interviews to collect qualitative data from vice principals in order to explain their thoughts and feelings about their roles and the effectiveness of an educational leadership program in their local setting. The qualitative data collected for this study were needed to explicitly describe the aspiring leaders' and mentors' perceptions of the SLPP and how the program helped them to develop their leadership skills.

The qualitative data were collected from four participants who are currently school principals and vice principals. An interview protocol was used as an instrument to collect the qualitative data. An interview guide contained several open-ended questions. The interviews were semistructured. In-depth individual interviews were used. The allotted time for each interview was 60 minutes. The qualitative interviews contained questions that helped the participants express their ideas, thoughts, experiences, and feelings.

In qualitative interviewing, open-ended questions are provided to participants, and responses are recorded (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative interviewing involves collecting data, eliciting stories, and allowing participants to express emotions and share experiences that cannot be easily observed (Rossetto, 2014). Interviews may reveal participants' actions, reactions, and

practices in an actual setting (Creswell, 2012). Participants' responses from interviews can be best analyzed not using numbers, but using categories and themes, which is one of the characteristics of qualitative case study (McMillan, 2004).

My interviews with aspiring leaders and their mentors who had experiences in the SLPP in the CNMI public school system were sufficient to collect qualitative data. The collected data enabled me to develop a rich description of the effectiveness of the SLPP and the participants' recommendations to improve the program.

The participants participated in face-to-face semistructured exploratory interviews, which allowed them to answer questions to give a general understanding of a range of perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 104) on the effectiveness of the SLPP. The semistructured questions from the interviews derived from the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005). The in-depth individual interviews with the participants using semistructured questions allowed the participants to describe their thoughts and feelings about the topics. An in-depth individual interview is an interview with a participant who has knowledge and experiences related to the topic of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants were interviewed at convenient times on or off campus, depending on their decision concerning confidentiality. In-depth individual interviews were conducted. An in-depth individual interview is one of the most powerful tools for obtaining an in-depth understanding of a person and for investigating subjects comprehensively (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Conducting in-depth individual interviews may be time consuming, and transcribing these interviews may require additional time and effort. However, the use of the in-depth individual interviews allowed individual recording; therefore, there was no confusion about the identity of a

person who made a specific statement. The collection of data through in-depth individual interviews was scheduled accordingly (Table 1).

Table 1

Timeline of Activities

Week 1	Secured 4-week absence from work for data collection. Met with school leaders and sought informed consent form from the individual leaders. Scheduled interviewed with the volunteer participants.
Weeks 1 and 2	Conducted interviews with the four participants (principals and vice principals).
Week 3	Responses shown to the participants for member checking.
Week 4	Analyzed data using qualitative data analysis software

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained, "The key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions" (para 3). A researcher may extract the information needed based on the way in which questions are worded. The manner in which interview questions are asked may depend upon the focus of the study. A pilot interview was conducted to ensure that the interview questions were useful. During the pilot interview, I was able to practice conducting an effective interview. I edited the interview questions to ensure that the questions were meaningful and aligned with the focus of the study.

Patton (2015) recommended using six types of questions. The first type of question is experience and behavior questions, which allow participants to explain their behavior, actions, and activities. The second type of questions involves opinions and values. This type of question allows participants to express their ideas and opinions on given topics. The third type of question involves the feelings of participants. The fourth type consists of knowledge questions, which allow participants to elicit actual knowledge about the topic. The fifth type is sensory questions, which allow the participants to explain in detail what they have seen, feel, heard, and touched. The last type of question consists of background/demographic questions, which allow the participants to provide detailed information about themselves.

Overall, the best interview questions are open-ended questions that lead to rich descriptions of the phenomenon or topics of interest (Merrian & Tisdell, 2016). I tried to avoid asking interview questions with *yes* or *no* answers to avoid gathering limited to no information about the topic. Asking multiple questions or series of single questions was avoided. These types of questions may engender confusion and do not allow participants a chance to respond to questions explicitly. Asking leading questions was also avoided, in that such questions may contain "a bias or an assumption that the researcher is making, which may not be held by the participant" (Merrian & Tisdell, 2016, p. 122). Patton (2015) recommended that researchers avoid "why" questions because they tend to lead to assumptions about causal relationships and can lead to dead-end responses.

Various types of interview questions were asked during the face-to-face interviews with the participants. In the beginning of the interview, I asked background/demographic questions to record the name of the participant and the position that the participant held at the time of the interview. Opinions and values questions were asked to capture participants' perceptions of the

effectiveness of the leadership preparation program. Questions regarding experience in the clinical learning internship were asked to develop detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences. Knowledge questions were asked to confirm their learning of the different leadership skills covered in the program. Ideal-position questions were used to reveal the positive and negative sides of the leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system.

A total of 15 questions were asked of the participants. The 15 interview questions were divided into three sets. The first set was composed of eight interview questions about the perceptions of the aspiring leaders concerning the SLPP based on The Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). The second set was composed of five interview questions about transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) and instructional leadership (Smith & Andrews, 1989) skills learned from the preservice preparation and field experience of the aspiring leaders. The third set was composed of one open-ended question about the recommendation of the school leaders for an effective school leadership preparation program.

I used a semistructured interview guide during the one-to-one in-depth interviews. The semistructured interview guide was an organized presentation of questions to explore participants' responses focused on the presented topic (Jamshed, 2014). Each semistructured interview was conducted once. There were 15 interview questions. During the interviews, it was important to record the participants' responses and to recognize the persons providing the responses for proper documentation and data collection. Interview responses were collected using an audio recording device. The use of an audio recording device during interviews is advisable, especially when the interviews are long (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The use of an audio recording device is an effective way to collect data because it allows a researcher to listen to participants'

responses even after interviews have concluded. This way, a researcher has a chance to provide a more accurate transcript from the interviews. Although the use of an audio recording device is a convenient way to capture data, it is important to ensure that each participant gives permission to record conversation during interviews. The use of audio recording ensured that data would be complete and preserved for analysis. I also jotted down some notes during the interviews.

The recorded data from the interviews were transcribed manually. Transcribing recorded interviews allows data to be transferred to a written form. A transcriber was used to develop transcripts from the audio-recorded interviews. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explained, "A transcriber is a playback part of the recorder with foot pedals to control the stopping, rewinding, and starting the machine" (p. 132). The qualitative data from the recorded interviews were stored in the USB device and were transferred to the computer.

I used transcripts to generate codes and themes. The written form of the recorded interviews was called transcript (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Transcripts from recorded interviews were collected for data analysis. "Transcripts were the main data of many interview studies" (p. 129). The transcript included the heading for each interview. The title of each interview allowed the researcher to remember the person interviewed, the time the interviewed was conducted, and the setting of where the interview occurred. When writing the transcript, the researcher needed to ensure that every time the speaker participants speak, the new line was created and the researcher took notes on the left side of who the speaker was. It is important to ensure that the interview was parallel to the person who made the statement (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

A procedure to gain access to the participants was needed to ensure the protection of the participants from risks or any human right violations. Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was necessary before conducting the study (Creswell, 2009). When developing a

proposal, it was important to consider the special needs of the participants. Some participants were highly protected including the minors, participants with disabilities, victims, pregnant women, senior citizens, prisoners, and participants with AIDS. The researcher needed to secure "research proposal containing the procedures and information about the participants with the IRB Committee" (Creswell, 2009, p. 89).

An informed consent form for the participants were obtained and secured first before the interview was conducted. The participants were provided with an assurance that their responses were confidential and non-evaluative. The informed consent form was signed by the participants before engaging in the research. The informed consent form included the identification of the researcher, identification of the sponsoring institution, indication on how the participants were selected, purpose of the research, benefits for participating, level and type of participant involvement, notation of risk to the participant, guarantee of confidentiality and assurance that the participant can withdraw anytime, and the contact person if questions arise (Creswell, 2009).

An approval from the CNMI public school system Commissioner of Education was obtained in order to gain access to the participants. A formal request letter was hand delivered. Upon the approval of the Commissioner of Education, the permission letter to enter at the site was obtained from the school superintendent and school administrators. As soon as the approval was received, I scheduled a visit to the target participants to discuss their volunteered participation. The content of the informed consent form was discussed thoroughly. The signature for the informed consent form was secured. Schedules for interviews was discussed.

I was currently a school principal at the CNMI public school system. My role as a school principal allowed me to establish a good working relationship with the school leaders in the CNMI public school system. The participants were my colleagues, and I have known them

through professional developments, leadership training, and community meetings. My current

role as the school principal did not affect the data collection because the research study being

sought had nothing to do with their present leadership abilities, but it was about their perception

of the effectiveness of the leadership preparation program. The participants remained anonymous

because their names were not mentioned in the project study instead, codes were used to conceal

their identity. Possible biases included my involvement and knowledge during the initial

implementation of the leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. I

served as an instructor of the one out of the nine courses offered to the aspiring leaders. The

responses of the aspiring leaders also varied depending on the load of their tasks and the

demographics and socio-economic status of the school they serve.

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) defined data analysis as the "process of thoroughly examining

and organizing the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials accumulated for the

presentation of the findings" (p. 159). The analysis involved organizing, coding, synthesizing of

the qualitative data and searching for patterns while data interpretation was the emerging of ideas

about the findings and connecting them to the literature and the broader interests and concepts.

Creswell (2012) identified six steps in analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. The steps were

not necessarily needed to be in sequence. The researcher used the six steps to analyze and

interpret the qualitative data developed by Creswell (2012). The six steps presented by Creswell

(2012) included (a) preparing and organizing the data for analysis; (b) engaging in an initial

exploration of the data through the process of coding (c) using the codes to develop a more

general picture of the data descriptions and themes; (d) representing the findings through

narratives and visuals; (e) making an interpretation of the meaning of the results by reflecting

personally on the impact of the findings and on the literature that might inform the findings; (f)

conducting strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings.

Preparing and Organizing of Data

According to Creswell (2012), the "organization of data is critical in qualitative research

because of a large amount of information gathered during a study" (p. 238). Each interview

contained a significant amount of information that needed transcription. The data for analysis

required organizing the vast amount of information, transferring the data to a typed file, and a

decision on how data were analyzed using either the hand or computer. I organized my data into

computer files during the early stage of my qualitative analysis. I developed a table of sources

that I used to help me organize my materials. I organized my documents by type. All recorded

interviews were in one file. I arranged the recorded interviews by participants. I made a duplicate

file for a back-up. I secured all my data with a password. I gave no access to the files to protect

the confidentiality of the data.

I conducted the data analysis as soon as all the data were collected from all the

participants, audio recorded data are transcribed, and participants reviewed the original

transcripts. I used the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software to store, organize, and

analyze my collected data. I used the computer software program NVivo because the software is

compatible with Windows PC and has the capability to quick coding, comprehensive exploration,

build theories, and conduct analyses of the data (Creswell, 2012). Zamawe (2015) finds NVivo as

a great tool to reshape and reorganize coding and nodes structure easily. I used the procedure

recommended by Creswell (2012) for using the data analysis computer software. First, I imported

my transcribed interview file into the computer program. Then, I gave each file a name for

identification. I went through the files and I wrote sentences or paragraphs of ideas that pertain to

the content of the files. Then, I provided a code label for the blocked text, and I continued the

process for the entire text file. Upon the completion of assigning labels to text, I searched for all

text matching codes and printed out the file of the text passages using the NVivo software. Lastly,

I broke down the code labels into themes or categories.

Data Exploration and Coding Process

After transcribing and organizing my data, I conducted a preliminary exploratory analysis

to acquire a general sense of the data, collect ideas, consider the organization of the data, and

identified if data collected was sufficient. Then, I conducted the coding process. "Coding was the

process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data"

(Creswell, 2012, p. 243). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), there were several steps in

developing a coding system. First, I searched through my data for irregularities and patterns and

the main topics my data covers. Second, I used the NVivo software to run the word query for

coding. I created coding categories to represent my topics and patterns. I examined the codes for

overlap and redundancy. Then, I developed a list of coding categories.

I used several coding categories to sort out my data. For example, I used the situation

codes to categorize units of data that tell how the participants defined the setting or the particular

topics. The situation codes were used to determine the participants' worldview and how they see

themselves about the topic or setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Therefore, the situation codes

were appropriate to use in analyzing the perceptions of the aspiring leaders and their mentors in

the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. I categorized the situation codes

for each type of participants.

The other code category that I used was the event codes. The event codes described the

particular experiences that had happened to the participants during the event (Bogdan & Biklen,

2007). The event codes were appropriate when organizing codes for the participants' experiences during the pre-service preparation and clinical learning internships. I also used the strategy codes to categorize codes on the leadership skills used for effective school leadership.

Themes and Descriptions

Themes were collections of codes that could be used to develop main ideas in the database; they developed an essential element in qualitative data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I used the themes to analyze my qualitative data. Similar to codes, themes have labels that consist of two to four words. I broke down my codes into themes. I developed at least five themes by eliminating redundancies. I chose the specific data to use and eliminate other data that did not provide enough evidence to support my themes. I used several types of themes during my data analysis. The themes that I used include the ordinary themes that I expected to find, unexpected themes that I encountered during my data analysis, and major and minor themes that represented major and minor ideas. For example, while the major theme was identified as the type of the leadership skills needed by the leaders, the subthemes emerged including the types of leadership skills developed by the participants during the SLPP.

Description is a detailed explanation of people, places, or events in a setting in a qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). The description of the events provided me with the detailed information of the participants experiences during the SLPP. For example, the participants fully described the events that have taken place during their pre-service preparation and clinical learning internship at the school setting, which helped me visualized what really was going on when the events took place.

I was able to write the vivid narrative descriptions of my data analysis by layering the themes. According to Creswell (2012), layering themes constructs on the idea of major and minor

themes by establishing the themes from basic to complex. I used the interview transcriptions as the first layer of my data analysis. Then I used the description of the events as the second layer of my data analysis. The identified major themes were the third layer and the subthemes were the last layer.

Data Representation and Findings Report

I used a demographic table for my data representation. My table included each participant's code name, the leadership skills they have learned and applied, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the SLPP. During the finding report, I used the narrative discussion to summarize my findings from my data analysis. When writing my narrative discussion, I considered including dialogues with the participants that support my themes. I reported some quotes from interview data. I reported multiple perspectives and contrary evidence. Lastly, I wrote a vivid detail of the events or activities the participants experienced during their leadership preparation program.

Validation for the Accuracy of the Findings

I conducted member checking to validate my transcription and my findings. Member checking was a method of undertaking the credibility of the results. Member checking included returning the interview transcripts to the participants for review (Birt, Scott, Cavers, & Campbell, 2016). Each participant was provided with the copy of the original transcription for their review and verification of the information. Any error or misinterpretation were corrected before finalizing the transcription for data analysis. I also used the triangulation of data to establish the accuracy and credibility of my findings. The validity of the findings is necessary for authentication of the study to be true and certain (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I triangulated my

data findings by comparing the responses of my participants and by doing a cross check with my data findings from my fieldnotes and the NVivo software.

Limitations

The limitation of this program evaluation was the number of participants. While the study intends to maximize the number of participants, I was not able to recruit with more than ten participants. The limited number of participants may not be enough to give me the true perceptions of the school leaders on the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. Despite this limitation, this program evaluation benefits the aspiring leaders to conduct a self-evaluation about their leadership skills and aligns their practices to the most important leadership components for the school's success. This program evaluation also helps the program leaders to improve the leadership preparation program given to the aspiring leaders.

