Dissertations

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A Phenomenological Study of Exemplary Charter School Executive Directors Leading From the Heart

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A Phenomenological Study of Exemplary Charter School Executive Directors

Leading From the Heart

A Dissertation by

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Never did I imagine the commitment, dedication, and support needed to accomplish this degree in pursuing my doctorate. I never imagined wanting to pursue this degree. It was not part of my short-term and definitely not part of my long-term goal. However, I am a firm believer that people and situations are placed in one's path for a reason, and that is what happened with me.

In 2018, I crossed paths with a leader in my organization who saw my potential. She noticed me developing systems, building infrastructures, connecting with people, and being hungry to learn more. She came to me one day and said, "What's next? Yes, you got your administrative credential, but what's next? How about a doctorate?" At the time, I laughed, I smiled, I chuckled because never did it ever cross my mind to go that far in school. My immediate imposter syndrome kicked in and shouted and screamed, "It's not possible; you are not smart enough and capable enough to pursue a degree so up there. Look around you; there are much more capable people who can do it . . . you for sure are not." However, what she did not know at the time, or maybe she did, she made me think about it. She opened up my eyes to imagine I was capable and could accomplish anything I set my mind and heart to do. So, thank you, Dr. Laurie Goodman, thank you for believing in me. Thank you for seeing me. Thank you for recognizing that I have the potential to do great things and get a doctoral degree.

Soon after starting my doctoral degree, I quickly realized I could not do this on my own. I had a heart-to-heart with my husband Ernesto and three children, Alejandro (12), Amelia (10), and Angelina (7), and told them this would be tough. I was going to do something harder than training for a marathon. I would need weeknights and

weekends and would have to pause on many things like family game nights. I asked my husband to do additional work at home and my kids to be more independent. All of them looked at me determined, encouraged, and willing to do whatever it took to make sure I received all the support needed to finish this unthinkable goal. So, to Ernesto and my kids, thank you for supporting me through my tough days and for celebrating with me on my good days. I love you and appreciate you all so much. The unthinkable can be thinkable.

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What gives me strength each day has always been my faith. I thank God each day for giving me all these beautiful people in my life. I am blessed each day to share beautiful moments with all of you and incredibly grateful to have you in my life. Thank you again so very much.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" – Philippians 4:13

ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Study of Exemplary Charter School Executive Directors

Leading from the Heart

by Giovanna Arzaga

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's 4 heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Methodology: This study followed a qualitative phenomenological research study to describe the lived experiences of exemplary charter school directors. A sample of 8 charter school executive directors was selected from the target population that included Fresno, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties in Central and Southern California. Each of the 8 identified charter school executive directors was interviewed in a semistructured open-ended, one-to-one interview protocol developed by a group of peer researchers. Data from artifacts and observations were used to triangulate the research results. Transcripts were analyzed and synthesized for themes using NVivo coding software.

Findings: Examination of qualitative data from the participating 8 exemplary charter school executive directors in this study indicated various findings. Analysis of data resulted in 21 themes and 409 frequencies among Crowley's 4 heart-led principles. From these 21 themes, 7 key findings emerged.

Conclusions: The study described the lived experiences that exemplary charter school executive directors do to lead their charter schools through Crowley's 4 heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). The researcher drew 4 conclusions for staff engagement by (a) communicating with staff members builds authentic relationships, (b) investing time connecting with staff members, (c) providing constant feedback and reflection time, (d) appreciating staff through various forms of communication.

Recommendations: Further research is recommended to study Crowley's heart-led principles. It is also recommended that research be conducted to identify and describe the teachers' perspectives on how their executive directors lead through the heart-led principles, using a mixed methods approach. This study should also be replicated in other roles, regions, and sectors in K-12 public, private, and charter schools.

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PREFACE

Upon consideration and discussions regarding the opportunity to study Mark Crowley's (2011) leadership from the heart strategies of exemplary leaders, 14 researchers with the collaboration of five faculty advisors, from education to corporate America, organized to form this thematic study. The thematic is driven by a shared passion to explore the ways exemplary leaders lead from the heart to achieve extraordinary results.

The framework for this phenomenological research study was designed using Crowley's four heart-led principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. Each peer researcher studied a different population of leaders and identified a sample of exemplary leaders through criterion based purposeful sampling from various public, for-profit and nonprofit organizations to interview. In an effort to ensure consistency and reliability throughout the thematic, the team of 14 peer researchers worked in collaboration to construct the purpose statement, research questions, definitions of terms, interview questions and research study protocols.

Throughout the study, the term *peer researchers* is used in reference to the 14 researchers in the thematic. The following is the complete list of the doctoral candidates, along with their chosen population in this research study, hereafter referred to as peer researchers: Giovanna Arzaga, Charter Executive Directors; Aimee Barnard, Special Education Administrators; Kelly Castillo, Elementary Principals; Joshua Chohaan, Elementary Title 1 Principals in Sacramento County; Jeyan Danesh, Secondary Admin Principals; Christina Foster, Middle School Principals; Martha (Stephanie) Herrera,

Nonprofit Women Leaders with focus on Domestic Violence/Sexual abuse; Teresa Hubbard, Primary Principals in Southern California; Randa Jad-Moussa, Learning and Development Leaders in Corporate Organizations; Angela Love, Community College Chief Human Resource Officers; Elizabeth Medina, Hispanic Entrepreneur Women; Aries Sanders, Leaders of Remote Sales/Marketing Employees; Jeanine Wulfenstein, Female Superintendents; and Sepideh Yeoh, K-12 Superintendents in Southern California.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

According to Mandelbaum and Friedman (2011), "Achievement in school matters, and it matters for a lifetime" (p. 119). Public schools in the United States continue to fail students. Even with class size reduction, teachers' qualifications rising, and payments to schools increasing, there is little evidence that student achievement is rising (Hanushek, 2003). According to the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.), the United States has one of the world's top high school dropout rates. In the United States, academic growth is also far from being uniform with Maryland taking the highest annual growth rate in math, reading, and science and California ranking in the lower rate of improvement (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 2004).

Comparing student achievement scores within the United States should help measure where the gaps are in education. However, the variables involved in this comparison are diverse (Hanushek, 2003; Klein, 2011). Teachers and administrators are a variable that makes a big difference in student achievement (Klein, 2011; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). High-performing teachers obtain higher expected increases in student performance while low-performing teachers steadily obtain lower than projected increases (Hanushek, 2003). A strategy to obtain high-quality teachers is to increase teacher salaries. Various authors have stated paying teachers more money may increase high-quality teachers to remain in schools that are underperforming (Hanushek, 2003; Klein, 2011; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011).

According to Payne (2008), teachers want to feel appreciated and recognized frequently by their leaders. This stimulates engagement and productivity about their purpose, which keeps them engaged to stay with their school. Along with teacher

performance, instruction and innovation are variables that affect student performance (Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011).

Parents also witness when schools are succeeding or failing academically. Hanushek (2003) stated parents are fully aware of the quality difference between teachers. When relocating, many parents consider the neighborhood schools' academic performance before moving (Weston, 1989). Being able to choose which school to attend is a luxury many people are unable to control. This may be a reason why so many parents have chosen to leave their traditional public school system and find alternative schools that excel in student performance (Bixby & Davis, 2018; Dressler, 2001; Klein, 2011; Quick, 2020).

Through the decline of student achievement in traditional public schools in the United States, parents and educators have turned to alternative schools to bridge the achievement gap (Bixby & Davis, 2018). It is in these alternative schools parents and educators have more choices for their students. There is more freedom in school choice, curriculum and instruction modalities, and administrative autonomy in alternative schools (Zimmer & Buddin, 2009). Freedom in school choice allows parents to enroll their children in any school, such as an alternative school. As traditional public schools guarantee enrollment to a student who resides in their school district lines, public charter schools require families to manually apply to enroll in their school and are dependent on space and county lines (Bixby & Davis, 2018). Charter schools are one form of an alternative school that is centered on being a school of choice and tuition-free. Charter schools maintain a student-first approach that has flexibility in meeting the student's

unique needs where teachers are equally engaged in the learning process (Bixby & Davis, 2018).

Charter schools bring alternative options to parents that provide purpose, mastery, autonomy, and safety (Bixby & Davis, 2018; Perry, 2008). According to the National Governors Association, a charter school's success centers on the executive director and the leadership they provide to their school (Quick, 2020). Charter school executive directors provide leadership and guidance to the school's mission and vision while ensuring students are learning and teachers are supported. The charter school executive director is the change agent responsible for cultivating a culture of engagement and purpose. This drive of innovation and achievement is cultivated by leadership that comes from the heart (Crowley, 2011).

Background

As the world continues to change and advance in its public education, America's public education system remains wedged in trying to remedy its challenges (Crowley, 2011; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2001). Student achievement is not just one challenge but involves many issues that affect its outcome. The abundance of issues includes underfunding, standardized testing, technology, emotional well-being, school safety, teacher engagement, lack of innovation, and parental support (Hanushek et al., 2004; Klein, 2011). America's public education system can transform with the support of students, teachers, parents, and the community to open their mindset to innovate, create, and construct and served by engaged leaders. To successfully have a large-scale education reform, one needs to change the culture systematically (DuFour & Fullan, 2013).

Failure of Traditional Public Schools

Nationally it has been difficult to measure student performance. Using one form of assessment to measure a year's worth of work does not represent the whole picture of a student's growth (Klein, 2011). In 2008, President Obama said, "The single most important factor in determining [student] achievement . . . It is who their teacher is" (Klein, 2011, p. 70). Teacher engagement and recognition are key to students' success (Hanushek et al., 2004; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). Principals also make a massive difference in student outcomes in supporting their teachers and students (Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011; Payne, 2008; Streshly & Gray, 2008). Innovation and technology also are factors that impact student achievement. However, public schools systematically may not be able to have the flexibility to change bureaucratic mandates of the district. Where parents have the choice, teachers and students are engaged, and administrators have more flexibility in instructional practices (Hanushek et al., 2004; Klein, 2011; Neckerman, 2008; Payne, 2008).

Public Charter Schools

Charter schools were founded to change the ways public schools operate. They were first introduced in the United States in 1992 in St. Paul, Minnesota (Epple, Romano, & Zimmer, 2015). A charter school is challenging to define because it varies in legislation from state to state (Epple et al., 2015; Good & Braden, 2000). In California, charter school legislation quickly followed suit from Minnesota as it was the second state to enact charter schools (Edwards, Perry, Brazil, & Studier, 2004; Gove & Meier, 2000; Zimmer et al., 1999). Two bills were proposed in the California legislature, one by State Senator Gary Hart and one by Assemblywoman Delaine Easton. Both addressed starting

charter schools and steered away from implementing a universal voucher plan for schools which was brewing in California at the time (Gove & Meier, 2000; Zimmer et al., 1999). Senator Hart proposed having greater flexibility for schools, providing local autonomy and parent choice while assembly women Easton addressed including waivers for educational code. Both bills reached Governor Wilson's desk, and in 1992 Wilson signed Hart's version, which enacted the charter schools act of 1992 in California (Gove & Meier, 2000; Zimmer et al., 1999). The bill required charter school developers to have a well-defined educational program, provide measurable outcomes, and set 5-year renewable terms (Edwards et al., 2004; Gove & Meier, 2000). Thus began the charter school enaction in California that has now established as over 1,300 charter schools in California today (David, 2016).

Unlike traditional public schools where students may attend based on a set geographical boundary, charter schools can educate students within an entire county (Bixby & Davis, 2018). Parents are given the liberty to choose which school they would like their students to attend. Charter schools also may provide innovative instructional practices, smaller class sizes, and more individual attention to students (Bixby & Davis, 2018; Epple et al., 2015; Good & Braden, 2000). Teachers in charter schools also feel less restrained than the bureaucratic model of traditional public schools and, because of this, are more engaged (Dressler, 2001; Good & Braden, 2000). Two things are certain: public charter schools are tuition-free and available to all students (Epple et al., 2015).

As charter schools provide more options for families and teachers to select, charter school executive directors also have more liberty to manage the instructional, financial, and school policy and to lead the staff (Carpenter & Peak, 2013; Dressler,

2001; Perry, 2008). According to Perry (2008), "A charter school leader's major task is to make a positive difference as evidenced in the learning of students, teachers, parents, and all associated with the school" (p. 173). The leadership and guidance from the charter school executive directors are critical to the success of the school.

Theoretical Foundations

The leadership approach a person utilizes may incorporate many different styles. According to Bass (2008), written policies of leadership go back to the beginning of civilization. Written principles dating back to 2300 B.C.E. in Egypt, Chinese classics in the 6th century B.C.E., and Greek concepts of leadership by heroes in Homer's Iliad have been found (Bass, 2008). To define leadership and its methods, they are presented in various works and discussions. According to Rost (1993), there were more than 221 definitions of leadership in 587 publications he reviewed. The characteristics of leadership approaches in education are also extensive.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is centered on self-awareness (Jackson, 2019). Leaders guide their team by understanding their own purpose. Wang (2020) explained that to lead others, a person needs to gain deep self-knowledge of who they are. It is by understanding one's boundaries, limits, and characteristics that one may help others find theirs. Kerfoot (2006) described authentic leaders as "fully embracing the imperative of a healthy work environment, authentically living it, and engage others in its achievement" (p. 319). Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) stated that to handle relationships well, one should begin by being genuine. Understanding one's own purpose begins the

development of helping others find their purpose. Although authentic leadership is about identifying one's purpose, servant leadership is about first serving others before oneself.

Servant Leadership

A servant leader ensures others have everything they need to be successful. Jackson (2019) shared, "As leaders, being of service is our true power. And servant leadership is a natural application for selfless leadership" (p. 931). Robert Greenleaf first instituted servant leadership. Greenleaf stated that servant leaders want to serve others before leading (Letizia, 2018). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) further investigated servant leadership through which they concluded there were 10 attributes that servant leaders possess: "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community" (p. 305). In higher education, serving others was modeled among leaders (Bass, 2008). Helping others correlates to what educators do with their students and teachers each day.