Data Analysis Results

During the data collection, I made phone calls with the principals and vice principals who participated in the School Leadership Preparation Program (SLPP) and set up an appointment to meet with each individual. I provided each candidate with the letter of invitation to participate in the study and the consent form during our initial meeting. I also explained the purpose of the study, how the data will be collected, and read the consent form to each candidate. Four principals and vice principals volunteered to participate and signed the consent form. Each volunteered participant was given the copy of the project study proposal. An interview with each participant was scheduled. The interviews were conducted during the date and time each participant has chosen for their convenience. Each participant was also interviewed at the site of their choice for confidentiality. During the interview, each volunteered participant answered the

14 questions about the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system and the leadership skills they learned during their pre-service preparation and field experiences. Although each participant was allotted with the 60 minutes, the interviews lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. The audio recorder was used to record the responses of each participant. I was able to transcribe the data manually as I repeatedly listen to the audio recorded data. The manual transcription of the data allowed me to recognize some themes and patterns from their responses and add depths to my data.

I have conducted the interviews with the four principals and vice principals from elementary and secondary schools. I have assigned each participant with a code to protect their identities. I used the codes P1, P2, P3, and P4 for the purpose of this project study. I transcribed my data manually in order for me to be familiar with the participants' responses and to identify words and phrases that present emerging patterns and codes. The transcribed data was sent to the participants via email for member checking and validation.

After transcribing the interviews, I created the fieldnotes to organize my data. The fieldnotes is the "written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 118). My fieldnotes included the participants' responses, word queries, and my notes that helped me find the word patterns or codes from my participants' responses, which helped me developed my themes. My fieldnotes has a chart with three columns. I used the first column to write my notes. I used the second column for the participants' responses. I used the color code to identify each participant's response to every question. I wrote the common themes and codes that I developed in the third column.

I used the NVivo software to run the word query for each question for regularities and patterns that I used for coding categories. I wrote down in my fieldnotes the words and phrases that represents my topics. Then I identified the coding categories to create the common themes. I used color coding to organize my data based on the themes that occurred. Then I run the word search in the NVivo software to find the participants' responses related to the themes. The participants' responses were color coded and were put together to provide support and details to my themes. Finally, I conducted the literature review to support the themes that I developed for this study.

Findings

1. **How do you describe the effectiveness of the School Leadership Preparation Program (SLPP) in the CNMI?**

The School Leadership Preparation Program (SLPP) in the CNMI public school system is effective. The participants' involvement in the SLPP allowed them to have access to the courses and hands-on training that they need to be equipped with skills and knowledge about school leadership. The school principals and vice principals who participated in the SLPP increased their self-confidence in decision making, promoting a positive school culture, and addressing the students' needs. Their participation in the SLPP prepared them to become effective leaders and transform them to become instructional leaders. P-1 stated, "SLPP was exceptionally effective because the courses offered equipped me with the essential skills needed for me to become an effective school administrator." P-3 remarked, "the SLPP allowed me to expand on things I had already known, and gain knowledge of things I did not. It allowed me to become, not only an organizational leader, but an instructional leader as well focused on ensuring quality instructions that yields high academic performance for all students." P-2 expressed, "I believe that my

participation in the SLPP helped me to gain a confidence on how to address the school culture

such as how to provide support to parents on their child's learning, how to make sound decision,

and how to provide support to teachers for students' success." P-4 stated, SLPP is effective

because we had nothing in place prior to my appointment as a principal and having the program

had made a difference in my leadership."

> 2. **Have you gained valuable curriculum and instructional experiences while in the SLPP?**

The participants of the SLPP have gained valuable experiences in regards with

curriculum and instruction. During their participation in the SLPP, the participants were able to

analyze the CNMI public school system curriculums and common core standards. The

participants were directly involved in the design and the implementation of the curriculum and

instruction. The participants were engaged in applying the curriculum and instructions in their

school to ensure accountability and student success. The participants utilized the valuable

curriculum resources and instructional experiences gained from the SLPP. P-3 responded, "I most

definitely have gained valuable experiences in regards with curriculum and instruction. I have

learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of

curriculum and instruction, but one must also be directly involved in the design and

implementation of curriculum and instruction." P-2 stated, "Yes I have! Most especially when I

was given a task to analyze the public school system curriculum and the common core standards.

For instruction, I gained the knowledge and experience of the different research- based strategies

the teachers could apply in teaching the content areas." P-4 expressed, "The curriculum and

instruction provided was useful and meaningful, especially since I was already serving as Interim

Principal. The policies, articles, and text required for the coursework are all resources I refer

back to when needed." P-1 remarked, I have gained a tremendous amount of instructional experience and information from the SLPP. We were given valuable resources that we were able to utilize throughout the program as well as during our tenure as administrators."

3. How do you describe your participation in the preservice preparation?

Leadership courses were offered to the SLPP participants during the pre-service preparation. The courses were facilitated by the career status principals and other leaders in the CNMI public school system. The facilitator and the participants met face to face during each course. The courses offered activities in which participants experienced the application of leadership theories relevant to their tasks as school leaders.

During the interview, the participants described their participation in the pre-service preparation. Their descriptions are as follow: P-3: "The pre-service preparation of the SLPP was one that was both practical and effective. I liked how the courses were practical, and not just theory based. The application of theory is directly aligned to what is relevant to the CNMI public school system"; P-1, "We participated fully in all courses during the pre-service preparation. We were engaged in the face to face meets with the facilitators of the program. They were readily available to assist us with any questions we had."; P-4, "I am happy that I participated because the courses that I took during the pre-service preparation did help prepare me to become a school principal."; P-2, "At first it was scary because of the word leadership but after being a part of the SLPP, I understood the importance of what a school leader is to accomplish."

4. How do you describe your experience in the clinical learning internship?

The participants were given one school year as the interim principal or vice principal for their clinical learning internship. The mentors were also provided for the participants during the

internship. Participant responses varied for this question. Some of their responses include: P-1, "I had a great experience during my clinical learning internship. I experienced how to handle the daily school operations."; P-2, "During the clinical learning internship, I was able to effectively communicate with all our stakeholders."; P-3 My experienced in the clinical learning internship was active and engaging. My internship allowed me to gain first-hand experience of what an administrator goes through. The internship brought rewarding experiences and the joy of working with teachers and staff."

5. **How did your participation in the SLPP help you gain the transformational leadership skills needed to become an effective leader?**

The participants recognized that their participation in the SLPP helped them gained the transformational leadership skills needed for their job. The participants' responses were positive for this question. Some of the positive responses were as follows: P-1 stated, "My participation in the SLPP has allowed me to experience first-hand what an effective leader is. I had the opportunity to experience working with teachers, students, staff, and parents to change our school culture and go through a transformation to improve the instructions for student success." P-2 replied, "My participation in the SLPP allowed me to become aware of the different behaviors of teachers and students and how to help them manage the changes to improve the "status quo" of the school." P-4 explained, "My participation in the SLPP allowed me to look at the different leadership styles including the transformational leadership. My participation helped me build on how to be supportive to my staff in setting their goals and how to meet their goals."

6. **When do you effectively use the transformational leadership skills that you have developed?**

Two of the participants applied the transformational leadership skills that they gained during the SLPP when managing change. The other two participants use the transformational leadership skills when dealing with teachers and other stakeholders. P-3 stated, "I discovered that the use of transformational leadership skills is mostly effective when leading change. As you know, any form of change is usually accompanied with resistance. Effective change most definitely will not happen through demanding or authoritative leadership. Although, change may happen using an authoritative leadership, it will most likely lead to passive resistance and hidden rebellion. In order for change to effectively take place, school leaders must hold strong professional beliefs about schooling. They must inspire teachers to accomplish things that may seem beyond their grasp. They must be flexible, adapting to the needs of different situations. And finally, they must be able to challenge the status quo by systematically considering new and better ways of doing things." P-1 expressed, "I use my transformational leadership skills when there are new initiatives implemented as well as goals that need to be met." P-4 explained, "I use my transformational leadership skills mostly when I conduct my teacher observations and change is needed to improve classroom instructions. Transformation happens when we talk about their goals, when they set their professional development plan and talk about how I can support them. So, I think I use it more when I am working with teachers." P-2 stated, "I use the transformational leadership skills that I learned mostly when I am dealing with the parents, students, and teachers. For example, a transformation is needed when the parents are concerned about their child's grades. Another example, I need to apply my transformational skills when the teacher is concerned about the students' behavior. As a transformational leader, I understand that everyone is different and that they do not see the same view as I do. I need to be aware of their feelings and provide support to make the necessary changes to improve or solve the issues."

7. How did your participation in the SLPP help you gain the instructional leadership skills needed to become an effective leader?

The participants recognized that their participation in the SLPP helped them gained the instructional leadership skills needed for their job. Two of the participants' responses showed that they gained the skills in various ways. The other two participants' responses were about how their participation in the leadership program taught them to become instructional leaders. P-1 stated, "My participation in the SLPP program helped me gain instructional leadership skills through collaboration with other aspiring leaders." P-4 claimed, "I really appreciated the clinical supervision course because it allowed me to use the templates I needed as I worked with teachers and my staff for instructional supervision." P-3 explained, "I am thankful that the program has taught me how to remain "focused on focus" by ensuring effective instruction consistently and continually takes place. While I was already passionate in regards with curriculum and instruction, SLPP allowed me to expand on what I had already knew by better supporting teachers using a systemic and systematic process." P-2 stated, "The instructional leadership skills that I obtained during the SLPP are being able to apply the research based instructions and curriculum, and to guide the teachers to achieve the school's mission and vision."

8. When do you effectively use the instructional leadership skills that you have developed?

All the participants' responses show that the instructional leadership skills are being used to achieve the school's goal in improving student achievements. P-3 stated, "I use my instructional leadership skills most especially when setting SMART goals for the school which is directly aimed to student success. Many years, the school that I have worked in had continually been labeled a turnaround and low performing school. After taking the role as an instructional

leader, I figured that we cannot keep doing the same thing over and over again, and expect a

different result. I wanted to take that first step as an instructional leader by challenging the status

quo by setting realistic goals as a team, driving the decision-making process with the use of data,

and then continually monitoring and evaluating its course." P-4 exclaimed, "When I am working

with teachers for observations but I also use it when working with my staff and leadership team

when we work on our school goals. I use my leadership skills basically for everything. But one of

my main focus is to become an instructional leader who works directly with the students to

achieve their goal." P-2 explained, "I use the instructional leadership skills that I learned when we

discuss the student data during the PTSA, staff and professional development, and school

leadership meetings. Instructional leadership skills are needed when unpacking the data and

setting individual goal. My role is to provide the teachers with guidance in setting student's goal.

I also use instructional leadership skills when conducting classroom observations. Providing the

teachers with support in using effective classroom instructions is one of the skills that I developed

and used." P-1 stated, "I use my instructional leadership skills on a daily basis when working and

interacting with my teachers, students, staff and parents as well as community members whenever

we talk about student data. Each day differs in situations and we engage in a variety of events or

meetings where goals, objectives, and instructions have to be addressed."

9. **What other leadership skills have you developed in your participation to the**
   SLPP?

All the participants' have developed other leadership skills during their participation in

the SLPP. The leadership skills learned are associated with The Seven Habits of Effective

Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005). The theme that was recurring

included communication skills, technology integration, school finance, human resources

management, and shared leadership and collaboration. Some of the responses are: P-1 explained, "Through my participation in the SLPP, I have gained a tremendous amount of leadership skills. To name a few are communication skills, managing change, collaboration skills, strategies for 21st century learning, technology integration, building community, and applying the school law such as how to protect individual's privacy." P-2 expressed, "I learned how to become comfortable in communicating to the media or to parents of what is our school's goals and asking support in the community to achieve it." P-3 stated, "The other leadership skills that I had developed in the leadership program was better understanding the administrative side of running a school, most especially in regards with hiring personnel as well as gaining a better understanding of the procurement process." P-4 responded, Other skills like balance leadership. It allowed me to work with my team by making decisions together and exploring their own leadership skills. The balanced leadership skill that I learned allowed me to learn how to share the responsibilities to my leadership team. I also learn to collaborate with each other, so we could make decisions together.

10. **If you were provided with the mentor, how involved was your mentor in guiding you to become an effective school leader? Describe his/her involvement?**

All participants were provided with the mentors. Three participants expressed that the roles of their mentors were to guide and help them with their school's daily routine, help them make sound decisions based on policies, provide awareness of the procedures and actions needed to take in certain situations, teach them the basic leadership roles including hiring of staff, processing of purchase order, create school budget, and conduct classroom observations. One of the participants felt that her mentor had a minimal involvement during the leadership program. Some of the positive responses are: P-1 exclaimed, "My mentor was my current supervisor. He walked me through the daily operations of the school. I was able to attend meetings with him and

work on school policies and handbook. He also walked me through the observation process and the school's daily routine. I learned how to process documents and how to file them properly. My mentor guided me in many ways that helped me become an effective school administrator." P-2 stated, "My mentor was very supportive and understanding in making me aware of the procedures and action I needed to take. My mentor was also readily available when I needed more clarification on my task." P-3 expressed, "What I have learned most from my mentor was that she was very knowledgeable with the CNMI PSS policies, rules, and regulations. Things such as the PSS procurement process, the hiring of teachers, the school budget, and so on was something that I had been missing and craving to understand during my first few years as a VP, and through her guidance I was able to understand the process much better."

11. **What is your experience about the collaboration with other aspiring leaders and school leaders?**

The participants responses about their experience on the collaboration with other aspiring leaders and school leaders were all positive. They find their collaboration helpful and positive. P-1 remarked, "My experience working and collaborating with other aspiring leaders and school leaders was very helpful. Through collaboration, we were able to better understand the system and expectations of the program." P-2 stated, "My experience was positive because I get to share what skills I have and at the same time learn from my colleagues. It allowed me to share my ideas on how to achieve students' success as well as providing support to teachers and parents." P-3 expressed, "This is one of the things that I am most thankful about the program. It allowed me to become connected and build relationships with other aspiring school leaders in the district. I never felt alone. We were a team, and relied on each other for advice, most especially the advice of our instructors which comprised of seasoned and effective school leaders." P-4 explained, "It

allowed us to open up and to reach out to each other. The group assignments allowed us to work together and allowed us to build good relationships amongst our colleagues. So, it was a very positive experience because of the group assignments. Now, since it opened up professional relationships with each other, I am comfortable reaching out to them to ask for suggestions and learn from their strengths. It also helped build the networking, so I know whom should I go to for assistance."

12. What was your engagement with the school's decision making during your clinical learning internship?

The four participants were engaged in the school's decision making during their clinical learning internship. Some of their involvements in the decision making include the development of the school's goals, daily school operation, implementation of curriculum and instructions, and staff development. P-1stated, "During my internship, I was given the opportunity to help make decisions that would benefit the school. Most of the decision-making process involves the school's leadership team and is reflected on the school's goals." P-2 explained, "My engagement was to be an acting principal for one year, so I can be a part of the decision-making body of the school either elementary, junior, or high school. Having different roles during the internship allowed me to be aware of the different behavior of each student, staff, and teacher and helped me make decisions based on my role." P-3 exclaimed, "As mentioned earlier, I was fortunate to be provided a mentor that allowed me to take full lead in the areas of curriculum and instruction, high student performance, and effective teacher and staff professional development." P-4 remarked, "Basically, I was the interim principal, so I make decisions for the school, but I use my leadership team. I also consult with my mentor on how to deal with difficult situations. So overall, I think I was building already as I was the interim principal on how to make sound decisions."

13. Did your participation in the SLPP prepare you to become an effective school leader?

All four participants agreed that their participation in the SLPP prepared them to become effective school leaders. Their positive responses were as follows: P-1expressed, "Yes, most definitely. I am grateful to have been a part of the SLPP. It helped build my values and skills to become an effective leader. This program helped me build confidence and courage to be a great communicator and listener and to have effective interpersonal skills."; P-2 exclaimed, "Yes. It did make me realize that as a leader I am always being looked at either at home, school and in the community. I have to be ready to defend and uphold the PSS goals and objectives in order to achieve students' success."; P-3 indicated, "The SLPP had surely made me become a more effective leader. It allowed me to assume a leadership position with a vision of success. It allowed me to improve instruction through effective teacher supervision and evaluation. It allowed me to foster curriculum collaboration amongst teachers and staff. It allowed me to utilize resources and time to maximize student achievement. It allowed me to discover ways to support all learners in the classrooms, and finally, it allowed me to achieve community support for the school's mission and vision."; P-4 stated, "Yes. I am very appreciative of the program. I wish the SLPP would have happened before I became the acting principal. It definitely made me look at school administration in a different way and it answered a lot of my questions and made me sure about what to do in different types of situations and where do I go for assistance. A lot of my questions were answered."

14. What recommendations do you have to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system?

The participants' responses on the recommendation to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP varied. Two participants expressed that the program should continually be offered by the CNMI public school system. "I feel the program was structured effectively and I have no recommendation. However, I hope that this program will be offered to future aspiring leaders", explained by P-1. P-3 expressed that "The only regret that I have in regards with the leadership program is that the program did not continue after the conclusion of the Cohort 1. While I understand that the system went a different direction by providing online courses to aspiring leaders, a cohort based learning environment is very different, one that provided an entire team of support, and I am proud to say that I was a part of it." P-4 commented, "As far as the program, the program should continue to build local capacity within the CNMI."

One of the recommendations was to improve the mentoring during the clinical learning internship. P-4 stated, "My only recommendation would be to revisit the mentoring component of the program. During the selection and assignment of mentors, work load should be considered to ensure the mentor is able to effective guide and support the aspiring leader." One participant recommended to allow the SLPP participants attend during the board meetings and public hearings to learn how decisions are made in a higher level. P-2 stated, "One recommendation is to have the SLPP participants involve in the board meetings and public hearing that way they can be part of the decision-making body."

The participants who answered the interview surveys were principals and vice principals from the CNMI public school system. These principals and vice principals were participants of the school leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. The findings from the interview responses answer the research problem about the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system.

Themes

There were five themes that occurred from the data analysis. The first theme that

occurred includes the relevant courses that were offered during the pre-service preparation. The

second theme is the knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instructions gained by the

participants. The third theme is the importance of internship and mentoring provided to the

participants. The fourth theme is the leadership skills gained by the participants. The fifth theme

is the professional relationships and collaboration built and developed by the participants.

Relevant Courses

The first major theme that occurred was the relevant courses that were offered during the

pre-service preparation. The participants expressed that the courses offered in the SLPP were

effective and relevant. P1 expressed, "the courses offered helped equip me with the essential

skills I needed to be an effective administrator." P-2 stated, "I believe that my participation in the

SLPP courses helped me to gain a confidence on how to address the school culture such as how to

provide support to parents on their child's learning, how to make sound decision, and how to

provide support to teachers for students' success. I learned to provide support to teachers and

address the student's needs by providing a safe and conducive classroom environment so the

learning can be accomplished." P-3 explained, "the pre-service preparation of the SLPP was one

that was both practical and effective. The application of theory is directly aligned to what is

relevant to the CNMI public school system. The SLPP allowed me to expand on things I had

already known, and gain knowledge of things I did not." P-4 stated, "I would say I am happy that

I participated because the courses that I took during the pre-service preparation did help prepare

me to become a school principal and answer a lot of questions that I already had from being an

acting principal at that time. I really appreciated the clinical supervision course because it allowed

me to use the templates I needed as I worked with teachers and my staff for instructional supervision. I found the course assignments and presentations to be highly relevant to my work as a school principal."

Knowledge and Experiences in Curriculum and Instruction

The second major theme that occurred was the knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instructions gained by the participants. The four participants seemed to agree that their participation in the SLPP have given them access to gain knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instructions needed to become the instructional leaders.   P-1 stated, "I have gained a tremendous amount of instructional experience and information from this program. We were given valuable resources that we can utilize throughout the program as well as during our tenure as administrators." P-2 exclaimed, "I gained the knowledge and experience of the different research- based strategies the teachers could apply in teaching the content areas." P-3 explained, I most definitely have gained valuable experiences in regards with curriculum and instruction. The leadership program allowed me to apply my knowledge at a greater level. To both affect and effect change not only at the classroom level, but also at the school level. I have learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of curriculum and instruction, but one must also be directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum and instruction." P-4 expressed, "I gained a lot of valuable curriculum and instructional experiences. I really appreciated to hear how other principals apply curriculum and instructions in their schools and how they manage to ensure accountability and student achievement."

Internship and Mentoring

The third major theme that was extracted from the participants' responses was the internship and mentoring. Internship and mentoring were the two predominating themes that emerged. Through the internship during the SLPP, the participants seemed to work with their mentors to assist in the daily school operations, implement school policies, rules, and regulations, develop school budget, implement curriculum and instruction, hire school personnel, and communicate with the stakeholders. P-1 stated, "I had a great experience during my clinical learning internship. During my internship, I was given the opportunity to help make decisions that would benefit the school. I experienced how to handle the daily school operations. My mentor walked me through the daily operations and protocols that the school accomplishes within a day. I was able to attend meetings with him and work on school policies and handbook. He also walked me through the observation process and the school's daily routine. I learned how to process documents and how to file them properly. My mentor guided me in many ways that helped me become an effective school administrator." P-2 exclaimed, "My experience in the clinical learning internship allows me to gain the knowledge on how to effectively communicate to all stakeholders. During the clinical learning internship, I was able to effectively communicate with all our stakeholders. My mentor was very supportive and understanding in making me aware of the procedures and action I needed to take. Some communication techniques allowed me to address situation in a comfortable setting." P-3 stated, "The internship allowed me to gain first-hand experience of what an administrator goes through. The internship brought rewarding experiences. What I have learned most from my mentor was that she was very knowledgeable with the CNMI PSS policies, rules, and regulations. Things such as the PSS procurement process, the hiring of teachers, the school budget, and so on was something that I had been missing and craving to understand during my first few years as a VP, and through her guidance I

was able to understand the process much better." P-3 also stated, "I was fortunate to be provided a mentor that allowed me to take full lead in the areas of curriculum and instruction, high student performance, and effective teacher and staff professional development." As P-4 recognized the importance of internship and mentoring, she recommended for the mentoring to be restructured to ensure that the mentor finds time to work with the participants in setting goals and meeting the goals together. P-4 stated, "I recommend that the SLPP mentoring be built around similar to how we mentor our teachers. I really think that having the face to face meeting with your mentor and set goal as a leader like what we do with our teachers could have been in place. We should set goals together, do some shadowing, conduct staff meeting together and give some feedback."

Leadership Skills Gained by the Participants

The fourth theme that emerged from the participants' responses was the various leadership skills they have learned and developed during their participation in the SLPP. The participants find it important to learn various leadership skills including communication skill, transformational leadership skills, instructional leadership skills, balanced leadership, skills in technology integration, skills in collaboration and building community, and skills in handling personnel, budgeting, and school policy implementation. P-1 indicated, "Through my participation in the SLPP I have gained a tremendous amount of leadership skills. To name a few are communication skills, managing change, collaboration skills, strategies for 21st century learning, technology integration, building community, and applying the school law such as how to protect individual's privacy." P-1 also stated, "My participation in the SLPP program helped me gain instructional leadership skills through collaboration with other aspiring leaders. We learned the essential skills through vigorous reading, dialogue and projects. I use my instructional leadership skills on a daily basis when working and interacting with my teachers, students, staff

and parents as well as community members whenever we talk about student data. I use my

transformational leadership skills when there are new initiatives implemented as well as goals

that need to be met. I also apply my leadership skills with my teachers and staff during

observations, meetings, and professional developments." P-2 responded, "P-2 I learned how to

become comfortable in communicating to the media or to parents of what is our school's goals

and asking support in the community to achieve it. The instructional leadership skills that I

obtained during the SLPP are being able to apply the research based instructions and curriculum,

and to guide the teachers to achieve the school's mission and vision." P-2 also indicated, "My

participation in the SLPP allowed me to become aware of the different behaviors of teachers and

students and how to help them manage the changes to improve the "status quo" of the school. I

use the transformational leadership skills that I learned mostly when I am dealing with the

parents, students, and teachers. For example, a transformation is needed when the parents are

concerned about their child's grades. Another example, I need to apply my transformational skills

when the teacher is concerned about the students' behavior. As a transformational leader, I

understand that everyone is different and that they do not see the same view as I do." P-3

explained, I discovered that the use of transformational leadership skills is most effective when

leading change, most especially second order change. As you know, any form of change is

usually accompanied with resistance. In order for change to effectively take place, school leaders

must hold strong professional beliefs about schooling. They must inspire teachers to accomplish

things that may seem beyond their grasp. They must be flexible, adapting to the needs of

different situations. And finally, they must be able to challenge the status quo by systematically

considering new and better ways of doing things." P-3 also added, "It allowed me to become, not

only an organizational leader, but an instructional leader as well focused on ensuring quality

instructions that yields high academic performance for all students. I use my instructional

leadership skills that I learned most especially when setting SMART goals for the school which is directly aimed to student success. I am thankful that the program has taught me how to remain "focused on focus" by ensuring effective instruction consistently and continually takes place. While I was already passionate in regards with curriculum and instruction, the SLPP allowed me to expand on what I had already knew by better supporting teachers using a systemic and systematic process." P-2 also mentioned, "The other leadership skills that I had developed in the leadership program was better understanding the administrative side of running a school, most especially in regards with hiring personnel as well as gaining a better understanding of the procurement process." P-4 stated, "I learned other skills like balance leadership. It allowed me to work with my team by making decisions together and exploring their own leadership skills. The balanced leadership skill that I learned allowed me to learn how to share the responsibilities to my leadership team. I also learn to collaborate with each other so we could make decisions together." P-4 also stated, I use my transformational leadership skills mostly when I conduct my teacher observations and when change is needed to improve classroom instructions. Transformation happens when we talk about their goals, when they set their professional development plan and talk about how I can support them."

Relationships and Collaboration

The fifth theme that occurred in data analysis was the relationships and the collaboration built and developed by the participants. P-1 expressed, "My experience working and collaborating with other aspiring leaders and school leaders was very helpful. Through collaboration, we were able to better understand the system and expectations of the program. P-1 also recognized the importance of collaboration with other stakeholders. P-1 expressed, "My participation in the SLPP has allowed me to experience first-hand what an effective leader is. I

had the opportunity to experience working with teachers, students, staff, and parents to change our school culture and go through a transformation to improve the instructions for student success." P-2 exclaimed, "My experience was positive because I get to share what skills I have and at the same time learn from my colleagues. It allowed me to share my ideas on how to achieve students' success as well as providing support to teachers and parents." P-3 indicated, "For one, I really liked how the program was cohort based. This allowed for a group of new and aspiring professionals to build a support group and instill a sense of camaraderie which only strengthened after each course, and till this day continue to seek advice from each other." P-3 added, "This is one of the things that I am most thankful about the program. It allowed me to become connected and build relationships with other aspiring school leaders in the district. I never felt alone knowing that there were other new leaders who were experiencing the same feelings as I did. The feeling of anxiety and feeling overwhelmed. Thankfully we were a team, and relied on each other for advice, most especially the advice of our instructors which comprised of seasoned and effective school leaders. Till this day I continue to reach out to my cohort when I need it. If this program did not exist, I can guarantee that I will not have the same connection and camaraderie that I have now with other school leaders in the district." P-4 explained, "It allowed us to open up and to reach out to each other. The group assignments allowed us to work together and allowed us to build good relationships amongst our colleagues. Now, since it opened up professional relationships with each other, I am comfortable reaching out to them to ask for suggestions and learn from their strengths. It also helped build the networking, so I know whom should I go to for assistance."

Disconfirming Data

All participants agreed that they were provided with the mentors during their clinical learning internship. All participants recognized the importance of mentoring during their participation in the SLPP. However, only two participants agreed that their mentors were helpful and supportive of them during the internship. P-1 expressed, "My mentor guided me in many ways that helped me become an effective school administrator." P-2 stated, "My mentor was very supportive and understanding in making me aware of the procedures and action I needed to take. My mentor was also readily available when I needed more clarification on my task." One participant felt that instead of being mentored, the mentor and the participant were able to balance each other using their own leadership styles to manage the school during the internship. P-3 expressed, "Although we may seem to have different leadership styles, I strongly feel that we balance each other and make a powerful team." One of the participants expressed that although her mentor has a vast experience in school administration and leadership, her mentor failed to have face to face meeting with her and she has minimal involvement during the internship due to the mentor's busy schedule. P-4 expressed, "I understand that she had vast experience in school administration and leadership, but she also had an extremely busy calendar. Most of the support I received was via email or phone calls. We did not have regular face-to-face meetings that focused on my progress as a school leader."

Evidence of Quality

In order to ensure the quality and validity of the collected data, the copy of the transcribed responses was provided to the participants for member checking. Member checking is a qualitative process during which the researcher solicits one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2012). Member checking allowed my participants to

validate the responses they provided to me during the interviews. It also gave my participants the opportunity to identify and correct any errors. I was also able to collect additional information during the member checking. Three participants agreed with the transcribed data while the other participant made some changes with her statement and provided additional information for some of the interview questions. Overall, all participants were satisfied with the transcribed data and agreed that the transcription of their responses were accurate.

Besides member checking, I also used the triangulation of data to establish the accuracy and credibility of my findings. According to Creswell (2012), triangulation is the "process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research". The validity of the findings is necessary for authentication of the study to be true and certain (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). I triangulate my data findings by comparing the responses of my participants. By manually transcribing the participants' responses, I was given the opportunity to learn the different viewpoints and commonality of their responses. I was also able to cross check the data findings from my fieldnotes and the NVivo software.

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. The findings of this research study were vital for the improvement of the SLPP provided to the school principals and vice principals for quality and effective school leadership. The conceptual framework of the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs (Davis & Jazzar, 2005) was proven to be the important components of the school leadership preparation program based on the responses of my interviews with the school principals and vice principals. The instructional leadership and transformational leadership were

amongst the leadership skills that the participants found essentials to help the teachers improve the status quo of the school and help provide instructional supports for teachers and staff. The participants found mentoring important and necessary in the school leadership preparation program, however, two participants felt that their mentors had minimal participation during their internship. The data collected from the interviews well-defined the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system.

The five major themes that were developed from the data collected were relevancy of the courses; the participants' gained knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instructions; the importance of internship and mentoring in the SLPP; the leadership skills gained by the participants; and the relationships and collaboration they have developed during their participation in the SLPP. The participants' responses during the interviews revealed that the effectiveness of the SLPP was based on the five major themes mentioned above. These themes were aligned with the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs (Davis & Jazzar, 2005).

Bustamante and Combs (2011) examined the 72 universities that offer courses in educational leadership to explore how relevant the courses were to the inquiry needs of practicing school leaders. According to Bustamante and Combs (2011), the preparation programs for school administrators have been criticized due to the deficiency in several areas including the offering of the relevant courses and curriculum for aspiring school leaders. The school leaders were expected to learn how to monitor and evaluate, promote continuous and sustainable improvement, and collect, and analyze data pertinent to the education environment (Bustamante & Combs, 2011). The study finding showed that fewer courses were being offered in the universities on education leadership and school improvement. The data analysis revealed that less than half of the courses

offered contained some language related to inquiry skills, which is critical to educational leaders (Bustamante & Combs, 2011). Base on my interviews with the participants, the courses that were offered during the pre-service preparation helped them learned the essential skills needed to become effective school leaders. The responses of the participants gave a direct answer to my second research question on how their pre-service preparation and field experience helped them learned the essentials skills associated with transformational and instructional leadership. McCarthy (2015) explained that the focus of curriculum components in educational leadership programs had evolved from school management to leadership for student learning. Several programs have shifted to problem-based learning (McCarthy, 2015). Some leadership preparation programs emphasized the cultural foundations and social justice (McCarthy, 2015). During my interviews with the participants, they agreed that the courses in the SLPP have helped them learned the skills needed to change their school culture for school improvement. Their participation in the pre-service preparation and clinical internship also provided them with the necessary instructional supports for teachers and staff to achieve students' success. The participants were provided with resources they needed for instructional supervision. All participants also expressed that the courses offered to them were relevant, practical, and effective.