Emotional Leadership

According to Goleman et al. (2013), "Great leadership works through emotions" (p. 25). Berkovich and Eyal (2020) defined emotional leadership as to influence teachers to morally support their emotional wellness, which then creates outcomes of effective teaching in educational organizations. Emotional leadership is identifying emotions in oneself and others' thoughts, thinking creatively and understanding the emotions' meaning (Bass, 2008). When a person's heart is open and connected to the emotion, a new direction becomes open (Brown, 2018). Emotional intelligence has four parts: self-awareness, self-management skills, social awareness, and relationship management skills (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Humphrey, 2002). According to Berkovich and Eyal

(2020), educational administrators are connected between emotional intelligence and a successful leader. Goleman et al. (2013) stated that great leadership is where "the heart and head feeling and thought-meet" (p. 49). Educators' projecting their emotional intelligence to other establishes a supportive environment (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). A link between emotional leadership and transformational leadership has taken precedence with several authors (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020; Humphrey, 2002; Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership places focus on exploring new ways of doing things that currently do not exist (Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders are challenging others to reach a higher standard or expectation. According to Bass (2008), "Transformational leaders look to a higher purpose" (p. 618). A transformational leader can change an environment (Kirby et al., 1992). They are not looking at themselves but looking into the organization and finding something that might not necessarily be evident. According to Powell (2018), transformational leaders are concerned with the moral needs of a group and what is good and right for them. The four described leadership theories define the different perspectives of leadership. These leadership theories build the foundation of Crowley's four principles of leading by the heart.

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Theoretical Framework

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Crowley (2011) stated, "It's the heart, and not the mind, that drives human achievement; gestures that positively affect the heart naturally and reflexively inspire people to perform" (p. xvi). Leaders need to make their employees feel valued and appreciated. They are inclined to connect and cooperate if they trust their leaders

(Huguet, 2017). Jackson (2019) shared, "Understanding happiness and its roots permit us to create more meaning, purpose, and fulfillment for our people. This, in turn, can unlock great productivity" (p. 929). By valuing others and giving them purpose, extraordinary results follow. According to Crowley (2011), people want to feel they matter and that their work matters. The principles presented in Crowley's work build the foundation of simulating exemplary leadership in organizations. The four heart-led principles include building a highly engaged team, connecting personally, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements to accomplish extraordinary results in an organization (Crowley, 2011).

Building a Highly Engaged Team

When a team is highly engaged, they are influenced to be proactive, passionate, innovative, and go above and beyond for their organization (Crowley, 2011; Gebauer, Lowman, & Gordon, 2008; Groysberg & Slind, 2012a; Macey & Schneider, 2008). They are engaged and satisfied with their job and feel emotionally connected to their organization and leaders (Bickel, 2009; Gebauer et al., 2008). Working in a team and feeling empowerment to make essential decisions creates a sense of value and purpose (DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Kerfoot, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Murari, 2015). Leaders who display this engagement, in return model the characteristics to their teams (Kerfoot, 2007). Providing an environment where participation is welcomed engages the hearts and mind (Gebauer et al., 2008). This in turn increases productivity and improves performance (Bickel, 2009; Crowley, 2011; Groysberg & Slind, 2012a).

Connecting on a Personal Level

Gelb (2017) shared that when one is open and available, one may connect with oneself, which makes it easier to connect with others. According to Maxwell (2010), "Leadership is about connecting with people" (p. 25). It is stepping down from management's everyday role and connecting with the team (Groysberg & Slind, 2012b; Powell, 2018; Sergiovanni, 1990). Being vulnerable builds the trust of connecting on a personal level (Brown, 2018; Gelb, 2017; Greenleaf, 2002). Leaders who display connection with their team allow the team to build commitment to their organization (Sergiovanni, 1990). Making these connections and relationships holds the team together and creates a safe place for compassion to take place (Brown, 2018; J. E. Glaser, 2016).

Maximizing Employee Potential

In maximizing employee potential, one is motivating the team beyond their reach. Crowley (2011) stated, "A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go but ought to be" (p. 93). Leaders have the power to influence growth in a person (Gebauer et al., 2008; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2005; Wiseman, Allen, & Foster, 2013). Allowing a team member to try something new opens the possibility of self-efficacy and confidence to try new things (Huguet, 2017). As charter schools are open to more innovative practices and skills, they allow teachers to try something new (Hanover Research – Academy Administration Practice, 2012). Leaders who give others a chance enable them to showcase their natural talents (Wiseman et al., 2013). They create an environment of growth and success.

Valuing and Honoring Achievement

Creating an environment of appreciation, acknowledgment, and recognition exhibits a place of value and purpose (Crowley, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2005). People want to know they are seen and valued (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Gebauer et al., 2008; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2005). In a school environment, this may take shape as affirmations, rewards, and praises (Marzano et al., 2001; Kirby et al. 1992). Authentic celebrations from the heart create a culture of togetherness that can carry an organization through challenging times (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Role of Charter School Executive Director

According to Bixby and Davis (2018), "Charter leadership comes from diverse backgrounds that bring fresh perspectives not entrenched in institutional allegiance" (p .26). They oversee fiscal management, operational processes, and board policies (Bixby & Davis, 2018; Perry, 2008). Goff, Mavrogordato, and Goldring (2012) stated charter school executive directors spend time building culture and understanding the organization's mission with their staff. Quick (2020) had a similar definition that focuses on developing a shared vision and on ensuring the team is concentrated in the direction they are headed. Carpenter and Peak (2013) stated their role is divided between instructional and managerial. The charter school executive director's role is subjective, and its unique demands are similarly seen across charter school leaders.

Unique Demands

Charter school leaders undergo different challenges than principals in a traditional school setting. According to Goff et al. (2012), charter school leaders have unique challenges that involve a lot of time managing a school building and less time on

"principalship," such as instruction. Quick (2020) stated that executive directors have the responsibility to maintain or to obtain funding for their charter schools to stay operational. In a traditional public school, the district office, not necessarily the principal, would secure federal and state funds for their schools. Likewise, charter school executive directors need to maintain a good relationship with all stakeholders, especially their authorizer. Bixby and Davis (2018) stated, "In public education, an authorizer is an entity given the authority to grant charters" (p. 6). Charter school executive directors rely on their authorizer to renew their school every 5 years or less. As change agents, charter school executive directors work alongside various stakeholders to remain operational and instructional. Without increased student performance, schools risk not being renewed from their authorizer (Bixby & Davis, 2018). According to the authors, the need to network is to build sustainability and stay current with policy updates and state mandates changes. The unique demands of charter school leaders make it challenging to remain open (Perry, 2008; Quick, 2020).

Leadership in Charter Schools

The National Governors Association states that a charter school's success depends on the executive director's skills she or he possesses (Quick, 2020). Their leadership styles take precedence over how they lead their schools. Depending on the school's size, the oversight of their authorizer and their experience as a leader influence how to care for the school (Dressler, 2001; Perry, 2008; Quick, 2020). Unfortunately, a systematic executive director leadership program for charter schools is not required or available (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Perry, 2008). Thus, charter school executive directors refer to their experience and academic knowledge to lead and support their schools.

Gap in Research

Although charter school executive directors support various unique demands and roles in a charter school, what is constant is that their leadership drives the schools' existence (Carpenter & Peak, 2013; Dressler, 2001; Powell, 2018; Quick, 2020). Engaged teachers also make a huge difference in how students perform (Bixby & Davis, 2018; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). Connecting on a personal level builds vulnerability and trust in a team (Maxwell, 2010). Maximizing an employee's potential allows one to reach for the unknown (Gebauer et al., 2008; Maxwell, 2010). When leaders value and honor achievement, they build a sense of responsibility, empowerment, and relationships with the team (Young & Carpenter, 2008). According to Crowley (2011), "Leading from the heart is not soft or sentimental, it's a necessary means of restoring worker commitment to the ambitions and goals of their organizations" (p. 58). A combination of leadership approaches is needed from charter school executive directors to be change agents and to transform charter schools so that teachers are engaged, connected, growing, and valued to impact student achievement positively. A gap exists with charter school executive directors in using Crowley's four heart-led principles of leading with the heart.

Statement of the Research Problem

The public school education system in the United States remains trapped, even with the ever-changing school reforms across the country (Klein, 2011). Caldwell and Hayward (1999) shared that even with the adoption of national goals, state-wide testing, increased revenue, and the creation of charter schools and private entities, a sense of crisis exists in America's public schools. The reform efforts are disjointed, and public

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schools remain trapped. Even when teachers try new teaching techniques, old attitudes

stay the same, keeping public schools failing (Payne, 2008). Eric Hanushek, an

economist at Stanford University, found that some teachers perform a year's worth of

learning in a year. In contrast, others only can fit in a half years' worth basically with the

same students (Klein, 2011). Effective teachers and principals can make a massive

difference in student learning. A principal's leadership skills can influence teaching

excellence, students' performance, and innovation in a student-centered public school

(Marzano et al., 2001).

School principals are responsible for building a positive environment,

communicating, driving the mission and vision, and maintaining core values of the school

while concentrating on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2001). As effective change

agents, they can create a culture that promotes student and parent engagement and

purpose. In charter schools, executive directors take on the role of principal. Effective

charter school leaders attract dedication, motivate, empower people, create relationships

among stakeholders, and establish a degree of excellence that drives the school's culture

(Dressler, 2001; Quick, 2020). They spend time developing their staff, guiding the

shared vision, and implementing the mission, which impacts the schools' performance

(Quick, 2020). Effective charter school directors do this while assuming accountability

for the school's operational and instructional sectors, including managing the budget,

facilities, school policy, and developing teachers and students in the school's

instructional program (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Perry, 2008). In this environment,

charter school executive directors may "mold and change issues as they see needed to

improve education and the instructional environment for their students" (Quick, 2020, p.

99). As change agents, charter executive directors impact the school's foundation and direction and build relationships, connections, and engagement.

Schools that are academically performing well usually have excellent leadership, creating a student-centered culture and success. In an environment where humility, appreciation, and connection exist, teachers are engaged to promote higher expectations for their students and themselves (Marzano et al., 2001). Principals and staff also build their ability to reach students. Leadership impacts the success of schools. Principals influence the culture and dynamic within a school (Marzano et al., 2001). They do this by evaluating, monitoring, reflecting, and communicating on the everyday experiences in a school. Even though principals are not solely responsible for the school's academic performance, their actions, attitudes, and mannerism impact the dynamic of the school's culture and presence (Huguet, 2017). Leading by the heart promotes a caring, positive, and thoughtful presence that drives a culture of growth, connection, engagement, and appreciation (Crowley, 2011). The problem arises in schools where leaders ignore leading from the heart, resulting in low performance and engagement for both students and parents (Goleman et al., 2013).

Perry (2008) stated charter school executive directors' leadership impacts the academic success of the school. Because charter school executive directors work directly with teachers and students, they can significantly influence developing the team. Carpenter and Peak (2013) shared that charter school executive directors spend most of their time handling parents' concerns and facilitating meetings and less on external development. In spending time on external development, they only help the organization

succeed during uncertain and challenging events that could affect results (Gebauer et al., 2008).

Charter school executive directors require an approach that enables them to guide the school to be engaged, feel connected, be challenged, and build strong connections. Fostering an environment that cares for each other through the heart is the "birthplace of creativity, innovation, and change" (Gelb, 2017, p. 50). For charter school executive directors to be agents of change, they must engage their staff, maximize the school's potential, connect with stakeholders, and value and appreciate students, parents, and the community to improve student achievement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

4. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Significance of the Problem

The number of charter schools opening across the country continues to rise each year. More parents and teachers are turning to this form of alternative schooling for various reasons. Charter schools' alternative ways of innovating, instructing, and enriching students have attracted both parents and teachers alike (Dressler, 2001; Hanover Research – Academy Administration Practice, 2012). Parents may also choose for their students to attend charter schools instead of being assigned to a traditional public school according to where they live (Epple et al., 2015). Leaders in charter schools may also have more freedom in their school's bureaucracy and regulations and have more autonomy in hiring, managing, and innovating (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Epple et al., 2015). These leaders drive the school's mission and vision and ensure the school continues to renew its petition each year by showing positive student growth (Campbell & Grubb, 2008).

The National Governors Association stated that a charter school's success depends on the executive director skills she or he possesses (Quick, 2020). When they work collaboratively toward a shared vision, success is possible for everyone (Huguet, 2017). Effective leadership influences the school's overall academic achievement and creates a positive culture within the school (Marzano et al., 2001). When charter school executive directors fail to lead their schools effectively, students fail, teachers are unengaged, and charter schools close (Consoletti, 2011). Without good leadership, charter schools risk the ability to remain open to innovate, create, and differentiate for

students. Charter school executive directors who lead from the heart positively impact the success of their school's existence (Epple et al., 2015).

Leadership that leads with the heart positively impacts the success of an organization. By committing to engage students and teachers, builds a strong value of trust, empowerment, and responsibility (Young & Carpenter, 2008). Engaging with the staff creates loyalty, productivity, and excitement that draws the desire to strive for excellence and overcome obstacles (Kerfoot, 2007). Kerfoot (2007) shared, "The leader who is engaged and passionate about the work will communicate this to staff who will then feel the contagion and the excitement" (p. 48). A leader's agenda impacts staff's emotions, which affect students' performance (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). Leaders who lead from their heart create an environment of success.

In Crowley's lead with the heart four principles, leaders can form their leadership style to create a positive transformative environment (Crowley, 2011). In fostering these heart-led principles in an organization, one can expect to see extraordinary results flourish within people. Charter school executive directors leading with their heart can create an environment of purpose, appreciation, and achievement where teams are highly engaged and go above and beyond what they expected to perform (Gebauer et al., 2008). This engagement in schools can increase student and teacher performance. By connecting personally to their teachers and students, leaders can create an environment of safety and trust (J. E. Glaser, 2016; Groysberg & Slind, 2012b). In leading by the heart, fostering an environment of safety allows one to be open to new possibilities and opportunities. By maximizing the team's potential, leaders are finding growth opportunities for their staff and students to persevere (Gebauer et al., 2008; Maxwell,

2010). Crowley (2011) stated, "When leaders value themselves while also valuing others, they're able to create extraordinary results" (p. 100).

In leading with the heart, executive charter school directors can make a positive impact in their school. Leading with heart will reveal students and teachers engaged in learning and striving to perform well. Leading with the heart, directors foster a culture of appreciation and recognition that positively impacts all stakeholders' performance, where innovation and creativity remain intact and charter schools remain open for students. This study will benefit charter school directors because it provides purpose to the importance of creating an environment of engagement and commitment. It will inform authorizers, board members, and state school representatives of the importance of having a systemic preparation program that centers on Crowley's four heart-led principles of leading with the heart. This can ensure teachers and students in all schools are engaged, connecting personally, maximizing their skills, and feeling valued and with purpose.

Definitions

Charter school executive director is an executive leader who reports to the governing board and is responsible for the school(s) infrastructure, instructional programs, and financial management and leads the school's vision and mission for the students, parents, and staff (Carpenter & Peak, 2013; Dressler, 2001; Perry, 2008).

Caring leadership. Caring leadership is showing kindness, empathy, and understanding that build relationships that bring people together around a common goal. Caring leaders demonstrate warmth and genuine interest in people and treat others with mutual acceptance and respect (Kautz, 2013; Madison, Tabor, Marler, & Kellermanns, 2020; Maxwell, 2013; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015).

Extraordinary results. Extraordinary results are those accomplishments that are remarkable, surprising, exceptional, and go beyond what is usually expected (O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000).

Operational Definitions

Building a highly engaged team is using strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging through which relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision, and values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees, Alfes & Gatenby, 2013; Senge, Lichtenstein, & Kaeufer, 2007).

Connecting on a personal level is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010).

Maximizing employee potential is igniting emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011).

Valuing and honoring achievements is praising, acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and/or nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema, Ready, & Embaye, 2013).

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Delimitations

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This study was delimited to eight exemplary charter school executive directors in Central and Southern California. An exemplary leader is someone set apart from peers in

a superior manner, suitable to serve as an example to model behavior, principles, or intentions (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014). The thematic research team determined the exemplar leader participants must meet the following criteria:

An exemplary charter school executive leader in this study is a leader who demonstrates at least four of the following criteria; the first three are required.

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization

2. A minimum of 3 years of experience as a charter school executive director

3. Evidence of extraordinary results

4. Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings

5. Recognition by peers

6. Membership in a professional association in their field

Organization of the Study

This research study includes five chapters with a bibliography and appendixes. Chapter I presented an overview of the problem, purpose statement, and research questions that guide the study. Additionally, Chapter I contained information about the significance of the study, definitions, and delimitations. Chapter II is a literature review related to heart-led theoretical foundations and frameworks aligned to the purpose statement and research questions. Chapter III consists of the methodology used and rationale in choosing a phenomenological research design. Chapter IV is an analysis of the data collection and findings. Chapter V represents the conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further study related to the topic.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Jackson (2019) stated, "Understanding happiness and its roots permit us to create more meaning, purpose, and fulfillment for our people this in turn can unlock great productivity" (p. 929).

To accomplish extraordinary results in organizations, it is vital that leaders lead from the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). Charter school executive directors are the leaders in their schools; they model, inspire, and drive their staff's culture and values. Leaders who are engaged influence those around them, creating positive results. Research shows when teams are highly engaged, they go above and beyond what is expected (Gebauer et al., 2008; Seymour & Dupré, 2008; Trahant, 2009). Fostering heart-led principles allows charter school executive directors the opportunity to model and add value, engagement, fulfillment, and recognition to their staff (Crowley, 2011). Creating a culture of heart-led principles opens the opportunity to witness extraordinary results in charter schools.

This study explains the various leadership approaches that many charter school executive directors utilize to lead their schools, oversee processes and procedures, and meet the demands to remain sustainable. Chapter II focuses on the literature on the variety of leadership approaches, heart-led principles, and charter schools' executive directors' perceptions of leadership. The literature review is divided into five parts. Part I includes the significant changes occurring in schools. Part II provides the theoretical foundations of leadership theories and seminal authors. Part III examines the theoretical framework of Crowley's heart-led principles of building an engaged team, connecting on

a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and recognizing achievements that provide this study's framework. Part IV focuses on charter school executive directors who are the target population for this study. Part V provides a summary.

Public Schools Failing

After several reforms, public schools in the United States continue to fall behind the world in core subjects (Klein, 2011). Reforms such as No Child Left Behind in 2001 (testing every year and rewarding schools with increased scores), Race to the Top in 2009 (offering states monetary incentives for evaluating their teachers and comparing test scores, closing schools with low test scores, increasing privately controlled charter schools, and implementing Common Core State Standards), and Betsy DeVos's School Choice (allowing privately run charters, vouchers for parochial schools, and online charter schools all with similar goals of increasing student achievement) continue to show little progress in student achievement advancement (Ravitch, 2020). However, even with these reforms, the World Economic Forum ranked the United States as 48th in math and science education and near the bottom of then industrialized countries in math tests (Klein, 2011). Public schools continue to fail, even with public schools' monetary incentives and structure (Hanushek et al., 2004; Klein, 2011).

To help alleviate public schools failing, alternative public schools have increased for the past couple of decades. Charter schools were first introduced in Minnesota to create a new level of flexibility and accountability (Bixby & Davis, 2018). California became the second state to pass charter school legislation shortly after the bill was enacted in Minnesota (Edwards et al., 2004, Gove & Meier, 2000; Zimmer et al., 1999).

Two bills were proposed in the California legislature, one by State Senator Gary Hart and one by Assemblywoman Delaine Easton. Both addressed starting charter schools and steered away from implementing a universal voucher plan for schools (Gove et al., 2000; Zimmer et al., 1999). Senator Hart proposed having the greatest flexibility for schools and providing local autonomy and parent choice, and Assemblywoman Easton addressed including waivers for educational code. Both bills reached Governor Wilson's desk, and in 1992 Wilson signed Hart's version, which enacted the Charter Schools Act of 1992 (Gove et al., 2000; Zimmer et al., 1999). The bill required charter school developers to have a well-defined educational program, provide measurable outcomes, and set 5-year renewable terms (Edwards et al., 2004; Gove & Meier, 2000). Promoting autonomy, flexibility, the mission statement, and safety, charter schools provided school choice opportunities (Epple et al., 2015; Zimmer & Buddin, 2009).

According to Zimmer and Buddin (2009), the hope for charter schools was to provide more teacher autonomy, raise student achievement, and promote an alternative form of learning within public schools. Drucker (1999) stated that to see positive results in productivity and innovation, people need autonomy. The challenge of charter schools is the uncertainty of new laws, authorizer, or sponsor regulations, and exhibiting academic progress every 5 years (Good & Braden, 2000). Even so, academic progress and student learning remain at the forefront of alternative public schools to remain sustainable.

While public schools' primary purpose is student learning, Rockoff's (2004) research showed evidence on the impact of teachers on student achievement. It concluded that teachers have a positive effect on student learning. Teachers significantly

impact students' success (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Mandelbaum & Friedman, 2011). President Obama shared in 2008, "The single most important factor in determining [student] achievement . . . it's who their teacher is" (Klein, 2011, p. 70). Many parents also research which schools to have their children attend based on the teacher's effectiveness and characteristics (Hanushek et al., 2004). Various authors have concluded that several factors contribute to effective teachers, including subject matter knowledge, knowledge of teaching and learning, education, teacher attitudes, and characteristics in the classroom connected to teacher quality (Fong-Yee & Normore, 2013). As a result, effective teachers make a positive impact on student learning.

Effective teachers positively impact student learning in conjunction with great leadership, creating great schools. The Wallace Foundation and several groups have brought into perspective the behaviors and characteristics of effective principals and their impact on student learning (Hall, Childs-Bowen, Pajardo, & Cunningham-Morris, 2015; Mendels, 2012). Leadership matters in schools. According to Hallinger and Heck (1998), Leithwood and Montgomery (1986), and Witziers, Bosker, and Krüger (2003), evidence shows that principals with outstanding leadership are tied to increase student achievement. Schools that make a difference are led by principals who contribute to their staff's effectiveness and student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Mandelbaum and Friedman (2011) also indicated that great schools come from outstanding leadership. Society must try to recruit, mentor, and grow the best teachers and principals to lead schools.

Importance of School Leadership

Schools that make a difference in student learning are led by principals who make a measurable impact on their staff and the students they lead (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Marzano et al.'s (2001) research study had evidence showing that principals of great leadership align with increased student performance. School leadership is vital to the successful functions of a school (Marzano et al., 2001). The researchers found the average effect size of 0.25 standard deviation, which means that one standard deviation improvement in principal leadership translates to a 10-percentile point gain in student achievement. Highly effective school leaders can dramatically influence overall student achievement (Marzano et al., 2001). They create an environment that improves student learning and effectiveness (Johnson, Uline, & Perez, 2017).

Principals are responsible for the daily activities of the schools. Based on the district's goals and mission of the school, they move forward to implement processes and procedures in their schools (Marzano et al., 2001). They are responsible for communicating with staff and the community. At the school level, the principal is responsible for culture, in which they work with staff to develop a shared vision for their school (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Marzano et al., 2001). By role modeling the core values through their interactions with staff, students, and parents, principals are constantly being examined. A school's climate and effectiveness align with the traits of administrators, who are the role models for their staff and students (Bridges, 1982). Clearly communicating the school's mission and vision ensures staff members have all the resources they need to succeed (Marzano et al., 2001). As with principal leadership in

schools and the many leadership theories and styles they perform in their schools, district leaders impact the leadership in schools as well.

Importance of District-Level Leadership

District leadership must create and support effective leadership in schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009). According to Marzano and Waters (2009), their responsibilities lie in ensuring collaborative goal setting, establishing the focus on instruction and achievement, board alignment to support goals, allocating funding for resources, and accountability. District-level leaders' responsibilities vary; however, a few may undertake the following role by giving input, communication, culture, outreach, knowledge of curriculum, instruction, monitor, evaluation, resource management, and our change agents (Marzano et al., 2001). Communication at the district level thrives in clear, reliable, and consistent communication to schools to be successful (Johnson et al., 2017).

District leadership must have a deep understanding of how their decisions will impact the lives of their students and parents in addition to the lives of their principals and teachers in implementing these decisions in their schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009). According to Miller (2004), the district's role is to create an infrastructure that allows principals access to monitor curriculum, instruction, and assessment so that student achievement is one of the primary goals. District leaders oversee student learning and autonomy in their schools (Leithwood & Prestine, 2002). By district leaders overseeing the infrastructure of their schools, they channel many different leadership theories and styles to meet the needs of their community.

Importance of Organizational Leadership

Organizational leadership is used in educational settings. It is used when building the infrastructure of vision, culture, climate, innovation, and school goals. According to Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010), building individuals and teams within organizations is the primary concern of growth and development. Several authors have shared that developing a shared vision allows everyone to be involved in the process of change and commitment (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Anderson, 2017; Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010; Johnson et al., 2017). Leaders' being able to do vision planning is an important part of leadership (Bush, 2009). Opening a channel of communication and collaboration within schools allows people to feel included and purposeful. In organizational leadership, change leaders transform teams and cultures to succeed together as one unit by making goals together (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). Leaders who are conscious change leaders look within all parts of the organization to improve aspects that help the entire organization (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). By looking into all parts of the organization, they also honor values and beliefs from their school's culture and climate.

Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) and Kowalski, Lasley, and Mahoney (2008) shared that organizational culture is composed of shared beliefs, values, hopes, and norms for people within a school. According to Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), "Culture is to an organization as mindset is to an individual" (p. 184). Culture makes a significant impact on the school's personality, behavior, and style. It impacts decision making in schools (Kowalski et al., 2008). Marzano et al. (2001) stated culture can be positive or negative, which influences the school's effectiveness. An effective

leader builds the culture to be positive (Marzano et al., 2001). The culture created in a school is shaped by the shared values and mission developed by school leadership.

Organizational leadership also involves developing a climate. The climate shapes the school characteristics and employees' insights into their roles and responsibilities. An open school climate allows staff to cooperate concerning each other and higher management. A closed school climate is the opposite (Kowalski et al., 2008). Through an open climate, staff members may be able to feel comfortable to innovate and create. Great leaders build a climate to promote high achievement and meaning in work (Crowley, 2011; Kowalski et al., 2008). Education leaders may use multiple leadership theories and styles to meet the needs of their students and staff. Educational leadership is another layer that leaders undertake to lead their schools.

Theoretical Foundation

Kowalski et al. (2008) stated leaders are not born into greatness; instead, they develop their leadership skills by building their skills and knowledge while practicing on an ongoing basis. Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated, "Leadership can be learned" (p. 8). Principals in schools come with various experiences and knowledge, which they model to their staff and community. According to Witziers et al. (2003), one of the main tasks for principals is to create a working environment where teachers can collaborate and identify ways to drive the school's mission and academic learning. A leader's approach may hinder the outcome of an organization's mission and goals. Leaders in schools may use various leadership approaches to facilitate, mentor, and navigate through planning and obstacles.