The participants of the SLPP have gained knowledge and experiences in developing and implementing curriculum and instructions. The knowledge of the school leaders on effective instructional practices is important (Goddard, Goddard, Sook-Kim, & Miller, 2015). The more the school leaders serve as the instructional leaders with in-depth knowledge of curriculum and instructional practices, the more the teachers are engaged in collaborative instructions designed to improve instructions in the classrooms (Goddard, Goddard, Sook-Kim, & Miller, 2015). I understand from my interviews with my participants that their participation in the SLPP allowed them to gain knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instructions needed to become the

instructional leaders. The SLPP participants acknowledged that the instructional leader goes beyond having knowledge of curriculum and instruction. Their participation in the program allowed them to directly be involved in the design and implementation of curriculum and instruction in the classrooms. During the interviews, the participants disclosed that they had gained the knowledge and experience of the different research-based strategies the teachers could apply in teaching the content areas.

The data that I collected from the interviews indicated that the internship and mentoring were the two important components of the effective SLPP. The participants' experiences in the clinical learning internship during the SLPP allowed them to work closely with their mentors in overseeing the daily operation of the school, helping the teachers implement curriculum and instructions, establishing protocols, and communicating with the stakeholders. During the internships, the participants' developed their administrative skills including skills in handling personnel, budgeting, and school policy implementation. Crow & Whiteman (2016) explained that the aspiring leaders' participation in the internship allows them to practice and apply both instructional and managerial leadership skills.

Mentoring was one of the outlying or disconfirming data in this research study. Two of the SLPP participants agreed that they were guided and supported by their mentors during their clinical learning internship. However, the other participant felt that the mentoring should be improved to ensure that quality internship and mentoring are provided for the SLPP participants. Clayton and Thessin (2017) conducted a study using the mixed method approach to examine the mentor's perception of their roles and relationships with their interns. One of the findings showed that not all the interns were given the same opportunities by their mentors to experience and practice their instructional and administrative leadership skills during the clinical internship

(Clayton & Thessin, 2017). Clayton and Thessin (2017) recommended based on the responses of their participants to include the need for trust in the mentor/intern relationship for a successful internship in leadership preparation program. Effective mentoring is described as the relationships that engage supporting, inspiring, molding, guiding, and inspiring; and that helps the mentees to maximize and reach their full potentials (Service, Dalgic, Thornton, 2016; Varney, 2012).

The participants have gained and developed various leadership skills during their participation in the SLPP program. During my interviews, I have concluded that the participants find it important to learn various leadership skills including communication skills, transformational leadership skills, instructional leadership skills, skills in technology integration, skills in collaboration and building community, and skills in handling personnel, budgeting, and school policy implementation. Communication is one of the leadership responsibilities that had the highest correlation with high student achievement (Baxter, 2013). Based on the interviews I have conducted, the SLPP participants have expressed that they have learned and used effective communication skills and techniques during their clinical learning internships to address situations in a more comfortable setting, deliver the school's goals, and seek the community's support to achieve their goals.

The participants acknowledged that their participation in the SLPP have helped them develop their skills in technology integration needed in the 21st-century learning. They have recognized that the use of technology in the classroom is necessary to make learning more fun and meaningful. LaFrance and Beck (2014) recognized the importance of the educational reform in K-12 schools to add more inertia for technology-based change. LaFrance and Beck (2014) recommended to include technology infusion throughout the coursework and in field experiences during the SLPP to maintain relevancy.

School leaders are crucial in giving support for collaboration's substantial time commitment, and they may serve as the catalyst for teacher collaboration (Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller, 2015). According to McCulla and Degenhardt (2016), understanding the importance of people and relationships were more important than the daily administrative tasks of the school leaders. The effective school leaders practice capacity building among staff (McCulla & Degenhardt, 2016). The same concept was observed during the SLPP in the CNMI. Based on the interviews I conducted, the participants emphasized the importance of relationship and collaboration. The participants agreed that through the SLPP, they were able to build and develop a good working relationship through their collaboration with each other. Through collaboration, the school leaders were able to better understand the system, change the school culture to improve instructions, share their ideas and leadership skills, build networking and support system, and learn from each other.

Description of Project

The three-day professional development has been organized as a project to provide the school administrators, district leaders, mentors, and policymakers of the CNMI public school system on the effectiveness of the SLPP. During the three-day professional development sessions, the research and interview questions with the participants' responses will be shared. The discussions and activities during the three-day professional development sessions will engage the school administrators, district leaders, mentors, and policymakers to analyze the themes that were developed from the research study, and reflect on the background literature on the components of effective leadership preparation program.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The findings from this study described the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system based on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005) and the theoretical frameworks of instructional leadership by Burns (1978) and transformational leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989). The results of the interviews affirmed that the school administrators' participation in the SLPP prepared them become effective school leaders. The participants affirmed that they were offered relevant courses and that they gained knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instruction. They also affirmed that they built professional relationships and expanded their networks as the result of their participation in the SLPP. Mentoring and internships were two components that were crucial in SLPP and needed to be improved.

Professional development will be provided to school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers on the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. During this professional development, school leaders and policymakers will be provided with evaluative information that the district can use for continuous improvement of the leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system.

Section 3 includes the project description, the project's goals and purposes, a literature review supporting the project, implications of the project to promote social change, and an outline of activities occurring during the professional development.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to present the findings to district leaders, mentors, school administrators, and policymakers to provide necessary support and make improvements to the

leadership program in the CNMI public school system. The findings will be presented to the

school administrators so that they may reflect on their leadership practices and use the leadership

skills necessary to strategically perform their challenging tasks in the schools. The

findings will also be shared with mentors to improve the mentoring and clinical learning

internship being offered in the SLPP. The findings will be shared with district leaders to

support necessary restructuring of the program based on the recommendations for

improvement. The findings will be shared with policymakers so that they may make

necessary changes in policy pertaining to the leadership preparation program in the

CNMI public school system.

Project Goals

The goal of this project is to provide evaluative information to policymakers and district

leaders so that they can provide needed support to school administrators. The findings revealed

that internships and mentoring are important components of leadership preparation programs.

Various researchers have emphasized the importance of quality internships (Christian, 2011;

Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011).

Quality internships must have well-defined expectations (Clayton & Myran, 2013), exemplary

mentoring and coaching (Duncan et al., 2011), and support from site-based mentors (Christian,

2011). Providing aspiring leaders and school administrators with effective internships and

mentoring experience will help school administrators define their role and develop leadership

skills they need to manage the schools. This could result in an improved leadership preparation

program for new aspiring leaders. Furthermore, this could result in a change to the "status quo" of

the schools in the CNMI public school system and could improve teaching and learning through

the practice of effective leadership skills learned by school administrators who participated and will participate in the SLPP.

Project Description

A 3-day professional development session has been prepared for school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers to provide them with evaluative information on the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. Participants can gain numerous active learning opportunities through professional development (Barlow, Frick, Barker, & Phelps, 2014). Collective input through participants' collaboration can also be achieved during professional development (Barlow et al., 2014).

The most "important component of any professional development activity is a design that allows the participants to engage in active participation during the activities" (Bayar, 2014, p. 324). School administrators and mentors will be invited to participate in the first 2 days of the professional development program. During the third day of the professional development program, district leaders and policymakers will be invited to participate. The first day of the professional development session will include an introduction to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used for this research study. Day 1 session activities will include discussions of the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005) and the theoretical frameworks of instructional leadership by Burns (1978) and transformational leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989). The participants will be provided with preassessments to measure their prior knowledge of the frameworks and reflect on effective leadership practices. The research findings will be discussed on the second day of the professional development session. The responses from the four participants will be shared with the school administrators and mentors attending the professional development without disclosing the participants'

identities. The components of an effective leadership preparation program based on the research findings will also be discussed. District leaders and policymakers will be invited for the third day of the professional development session. District leaders will participate in a collaborative discussion about the types of supports that can be provided to school leaders. By participating in this session, policymakers will gain information that will help them to make necessary decisions to recommend and adopt policies pertaining to the leadership preparation program offered to aspiring and novice school leaders.

Review of the Literature

The emphasis of the literature review conducted for Section 3 was on the components of effective professional development and mentoring. Various sources of information were collected from multiple databases, including the Walden University electronic library, EBSCO, ERIC, Google Scholar, Education Source, Research Gate, and SAGE Publishing. Key words used for the search of literature included *professional development, mentoring, mentor,* and *mentee.*

I included professional development in the literature review to validate and support the development of this project. I also included the components of effective mentoring to develop the relevance of this project and to address the recommendations of the participants on the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. I concluded that my literature review research was saturated and complete when article titles and authors repeatedly appeared during my searches.

Professional Development

Professional development is commonly offered to individuals in various types of professions for the purpose of enhancing their knowledge and skills to improve their performance on the job (Mizell, 2010). There is a vast range of professional development opportunities, which

are offered in a variety of formats (Koellner & Jacobs, 2015). Several models of professional development have been shown to enhance educational practices, including action research, inquiry, networking, coaching strategies, and self-monitoring (Nabhania, O'Day Nicolas, & Bahous, 2014).

Professional development is a strategy used to disseminate information and foster collaboration among school administrators, district leaders, and policymakers in the CNMI public school system. Individuals who participate in professional development become engaged in active learning through activities that involve leading and participating in discussions, applying new knowledge, observing, and practicing what has been learned (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). The purpose of this project is to conduct professional development to provide evaluative information to policymakers and district leaders on the effectiveness of the leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. Collaborative opportunities within learning communities constitute one of the core features of effective professional development for educators (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). Professional development is necessary to engage stakeholders including school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers in a collaborative discussion and decision-making process for the improvement of support for the preparation of school leaders to oversee the schools effectively.

Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengtson (2014) conducted a qualitative study that analyzed principal professional development practices. The results of their cross-analysis indicated that effective professional development is job embedded, problem centered, relevancy oriented, and goal oriented (Zepeda et al., 2014). Effective professional development was described as comprehensive and job-embedded learning that promotes continuous improvement through an

ongoing process (Zepeda et al., 2014). Effective professional development is also goal-oriented, supporting a data-driven approach focused on meeting goals (Zepeda et al., 2014).

Many believe that providing professional development to teachers can lead to improvements in teaching. Research conducted by Kennedy (2016) indicated that professional development programs result in the development of approaches that foster learning. The findings showed that professional development that was focused mainly on content knowledge had less effect on student learning, whereas professional development that was focused on addressing the problems of teaching improved teachers' effectiveness. He also emphasized that collective participation in professional development should involve meaningful discussions that foster the intellectual work that teachers are engaged in. Lastly, coaching during professional development is more effective when coaches collaborate with teachers on lesson planning and provide a model of strategic planning (Kennedy, 2016).

District leaders should systematically implement professional development programs that represent best practices (Mazzotti, Rowe, Simonsen, Boaz, & VanAvery, 2018). Mazzotti et al. (2018) described seven steps for using data-based decision making to design and implement quality professional development at the local level to ensure that districts across a state efficiently implement evidence-based practices. One of the steps needed to sustain evidence-based practices is the development of a stakeholder team for decision making (Mazzotti et al., 2018). They recommended that such a team be composed of individuals from the state education agency and other organizations that influence professional development policies and practices. Collecting and analyzing data constitute another step toward quality professional development. Stakeholders should collect various data and analyze them to identify needs and align professional development activities to address those needs (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). Developing smart

goals, selecting specific strategies, and monitoring and evaluating results are other steps in implementing professional development for secondary transitions (Mazzotti et al., 2018).

Involving policymakers in professional development focused on student achievement is necessary. Policymakers typically mandate that teachers attend professional development or earn credits from attending continuing education as part of ongoing licensure procedures. This mandate is due to their assumption that teachers will improve their content knowledge upon completion of training, leading to improved student achievement (Barrett, Cowen, Toma, & Troske, 2015).

Policymakers have the ability to make decisions to support effective leadership for school improvement. Professional development is necessary to engage policymakers in meaningful discussion that could reshape the leadership preparation program in the district. Turnbull, Riley, and MacFarlane (2015) reported on how policymakers took strong roles in taking charge of the principal pipeline in their districts. Policymakers are responsible for ensuring that school leaders are abreast of leadership strategies that could be used to increase student achievement (Zavala, 2014).

Mentoring

Although school leaders recognize the importance of mentoring in the SLPP, sufficient funding and quality planning for mentoring are frequent problems (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017). New school leaders usually have limited access to mentoring that could help with their professional growth. According to Carr, Holmes, and Flinn (2017), understanding the complexity of mentoring is essential. It is imperative that a mentoring program for new school leaders is systematically designed to support novice leaders in being successful in their jobs (Carr et al.,

2017). Mentoring is an essential component of learning and teaching in educational leadership (Welton, Mansfield, Lee, & Young, 2015).

Mentoring involves professional relationships between less experienced individuals or *mentees* and more experience individuals or *mentors* (Opengart & Bierema, 2015). Mentoring can be beneficial for mentees, mentors, and schools; however, it may also cause harm if it lacks the components of an effective and systematic framework (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Rienbenbauer, Dreisiebner, & Stock, 2018). Rienbenbauer et al. (2018) conducted a study and determined that the key elements of successful mentoring are feedback, opportunities for reflection, and career orientation. It was found that mentors and mentees valued immediate feedback (Rienbenbauer et al., 2018). They also stated that opportunities for reflection were helpful for competence development.

Mentoring support for new school leaders may narrow the gap between new leaders' prior knowledge and experiences and new knowledge and skills acquired while on the job (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017; Villani, 2006). New school leaders who are mentored by experienced veterans are able to acquire resources and leadership skills that help them establish priorities and focus on what matters most. Mentors are able to guide new school leaders in making decisions that impact the school system (Augustine-Shaw & Hachiya, 2017).

Several studies have been conducted to identify various types of effective mentoring. Curtin, Malley, and Stewart (2016) identified three types of mentoring that were effective in supporting the academic career aspirations of doctoral students. Based on the study, the types of mentoring that fit well within social learning were career or instrumental mentoring, sponsorship, and expressive or psychosocial mentoring. Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, and Edwards-Groves (2014) conducted research using meta-analysis and identified three archetypes of

mentoring for teachers: mentoring as supervision, mentoring as support, and mentoring as collaborative self-development. They stated that *mentoring as supervision* requires a process of probation for teachers to meet the requirement to become highly qualified. *Mentoring as support* is a process of providing guidance to mentees in the development of their professional practice in their jobs. *Mentoring as collaborative self-development* is a process to assist mentees in becoming part of the professional learning community, in which the mentees participate in active dialogue to achieve professional growth (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Callahan (2016) identified the characteristics of successful mentoring practices and discussed the positive impact of effective mentoring on teacher retention. An effective mentoring program provides novice teachers with opportunities for open communication with veteran teachers. Mentors serve as resources, providing suggestions for classroom management, guidance in reflective practice, and knowledge on school policies and procedures (Callahan, 2016). Mentoring has a positive impact on mentees' professional development (Manzar-Abbass, Malik, Khurshid, & Ahmad, 2017). Callahan added that the most effective mentoring programs include opportunities for mentors to conduct classroom observations and provide coaching to novice teachers. Coaching may include collaborative discussions on the mentor's and mentees' areas of strength and the design of a plan for improvement (Carr et al., 2017).