Authentic Leadership

One of the leadership styles a principal may utilize is authentic leadership. The concept of authentic leadership traces back to the ancient Greek philosophy that it is important to know oneself (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Duncan, Green, Gergen, & Ecung, 2017; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; McDaniel, 2018). According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), authenticity maintains one's personal experiences and acting oneself. Shamir and Eilam (2005) also introduced authentic leadership with followers, who follow their leaders because of authentic reasons because of authentic relationships between them both. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) shared, "It's acting from one's genuine feelings" (p. 51). Authentic leadership is making decisions based on one's desires and self-motivated motives (Heidegger, MacQuarrie, & Robinson, 1962). Authentic leaders are true to themselves and to those they lead (Bass, 2008).

Authentic leaders inspire others to embrace their hearts, desires, and passion. They desire a healthy work environment, guide others toward success, and model the way for justice and equality for all (Kerfoot, 2006). They love and challenge followers to strive for the unimaginable, motivating and encouraging them with their passion for helping and doing the right thing (Kerfoot, 2006). Authentic leaders are trusted because they follow through on their word. Bass (2008) said authentic leaders sacrifice their interests for the good of the organization. Authentic leaders are true to themselves and positively display behavior that develops followers into leaders (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), authentic leadership in organizations is a process with a positive psychological and organizational framework that involves self-

awareness and behaviors toward positive self-development. Leaders display honesty, integrity, and transparency that model authentic leadership in organizations (Kerfoot, 2006). They bring love and hope in building relationships in a workplace to follow their passions and interests (Kerfoot, 2006). By modeling their self-interests and internal motivation, they inspire their followers to do the same (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Authentic leaders are confident, hopeful, and resilient, traits that many exemplary leaders exhibit running their organizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Servant Leadership

Although authentic leadership is centered on one's self-interests and models confidence and resilience, servant leadership is centered on serving others instead of oneself. Greenleaf's (1977) seminal work on servant leadership discusses the characteristics of a servant leader. Servant leaders are first people who want to help others instead of their own self-interest (Matteson & Irving, 2006). Greenleaf (1977) shared that one of the first servant leaders written about was Jesus Christ; servant leaders are leaders who put other people's needs and interests before their own. Based on Greenleaf's essay, Spears and Lawrence (2002) shared 10 characteristics of servant leadership that exhibit "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community" (p. 57).

Jackson (2019) shared, "As leaders, being of service is our true power. And servant leadership is a natural application of selfless leadership" (p. 128). Servant leaders exhibit many different types of characteristics including, trust, empathy, acceptance, authenticity, and love for their followers (Greenleaf, 1977; Matteson & Irving, 2006). To

lead others, one needs to build trust. In servant leadership, the one who sets goals and expectations must elicit trust (Greenleaf, 1997). Servant leaders show love with their followers in a variety of ways. According to Winston and Ryan (2008), *agapao* is love, or in Greek terminology, it is defined as moral love, which is doing fair things, at the right time, and with good intentions. Servant leaders exhibit this love with their followers by leading with their feelings, reflecting caring, appreciation, understanding, and compassion (Patterson, 2003). Servant leaders actively listen, genuinely communicate, and are empathetic. The love exhibited from servant leadership reflects into the culture of the organization (Patterson, 2003).

Servant leadership in schools is seen in a variety of ways. Servant leaders are servants to their teams; they share goals, build trust, actively listen, and provide positive feedback (Rehman, Shahzad, Farooq, & Javaid, 2020). They are role models, take risks, and inspire others to do the same (Crippen, 2005). Crippen (2005) shared that Greenleaf believed, "Leadership involves teaching and mentoring, as one of the major requirements of leaders to invite others toward service" (p. 5). When leaders are grounded in servant leadership, trust builds in schools, and excellence is established (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). By building this foundation of trust in their schools, leaders construct an environment that listens, solves, and rebuilds together during unprecedented times (Crippen, 2005). These inclusive, empathetic, loving, and caring characteristics allow leaders and their followers to exhibit a proactive mindset when handling challenging situations (Crippen, 2005).

Emotional Leadership

In emotional leadership, a leader is looking toward the emotions of others to help lead others to excellence. Daniel Goleman's (2012) book *Emotional Intelligence* shares statements regarding the influence of emotional intelligence on others. The five essential elements include: knowing your owns emotions, managing your emotions, motivating yourself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006). Several authors defined emotional intelligence to be "the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others" (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Cherkasskiy, 2012, p. 528). Salovey and Mayer (1990) shared that emotional intelligence has four parts that include perceive one's emotions, perceive others' emotions, be able to manage one's emotions, and be able to manage other's emotions. Emotional intelligence exhibits authentic leadership but also investigates understanding others' emotions.

Mayer et al. (2012) shared that when people are using their feelings and emotions, they understand the world and think with their hearts. According to Goleman et al. (2013), speaking from the heart can bring passion. Optimistic and enthusiastic leaders usually have more of their followers stay with them when compared with leaders who displayed negative moods (Goleman et al., 2013). Characteristics of empathy, hearing, alertness, observation, and concern allow leaders to come into a nonjudgmental and more transformational situation to help deescalate the situation (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). Recognizing emotions from oneself and others allows leaders to navigate obstacles in organizations (Mayer et al., 2012).

Great leaders work through emotions; they guide people and encourage the best of them (Goleman et al., 2013). Their modeling influences how others perceive situations and obstacles. Followers look to their leaders for support, empathy, and resonance. They create an environment that either welcomes emotions or ignores their significance (Goleman et al., 2013). According to Berkovich and Eyal (2020), education leaders embrace the connection between emotional intelligence and successful leaders. Emotional leadership in schools influences employees to support their emotional wellness and affects effective teaching and work in schools (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). Lussiez (2009) also shared there is a positive connection between empathetic school leaders and transformative leadership. When leaders drive emotions positively, they help create resonance within an organization (Goleman et al., 2013).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership represented a pivotal shift in the field of leadership (Bass, 2008). It explored a form of leadership that exhibited the qualities of "charismatic, visionary, inspirational, values-oriented, and change-oriented leadership" (Bass, 2008, p. 619). Instead of leading followers and providing them contingent rewards, transactional leadership, transformational leadership addresses the follower's sense of self-worth, commitment, and involvement to an organization (Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership is seen as Xenophon, a Greek leader marching an army of 10,000 soldiers safely through 1,000 miles of a hostile environment, where followers remain with their leader during times of great danger and their own will (Arenas, 2019). Transformational leaders are attentive to their followers and help them to consider the unimaginable.

According to several authors, transformational leadership has four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Arenas, 2019; Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Murari, 2015). Transformational leaders are role models, motivators, innovators, and mentors. They empower their followers to discover their unique qualities and guide them toward exploration, creativity, and innovation, which grows the organization and develops themselves further. Arenas (2019) stated transformational leadership involves creating a personal relationship with followers that raises their motivation and self-worth. Because of this connection, transformational leaders tend to have more committed and gratified followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

As leaders model transformational leadership, followers also exhibit their qualities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leithwood (1995) shared that transformational leadership shows up with effective school principals during problem solving; developing a shared vision; involving their staff, teachers, parents, and students in decision making; and creating a collaborative culture. Transformational leaders demonstrate respect for others and appreciate their own values (Bass, 2008). Major (1988) reported students showed better performance in school when principals exhibited transformational leadership skills. Geijsel, Sleegers, and van den Berg's (1999) large-scale qualitative study of innovation in the Netherlands showed that exhibiting transformational leadership qualities in schools improved teacher's practices. Inspirational leaders who are committed, challenge, and genuinely care for their followers most likely will see positive results in their organizations.

Educational Leadership

According to Marzano et al. (2001), "A highly effective school leader can have a dramatic influence on the overall academic achievement of students" (p. 17). According to Hallinger and Heck (1998), the growth of educational leadership and management began about 20 years ago. During the 1960s, principals, were known to be change agents for government programs. In the 1980s, principals were seen more as instructional experts managing the educational program in their school, continuing today to clearly focus on ensuring students are learning (Bush & Glover, 2003). Effective leadership in schools involves leaders having a clear mission, vision, goals, creating a positive culture and climate in schools to produce an environment of student learning (Marzano et al., 2001). Educational leadership involves leaders who are visionaries, influencers, managers, and motivators. According to Marks and Printy (2003), leaders must sustain how they protect and promote teaching and learning in schools. They must strive forward in motivating, encouraging, and supporting the vision in their schools.

Educational leadership also involves being an instructional leader. Smith and Andrews (1989) identified four traits of an instructional leader: resource provider, instructional support, communicator, and a leader who is present. Leithwood (1995) shared that instructional leadership and transformational leadership are expansions of each other. By inspiring others and increasing the organization's efforts, they produce better results (Leithwood, 1995). Hallinger, Murphy, Well, Mesa, and Mitman (1983) and Marks and Printy (2003) identified similar functions of instructional leaders: defining mission, managing curriculum and instruction, establishing a positive school climate, and creating a supportive work environment. Instructional leadership and educational

leadership form a leadership centered on student learning and supporting teachers to be effective leaders.

School leadership is intertwined with various leadership theories. To be a great leader, one must have the experience, knowledge, patience, and commitment to achieve goals established for the school (Bush & Glover, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001). An effective leader inspires, motivates, and implements processes to meet the goals and mission of the school (Bush & Glover, 2003). Through the words, actions, and examples of effective school leaders' model, they influence the schools' behaviors, values, and characteristics of the schools' shared mission and vision to support student learning (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). As the change agents in schools, their leadership impacts the success of their schools.

Charter school executive directors may use one or various leadership styles when leading their schools. By exhibiting authentic leadership, they foster qualities of love, hope, and relationship building (Kerfoot, 2007). They show a deep sense of purpose and strive for fulfillment in their everyday activities. Charter leaders may exhibit leadership qualities of servant leadership, whereby they serve others first before their own needs (Greenleaf, 1977). Emotional leadership shows leaders are looking inward to examine their own emotions, which then radiate from them (Gelb, 2017). Finally, transformational leadership qualities create results in others that go above what was expected (Bass, 2008). By providing resources to help grow staff, give autonomy, and build relationships, extraordinary results can occur in organizations. As charter school executive directors, they are the change agents in their organizations who model and influence their followers to imagine the unexpected and overcome challenges along the

way (Epple et al., 2015). Exhibiting these leadership styles shapes a leader to lead with their heart (Crowley, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks consist of concepts and provide a perspective to view a topic. Many different perspectives offer a particular view, such as organizational theories, social theories, and emotional theories, formulated to explain and understand phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The theoretical framework for this study is Crowley's four heart-led principles of building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements that exhibit what leaders must do to create extraordinary results in their organizations (Crowley, 2011). People seek more than ever opportunities to feel valued, appreciated, and respected in their organizations (Gebauer et al., 2008). Working in an environment where employees feel genuinely cared for, purposeful, and appreciated has significantly impacted an employee's productivity and longevity in an organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Crowley's heart-led principles open the door for leaders to open their hearts and minds to engage their employees by recognizing potential, building confidence, and maximizing the efficiencies within organizations (Crowley, 2011).

Building a Highly Engaged Team

To build a highly engaged team, one uses strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging, where relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision, and where values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees et al., 2013;

Senge et al., 2007). There are a variety of strategies that employees may use to help promote engagement. According to Gebauer et al. (2008), to engage employees, one needs to provide opportunities for participation that engage the hearts and minds. This opportunity allows employees to start creating a deep connection by which employees are willing to go above and beyond what is expected of them to help the company prosper (Bickel, 2009; Gebauer et al., 2008). Employers need to care genuinely about their employees' daily responsibilities. Kouzes and Posner (2012) shared that employers need to spend time to find out what motivates each employee. This strategy allows the employees to feel connected and have purpose for their contributions to the company. Also, providing space for employees to share their voice builds trust and respect and creates a strong culture of inclusion (Rees et al., 2013).

Kerfoot (2007) stated, "Engagement is contagious" (p. 48). To build a highly engaged team, employees need to feel their work is meaningful but also challenging. Britt (2003) "has defined job engagement as being personally responsible for and committed to one's job performance and feeling that job performance matters to the individual" (p. 32). Crowley (2011) similarly shared that people want to feel they matter in all jobs and roles, and what they do matters. Leaders engaging others at work makes people feel what they are doing is important and meaningful in their organizations. When internally a person feels their work is significant, it builds a feeling of empowerment and drives for growth and change (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008). According to Rees et al. (2013), engagement is only meaningful if there is genuine sharing between upper management and lower management over issues that matter.

Wiseman et al. (2013) stated when leaders inspire employees to stretch themselves, results exceed expectations.

Emotional connection at work is when team members feel a part of their organization's values and decisions. According to Gebauer et al. (2008), the emotional aspect (heart) is the passion and energy or feeling they bring to work. Employees who feel emotionally connected to their organizations are willing to put their energy and knowledge into action to improve the organization's performance and their own (Gebauer et al., 2008). In addition, because they have this sense of connection, employees can overcome any challenges and demands in their jobs because they have a connection with their work (Bickel, 2009). McKee et al. (2008) shared that emotions are contagious. Leaders can create a climate of resonance that supports success. It could also do the opposite and promote dissonance and unproductiveness—either path—or it can spread across the organization (McKee et al., 2008). In addition, Marzano et al. (2001) shared when school leaders form an emotional bond with staff, this helps them stay connected during the time of uncertainty.

When employees share the vision of the organization, they are more engaged at work. Employees who feel empowered in their organizations feel more connected (Murari, 2015). Employees who act as ambassadors for the organization when talking to people outside of work tend to stay longer in their organizations too (Groysberg & Slind, 2012b). Alignment of one's values and commitment to the organizational goals engages people to remain in their organization. According to Maxwell and Maxwell (2005), adding value to people is an ongoing process; the value will come back to the leader in return. People learn and develop more in organizations when it affects them personally

and professionally (McKee et al. 2008). Crowley (2011) stated, "When leaders value themselves while also valuing others, they're able to create extraordinary results" (p. 100). The more people are engaged and valued at work, the more they believe in the quality of the organization's products and services, which in turn positively impacts customer satisfaction, innovation, and overall profitability (Gebauer et al., 2008; Rees et al., 2013).

Connecting on a Personal Level

The connecting on a personal level principle is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating to add value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2018; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010). Seeing employees at work is identifying, recognizing, and noticing who they are as individuals. Leaders who identify with employees acknowledge and affirm their individual characteristics (Marzano et al., 2001). They identify with their employees—their purpose, strengths, work environment, and growth in the organization—and personal development (Gebauer et al., 2008; Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated that a simple gesture of acknowledgment and rewards positively impacts individuals. By seeing employees in the workplace, leaders build a positive connection that may result in sustained performance for an organization (Dutton, 2003).

Acting on behalf of others is connecting with people. The heart of connection is understanding the feelings of others, sharing experiences, and not being alone (Brown, 2018). Understanding each other creates meaning, purpose, and fulfillment within oneself (Jackson, 2019). According to Goleman et al. (2002), leaders need to act from their "genuine feelings" in order to lead others (p. 51). By modeling this behavior, a

person empowers and builds trust (Bickel, 2009). Leaders modeling behaviors in a workplace may be positive or negative. Leaders need to set the example to heighten the morality of followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006; (Goleman et al., 2013). Leaders modeling this action navigate emotions positively (Goleman et al., 2013).

According to Groysberg and Slind (2012b), leaders need to step down from their hierarchy to communicate with their employees authentically. They must be at the level of their employees to speak in ways that are "personal, authentic, and transparent" (Groysberg & Slind, 2012b, p. 16). Speaking between a leader and follower allows for envisioning the real needs, vision, and passion (Bass, 2008; Goleman et al., 2013). When leaders' hearts are open, they can connect to their followers' emotions, which builds empathy, resilience, and compassion between them (Brown, 2018). Being open to feelings, avoiding defensiveness, and monitoring emotions enable leaders and followers to communicate about themselves and their feelings and emotions (Bass, 2008). Communicating authentically builds connecting on a personal level.

Crowley (2011) shared the fact that employees want to feel valued and cared about. Adding value to an employee's emotions, skills, and competence may be represented with humility. Leaders showing they care for their employees builds a personal connection. The approach in showing they care may be made in a variety of ways. When leaders know their staff, they open an opportunity to connect personally (Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). Leaders spending time to learn what motivates employees and recognizing employees on their actions and behaviors builds trust (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Leaders adding value to their employees strengthens them to keep pushing forward. When leaders show this love and compassion without expecting anything in

return, they offer the meaning of humility and servant leadership (Patterson, 2003; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Leaders showing love and compassion ensures employees have everything they need to be successful in their environment, which adds value to a person's self-worth.

Showing concern and love for employees may happen in a variety of ways. According to J. E. Glaser (2016), creating a safe space for employees to connect heart-to-heart with compassion and understanding builds relationships in an organization. Being vulnerable with employees may also show love and concern (Brown, 2018). When companies show concern about people's well-being and care for their employees, they build love for the organization (Gebauer et al., 2008). Employees being a part of an environment where concern and love are included in the values positively changes the dynamic of their daily responsibilities. Capturing and connecting with employees' hearts leads to higher organizational performance (Crowley, 2011; Ulrich & Woodson, 2011).

Maximizing Employee Potential

Maximizing employee potential ignites emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011). To ignite emotional drivers, leaders need to understand what motivates employees to perform and enjoy doing (Gebauer et al., 2008). Employers need to discover the emotional drivers of employees. According to Burnett and Lisk (2019), there are a variety of emotional states employees may have, which include excitement, motivation, devotion, fulfillment, and dedication. As a result of these emotional states, employees tend to stay longer in their organizations, produce

better results, and find opportunities to grow the organization more (Burnett & Lisk,

2019).

According to a research study in the 2006 Conference Board Report, there were at

least eight drivers of engagement that significantly impacted an employee's engagement

(Burnett & Lisk, 2019). The eight drivers of engagement included trust, integrity,

relationship with the employer, the influence of coworkers, pride in the organization,

growth development, job responsibilities, and alignment of core values with the

organization's mission (Burnett & Lisk, 2019). Igniting the emotional drivers of

employees engages them at work. Gebauer et al. (2008) shared when employees are

provided with emotional bonds and believe that the organization cares for their well-

being and want to grow within the organization, they are engaged at work. Maxwell and

Maxwell (2005) stated that employees go above and beyond because their leaders help

them find the way to better themselves. Additionally, Britt's (2003) study on elite army

unit members found that engagement at work depends on self-motivation and

psychological safety. Building an environment safe to collaborate, honor values, and

cultivate cultural diversity promotes a person's self-worth. Fostering human well-being

at work also encourages employees to feel cared for and maximizes their potential.

Giving learning opportunities can promote an employee's "heart and mind" to grow

within an organization (Gebauer et al., 2008, p. 63).

According to Gebauer et al. (2008), employees want to feel proud about their

work. Leaders have the power to create a positive impact in an employee's sense of

purpose and development above what people think of themselves (Gebauer et al., 2008).

To do this, employers do not need to provide all the groundwork and information on a

project but provide more respect for people's decisions, time, and creativity (Gebauer et al., 2008). Crowley (2011) shared that a great leader takes employees where they do not necessarily know they could go. Empowering employees in an organization provides employees with the tools to grow and fulfill (Murari, 2015).

Valuing and Honoring Achievements

Valuing and honoring achievements is praising, acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013). According to Brun and Dugas (2008), honoring achievements in organizations is expressed in two ways. It can either be done formally, such as in performance reviews, ceremonies, incentive bonuses, or informally where peers congratulate, and leaders announce a job well done during team meeting. Marzano et al. (2001) shared contingent rewards are presented when followers are recognized and rewarded for their individual accomplishments. Bass and Riggio (2006) stated, "Humans are practical and goal-oriented, seeking rewards and avoiding punishments" (p. 46). Organizations control the structure of how achievements are honored.

To praise, acknowledge, recognize, and appreciate positive accomplishments, an individual values a person's achievement. According to Brun and Dugas (2008) and Crowley (2011), respect, acknowledgment, and fulfillment are needed in the workplace. Brown (2018) shared that people need to stop and celebrate each other's victories, no matter how small. People want to know whether they are doing a good job and whether their work is worth something to the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). By taking

the time to get to know employees, leaders can genuinely recognize positive achievements taking place in the workplace (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Marzano et al. (2001) also shared that affirmation is when leaders recognize and honor accomplishments and acknowledge failures. Recognitions are reminders and opportunities to inform the team what values are honored (Marzano et al., 2001). A simple gesture shows employees they are being seen and valued (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Several authors have shared that employers who express care to their employees impact engagement (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Gebauer et al., 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Crowley (2011) shared that workers who feel cared for produce better results and financial gain. Gebauer et al. (2008) stated to engage employees, employers need to model a sense of pride for their work and genuinely care about their employees' well-being. Employers' expressing concern for others is linked to recognition, which impacts employees' outcomes (Brun & Dugas, 2008).

Valuing and honoring achievements can be done through monetary and nonmonetary rewards. According to Brun and Dugas (2008), regularly informing employees of strategic plans involving participation and feedback, providing flexible work scheduling, promoting internal growth development, and modeling supporting team members are rewards. They also recognize employees publicly, setting up programs to reward innovation, collecting letters from the staff of positive encouragement and gratitude show how employers can add nonmonetary rewards in an organization (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Crowley (2011) stated these perks are more powerful than momentary rewards. Kirby et al. (1992) shared extraordinary leaders spend less emphasis on external rewards and focus more on raising followers to advance in their careers. By valuing and

honoring achievements, employers increase their sense of usefulness and increase their job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011).

By incorporating Crowley's four heartfelt principles in schools, leaders are equipped to build an environment of engaged, caring, meaningful, and purposeful individuals (Crowley, 2011). When leaders engage their employees, followers thrive to grow more internally (Murari, 2015). When they connect personally to their team members, care and concern with love are valued and transparent, building trust (Gelb, 2017). Leaders maximizing an employee's potential is looking at each team with the lens of finding each team member's strengths and talents to grow professionally (Maxwell & Maxwell, 2005). Finally, honoring by recognition and appreciation showcases their purpose and importance in the organization's mission and values (Marzano et al., 2001). Connecting these principles with a leader's leadership style establishes leaders prepared to lead change and be effective change agents in their schools (Crowley, 2011).

The leadership theories in this study align with Crowley's heart-led principles. Luthans and Avolio's (2003) seminal work on authentic leadership models one's self-interests and motivation that inspire followers to do the same, similar to Crowley's principle of building an engaged team by inviting employees to create a deep connection in their self-worth and contribution to their organization (Crowley, 2011). Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership builds on leaders serving others before meeting their own needs. Helping others instead of one's self-interest is selfless leadership. By connecting on a personal level, leaders build a relationship with their followers to grow more. In emotional leadership, Goleman et al. (2013) shared that knowing their own emotions motivates team members to recognize others who lead them to maximize an employee's

potential. Additionally, in transformational leadership, Bass and Riggio (2006) stated recognizing and appreciating followers among other facets of idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration leads leaders to transform their organization. Crowley's heart-led principles are intertwined among various leadership theories and seminal authors, making it an ideal framework for leaders.

Charter School Executive Directors

A charter school executive director's leadership style may possess a variety of different approaches using one or several leadership theories. One of the shared values of charter leaders is being the driver of their mission and vision statements. They conduct their school based on the mission of the school (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). The charter school leaders follow this mission and vision to drive instruction, engagement, and passion for meeting the school's needs. Depending on the school's mission and vision, the charter school executive director may need to collect a variety of resources and tools to fit the nature of their school (Campbell & Grubb, 2008).

Unique Demands of Charter School Executive Directors

Charter executives need to recruit students and teachers, find monetary resources, and manage their budget because of not having a district office like traditional schools (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). Many charter schools turn to charter management companies to help guide them through the accountability and financial management needed for charter schools. Charter schools undergo a rigorous charter renewal process that is necessary to complete every 3 to 5 years. Through this process, the charter executive director, teachers, parents, and other public or private sectors collect data and

evidence to provide to the authorizing district and seek approval to continue operating (Crawford, 2001).

However, even with the obstacles to manage budgets, facilities, and instructional rigor, charter schools continue to grow in creation each year (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Carpenter & Peak, 2013; Dressler, 2001; Perry, 2008). In addition to finding facilities, they negotiate with vendors, and hiring of staff requires constant communication with board members, parents, and charter authorizers (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). According to Hess (2001), the most commonly monitored items for charter schools are finances, compliance, and achievement oversight. Charter schools can be closed because of not meeting goals provided to their authorizing district, which may provide additional pressure on charter leaders (Hess, 2001). Charter school executive directors may lack the leadership skills to run all aspects of their schools.

Staff and Student Populations

Because charter schools are public schools, students and teachers are welcome to enroll or apply to schools within their attendance boundaries. Students who would like to attend charter schools need to register during the registration period. Charter schools review their enrollment capacity and see whether space is available. If space is limited, charter schools find opportunities for students to find a school that meets their needs. Non-classroom-based charter schools may also offer enrollment availability outside of their authorizing county because they are not bound by a facility or building (Guarino, Zimmer, Krop, & Chau, 2005).

The staff populations at charter schools also meet the same credential requirements and guidelines as traditional schools. Teachers in California must be

credentialed for both general education and special education. Recruiting teachers for charter schools is based on the school's student enrollment, similar to traditional schools (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). However, the difference between sustaining teachers all ties with student enrollment and attendance. The budget in a charter school is determined based on student enrollment and attendance because funding from state and federal grants are not available to charters (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). This makes it a little hard to maintain good teachers with the uncertainly of the schools' longevity (Campbell & Gross, 2008). These are challenges that many charter school executive directors face. Campbell and Gross (2008) shared these are also qualities that charter school executive directors have less confidence and experience in maneuvering because of the lack of training and experience. Many teachers also are attracted to charter schools because of the autonomy and flexibility of leadership management (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). According to Campbell and Grubb (2008), charter school management aims to allow teachers the autonomy to be innovative and creative and use their professional judgement as an educator.

Leadership Requirements

Charter school executive directors do not have specific education or experience requirements to lead a charter school. According to Perry (2008), 80% of charter school executive directors have degrees in education. The same number have taken courses in leadership, curriculum, instruction, law, and development. Almost one-third are new to administration and 58% are in their first 4 years as a principal (Perry, 2008). Additionally, Campbell and Grubb (2008) found a study from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that suggested 30% of charter school leaders have managed

a school for 2 or fewer years and 19% of charter directors with 10 or more years' experience.

Dressler (2001) and Perry (2008) stated charter school leadership is a different kind of opportunity from a traditional principalship. According to Perry's (2008), Quick's (2020), and Campbell and Gross's (2009) studies found that charter leaders are young and lack experience. However, various authors have also shared the same observations with the most significant setbacks being able to navigate through "difficulty regarding acquiring resources and recruiting and retaining teachers and students" (Cravens, Goldring, & Penaloza, 2012, p. 465). According to Perry (2008), the most prominent skills charter school leaders need to learn are business skills and education experience, depending on the school's mission and vision.

Many authors have shared there is not an adequate preparation program available to charter school executive directors. Farkas, Johnson, and Duffett found that 67% of principals felt their principal education program did not prepare them for their role as an educational leader (Dressler, 2001). Campbell and Gross (2008) surveyed 78 charter school executive directors and found the most challenging for them to be locating facilities, raising funds, and managing facilities. Additionally, they had the lowest confidence in leading the instructional component of reading and math (Campbell & Gross, 2008). Also, the same study shared that charter executive directors spent considerably less time on external development and had low confidence in their abilities to influence parents (Quick, 2020). According to the National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP), in a study of 238 charter schools, charter school executive directors have a plethora of leadership responsibilities (Perry, 2008).