Effective mentoring depends on a mutual understanding between the mentor and the mentees. Mentoring relationship is built on trust and openness and is sustained as long as it is needed (Opengart & Bierema, 2015). Mentors have the profound responsibility to foster a cooperative, trusting, and supportive relationships with the mentees (Hobbs & Stovall, 2015). Three studies were conducted to identify the components of the positive mentoring relationships. Izadinia (2016) conducted a study to examine the similarities and differences between mentor

teachers and student teachers' perceptions of components of positive mentoring relationship. Data from the study suggested that the components of the mentoring relationships from student teachers and teacher mentors' point of views include encouragement and support, open relationship, feedback, and mutual respect (Izadinia, 2016). Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014) conducted a qualitative study and identified 8 components of effective mentoring relationship, which include open communication and accessibility, goals and challenges, passion and inspiration, caring personal relationship, mutual respect and trust, exchange of knowledge, independence and collaboration, and role modeling. Pololi and Evans' (2015) study resulted in identifying the features of effective mentoring relationships as good listening, feedback, reciprocity, mutual respect, personal connection, and providing career guidance.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

There are several resources needed for the project delivery. One of the resources is the copy of the PowerPoint Presentation that contains the slides presentation on the conceptual frameworks based on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by David and Jazzar (2005), Instructional Leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989), and Transformational Leadership by Burns (1978). The other resource is the copy of the interview questions with the responses from the participants. Themes that were found and data will be included in the slides presentation. Pre-assessment will be other resource that is needed to access the prior knowledge of the professional development participants during the implementation of the project study. Three groups of participants will be invited to the 3 days of professional development. The first group will consist of 38 school principals and vice principals who were school administrators and mentors from the CNMI public school system. The second group of participants will consist of 12 district leaders. The third group of participants will consist of five board members from the

CNMI public school system. A packet will be provided to each participant during the professional

development. The packet will contain handouts that will provide description of the Seven Habits

of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by David and Jazzar (2005), Instructional Leadership

by Smith and Andrews (1989), and Transformational Leadership by Burns (1978). A copy of

the interview questionnaire will also be included in the packet. The responses of research

participants will also be included. The post assessment will be provided to school administrators

and mentors during the second day to validate if deeper understanding on leadership framework

was acquired. Evaluation form will be provided to participants at the end of professional

development. Evaluation form would include the reflection on what they learned, the relevancy of

the content, and their proposed recommendation and action to support the school leaders.

Potential Barriers

One of the potential barriers to successfully implement this project is the availability and

willingness of school administrators, policymakers and the district leaders to attend the

professional development. Participants may need to find the urgency to support the project and

needed to be encouraged to find time for meaningful discussions on the importance of school

leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. Cost is another barrier that

can hinder the successful implementation of the project.

Proposal for Implementation and Timeline

The 3-day professional development will be held on the summer of 2018. School

administrators and mentors will attend the Days 1 and Day 2 sessions, while policymakers and

district leaders will attend the Day 3 session. The introduction of the frameworks and presentation

of research findings will be presented during Day 1 and Day 2 to the school administrators and

mentors. Themes that emerged from the research and debriefing with the district leaders and

policymakers will take place in Day 3.

Table 2

Three-Day Schedule for the Professional Development

Time	Day 1: School administrators and mentors	Day 2: School administrators and mentors	Day 3: District leaders and policymakers
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Activity 1: Preassessment to access prior knowledge on the frameworks	Activity 1: Introduction of the research study	Activity 1: Introduction of the frameworks (use the quizzes for preassessment)
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Activity 2: Explanation and discussion of the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs	Activity 2: Table talk—What makes an effective school administrator?	Activity 2: Introduction of the research and sharing of findings/themes
10:20-12:00 p.m.	Activity 3: Explanation and discussion of the instructional leadership	Activity 3: Unpacking the data/sharing of findings	Activity 3: Table talk—How do we best support our school leaders?
12:00 -1:00 p.m.	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00-2:30 p.m.	Activity 4: Explanation and discussion of transformational leadership.	Activity 4: Table Talk—What makes an effective school leadership preparation program?	Activity 4: Discussion— School administrators' policy recommendations to policymakers
2:30-3:30 p.m.	Activity 5: Reflection on their practices based on the frameworks	Activity 5: Group reflection and recommendations to the policymakers to support school leaders	Activity 5: Debriefing and policy change

| 3:30-4:00 p.m. | Activity 6: Postassessment | Activity 6: Evaluation | Activity 6: Evaluation |

Student's Roles and Responsibilities

I took several roles as the student at Walden University. I took part in the data collection of the research. I also took part as the transcriber and the data analyzer. For this project study, I will take the role of the project study organizer. I will also become the developer and presenter during the three-days of professional development. I will prepare the materials and resources including the presentation, handouts, and the invitations for the participants. I will set the date and arrange the venue for the three days professional development.

As a presenter and organizer of professional development, it is my responsibility to provide the participants with background knowledge on the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by David and Jazzar (2005), Instructional Leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989), and Transformational Leadership by Burns (1978). It is also my responsibility to present my study findings on the effectiveness of the leadership preparation program to the school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers.

Project Evaluation

Likert scale and summative evaluation will be used to evaluate the project. Likert scale is used to measure the person's attitudes or opinions (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). Likert scale requires the participants to show their level of agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the given statement on a metric scale (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). Likert scale is used by the researchers to capture the feelings, actions, and pragmatic opinions of the participants about issues around phenomenon under study (Joshi et al., 2015). Likert scale will be used as a tool to evaluate the presentation of project. The ranges that will be used are strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree. The 5-point Likert scale will be used to determine the opinions of

participants about how the project was clearly presented and how useful and relevant the project presentation was.

Summative evaluation measures the impact or success of meeting the goal of the project (Fu, Peterson, Kannan, Shavelson, & Kurpius, 2015). Summative evaluation will be used to inform the researcher if the goal of professional development is met. The goal of professional development is to provide an evaluative information to policymakers and district leaders to maximize the support they needed to provide to school administrators. A summative evaluation will be used to measure the growth and understanding of school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers who attended the professional development on the effective leadership and effectiveness of school leadership preparation program. Summative evaluation will also be used to measure the impact of professional development to participants and the overall quality of professional development.

The format that will be used for project evaluation will be in the form of questionnaire. The questionnaire will be composed of 3 Likert scale statements and 3 open-ended questions. The Likert scale will include the statements about the clarity, usefulness, and relevancy of the project presentations. Summative evaluation will include open-ended questions about professional development participants' understanding of the content presented, impact of professional development to their personal and professional beliefs and understanding, and overall quality of professional development.

Project Implications for Social Change

This project study helped the school administrators further understood and used the leadership skills needed to carry on their leadership roles and responsibilities. As a school principal, I have seen many school administrators struggle with their career because they lack the

leadership skills needed to become effective school leaders. As a result, there is a high percentage of the school administrators' transition, which created challenges to the sustainability of the schools. The presentation of the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs and the discussion on the instructional and transformational leaderships will help the school administrators identify their clear roles and use the effective leadership skills to focus on the outcomes that matter to all. By doing so, this led to a social change by allowing the skilled administrators to create a school culture that embrace and fulfill the school's vision and mission.

This project study helped the district leaders and mentors understand the components of effective leadership preparation program based on research. This helped the district leaders developed a better and improved leadership preparation program for the new aspiring leaders. The mentoring component of leadership preparation program was given an emphasis during the professional development. Providing new aspiring leaders with mentoring during the leadership preparation program was essential in guiding new principals and vice principals in delivering their leadership tasks successfully. This led to social change by allowing the equipped school leaders to take the lead in promoting the school's initiatives and by meeting their school's goals.

This professional development was provided to policymakers to provide a continues support and deeper understanding on importance of the principal preparation programs. It is evident based on participants' responses that mentoring plays an integral part in leadership preparation program. Providing a quality mentoring for novice school principals and vice principals promoted camaraderie amongst school administrators. Mentoring also provided assurances for the new school leaders on how to run the school with confidence. The commitment and assurance of policymakers to provide education system with quality leadership preparation

program led to social change by producing highly qualified school administrators for every school in the district.

Conclusion

The project provided the 3 days of professional development for school principals, vice principals, district leaders, mentors, and policymakers on effective components of school leadership preparation programs based on research. Participants during professional development were provided with qualitative data on components of school leaderships and school leadership preparation program. Professional development was provided to improve the school leadership preparation program provided for new and aspiring leaders who wanted to become effective and highly qualified school administrators. Professional development was focused on the components of school leadership preparation program and school leadership skills.

Students' roles and responsibilities were discussed in this section. Project evaluation were given to evaluate how well the project was presented and to measure participants' understanding of the content presented. Project implications were discussed to understand the impact of the project for creating social change.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

A qualitative case study was conducted in a school district in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. The purpose of the project was to examine the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system. Data were collected through interviews with school principals and vice principals who participated in the SLPP. Peer review was conducted to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the data. Five major themes emerged from the research study. The themes that occurred in data analysis included relevant courses, knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instruction, internship and mentoring, leadership skills gained by the participants, and relationship and collaboration.

A literature review on professional development was conducted to support the importance of the project study. Because mentoring was one of the outlying data, a second literature review on mentoring was conducted. A 3-day professional development session was designed. During Days 1 and 2, I will meet with school administrators and mentors to share the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005) and the theoretical frameworks of instructional leadership by Burns (1978) and transformational leadership by Smith and Andrews (1989). I will also share and discuss the 15 questions that I used in my research study, as well as my findings. The components of effective leadership preparation programs based on the research findings will also be discussed. During Day 3, district leaders and policymakers will be invited to participate. Day 3 will consist of a presentation to policymakers on the components of an effective leadership preparation program. District leaders will participate in a collaborative discussion about the types of supports that can be provided to

school leaders. Policymakers will also develop proposals for changes in policies to support an effective SLPP in the CNMI public school system.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This project study has several strengths and limitations. One of the strengths of this project study is that it involves imparting knowledge to school administrators on the leadership skills needed to become effective school leaders. School administrators will be given a chance to collaborate with each other and learn the transformational leadership and educational leadership skills that are effective in challenging the status quo and transforming the school to improve student performance.

The presentation on the components of an effective SLPP to school administrators and mentors during the professional development session is another strength of this project study. School administrators and mentors will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of improving the mentoring component of the program.

The third strength of this project study is the sharing of findings with policymakers during the professional development. The sharing of the participants' responses during the research study will give a true indication of whether the SLPP implemented in the CNMI public school system has been effective or not. The policymakers will also be given an opportunity to reflect on the results of the research study and make recommendations to create new policies on how to improve the SLPP.

The 3-day timeframe for the professional development could be a limitation of this project study. Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengtson (2014) indicated that an effective professional development program is meaningful and timely. The timeframe for this professional development may limit the access of the stakeholders to more meaningful discussion and collaboration for the

improvement of the SLPP. The professional development timeframe provided for the policymakers may limit their ability to engage in discussion and make revisions and recommendations for new policies. The policymakers may not have enough time to review and reflect on their ideas. The professional development timeframe provided for the school administrators may not be sufficient to show how certain leadership skills could be applied in real-life situations.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches to Address the Problem

There are several recommendations to address the problem of the effectiveness of the SLPP. One alternative way to approach this issue would involve policymakers allocating a budget to hire effective and experienced mentors for novice principals and vice principals. Effective mentoring is necessary as a supportive approach to assist novice school administrators in placing themselves within the school community and meeting the demands of their new positions in the induction phase of their new profession (Kemmis et al., 2014). Each aspiring school administrator should be provided with a mentor who will spend certain required hours helping the aspiring school administrator develop and learn the leadership skills needed to become a successful school leader. Another effective way to address the problem would be for district leaders to allow aspiring school administrators to shadow veteran school administrators in the district.

Scholarship

This research study has prepared me to become a scholar of change. I was able to gain an in-depth understanding of the various effective leadership skills that should be applied to change the status quo of the school for improvement. I also developed my understanding of the importance of scholarly writing in research. I was able to easily navigate through various

scholarly articles to increase my understanding of school leadership. I was able to share the wealth of information I gained from this research project with others, particularly my colleagues.

In conducting my research, I learned how to organize and interpret data. I learned how to develop research questions for a qualitative research study. I realized the importance of conducting interviews to capture participants' true feelings and their understanding of leadership and how the education system had prepared them to become effective school leaders. The vast of information I gained from the school principals and vice principals during my interviews was invaluable. During the data analysis, I learned how to use the tools available to validate the data that I collected. I have created a professional development session to share my findings with school administrators, district leaders, and policymakers. Walden University has helped me to become confident in engaging in the conversation on the effectiveness of the SLPP.

Project Development and Evaluation

School administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the components of an effective SLPP during the 3-day professional development session. There will be a discussion of the components of the Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by David and Jazzar (2005). The themes that emerged from the research study will also be presented. School administrators will reflect on the leadership skills and the new skills they will learn from the presentation. Mentors and district leaders will reflect on the components of an effective SLPP, including mentoring. They will reflect on different ways to structure mentoring as part of the program. Policymakers will reflect on policies that will strengthen and support the SLPP in the CNMI public school system.

A questionnaire will be used to evaluate the project study. The questionnaire will be composed of three Likert-scale statements and three open-ended questions. The Likert scale will

include statements about the clarity, usefulness, and relevancy of the project presentations. A summative evaluation will include open-ended questions about the professional development participants' understanding of the content presented, the impact of the professional development on their personal and professional beliefs and understanding, and the overall quality of the professional development.

Leadership and Change

As an educator for 24 years, I have experienced changes in schoolwide initiatives to improve teaching and learning. As an educator, I seek effective, research-based tools and approaches that have proven to be effective in improving student learning. I have participated in a professional learning community to become part of the school improvement process. I show my passion for improvement by taking the lead to change the status quo of the school.

My 13 years of teaching experience motivated me to become a teacher leader and eventually supported me in taking the role of school principal. As a school principal for 11 years, I continuously seek the betterment of my career and the improvement of my leadership skills. My participation at Walden University as a student in the Doctor of Education program has provided me with the precise tools and wisdom I have needed to learn and validate my perspective using review of scholarly literature.

I am now confident in sharing my expertise as a scholar with a Doctor of Education degree from a prestigious school. I am ready to share my valuable wisdom on leadership and the components of an effective SLPP. The study that I have conducted will not just contribute to the overall body of research, but also improve the status quo of school leadership in the CNMI public school system. To continue to make changes for improvement, I will continue to apply my knowledge in conducting research as part of the school improvement process in the school.

Reflective Analysis on the Importance of the Work

My participation in this academic journey has been challenging yet fulfilling. I must admit that, as a full-time school principal and an online student in a doctoral program, I found that there were times when I struggled and thought that it was impossible to complete this journey. The encouragement of my professors and my colleagues helped me to persevere and to eventually complete my research, becoming a scholar whose work could actually contribute to society. As a scholar, I now possess knowledge and expertise about conducting a research study, which I may apply at the school and district levels. I now consider myself a researcher who is equipped to promote social change.

This project study has provided me with opportunities to explore various leadership skills that school leaders need to become effective, as well as with opportunities to gain knowledge on the components of the SLPP. My interviews with school principals and vice principals affirmed that an effective school leadership program must be in placed to help aspiring leaders become effective school administrators. As a veteran principal, I always have the desire to help new school principals and vice principals become successful in their careers. I have the desire to impart my leadership experiences and serve as a mentor to novice school administrators. It is my passion to continue to serve in that capacity to ensure that necessary guidance is provided to new and aspiring leaders.