Common Values and Purpose of Charter School Executive Directors

Charter school executive directors have shared values and purpose with their colleagues. According to Quick (2020), charter school leaders have many roles to play, including teacher, principal, superintendent, and reporting to the board. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools stated charter leaders are "multi-faceted and mission-driven, requiring great passion, resourcefulness and resiliency" (Perry, 2008, p. 14). Charter school executive directors' common goals that need to be addressed are student achievement and accountability, building a team, and being financially responsible for the school's longevity.

Like any public school's core foundation, charter schools ensure students are learning and succeeding. Young and Carpenter (2008) stated a commitment to students in the heart of their "higher calling" (p. 297). Hallinger and Heck (1998) and Leithwood and Riehl (2003) stated that excellent schools will likely find an excellent principal, but a failing school will probably have weak leadership. Crawford (2001) shared that the implementation of charter schools was to be more responsive to the needs of students and parents by having the autonomy to be more innovative, flexible, and rigorous in their educational program approach to students and parents to gain student achievement.

Like many districts, charter schools are mission driven and build teams centered on the values and principles of the school. According to Perry (2008), charter school leaders require passion, ingenuity, and resiliency. To build a team, several authors shared charter school leaders need to develop and inspire trust (Covey, 2012; Perry, 2008; Quick, 2020). They further explained that leaders must provide individual support by helping their teams build self-competence, commitment, and strength to overcome

challenges (Quick, 2020). A Campbell and Grubb (2008) study showed that charter

school leaders were 94% very or primarily confident in their ability to "engage staff to

work toward a common vision" (p. 14). Engaging staff through professional growth,

recognition, and fulfillment inspires employees to stay loyal and highly productive

(Kerfoot, 2007). Kerfoot (2007) stated that when leaders are engaged, staff members also

tend to mimic the characteristics of their leaders. Building a team of charter school

executive directors may require promoting mission and vision, engaging, modeling, and

connecting to each staff member to see results.

Additionally, charter school executive directors look to the longevity and

sustainability of their charter school. Charter schools are not guaranteed to remain open

each year. Each charter school must undergo a process to renew its charter every 3 to 5

years. Carpenter and Peak (2013) shared that if charter schools cannot meet the

expectations for their charter agreement, they will be forced to close. Charter school

executive directors must also ensure enough enrollment and funding to support their

school's existence (Carpenter & Peak, 2013; Dressler, 2001). Consoletti (2011) shared

that one of the biggest concerns executive directors faced was financial resources and that

most closed because of managing financial hardship. According to the NCSRP survey,

almost 10% of charter leaders cannot take on the responsibility of managing the finances

at their school, which results in many executive directors leaving their schools (Campbell

& Grubb, 2008).

Leadership in Charter Schools

Leadership in charter schools is like those in any public school. They may

perform various leadership styles depending on their personality and characteristics

(Griffith, 1999). In addition, to be mission driven, charter school executive directors need to ensure students are learning and teachers are engaged. According to Huguet (2017), principals play an active role in collaborating with teachers to realize that leaders are devoted to their students' academic growth. As leaders, they constantly plan for alternative strategies between environmental demands and respond to their organization (Hanson, 1979). It is the leader's main reason to lead a school by doing everything necessary to ensure students are learning and teachers have the resources and tools to succeed (Young & Carpenter, 2008). Dressler (2001) identified four areas of accountability of charter schools: (a) student achievement, (b) standards and curriculum, (c) assessment, and (d) consequences. Leaders influence positive student achievement by making it possible to have the resources, collaboration, and process to teach their students well (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

As charter leaders, engaging employees makes an impact on the success of the school. Griffith (1999) shared that the primary role principals have is providing a supportive environment where teachers can make mistakes, try new things, and trust their principals and colleagues. By leaders modeling how to increase engagement, staff members can channel that approach toward their colleagues and students (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Setting the example engages staff members to enhance their sustainability in the school and opens the door to possibilities of growth and fulfillment in the workplace. Engaging employees also allows leaders to strengthen their culture, core values, and norms, promoting the school to respect, trust, and appreciate their school's mission. In addition to setting the examples as trustworthy citizens, leaders give opportunities for the staff members to have a voice and be exclusive (Leithwood & Riehl,

2003). The leadership variable in charter schools is among the most important (Sarason, 1999).

Leadership Preparation for Charter School Executive Directors

Leadership preparation for charter school executive directors across Central and Southern California varies. Because formalized preparation programs are not mandated, many aspiring leaders turn to mentors or sign up for formal administration preparation programs to grasp the concept of leading a school. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2021) conventional leadership programs lack vision, purpose, and connectedness skills. Farkas, Johnson, and Duffett discovered that 67% of principals felt their programs did not prepare them in building relationships, change processes, professional development, and structuring consistency (Perry, 2008). For charter school leaders, many of whom come from different backgrounds and have other gaps in their experience, an intense preparation program that identifies what they need to make them successful is necessary (Perry, 2008).

Campbell and Grubb (2008) shared that charter school executive directors recognize they require different or more training in their role. In the 13 charter school leadership programs that the NCSRP surveyed, the topics that were covered on core coursework were leadership skills, human resources, charter law, legal issues, charter financial, special education, academic accountability, building management, and charter renewal (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). NCSRP research stated that even with additional training on instructional components, the one training piece for charter schools is financial aspects for the staff (Campbell & Gross, 2008). To meet the unique demands of

charter schools, utilizing preparation programs may decrease the leadership gap and provide more opportunities to build a culture of engagement and sustainability.

Extraordinary Results in Schools

Kirby et al. (1992) investigated 53 graduate students working in 13 local school districts as teachers and administrators in public schools, nine of whom identified characteristics of extraordinary leadership in their lifetime. They described them as "caring, personable, supportive, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and optimistic and committed" (p. 307). The researchers concluded that extraordinary leaders modeled attitudes and behaviors and took extreme measures to support goals. The authors concluded that a leader's commitment to the shared vision might explain followers' emotional connection to the leader (Kirby et al., 1992). Leaders who build an environment of value, emotional connection, fulfillment, and meaning see extraordinary results in their organizations (Sergiovanni, 1990).

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Summary

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Chapter II was a review of the current literature addressing the failure of public schools even with educational reforms. The literature shows a different leadership model is needed to meet the needs of charter school executive directors. Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles of building a highly engaged team, connecting personally, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievement positively impact leaders in organizations. Engagement in organizations produces a higher level of productivity among staff and a deeper connection to the organization's mission and values (Gebauer et al., 2008; Groysberg & Slind, 2012b; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Connecting on a personal level deepens the emotional connection between leaders

and their staff, allowing them to feel more connected to the organization (J. E. Glaser, 2016; Groysberg & Slind, 2012b; Sergiovanni, 1990; Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). Also, when maximizing employee potential, leaders motivate, mentor, and inspire their followers to grow professionally or personally to levels they might only imagine (Gebauer et al., 2008; Huguet, 2017). Additionally, valuing and honoring achievement provides the follower fulfillment and purpose, making work meaningful and purposeful (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2005; Kirby et al., 1992). Crowley's four heart-led principles create an environment for effective leadership, allowing an organization to witness extraordinary results (Ibarra, 2016; Jackson, 2019; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Kirby et al., 1992; Sergiovanni, 1990). Leaders leading with the heart transform their organizations into witnessing extraordinary results within their schools (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020; Kirby et al., 1992). As public schools continue to find ways to reform education, charter school executive directors must lead through their hearts using Crowley's four principles.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III describes the methodology used to conduct this research study. The study described the lived experiences exemplary charter school executive directors do to lead from the heart using Crowley's four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The phenomenological study provides a deeper understanding of the characteristics, attitudes, and presence of the everyday experiences of charter school executive directors (Patton, 2015). This qualitative study examines charter school executive directors' perspectives on their role in leading from the heart. This chapter begins with the purpose and research questions. It examines the phenomenological research design, population, and sample method to select participants. Chapter III then reviews the data collection, including interviews and methods of data analysis. Additionally, this chapter includes the study's limitations and concludes with a summary of the methodology used in the research study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

4. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Research Design

A research design is a process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Research design is the overall structure of the study whereas research methods are the various procedures, processes, and tools to gather and analyze the data (Creswell, 2007). Essentially there are two main research designs: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research designs focus more on gathering data on "naturally occurring phenomena" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 23). The main designs included in qualitative research are ethnographic, phenomenological, case study, grounded theory, and critical studies. The design used for this study was a qualitative phenomenological study as it provides a systematic subjective manner to describe the lived experiences of charter school executive directors that allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the motives and reasons of the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This phenomenological study focused on answering questions regarding lived experiences and strategies of leading by the heart as

perceived by Crowley based on the four heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting personally, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). A qualitative research design is most appropriate for this research study. It allows the researcher to describe the lived experiences of the exemplary charter school executive directors who lead from the heart.

Research Methods

The method chosen for this research study was a qualitative phenomenological research design that identified the lived experiences by exemplary charter school executive directors leading with the heart. The qualitative phenomenological research design looks for answers by collecting evidence through observations, in-depth interviews, and focus groups (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). Qualitative research is also personal and delivers information about the human side of issues (Mack et al., 2005). A researcher does this by gathering information through conversations, stories, lived experiences, and field notes and may use multiple pathways such as artifacts and observations to collect the information. Once the data were collected, the researcher transcribed the data and categorized information by themes. Qualitative research may take time to collect and analyze, and results will consist of a deeper understanding of the research question.

Method Rationale

Qualitative and quantitative research designs both find answers to a researcher's inquiry. Qualitative is personal; it goes beyond numbers and describes emotions, attitudes, and beliefs (Patton, 2015). Quantitative proves the question by analyzing data and comparing data with evidence from surveys or data sets. In contrast, quantitative

research tries to determine relationships and explain reasons for change among outcomes in an inquiry. Qualitative study is concerned with understanding and describing the phenomenon from people's lived experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

A phenomenological approach was used in this study to capture a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of charter school executive directors. The qualitative research method used in this study aided in describing how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and value and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in organizations. A qualitative research design is most appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to describe the lived experiences of the exemplary charter school executive directors who model lead from the heart. The research methods of interview and artifact collection provided rich stories of the participants' experiences supported by artifacts that document strategies used to lead from the heart.

Population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific standard and to which the research intends to generalize the results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The population for this study consisted of executive directors in K-12 charter schools in California. According to Dressler (2001), charter school executive directors "are called principals, headmasters, or executive directors . . . the principal's major task is to make a positive difference as evidenced in the learning of students, parents, and all associated with the school" (p. 173). Additionally, charter school executive directors manage the operational,

instructional, and financial aspects that drive the shared vision and mission daily in the

school (Carpenter & Peak, 2013). For this study's purpose, charter school executive

directors are people who oversee the school's infrastructure, instructional program,

operational departments, and financial management, driving the school's shared vision

and mission for students, parents, and staff. According to the National Alliance for

Public Charter Schools, approximately 1,300 charter schools exist in California (David,

2018). Within these 1,300 charter schools, charter school executive directors may be

servicing in education management organizations (EMO), charter management

organizations (CMO), or independent charter schools (see Figure 1).

EMO	• Education Mangament Organizations • With a for-profit tax status • 4% of California charter schools
CMO	• Charter Managment Organizaitons • With non-profit tas status • 24% of California charter schools
Independent	• Independent Freestanding Organizations • Indepdently managed • 72% of California charter schools
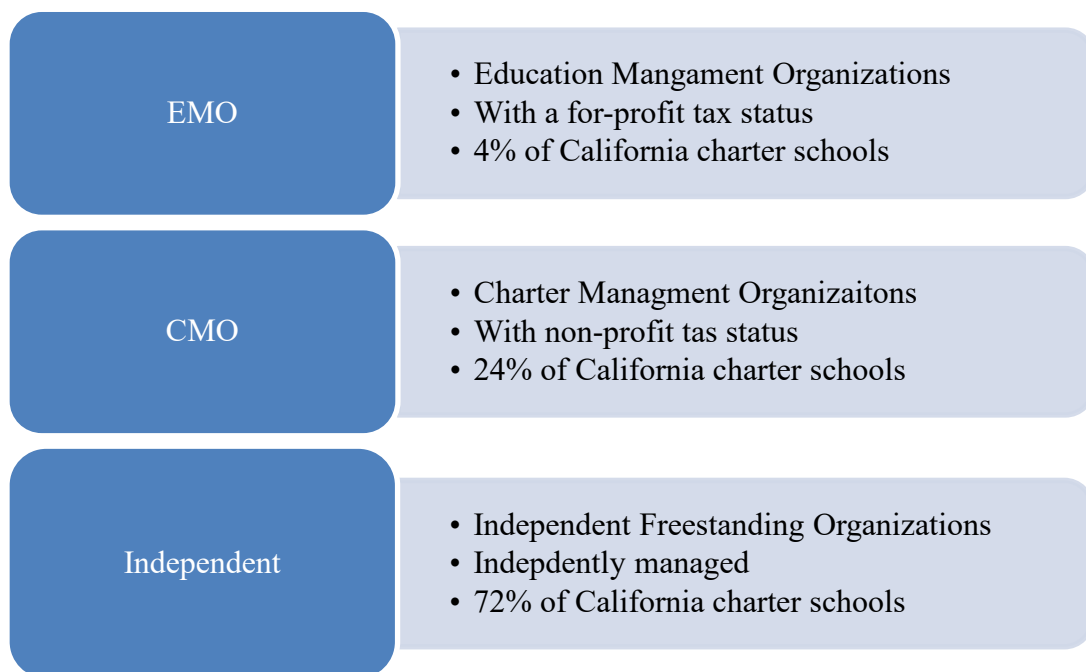
Figure 1. National charter school management overview. Adapted from *National Charter School Management Overview, 2016-17*, by R. David, 2018 (https://www.publiccharters. org/our-work/publications/national-charter-school-management-overview-2016-17).

According to David (2018), there are currently 121 CMO/EMO and 936

independent charter school executive directors, with 1,057 charter school executive

directors in California. The difference between the 1,300 charter schools and 1,057

charter school executive directors is 243, which signifies there are 243 charter executive

directors who oversee multiple charter schools in California. The population for this

study was 1,057 charter school executive directors in California.

Sampling Frame/Target Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a target population for a study is

the entire set of participants chosen from the overall population of the study data to be

used to make inferences. A target population is determined based on the research study's

overall population. The target population is used to define the population and is

generalized to describe the overall population. It is essential to identify the target

population clearly in a research study. Because of time or cost constraints, it is typically

not possible to a study large population; thus, the researcher chose a target population

from within a larger group. The target population for this research study was identified

as charter school executive directors in Central and Southern California in Fresno,

Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties. With 1,057 charter school executive

directors in California, it was not feasible to use such a large population because of time,

location, and financial constraints. The target population for this study was narrowed to

371 charter school executive directors in Central and Southern California counties of

Fresno, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange. Interviews were held virtually using Zoom

Video Communications, a cloud-based video conferencing tool. This was primarily due

to the participants' safety and health concerns because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sample

A sample is a group of individuals in a study selected from the population from which the researcher aims to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In a qualitative research study, sampling depends on the purpose of the study, time allotment, and monetary resources (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In qualitative research, a plethora of sampling methods may be used to conduct a study. For this study, nonprobability sampling methods of purposive and criteron sampling were used based on their characteristics and alignment to the study.

In nonprobability sampling, there is no random selection of participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Patten and Newhart (2018), nonprobability sampling does not warrant each participant in a population will have an opportunity to be selected. Purposeful sampling is a technique used in qualitative research for identifying information from participants with a limited amount of resources (Patton, 2015). It involves identifying and selecting groups of people experienced with the phenomenon of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Additionally, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) stated the importance of participants being willing to communicate and share their opinions in a meaningful and insightful manner. For this research study, participants were selected based on their experience and knowledge toward the purpose, research questions, and the study's phenomenon. The participants were identified as exemplary in their field of occupation to ensure the data collected would be reliable and in alignment with the study's purpose.

Criterion sampling was also used in conjunction with purposeful sampling to ensure participants met the criteria of exemplary charter school executive directors.

Criterion sampling is a form of purposeful sampling based on meeting the studied

measure (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Patten and Newhart (2018), "It

is a standard or principle used to judge" (p. 129). This sampling approach provides a

quality assurance standard to an information or monitoring system (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010). Criterion sampling provides predetermined criterion attributes

identified for qualitative assessment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The criteria used

for this study included eight exemplary charter school executive directors who

demonstrated at least four of the following criteria; the first three were required.

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization

2. A minimum of 3 years' experience as a charter school executive director

3. Evidence of extraordinary results

4. Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences of
   association meetings

5. Recognition by peers

6. Membership in professional association in their field

Qualitative research approaches typically require a smaller sample size. The

sample size should be large enough to collect feedback from all of the perspectives that

will lead to the collection of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants

to the study does not result in additional views or information. B. Glaser and Strauss

(1967) suggested saturation when reaching a sample size in qualitative research. Other

research authors also shared similar suggestions as to determining sample sizes for

qualitative research. Creswell (2007) recommended five to 25 participants whereas

Morse (2007) recommended at least six to 10. There is no specific rule as to how many

participants should be included in a qualitative research study. It may be best to determine the time allotted, available resources, and the study's purpose when determining sample size (Patton, 2015). The sample size for this phenomenological study was eight.
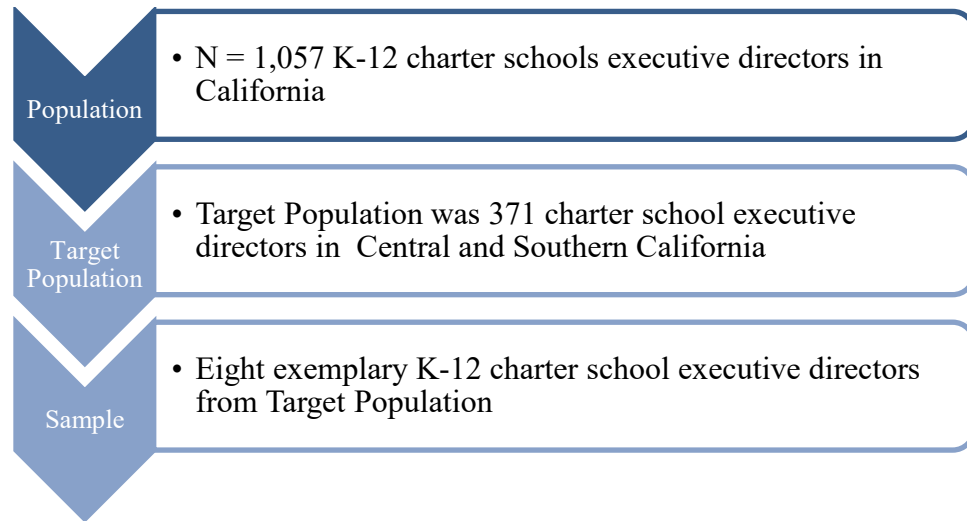
Figure 2. Population, target population, and sample.

Sample Selection Process

The sample selection of participants for this research study began with identifying an expert panel familiar with charter school executive directors in California. The panel members were asked to nominate possible participants based on the criteria using their knowledge of charter school executive directors. The panel included

1. Dr. Cindy Petersen

2. Dr. Laurie Goodman

Both individuals have developed, managed, and strategically planned the structure of their charter organizations and networked with various charter leaders in the charter sector (see Appendix A). Dr. Petersen has been a superintendent/CEO and director of

charter schools for over 21 years and is involved with various charter organizations. Dr. Goodman has over 14 years' experience as superintendent and charter school executive director and is involved with numerous charter organizations, including Charter Schools Development Center (CSDC) and Homeschool Association of California (HSC). The following steps were taken to determine the selection of participants for the study.

1. The expert panel member was asked to nominate eight charter school executives perceived as meeting the study criteria as exemplary.

2. The researcher created a list of prospective participants who had been nominated by both panel experts.

3. The researcher than checked social media, web sites, and professional sources to validate that the participants met the criteria.

4. The researcher presented the potential list of participants to the faculty team and met to discuss and verify that it was a valid list.

5. Once it was determined that candidates met the criteria, the researcher contacted each nomination by email telling them about the study and asked for their assistance.

6. Candidates were then contacted by telephone at their office to seek agreement to be involved in the research study.

7. During the phone conversation, the purpose and benefits of the study were discussed. IRB information was presented and possible risks, privacy with involvement, and questions were answered during the initial phone conversation.

8. After the potential candidates agreed to their participation, they received the invitation letter (Appendix B), interview guide (Appendix C), Informed Consent and

Audio Recording Release (Appendix D), and UMASS Global Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix E).

9. Interview appointments were scheduled for 45 to 60 minutes through Zoom based on the participant's schedule.

10. Interviews were recorded on a digital device (Appendix D) by the researcher and transcribed. The interview included a verbal confirmation of consent, which was included in the Zoom recording and transcript for verification.

Instrumentation

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), qualitative data are collected in various ways such as interviews, observation, focus groups, or other methods of data collection that are more extensive than those used in quantitative data. Instrumentation is critical in a qualitative study. A qualitative study involves practice writing open-ended questions and training (Chenail, 2011). The researcher served as the instrument for interviews, observations, and the artifacts' analysis, which may threaten the study's validity and formulate bias (Chenail, 2011). Patten and Newhart (2018) stated that it is essential for an interviewer to maintain neutrality when questioning wording because it may affect the interview session referred to or self-disclosure. When conducting a qualitative research study, the researcher is an instrument in the process. The researcher's personality, characteristics, and method of conducting interviews may influence data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Because of this influence, a research study may contain some bias based on the researchers' personal experience when examining a setting like their own (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). The researcher conducted a qualitative semistructured open-ended interview with the research

participants. The interview questions and responses were conducted through video conferencing and recorded digitally using a handheld device. The peer researchers in the thematic collaborated with faculty members and developed interview questions for the study using the following steps:

1. Identified Crowley's four heart-led principles

2. Divided the four heart-led principles among four research teams, each with three to four team members

3. Each thematic team member defined the heart-led principle using research from seminal authors (see synthesis matrix in Appendix F); the thematic team met numerous times until there was agreement on the definitions.

4. The next step was for each thematic team member to identify the subvariables within each definition using research from seminal authors.

5. Thematic team members convened, reviewed, revised, and finally agreed upon final subvariables within the definitions.

6. Thematic team members then developed concept papers to ground the operational definition for each term or phrase discussed

7. Each thematic team member wrote a concept paper for each subdefinition and produced three questions and a probe to each question based on these definitions in the concept papers.

8. This process ensured that the thematic team aligned potential questions to the primary definition of each heart-led principle and subvariables within that definition.

9. Each thematic team member then drafted interview questions from each definition of heart-led principles using the subvariables as a content guide.

10. The thematic team convened, reviewed, revised, and agreed upon final interview questions and probes aligned with research questions and definitions.

11. Following review by the faculty chairs, team members drafted a script for the interview process.

The thematic team finalized 12 open-ended questions with three questions for each of Crowley's four heart-led principles (building an engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). The questions were based on the review of the literature and Crowley's four heart-led principles. The thematic research team met to do a final review and reached agreement on the final version of the interview instrument and script.

Researcher as Study Instrument

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument (Patten & Newhart, 2018; Patton, 2015), bringing personal bias to the study. The researcher of this study has over 15 years of experience as an educator. Ten of those 15 years have been as a charter school leader and educator. In this capacity, the researcher has performed numerous leadership development and training programs in her organization. Through these professional duties, the researcher has developed an understanding of and potential bias concerning the role of charter school executives. The researcher conducted the interviews with charter school executive directors through Zoom. The transcripts were then provided to the participants to review accuracy to ensure the charter school executive directors were embodied and quoted with precision and objectivity.

In this qualitative phenomenological research design, semistructured open-ended interviews were conducted. Patten and Newhart (2018) stated that semistructured interviews are popular because interview questions are constructed beforehand, but interviewers may probe for further detail, unlike in structured interviews. Semistructured interviews are open-ended questions, and probing is allowed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing or field-testing is a vital step in conducting a research study (Hazzi & Maldaon, 2015). According to Porta (2008), the definition of a pilot test is "a small scale test of the methods and procedures to be used on a large scale" (p. 320). By conducting a pilot test, one reveals any logistical problems before conducting the main study, which helps the researcher modify the actual research (Hazzi & Maldaon, 2015). Before conducting a pilot test, an interview guide was also formulated in advance and tested during the field test.

According to Nelson and Slater (2013), an interview guide or interview protocol is created in advance. This allowed the interviewer to capture the descriptions from the charter school executive directors with the opportunity to dig deeper. It also helped the interviewer rephrase questions if the interviewee was unsure of the question being asked. The predetermined questions were used to guide the conversation and offer opportunity for the interviewee to describe in more detail their lived experiences (Patten & Newhart, 2018). The questions asked helped the researcher receive more in-depth knowledge of the support the charter school executive directors had in place and how they overcome gaps in preparedness.

Each member of the thematic team was tasked with conducting a pilot test with a participant who met the study criteria but was not included as a participant in the study. The participant for the pilot test was chosen based on the study's criteria of exemplary charter school executive director. As a part of the pilot, the research collected three forms of feedback to check the reliability and validity of the interview instrument. An independent observer of the test interview was asked to provide feedback using the observer's feedback reflection form (Appendix G). The participant was asked to evaluate the interview process and content using field-test participant feedback form (Appendix H). Finally, each researcher used the interview feedback reflection form (Appendix I) to conduct a self-assessment of the interview. The researcher gathered the data and presented it to the thematic team for further review. In addition, each team member from the thematic group met to discuss the pilot test, feedback from observers, participants, and researchers. The thematic team reviewed and made final revisions to the interview instrument after a review with faculty advisors.

Validity and Reliability

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), validity "is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between participants and the researcher" (p. 330). Validity in qualitative research is dependent on the instrument construction of what is measured, and that the measurement is applicable (Patton, 2015). A variety of strategies were used to increase the validity of the qualitative study, including multiple researchers, multimethod strategy, and participant review (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Multiple Researchers

The strategy of multiple researchers consists of an agreement on descriptive data gathered by a research team (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is one way to enhance validity in a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Multiple measures were used in this study with the 14 thematic team members collecting data, literature review, pilot test, and revisions that enabled the team to implement the interview process for this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This strategy enabled the research team to collaborate on the definitions for the study and identified the variables for the study collectively. In this process, four university professors provided their expertise and guidance to navigate the validation of the instrument and interview process, variable definitions, and the conditions of an exemplary leader. Brink (1993) stated external validity represents reality rightfully across groups.

Participant Review

After each interview, the researcher transcribed the recordings and notes onto a Word document that was then sent for the participant to review for accuracy. The researcher reviewed the transcript prior to sending it to the participant for review. In participant review, the researcher asked the participant to review the interview transcript for accuracy (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The participants were asked to review the transcript and send any corrections to the researcher within a week. The corrected transcripts and transcripts not needing modifications were analyzed and synthesized for themes.

Multimethod Strategies

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "Validity in qualitative research refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world" (p. 330). The primary method of collecting data in this study was the use of in-depth interviews. Multimethod strategies allow triangulation of data across investigation techniques, such as observations, artifacts, and field notes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Flick (2004) shared that triangulation combines data from different sources, times, places, and different people. It circumvents the personal bias of researchers and a single researcher's validity of the study (Brink, 1993). Using different strategies enabled the researcher to have different perspectives of the findings that the data collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the results being similar over different forms of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The instruments used for reliability consist of internal, external, and intercoder processes that test reliability to produce similar results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher stated a pilot test can successfully identify needed changes to the instrument and provide feedback to improve the clarity of the questions. A pilot test was conducted to witness the validity and reliability of the research questions.