During the development of this project study, I was able to develop my patience and improve my writing skills. As I progressed with my project, feedback from my chairperson and my committee members helped me to correct and improve my writing. My communication with my chairperson also helped me to be more focused and on task. I learned to maximize the use of my time to ensure that I could accommodate my study, work, and family.

As a developer of this project, I learned how to use various tools and resources that were useful and meaningful. I used online research tools such as Google Scholar, the Walden library, and other educational and reliable websites to search for articles I needed to complete my literature review and to validate my statements. I used Endnote to organize my resources and references. I used NVivo software to analyze and interpret my data. I developed a 3-day professional development session to present and share my project with school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers. My presentation on the components of an effective SLPP will allow policymakers to support the needs of new and aspiring leaders to ensure the effectiveness of school leadership in the district.

Potential Impact for Positive Social Change

This project study has potential impacts to promote positive social change. Positive social change is defined "as a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies" (Walden University, 2016, para. 1). The professional development session on the components of an effective SLPP will foster positive social change by allowing new and aspiring leaders to become successful in their roles as school leaders, which could eventually create a more positive school climate and improve student achievement.

During the professional development, school administrators will be given a chance to reflect on their current leadership practices and assess their leadership skills. They will be engaged in discussion on the leadership skills that have been proven effective by research. They will increase their knowledge on the leadership skills they have yet to practice, which may improve teaching and learning.

Mentors will be given the opportunity to reflect on their mentoring skills and how mentoring is practiced during the SLPP. I found mentoring to be one of the important components of a leadership preparation program. Kemmis et al. (2014) viewed mentoring as a process whereby a mentor provides professional support and guidance to a mentee, in which the mentor does not act in a supervisory capacity in relation to the mentee. Through the professional development, mentors will recognize their importance and will be able to make recommendations to improve and strengthen the mentoring component of the leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. With the support of district leaders and policymakers, a proposal to restructure the SLPP to include better and more structured mentoring will be developed. This will provide new and aspiring leaders with a more structured and developed leadership preparation program, which could benefit future school leaders in successfully fulfilling their leadership roles as school principals or vice principals. The impact of this study toward positive social change could be extended by applying the project study to other states or territories with the aim of improving the development of effective school principals and vice principals.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The goal of this project study was to determine the effectiveness of the SLPP provided for new and aspiring leaders in the CNMI public school system. The components of an effective SLPP were identified as the result of the research study findings. The findings were supported by the literature. The research study findings could be used and applied to other districts across the nation that aim to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP in their area. The findings from this study can also be used by district leaders and policymakers in other districts seeking to build pipelines for effective principals and vice principals through an improved and effective SLPP.

Leadership is a critical component of the success of a school (Allen et al., 2015). School leaders need to possess certain leadership skills to positively impact their school climate and change the status quo of the school for improvement. Research shows that school principals who practice transformational and instructional leaderships increase the motivation of the staff to collaborate, support future plans, and try new initiatives (Allen et al., 2015). Research conducted by Day et al. (2016) illustrated the success of leaders in progressively shaping and layering the improvement of the school culture to improve students' outcomes by using leadership skills, including transformational and instructional leadership. Findings from this study show that relevant courses, knowledge and experience in curriculum and instruction, internship and mentoring, leadership skills gained by participants, and relationship and collaboration are among the components that must be included in the SLPP to prepare new and aspiring school leaders to become effective in their future roles. Although this project was designed for aspiring principals, the professional development could be applied to all school administrators, district leaders, policymakers, and other institutions that could benefit from the findings.

A recommendation for future research is to identify differences in leadership styles between school administrators who participated in their local leadership preparation program and school administrators who did not participate in the program. Such research could be significant for policymakers in establishing the importance of the SLPP in the local district and could be used to sustain and secure funding for the program.

Conclusion

This project study is significant in determining the effectiveness of the SLPP conducted in the local school district as a response to the principal pipeline initiative. This project study was developed to respond to the need of the district to establish an effective SLPP to ensure that new

and aspiring school leaders are provided with necessary support to become effective in their leadership roles. Interviews with school principals and vice principals who participated in the SLPP allowed me to collect data. Themes were developed during data analysis that represented effective components of the SLPP, based on the responses of participants during the interviews. Findings from this study show that relevant courses, knowledge and experience in curriculum and instruction, internship and mentoring, leadership skills gained by participants, and relationship and collaboration are among the components that must be included in the SLPP. Findings also indicated that mentoring needs to be restructured to ensure that effective mentoring is in place. A professional development plan was organized, and a PowerPoint presentation was developed to be shared with school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers.

The strength of this project study is that it involves imparting knowledge to school administrators, mentors, district leaders, and policymakers. Limitations include the professional development timeframe. Through this project study, I was able to understand the importance of scholarly writing. I learned to become resilient and goal oriented. My 5 years at Walden University have been very rewarding. One of the most fulfilling success stories that I can share with everyone is the story of how I became a scholar of change. I have found joy in sharing the wealth of information I gained from this project study. The presentation of this project study will provide positive social change by allowing new and aspiring leaders to become successful in their roles as school leaders, which could result in higher student achievement. The presentation of this project study will also create positive social change by helping policymakers in the area of school leadership preparation.

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Appendix A: Powerpoint Presentation for Professional Development

The Effectiveness of School Leadership Preparation Program

Rizalina M. Liwag

1

Outcomes:

Increased:

▶ understanding of the research findings on the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program

▶ knowledge of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs

▶ knowledge about the component of the effective school leadership preparation program based on the perceptions of the school leaders

2

Day 1
(For School Administrators and Mentors)

▶ Welcome

▶ The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Program

▶ Instructional Leadership

▶ Transformational Leadership

▶ Reflection

3

ACCESS YOUR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

▶ Use online quizizz to access participants' prior knowledge on the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs and Theoretical Frameworks of Transformational Leadership and Instructional Leadership

▶ Go to: https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/5accae108fd9ac00196de392

4

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs

5

Self-Reflection

Think for a moment about your leadership experiences. What are some of the leadership skills do you possess and how did you learn those leadership skills? Write your answer in your notebook, then share your responses with a partner.

6

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs

▶ Read the Handout # 1 on "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs"

▶ Think of some of the habits that you think were not mentioned in the handout.

7

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs

Round Robin Discussion

▶ Divide the groups into seven.

▶ Have a discussion about a habit assigned to your group

▶ Write down notes from your discussion on the question below:

How is this habit important in the effectiveness of the school leadership preparation program?

8

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Principal Preparation Programs

Round Robin Discussion

▶ After initial discussion, be ready to move your group clockwise. Leave one person from your original group to serve as the group facilitator

▶ With the new group, have the facilitator introduce and discuss the habit assigned to that particular group

▶ Write down additional notes as needed

▶ Repeat until all groups have given a chance to discuss the seven habits

9

Instructional Leadership
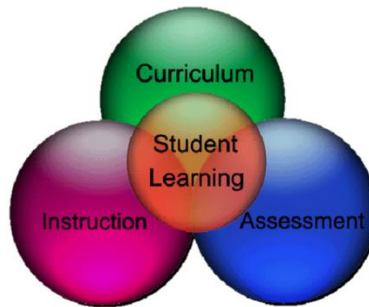
10

Self-Reflection

How do you spend your time at the school?
Create your daily schedule and discuss with a
partner how you are spending your time at the
school.

11

Instructional Leadership

▶ Watch the video clip on Instructional Leadership:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-0cNhHOqH4

▶ Take some notes on how school principals may
practice instructional leadership

12

Four Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

Read the Handout # 2 and discuss with your group the the 4 dimensions of Instructional Leadership:

▶ Vision, Mission, and Culture Building
▶ Improvement of Instructional Practice
▶ Allocation of Resources
▶ Management of People and Processes

13

Transformational Leadership

14

Self-Reflection

Think of an initiative that you led in the past. How did you lead your people to adopt the new ideas to help move the initiative forward? Share your thoughts with a partner .

15

Transformational Leadership

▶ Watch the video clips on Transformational Leadership:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60O2OH7mHys
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=_788Rkb0EQA

▶ Take some notes about how school principals may practice transformational leadership.

16

Four Components of Transformational Leadership

Read Handout # 3 and have a group discussion on the 4 components of transformational leadership:

▶ individual consideration
▶ intellectual stimulation
▶ inspirational motivation
▶ idealized influence

17

Day 2
(For School Administrators and Mentors)

▶ Welcome

▶ Introduction of the Research

▶ Sharing of Findings

▶ Table Talk

▶ Group Reflection

18

Introduction of the Research

▶Table Talk: What makes an effective school administrator?

▶Group Sharing

19

Sharing of Findings

▶Read Handout # 4 and have a group discussion on the research findings.

▶Prepare a presentation about your group discussion

20

Table Talk

▶ What makes an effective leadership preparation program?

▶ Group Reflection and Recommendation to the Policymakers

21

Evaluation

▶ Please fill out the evaluation for this professional development

Thank you!

22

Day 3
(For District Leaders and Policymakers)

▶ Welcome

▶ Introduction of the Research

▶ Sharing of Findings

▶ Table Talk

▶ Discussion on the 5 themes

▶ Policy Recommendation

▶ Evaluation

23

Introduction of the Research

▶ Table Talk: What makes an effective school administrator?

▶ Group Sharing

24

Sharing of Findings

▶ Read Handout # 4 and discuss with your group the research findings.

▶ Prepare a presentation about your group discussion

25

Table Talk

▶ Read the responses of the school administrators and mentors on "What makes an effective leadership preparation program?" Discuss with your group what you think are the most important components of the SLPP.

26

Themes that Emerged from Research

▶ Disseminate Handout # 5 and discuss the 5 themes that emerged from the research:

  ▶ Relevant Courses
  ▶ Knowledge and Experience in Curriculum and Instruction
  ▶ Internship and Mentoring
  ▶ Leadership Skills
  ▶ Relationships and Collaboration

27

Group Work

▶ With your group, develop at least two to three policies that will help improve the leadership preparation program in the CNMI public school system. Then discuss what would be the next step to help fully implement the recommended policies.

▶ Share your work with the whole group.

28

Evaluation

▶Please fill out the evaluation for this professional development

Thank you!

29

Appendix B: Professional Development Handouts

Handout # 1: The Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Program

The Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs

1. **Curriculum and Instruction**

   Effective principal preparation programs strive to provide relevant, standards-based, and job-embedded curricular and instructional experiences. Aspiring principals are provided ample opportunities to learn, share, and reflect on curricular and instructional learning activities that can lead to school improvements.

2. **Clinical Learning Internships**

   Aspiring principals experience relevant and timely learning opportunities by participating in clinical internships. These internships are designed to embrace bold, new strategies and provide realistic experiences beyond descriptive studies. Many programs require participants to engage in intensive learning experiences at multiple sites in and out of their home school districts.

3. **Providing mentors**

   Working with exemplary principals, who act as coaches, guides, or resource leaders for aspiring principals, is integral to all successful preparation programs. The key to successful mentoring is to have the experienced principals encourage the aspiring ones to be candid, critical, and reflective, rather than reactive or defensive.

4. **Collaborative experiences**

Collaborative activities resulting in internal networking, teamwork, and cooperative initiatives are considered vital experiences of good principal preparation programs. Collaboration in learning communities, especially those that include other aspiring principals, exemplary practicing principals, and university faculty members, are considered a premium in all the programs we researched.

5. Authentic assessment

The assessment of participants in effective principal preparation programs no longer is based on paper-and-pencil testing. Instead, aspiring principals are asked to write a student discipline letter to a parent, justify budget cuts, develop and defend a portfolio, and provide practical solutions to problems. Culminating assessment activities might include developing a community relations manual or an orientation program for new teachers.

6. Research-based decision-making

Strong preparation programs instill in aspiring principals the importance of making decisions based on research rather than impulse or nearsightedness. They are taught and given opportunities to use a systemic approach, in which data is gathered and analyzed in light of school improvements and student achievement.

7. Turnkey transitions

Ready, set, go, succeed! These four words express the intent, hopes, and wishes of effective preparation programs for aspiring principals. By focusing on strong leadership skills, grounded with in-depth knowledge of leadership theory and best practices, these programs produce graduates primed for success in their first principalships.

Handout # 2: The Four Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

CENTER for EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON · COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

4 Dimensions of Instructional Leadership™
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK 1.0

Among school-related factors, school leadership is second only to teaching in its potential influence on student learning. Instructional leadership is a critical aspect of school leadership. The work of instructional leaders is to ensure that each student receives the highest quality instruction each day. Doing so requires that instructional leaders lead for the *improvement of the quality of teaching and for the improvement of student learning*. This framework is *not* the sum total of the work of instructional leaders. Rather, it is a description of the most salient aspects of instructional leadership. Five core beliefs undergird the concepts of this framework and therefore drive our work in school leadership here at the Center for Educational Leadership.

1. Instructional leadership is learning-focused, learning for both students and adults, and learning which is measured by improvement in instruction and in the quality of student learning.

2. Instructional leadership must reside with a team of leaders of which the principal serves as the "leader of leaders."

3. A culture of public practice and reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practice.

4. Instructional leadership addresses the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and learning diversity in the school community.

5. Instructional leadership focuses upon the effective management of resources and of people — recruiting, hiring, developing, evaluating — particularly in changing environments.

DIMENSION	THE VISION	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Vision, Mission and Culture Building School leaders, committed to collective leadership, create a reflective, equity-driven, achievement-based culture of learning focused upon academic success for *every* student.	• Through collaboration and shared leadership, staff, students and the school community embrace a vision of academic success for every student and work toward clear goals focused on student learning. • School leaders foster a culture of learning, cultural responsiveness and high expectations for *every* student and every adult. • School leaders create and maintain a results-focused learning environment of continuous improvement that is responsive to individual students' needs and the diversity among the students.	1. What do the school's environment and day-to-day interactions among students, staff and families say about what is valued in the school community? 2. How does the school leadership communicate and drive the school's instructional agenda? 3. How does the school leadership organize the learning environment to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity and the varying learning and social needs of students? 4. How do the school leadership and community use evidence of student success and learning needs to drive collaboration? 5. How does the school leadership encourage leadership within others?

DIMENSION	THE VISION	GUIDING QUESTIONS

Improvement of Instructional Practice
 	
Based upon a shared vision of effective teaching and learning, school leaders establish a focus on learning; nurture a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and public practice; and monitor, evaluate and develop teacher performance to improve instruction.
	• School leaders use data, evidence and inquiry to analyze student learning as well as to assess both teacher and leadership practice.
	• School leaders use a research-based instructional framework to:
	  » Observe teacher practice.
	  » Engage in cycles of inquiry.
	  » Plan individual and collective professional development and coaching needs.
	• School leaders use data and evidence of student learning and teacher practice to inform feedback to teachers.
		1. What evidence is there that leadership efforts are resulting in the improvement of teaching practice and student learning?
		2. How is leadership distributed to ensure collaboration and collective leadership and that the tasks of instructional leadership are accomplished?
		3. What data does the school leadership collect to learn about trends in instructional practice as well as student performance and problems of learning?
		4. What is the evidence that among staff there is a shared vision of effective teaching and learning and that the improvement of instructional practice is guided by that vision?
		5. What role does a research-based instructional framework play in the observation, analysis, feedback and inquiry about instructional practice?
		6. How does the school leadership use monitoring of instruction and evaluation in the improvement of instruction?

Allocation of Resources School leaders allocate resources strategically so that instructional practice and student learning continue to improve.	• School leaders use financial resources, time, facilities, technology and partnerships innovatively and equitably to accomplish the goal of powerful teaching and learning for all students. • The principal and leadership team have articulated clear processes and procedures for instructional support. • School leaders use data to make equitable decisions about the allocation of resources.	1. How is the distribution of resources (i.e., time, money, technology, space, materials and expertise) related to improved teaching and learning in this school? What evidence do you have? 2. How do school leaders use instructional coaches, mentors and other teacher leaders to help improve instructional practice? 3. How are decisions made about staff allocation and student interventions to ensure that the varying needs of students are met? 4. How do school leaders use staff time and collaborative structures to drive the instructional program?
Management of People and Processes School leaders engage in strategic personnel management and develop working environments in which teachers have full access to supports that help improve instruction.	• School leaders strategically recruit, hire/retain, induct, support and develop the most qualified staff as well as engage in succession planning. • Instructional leaders employ critical processes such as planning, implementing, advocating, supporting, communicating and monitoring to all leadership responsibilities including curriculum, instruction and school improvement planning. • Instructional leaders create supportive working environments, which include professional development opportunities, time and space for collaboration, and access to professional learning communities.	1. What evidence exists that the school leadership implements strategic efforts to recruit, hire/retain, induct, support and develop the best staff? 2. What data and processes does the school leadership use in planning for instructional and school improvement planning? 3. What evidence exists of the staff's access to professional growth opportunities?

Handout # 3: The Four Components of Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the

organization; being a role model for followers that inspires them; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that optimize their performance.

Background

James MacGregor Burns (1978) [1] first introduced the concept of transforming leadership in his descriptive research on political leaders, but this term is now used in organizational psychology as well. According to Burns, transforming leadership is a process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation". Burns related to the difficulty in differentiation between management and leadership and claimed that the differences are in characteristics and behaviors. He established two concepts: "transforming leadership" and "transactional leadership". According to Burns, the transforming approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of employees. Unlike in the transactional approach, it is not based on a "give and take" relationship, but on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are a moral exemplar of working towards the benefit of the team, organization and/or community. Burns theorized that transforming and transactional leadership were mutually exclusive styles. Transactional leaders usually do not strive for cultural change in the organization but they work in the existing culture while transformational leaders can try to change organizational culture.

Four Components:

1. Individualized Consideration – the degree to which the leader attends to each

   follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the

   follower's concerns and needs. The leader gives empathy and support, keeps

   communication open and places challenges before the followers. This also

   encompasses the need for respect and celebrates the individual contribution that

   each follower can make to the team. The followers have a will and aspirations for

   self-development and have intrinsic motivation for their tasks.

2. Intellectual Stimulation – the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes

   risks and solicits followers' ideas. Leaders with this style stimulate and encourage

   creativity in their followers. They nurture and develop people who think

   independently. For such a leader, learning is a value and unexpected situations are

   seen as opportunities to learn. The followers ask questions, think deeply about

   things and figure out better ways to execute their tasks.

3. Inspirational Motivation – the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is

   appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation

   challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals,

   and provide meaning for the task at hand. Followers need to have a strong sense of

   purpose if they are to be motivated to act. Purpose and meaning provide the energy

   that drives a group forward. The visionary aspects of leadership are supported by

   communication skills that make the vision understandable, precise, powerful and

engaging. The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks, they are

encouraged and optimistic about the future and believe in their abilities.

4. Idealized Influence – Provides a role model for high ethical behavior, instills pride,

gains respect and trust. As a development tool, transformational leadership has

spread already in all sectors of western societies, including governmental

organizations.

Handout # 4: Interview Findings

1. **How do you describe the effectiveness of the School Leadership Preparation**

 Program (SLPP) in the CNMI?

The School Leadership Preparation Program (SLPP) in the CNMI public school system is

effective. The participants' involvement in the SLPP allowed them to have access to the courses

and hands-on training that they need to be equipped with skills and knowledge about school

leadership. The school principals and vice principals who participated in the SLPP increased their

self-confidence in decision making, promoting a positive school culture, and addressing the

students' needs. Their participation in the SLPP prepared them to become effective leaders and

transform them to become instructional leaders. P-1 stated, "SLPP was exceptionally effective

because the courses offered equipped me with the essential skills needed for me to become an

effective school administrator." P-3 remarked, "the SLPP allowed me to expand on things I had

already known, and gain knowledge of things I did not. It allowed me to become, not only an

organizational leader, but an instructional leader as well focused on ensuring quality instructions

that yields high academic performance for all students." P-2 expressed, "I believe that my

participation in the SLPP helped me to gain a confidence on how to address the school culture

such as how to provide support to parents on their child's learning, how to make sound decision,

and how to provide support to teachers for students' success." P-4 stated, SLPP is effective

because we had nothing in place prior to my appointment as a principal and having the program

had made a difference in my leadership."

2. **Have you gained valuable curriculum and instructional experiences while in the SLPP?**

The participants of the SLPP have gained valuable experiences in regards with

curriculum and instruction. During their participation in the SLPP, the participants were able to

analyze the CNMI public school system curriculums and common core standards. The

participants were directly involved in the design and the implementation of the curriculum and

instruction. The participants were engaged in applying the curriculum and instructions in their

school to ensure accountability and student success. The participants utilized the valuable

curriculum resources and instructional experiences gained from the SLPP. P-3 responded, "I most

definitely have gained valuable experiences in regards with curriculum and instruction. I have

learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of

curriculum and instruction, but one must also be directly involved in the design and

implementation of curriculum and instruction." P-2 stated, "Yes I have! Most especially when I

was given a task to analyze the public school system curriculum and the common core standards.

For instruction, I gained the knowledge and experience of the different research- based strategies

the teachers could apply in teaching the content areas." P-4 expressed, "The curriculum and

instruction provided was useful and meaningful, especially since I was already serving as Interim

Principal. The policies, articles, and text required for the coursework are all resources I refer

back to when needed." P-1 remarked, I have gained a tremendous amount of instructional

experience and information from the SLPP. We were given valuable resources that we were able

to utilize throughout the program as well as during our tenure as administrators."

3. How do you describe your participation in the preservice preparation?

Leadership courses were offered to the SLPP participants during the pre-service

preparation. The courses were facilitated by the career status principals and other leaders in the

CNMI public school system. The facilitator and the participants met face to face during each

course. The courses offered activities in which participants experienced the application of

leadership theories relevant to their tasks as school leaders.

During the interview, the participants described their participation in the pre-service

preparation. Their descriptions are as follow: P-3: "The pre-service preparation of the SLPP was

one that was both practical and effective. I liked how the courses were practical, and not just

theory based. The application of theory is directly aligned to what is relevant to the CNMI public

school system"; P-1, "We participated fully in all courses during the pre-service preparation. We

were engaged in the face to face meets with the facilitators of the program. They were readily

available to assist us with any questions we had."; P-4, "I am happy that I participated because

the courses that I took during the pre-service preparation did help prepare me to become a school

principal."; P-2, "At first it was scary because of the word leadership but after being a part of the

SLPP, I understood the importance of what a school leader is to accomplish."

4. How do you describe your experience in the clinical learning internship?

The participants were given one school year as the interim principal or vice principal for

their clinical learning internship. The mentors were also provided for the participants during the

internship. Participant responses varied for this question. Some of their responses include: P-1, "I had a great experience during my clinical learning internship. I experienced how to handle the daily school operations."; P-2, "During the clinical learning internship, I was able to effectively communicate with all our stakeholders."; P-3 My experienced in the clinical learning internship was active and engaging. My internship allowed me to gain first-hand experience of what an administrator goes through. The internship brought rewarding experiences and the joy of working with teachers and staff."

5. **How did your participation in the SLPP help you gain the transformational leadership skills needed to become an effective leader?**

The participants recognized that their participation in the SLPP helped them gained the transformational leadership skills needed for their job. The participants' responses were positive for this question. Some of the positive responses were as follows: P-1 stated, "My participation in the SLPP has allowed me to experience first-hand what an effective leader is. I had the opportunity to experience working with teachers, students, staff, and parents to change our school culture and go through a transformation to improve the instructions for student success." P-2 replied, "My participation in the SLPP allowed me to become aware of the different behaviors of teachers and students and how to help them manage the changes to improve the "status quo" of the school." P-4 explained, "My participation in the SLPP allowed me to look at the different leadership styles including the transformational leadership. My participation helped me build on how to be supportive to my staff in setting their goals and how to meet their goals."

6. **When do you effectively use the transformational leadership skills that you have developed?**

Two of the participants applied the transformational leadership skills that they gained during the SLPP when managing change. The other two participants use the transformational leadership skills when dealing with teachers and other stakeholders. P-3 stated, "I discovered that the use of transformational leadership skills is mostly effective when leading change. As you know, any form of change is usually accompanied with resistance. Effective change most definitely will not happen through demanding or authoritative leadership. Although, change may happen using an authoritative leadership, it will most likely lead to passive resistance and hidden rebellion. In order for change to effectively take place, school leaders must hold strong professional beliefs about schooling. They must inspire teachers to accomplish things that may seem beyond their grasp. They must be flexible, adapting to the needs of different situations. And finally, they must be able to challenge the status quo by systematically considering new and better ways of doing things." P-1 expressed, "I use my transformational leadership skills when there are new initiatives implemented as well as goals that need to be met." P-4 explained, "I use my transformational leadership skills mostly when I conduct my teacher observations and change is needed to improve classroom instructions. Transformation happens when we talk about their goals, when they set their professional development plan and talk about how I can support them. So, I think I use it more when I am working with teachers." P-2 stated, "I use the transformational leadership skills that I learned mostly when I am dealing with the parents, students, and teachers. For example, a transformation is needed when the parents are concerned about their child's grades. Another example, I need to apply my transformational skills when the teacher is concerned about the students' behavior. As a transformational leader, I understand that everyone is different and that they do not see the same view as I do. I need to be aware of their feelings and provide support to make the necessary changes to improve or solve the issues."

7. **How did your participation in the SLPP help you gain the instructional**

   leadership skills needed to become an effective leader?

The participants recognized that their participation in the SLPP helped them gained the

instructional leadership skills needed for their job. Two of the participants' responses showed that

they gained the skills in various ways. The other two participants' responses were about how their

participation in the leadership program taught them to become instructional leaders. P-1 stated,

"My participation in the SLPP program helped me gain instructional leadership skills through

collaboration with other aspiring leaders." P-4 claimed, "I really appreciated the clinical

supervision course because it allowed me to use the templates I needed as I worked with teachers

and my staff for instructional supervision." P-3 explained, "I am thankful that the program has

taught me how to remain "focused on focus" by ensuring effective instruction consistently and

continually takes place. While I was already passionate in regards with curriculum and

instruction, SLPP allowed me to expand on what I had already knew by better supporting teachers

using a systemic and systematic process." P-2 stated, "The instructional leadership skills that I

obtained during the SLPP are being able to apply the research based instructions and curriculum,

and to guide the teachers to achieve the school's mission and vision."

8. **When do you effectively use the instructional leadership skills that you have**

   developed?

All the participants' responses show that the instructional leadership skills are being used

to achieve the school's goal in improving student achievements. P-3 stated, "I use my

instructional leadership skills most especially when setting SMART goals for the school which is

directly aimed to student success. Many years, the school that I have worked in had continually

been labeled a turnaround and low performing school. After taking the role as an instructional

leader, I figured that we cannot keep doing the same thing over and over again, and expect a different result. I wanted to take that first step as an instructional leader by challenging the status quo by setting realistic goals as a team, driving the decision-making process with the use of data, and then continually monitoring and evaluating its course." P-4 exclaimed, "When I am working with teachers for observations but I also use it when working with my staff and leadership team when we work on our school goals. I use my leadership skills basically for everything. But one of my main focus is to become an instructional leader who works directly with the students to achieve their goal." P-2 explained, "I use the instructional leadership skills that I learned when we discuss the student data during the PTSA, staff and professional development, and school leadership meetings. Instructional leadership skills are needed when unpacking the data and setting individual goal. My role is to provide the teachers with guidance in setting student's goal. I also use instructional leadership skills when conducting classroom observations. Providing the teachers with support in using effective classroom instructions is one of the skills that I developed and used." P-1 stated, "I use my instructional leadership skills on a daily basis when working and interacting with my teachers, students, staff and parents as well as community members whenever we talk about student data. Each day differs in situations and we engage in a variety of events or meetings where goals, objectives, and instructions have to be addressed."

9. **What other leadership skills have you developed in your participation to the SLPP?**

All the participants' have developed other leadership skills during their participation in the SLPP. The leadership skills learned are associated with The Seven Habits of Effective Principal Preparation Programs by Davis and Jazzar (2005). The theme that was recurring included communication skills, technology integration, school finance, human resources

management, and shared leadership and collaboration. Some of the responses are: P-1 explained, "Through my participation in the SLPP, I have gained a tremendous amount of leadership skills. To name a few are communication skills, managing change, collaboration skills, strategies for 21st century learning, technology integration, building community, and applying the school law such as how to protect individual's privacy." P-2 expressed, "I learned how to become comfortable in communicating to the media or to parents of what is our school's goals and asking support in the community to achieve it." P-3 stated, "The other leadership skills that I had developed in the leadership program was better understanding the administrative side of running a school, most especially in regards with hiring personnel as well as gaining a better understanding of the procurement process." P-4 responded, Other skills like balance leadership. It allowed me to work with my team by making decisions together and exploring their own leadership skills. The balanced leadership skill that I learned allowed me to learn how to share the responsibilities to my leadership team. I also learn to collaborate with each other, so we could make decisions together.

10. **If you were provided with the mentor, how involved was your mentor in guiding you to become an effective school leader? Describe his/her involvement?**

All participants were provided with the mentors. Three participants expressed that the roles of their mentors were to guide and help them with their school's daily routine, help them make sound decisions based on policies, provide awareness of the procedures and actions needed to take in certain situations, teach them the basic leadership roles including hiring of staff, processing of purchase order, create school budget, and conduct classroom observations. One of the participants felt that her mentor had a minimal involvement during the leadership program. Some of the positive responses are: P-1 exclaimed, "My mentor was my current supervisor. He walked me through the daily operations of the school. I was able to attend meetings with him and

work on school policies and handbook. He also walked me through the observation process and the school's daily routine. I learned how to process documents and how to file them properly. My mentor guided me in many ways that helped me become an effective school administrator." P-2 stated, "My mentor was very supportive and understanding in making me aware of the procedures and action I needed to take. My mentor was also readily available when I needed more clarification on my task." P-3 expressed, "What I have learned most from my mentor was that she was very knowledgeable with the CNMI PSS policies, rules, and regulations. Things such as the PSS procurement process, the hiring of teachers, the school budget, and so on was something that I had been missing and craving to understand during my first few years as a VP, and through her guidance I was able to understand the process much better."

11. **What is your experience about the collaboration with other aspiring leaders and school leaders?**

The participants responses about their experience on the collaboration with other aspiring leaders and school leaders were all positive. They find their collaboration helpful and positive. P-1 remarked, "My experience working and collaborating with other aspiring leaders and school leaders was very helpful. Through collaboration, we were able to better understand the system and expectations of the program." P-2 stated, "My experience was positive because I get to share what skills I have and at the same time learn from my colleagues. It allowed me to share my ideas on how to achieve students' success as well as providing support to teachers and parents." P-3 expressed, "This is one of the things that I am most thankful about the program. It allowed me to become connected and build relationships with other aspiring school leaders in the district. I never felt alone. We were a team, and relied on each other for advice, most especially the advice of our instructors which comprised of seasoned and effective school leaders." P-4 explained, "It

allowed us to open up and to reach out to each other. The group assignments allowed us to work together and allowed us to build good relationships amongst our colleagues. So, it was a very positive experience because of the group assignments. Now, since it opened up professional relationships with each other, I am comfortable reaching out to them to ask for suggestions and learn from their strengths. It also helped build the networking, so I know whom should I go to for assistance."

12. What was your engagement with the school's decision making during your clinical learning internship?

The four participants were engaged in the school's decision making during their clinical learning internship. Some of their involvements in the decision making include the development of the school's goals, daily school operation, implementation of curriculum and instructions, and staff development. P-1stated, "During my internship, I was given the opportunity to help make decisions that would benefit the school. Most of the decision-making process involves the school's leadership team and is reflected on the school's goals." P-2 explained, "My engagement was to be an acting principal for one year, so I can be a part of the decision-making body of the school either elementary, junior, or high school. Having different roles during the internship allowed me to be aware of the different behavior of each student, staff, and teacher and helped me make decisions based on my role." P-3 exclaimed, "As mentioned earlier, I was fortunate to be provided a mentor that allowed me to take full lead in the areas of curriculum and instruction, high student performance, and effective teacher and staff professional development." P-4 remarked, "Basically, I was the interim principal, so I make decisions for the school, but I use my leadership team. I also consult with my mentor on how to deal with difficult situations. So overall, I think I was building already as I was the interim principal on how to make sound decisions."

13. Did your participation in the SLPP prepare you to become an effective school leader?

All four participants agreed that their participation in the SLPP prepared them to become effective school leaders. Their positive responses were as follows: P-1expressed, "Yes, most definitely. I am grateful to have been a part of the SLPP. It helped build my values and skills to become an effective leader. This program helped me build confidence and courage to be a great communicator and listener and to have effective interpersonal skills."; P-2 exclaimed, "Yes. It did make me realize that as a leader I am always being looked at either at home, school and in the community. I have to be ready to defend and uphold the PSS goals and objectives in order to achieve students' success."; P-3 indicated, "The SLPP had surely made me become a more effective leader. It allowed me to assume a leadership position with a vision of success. It allowed me to improve instruction through effective teacher supervision and evaluation. It allowed me to foster curriculum collaboration amongst teachers and staff. It allowed me to utilize resources and time to maximize student achievement. It allowed me to discover ways to support all learners in the classrooms, and finally, it allowed me to achieve community support for the school's mission and vision."; P-4 stated, "Yes. I am very appreciative of the program. I wish the SLPP would have happened before I became the acting principal. It definitely made me look at school administration in a different way and it answered a lot of my questions and made me sure about what to do in different types of situations and where do I go for assistance. A lot of my questions were answered."

14. What recommendations do you have to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI public school system?

The participants' responses on the recommendation to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP varied. Two participants expressed that the program should continually be offered by the CNMI public school system. "I feel the program was structured effectively and I have no recommendation. However, I hope that this program will be offered to future aspiring leaders", explained by P-1. P-3 expressed that "The only regret that I have in regards with the leadership program is that the program did not continue after the conclusion of the Cohort 1. While I understand that the system went a different direction by providing online courses to aspiring leaders, a cohort based learning environment is very different, one that provided an entire team of support, and I am proud to say that I was a part of it." P-4 commented, "As far as the program, the program should continue to build local capacity within the CNMI."

One of the recommendations was to improve the mentoring during the clinical learning internship. P-4 stated, "My only recommendation would be to revisit the mentoring component of the program. During the selection and assignment of mentors, work load should be considered to ensure the mentor is able to effective guide and support the aspiring leader." One participant recommended to allow the SLPP participants attend during the board meetings and public hearings to learn how decisions are made in a higher level. P-2 stated, "One recommendation is to have the SLPP participants involve in the board meetings and public hearing that way they can be part of the decision-making body."

Handout# 5: Five Themes that Emerged from Research

Five Themes That Emerged from the Research

1. *Relevant Courses*

The first major theme that occurred was the relevant courses that were offered during the pre-service preparation. The participants expressed that the courses offered in the SLPP were effective and relevant. P1 expressed, "the courses offered helped equip me with the essential skills I needed to be an effective administrator." P-2 stated, "I believe that my participation in the SLPP courses helped me to gain a confidence on how to address the school culture such as how to provide support to parents on their child's learning, how to make sound decision, and how to provide support to teachers for students' success. I learned to provide support to teachers and address the student's needs by providing a safe and conducive classroom environment so the learning can be accomplished." P-3 explained, "the pre-service preparation of the SLPP was one that was both practical and effective. The application of theory is directly aligned to what is relevant to the CNMI public school system. The SLPP allowed me to expand on things I had already known, and gain knowledge of things I did not." P-4 stated, "I would say I am happy that I participated because the courses that I took during the pre-service preparation did help prepare me to become a school principal and answer a lot of questions that I already had from being an acting principal at that time. I really appreciated the clinical supervision course because it allowed me to use the templates I needed as I worked with teachers and my staff for instructional supervision. I found the course assignments and presentations to be highly relevant to my work as a school principal."

2. *Knowledge and Experiences in Curriculum and Instruction*

The second major theme that occurred was the knowledge and experiences in curriculum and instructions gained by the participants. The four participants seemed to agree that their participation in the SLPP have given them access to gain knowledge and experiences in

curriculum and instructions needed to become the instructional leaders.   P-1 stated, "I have gained a tremendous amount of instructional experience and information from this program. We were given valuable resources that we can utilize throughout the program as well as during our tenure as administrators." P-2 exclaimed, "I gained the knowledge and experience of the different research- based strategies the teachers could apply in teaching the content areas." P-3 explained, I most definitely have gained valuable experiences in regards with curriculum and instruction. The leadership program allowed me to apply my knowledge at a greater level. To both affect and effect change not only at the classroom level, but also at the school level. I have learned that being an instructional leader goes beyond just simply having knowledge of curriculum and instruction, but one must also be directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum and instruction." P-4 expressed, "I gained a lot of valuable curriculum and instructional experiences. I really appreciated to hear how other principals apply curriculum and instructions in their schools and how they manage to ensure accountability and student achievement."

3. *Internship and Mentoring*

The third major theme that was extracted from the participants' responses was the internship and mentoring. Internship and mentoring were the two predominating themes that emerged. Through the internship during the SLPP, the participants seemed to work with their mentors to assist in the daily school operations, implement school policies, rules, and regulations, develop school budget, implement curriculum and instruction, hire school personnel, and communicate with the stakeholders. P-1 stated, "I had a great experience during my clinical learning internship. During my internship, I was given the opportunity to help make decisions that would benefit the school. I experienced how to handle the daily school operations. My

mentor walked me through the daily operations and protocols that the school accomplishes within

a day. I was able to attend meetings with him and work on school policies and handbook. He also

walked me through the observation process and the school's daily routine. I learned how to

process documents and how to file them properly. My mentor guided me in many ways that

helped me become an effective school administrator." P-2 exclaimed, "My experience in the

clinical learning internship allows me to gain the knowledge on how to effectively communicate

to all stakeholders. During the clinical learning internship, I was able to effectively communicate

with all our stakeholders. My mentor was very supportive and understanding in making me aware

of the procedures and action I needed to take. Some communication techniques allowed me to

address situation in a comfortable setting." P-3 stated, "The internship allowed me to gain first-

hand experience of what an administrator goes through. The internship brought rewarding

experiences. What I have learned most from my mentor was that she was very knowledgeable

with the CNMI PSS policies, rules, and regulations. Things such as the PSS procurement

process, the hiring of teachers, the school budget, and so on was something that I had been

missing and craving to understand during my first few years as a VP, and through her guidance I

was able to understand the process much better." P-3 also stated, "I was fortunate to be provided

a mentor that allowed me to take full lead in the areas of curriculum and instruction, high student

performance, and effective teacher and staff professional development." As P-4 recognized the

importance of internship and mentoring, she recommended for the mentoring to be restructured to

ensure that the mentor finds time to work with the participants in setting goals and meeting the

goals together. P-4 stated, "I recommend that the SLPP mentoring be built around similar to how

we mentor our teachers. I really think that having the face to face meeting with your mentor and

set goal as a leader like what we do with our teachers could have been in place.   We should set

goals together, do some shadowing, conduct staff meeting together and give some feedback."

4. *Leadership Skills Gained by the Participants*

The fourth theme that emerged from the participants' responses was the various leadership skills they have learned and developed during their participation in the SLPP. The participants find it important to learn various leadership skills including communication skill, transformational leadership skills, instructional leadership skills, balanced leadership, skills in technology integration, skills in collaboration and building community, and skills in handling personnel, budgeting, and school policy implementation. P-1 indicated, "Through my participation in the SLPP I have gained a tremendous amount of leadership skills. To name a few are communication skills, managing change, collaboration skills, strategies for 21st century learning, technology integration, building community, and applying the school law such as how to protect individual's privacy." P-1 also stated, "My participation in the SLPP program helped me gain instructional leadership skills through collaboration with other aspiring leaders. We learned the essential skills through vigorous reading, dialogue and projects. I use my instructional leadership skills on a daily basis when working and interacting with my teachers, students, staff and parents as well as community members whenever we talk about student data. I use my transformational leadership skills when there are new initiatives implemented as well as goals that need to be met. I also apply my leadership skills with my teachers and staff during observations, meetings, and professional developments." P-2 responded, "P-2 I learned how to become comfortable in communicating to the media or to parents of what is our school's goals and asking support in the community to achieve it. The instructional leadership skills that I obtained during the SLPP are being able to apply the research based instructions and curriculum, and to guide the teachers to achieve the school's mission and vision." P-2 also indicated, "My participation in the SLPP allowed me to become aware of the different behaviors of teachers and students and how to help them manage the changes to improve the "status quo" of the school. I

use the transformational leadership skills that I learned mostly when I am dealing with the

parents, students, and teachers. For example, a transformation is needed when the parents are

concerned about their child's grades. Another example, I need to apply my transformational skills

when the teacher is concerned about the students' behavior. As a transformational leader, I

understand that everyone is different and that they do not see the same view as I do." P-3

explained, I discovered that the use of transformational leadership skills is most effective when

leading change, most especially second order change. As you know, any form of change is

usually accompanied with resistance. In order for change to effectively take place, school leaders

must hold strong professional beliefs about schooling. They must inspire teachers to accomplish

things that may seem beyond their grasp. They must be flexible, adapting to the needs of

different situations. And finally, they must be able to challenge the status quo by systematically

considering new and better ways of doing things." P-3 also added, "It allowed me to become, not

only an organizational leader, but an instructional leader as well focused on ensuring quality

instructions that yields high academic performance for all students. I use my instructional

leadership skills that I learned most especially when setting SMART goals for the school which is

directly aimed to student success. I am thankful that the program has taught me how to remain

"focused on focus" by ensuring effective instruction consistently and continually takes place.

While I was already passionate in regards with curriculum and instruction, the SLPP allowed me

to expand on what I had already knew by better supporting teachers using a systemic and

systematic process." P-2 also mentioned, "The other leadership skills that I had developed in the

leadership program was better understanding the administrative side of running a school, most

especially in regards with hiring personnel as well as gaining a better understanding of the

procurement process." P-4 stated, "I learned other skills like balance leadership. It allowed me to

work with my team by making decisions together and exploring their own leadership skills. The

balanced leadership skill that I learned allowed me to learn how to share the responsibilities to my leadership team. I also learn to collaborate with each other so we could make decisions together." P-4 also stated, I use my transformational leadership skills mostly when I conduct my teacher observations and when change is needed to improve classroom instructions. Transformation happens when we talk about their goals, when they set their professional development plan and talk about how I can support them."

5. *Relationships and Collaboration*

The fifth theme that occurred in data analysis was the relationships and the collaboration built and developed by the participants. P-1 expressed, "My experience working and collaborating with other aspiring leaders and school leaders was very helpful. Through collaboration, we were able to better understand the system and expectations of the program. P-1 also recognized the importance of collaboration with other stakeholders. P-1 expressed, "My participation in the SLPP has allowed me to experience first-hand what an effective leader is. I had the opportunity to experience working with teachers, students, staff, and parents to change our school culture and go through a transformation to improve the instructions for student success." P-2 exclaimed, "My experience was positive because I get to share what skills I have and at the same time learn from my colleagues. It allowed me to share my ideas on how to achieve students' success as well as providing support to teachers and parents." P-3 indicated, "For one, I really liked how the program was cohort based. This allowed for a group of new and aspiring professionals to build a support group and instill a sense of camaraderie which only strengthened after each course, and till this day continue to seek advice from each other." P-3 added, "This is one of the things that I am most thankful about the program. It allowed me to become connected and build relationships with other aspiring school leaders in the district. I

never felt alone knowing that there were other new leaders who were experiencing the same feelings as I did. The feeling of anxiety and feeling overwhelmed. Thankfully we were a team, and relied on each other for advice, most especially the advice of our instructors which comprised of seasoned and effective school leaders. Till this day I continue to reach out to my cohort when I need it. If this program did not exist, I can guarantee that I will not have the same connection and camaraderie that I have now with other school leaders in the district." P-4 explained, "It allowed us to open up and to reach out to each other. The group assignments allowed us to work together and allowed us to build good relationships amongst our colleagues. Now, since it opened up professional relationships with each other, I am comfortable reaching out to them to ask for suggestions and learn from their strengths. It also helped build the networking, so I know whom should I go to for assistance."

Appendix C: Professional Development Evaluation

Professional Development Evaluation

Participant's Name (optional): _____Date: _____

Name of Facilitator(s):_____

A. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statement by placing a checkmark ($\sqrt{}$) on the appropriate box:

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1	The professional development met its stated outcome					
2	The content presented was useful and relevant to my work					
3	The activities were valuable and useful					
4	The handouts were relevant and helpful					
5	The project was clearly presented					

B. Please write your statement to answer the following questions:

6. How do you feel about the overall quality of this professional development?
7. What impact will the content of this professional development have on your work?
8. What did you learn this professional development?
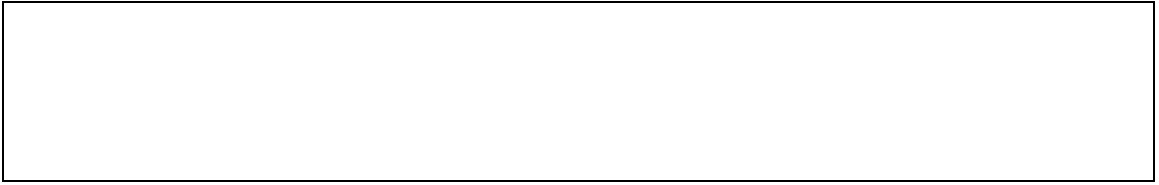
Appendix D: Six Steps in Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data

Six Steps in Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data by Creswell (2012).

1. Preparing and organizing the data for analysis

2. Engaging in an initial exploration of the data through the process of coding

3. Using the codes to develop a more general picture of the data descriptions and themes

4. Representing the findings through narratives and visuals

5. Making an interpretation of the meaning of the results by reflecting personally on the impact of the findings and on the literature, that might inform the findings

6. Conducting strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

1. Please state your name and the position you are currently holding?

2. How do you describe the effectiveness of the SLPP in the CNMI?

3. Have you gained valuable curriculum and instructional experiences while in the SLPP?

4. How do you describe your participation in the pre-service preparation?

5. How do you describe your experience in the clinical learning internship?

6. How did your participation in the SLPP help you gain the transformational leadership skills needed to become an effective leader?

7. When do you effectively use the transformational leadership skills that you have developed?

8. How did your participation in the SLPP help you gain the instructional leadership skills needed to become an effective leader?

9. When do you effectively use the instructional leadership skills that you have developed?

10. What other leadership skills have you developed in your participation in the SLPP?

11. If you were provided with the mentor, how involved was your mentor in guiding you to become an effective school leader? Describe his/her involvement.

12. What is your experience about the collaboration with other aspiring leaders and school leaders?

13. What was your engagement with the school's decision making during your clinical learning internship?

14. Did your participation in the SLPP prepare you to become an effective school leader?

15. What recommendations do you have to improve the effectiveness of the SLPP in the

CNMI public school system?