Internal Reliability

The research team collectively formulated the study's purpose, research questions, variables, definitions, and the instruments used for the data collection. Having 14 research team members reduces the probability of bias in the data analysis. For this

phenomenological study, the research team designed a semistructured open-ended interview instrument. The participants were asked the same questions and in the same order with probing allowed. The data were then collected, transcribed, participant reviewed, and then synthesized for themes, which as a result increased the reliability of the study's results consistent with the aspects of measurement (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

A pilot test is necessary to check for bias in the procedures, the interviewer, and the questions. In the pilot test, the procedures should be identical to those implemented in the study. The pilot test provides a means of assessing the length of the interview and gives the researcher some idea of the ease with which the data can be summarized. Interviews result in a much higher response rate than questionnaires, especially for topics that concern personal qualities or negative feelings. The primary disadvantages of the interview are its potential for subjectively and bias, its higher cost and time-consuming nature, and lack of anonymity. Probing for further clarification of an answer is a skill that can lead to an incomplete or inaccurate response. The interviewer should allow sufficient time for the respondent to answer and avoid anticipating and curing a potential answer. Probes should be neutral so they do not affect the nature of the response. A list of questions was asked based on the questions in the survey instrument:

1. Are the questions clear and understandable?

2. Is the scale appropriate to the questions or is less or more responses needed?

3. Is the instrument length appropriate?

4. Are the questions appropriate for both new and experienced administrators?

External Reliability

According to Franklin and Ballan (2001), external reliability is when independent researchers can discover the same themes or the same data under similar settings. External reliability is looking to see whether the data can be replicated and generalized. By conducting a pilot test group, the research team decreases the lack of external reliability (Wildemuth, 2016). Working in a thematic team reduced the risk of bias and assured external reliability in the research study.

Data Collection

According to Patton (2015), qualitative data allow a researcher to describe the participant's lived experiences in the time and place where the phenomenon took place. Semistructured interviews and artifacts enabled the researcher to collect data to describe the lived experience of exemplary charter school executive directors. Recording allows the interview time to focus on building rapport and active listening instead of taking notes and missing opportunities shared (Patton, 2015). Recorded interviews also enable data to be shared among research teams more efficiently. The data were collected for this study in the following manner:

1. Each participant was interviewed in a semistructured open-ended, one-to-one interview through Zoom Video Communications.

2. The data of the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3. In addition to the interviews, artifacts were collected. The artifacts gathered included items as such as agendas, PowerPoint presentations, memos, emails, employee handbooks, professional development, and announcements to staff and students.

4. The data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed into NVivo. They helped support the analysis of the interviews.

Method of Data Collection

To conduct research that involves human subjects, one must meet the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), whose main principles are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). An application was submitted to the IRB with information about the research study and a copy of the certificate indicating the researcher completed the IRB (Appendix J). After approval of the IRB, possible candidates were contacted to seek their involvement in the research study. The researcher emailed and telephoned to contact potential candidates for participation in the research study to begin data collection based on the expert panel recommendations. Once the verbal agreement to participate was confirmed from each candidate, an interview was scheduled at a time and location convenient to the participant. A couple of days before the interview, the researcher emailed a copy of the Informed Consent and Audio Recording Release and the UMASS Global Institutional Review Board's Research Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix E). The researcher collected interview recordings, observations, and artifacts to describe the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors. The semistructured interviews were conducted using one-to-one protocol. The following steps were used to collect data:

1. Participants who met the criteria of exemplary charter school executive directors were identified by responses to a questionnaire created by the thematic team.

2. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from UMASS Global Institutional Review Board (IRB)

3. The researcher telephoned possible participants to seek verbal agreement to participate. A follow-up email was sent to clarify the study's purpose.

4. After approval was granted, interviewees were contacted by telephone to schedule an interview and emailed to confirm the date and time. Interviewees were advised interviews would be approximately 45 to 60 minutes long or possibly longer with permission of the interviewee.

5. Participants were emailed copies of the questions 2 days prior to the interview.

6. Prior to the interview, participants signed an Informed Consent and Audio Recording Release form and were provided with UMASS Global University Institutional Review Board's Research Participant's Bill of Rights.

7. The interviews were recorded digitally using a handheld device to ensure accuracy for data analysis.

8. The interview protocol was read at the beginning of the interview, and participants were reminded of their rights to the interview.

9. Interviews were conducted as a semistructured interview setting. Probes were also used to collect deeper understanding of the lived experiences.

10. At the conclusion of the interview questions, each participant was thanked, and the recording was stopped.

11. Immediately following the interview, the researchers asked participants for artifacts that they would be willing to share to further describe their lived experiences as exemplary charter school executive directors.

12. The interview recordings were confidentiality transcribed, and participants were

    provided with a copy of the transcription to verify the accuracy of their declarations.

Data Analysis

Analyzing data in a qualitative study may take many approaches. Patton (2015) stated that analyzing data consists of a systematic analysis of data, paying attention to credibility issues. Staying open to the data allows data to be represented that may form unexpected patterns (Patton, 2015). Researchers can increase credibility by minimizing bias. For this to occur, the researcher performed data analysis and attempted to find an alternative explanation of the phenomenon of the descriptions of exemplary charter school executive directors. Analyzing the data to find alternative possibilities increases the credibility of findings and decreases researcher bias (Patton, 2015). Data analysis included the following:

1. Transcription of audio recordings

2. Review of data for possible emergent themes

3. Coding data using NVivo software

4. Categorizing codes into themes and creating frequency tables

5. Analysis of emergent themes that describe the lived experiences that exemplary

    charter school executive directors' practice in leading with their heart

Coding of Data

In the coding process, the researcher began to look for themes that answered the research questions of leading with the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles. The researcher scanned each interview and highlighted words or sentences that answered the research question. It was imperative to pay close attention to each interview and

ensure nothing was missed. After reading the interview transcripts a few times, the researcher started to list potential categories and themes that emerged. The researcher used the approach of emergent categories rather than having preconceived themes before reading the transcripts (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003).

Triangulation of Data

Patton (2015) stated, "Triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods" (p. 316). The data collected from semistructured interviews and artifacts were coded separately using NVivo software. NVivo software allows the researcher to store interviews and artifacts data securely and to search through the stored evidence and helps organize and support codes and themes. In coding the themes, frequency was used to measure the number of occurrences of a particular score in a given set of themes (Creswell, 1994). A frequency table was used to organize raw data to show each theme's number of times in the data collected. A frequency table helps display the number of occurrences of a particular theme presented from data collected (Creswell, 1994). It can help identify apparent trends collected from the data. The codes were grouped into themes and compared across all the data sources using the NVivo software, resulting in displaying the evident trends across the interviews and artifacts in the research study.

Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability tests the reliability of the consistency of the measurement (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is a measurement of agreement between multiple coders and the application of the codes to the data (Kurasaki, 2000). In a qualitative study, determining whether the data are measured the same with various researchers is essential to the reliability of the data analysis (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen,

2012). To establish intercoder reliability in the research study, a peer researcher from the thematic team reviewed the transcripts and looked for themes or codes. Next a comparison of both the coding of the peer researcher and researcher was examined for a percentage of agreement. Intercoder reliability requires two or more themes or codes to synthesize whether there were coding discrepancies (Campbell et al., 2012). In this study, a threshold of 80% agreement was chosen to establish intercoder reliability for the transcription. This threshold was appropriate for the research because it is a considerable measure of intercoder reliability.

Limitations

Research studies have limitations. Limitations for any study are potential weaknesses that are out of a researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In a phenomenological study, the generalizability is limited to the research design, model, and constraints to the research (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study is to describe the lived experiences of participants from a certain place and time (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten & Newhart, 2018; Patton, 2015). The phenomenological study limits that no two people would exhibit the same exact experiences the same way.

Study Participant Location

The geographic location of the researcher limits the findings in this study. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted through Zoom Communications. In addition, there were few charter school locations near the researcher that were easily accessible. The target sample was limited to charter schools in Central and Southern California, which stretched from Orange County to Fresno County.

Time

Time was a limitation in this study. Charter school executive directors do not have time to participate in interviews or observations. Each interview could be up to 60 minutes, which was a factor in scheduling the interviews during a school day. Because of the time needed to conduct interviews, the ability of the researcher to conduct multiple interviews and observations was constrained.

Sample Size

The sample size for the qualitative study was a limitation. With eight exemplary charter school executive directors in Central and Southern California, there is a limited scope that was considered for generalizing to the total population. Larger sample size would be able to increase precision (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

Summary

A phenomenological study was used to describe the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors using lead from the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. Chapter III included the purpose, research questions, research design, study population sample criteria, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and limitations. Chapter IV provides detailed descriptions, outcomes of the data, and research findings of the phenomenological study. Finally, Chapter V summarizes the findings and conclusions and provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter IV describes the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors who lead from the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The qualitative study examines charter school executive directors' perspective on leading from the heart through everyday experiences and interactions in their schools. Chapter IV provides the evidence for this study, including the purpose statement, research questions, research methods, data collection procedures, and population for the study. The last section of this chapter provides a presentation and analysis of data and a summary of key findings aligned to the research questions leading the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

4. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The research method used for this research study was a qualitative phenomenological design that identifies the lived experiences by exemplary charter school executive directors leading from the heart. By gathering information through interviews and artifacts, the participants' lived experiences were collected and analyzed for themes. Once the data were collected, it was transcribed and categorized into themes according to each research question. A phenomenological approach was used in this study to capture a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of charter school executive directors. The research method of interviews and collecting artifacts provided rich stories of the participants' experiences and strategies used to lead from the heart.

Data collection for this phenomenological research study consisted of semistructured open-ended, one-to-one interviews through Zoom Video Communications with exemplary charter school executive directors. In addition to the interviews, artifacts were collected. The artifacts gathered were a combination of agendas, PowerPoint presentations, professional development presentations, emails, and so forth. The eight interviews were conducted through Zoom Video Communication at a time that was convenient to the participant's schedule. The eight interviews were the primary source of the evidence collected for the research study; artifacts were used as the secondary data source to show the consistency of findings and evidence across the results.

The semistructured interviews were conducted using one-to-one protocol, consisting of 12 questions with optional probes to provide opportunities for more profound responses. Crowley's four heart-led principles were investigated with three questions with additional probe questions as needed. Before the interview, the participants were provided a copy of the research questions and definitions of the four heart-led principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The questions were developed in conjunction with peer researchers in the thematic study and with faculty members. The duration of the interviews was between 30 to 59 minutes, with an average of 46 minutes.

In addition to the eight interviews collected and transcribed using NVivo systems, there were 22 artifacts collected. The researcher collected 25 artifacts; of these, 22 generated content aligned with Crowley's four heart-led principles leading from the heart.

The artifacts gathered included weekly updates, professional development PowerPoint presentations, email communication, well-being messages, and photographs of motivational quotes. The artifacts were coded using NVivo as a method of triangulation to increase the rationality of the findings.

Population

The population for this study consists of exemplary executive directors in K-12 charter schools in California. According to Dressler (2001), charter school executive directors "are called principals, headmasters, or executive directors . . . the principal's major task is to make a positive difference as evidenced in the learning of students, parents, and all associated with the school" (p. 173). For this study's purpose, charter

school executive directors are people who oversee the school's infrastructure, instructional program, operational departments, and fiscal management driving the school's shared vision and mission for students, parents, and staff.

According to David (2016), there are currently 121 charter management organizations (CMO) and education management organizations (EMO) charter school executive directors and 936 independent charter school executive directors, equaling 1,057 charter school executive directors in California. The population for this study was 1,057 charter school executive directors in California who oversee a charter school network across California. Because of time or cost constraints, it is typically not possible to study a large population; thus, the researcher chose a target population from within a larger group. With 1,057 charter school executive directors in California, the target population for this study was narrowed to 371 charter school executive directors in Central and Southern California counties of Fresno, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange.

Sample

A sample is a group of individuals in a study selected from the population from which the researcher aims to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study used nonprobability methods of purposive and criterion sampling to identify participants for the study. Nonprobability sampling involves identifying and selecting groups of individuals with experiences of the phenomenon in the research study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The participants identified for this research study were selected by an expert panel who nominated each individual by witnessing the heart-led principles of exemplary leadership. Criterion sampling, which provides predetermined criterion attributed for the qualitative assessment, was also used in conjunction with purposeful

sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary charter school executive directors who demonstrated at least four of the following criteria; the first three were required.

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization

2. A minimum of 3 years' experience as a charter school executive director

3. Evidence of extraordinary results

4. Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences of association meetings

5. Recognition by peers

6. Membership in professional association in their field

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) recommended that the sample size for qualitative research be five to 25 participants. Morse (2007) recommended at least six to 10 participants. Because there are no specific criteria as to how many participants are needed in a qualitative research study, the thematic research team considered time allotment, available resources, and the study's purpose to determine the sample size for the study (Patton, 2015). To ensure rich stories and experiences from participants, the thematic team moved forward with eight exemplary charter school executive directors as the sample size for this study. This was generated from the target population of 371 charter school executive directors in Central and Southern California counties of Fresno, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange.

Demographic Data

Respondents were referenced by pseudonyms and not by name, work, location, or employer to ensure confidentially. Each participant was assigned a numbers 1 through 8.

Each participant also met at least four of the criteria to be considered exemplary, with the first three being required. Table 1 shows the researcher's criteria to verify that each participant met the requirements identified as exemplary.

Table 1

Exemplary Criteria of Participating Charter School Executive Directors

Study Participant	Evidence of caring for people in the organization	A minimum of 3 years' experience as a charter school executive director	Evidence of extraordinary results	Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences association meetings	Recognition by peers	Membership in professional association in their field
1	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	X	X	X		X	X
4	X	X	X	X	X	X
5	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	X	X	X			X
8	X	X	X		X	X

Presentation and Analysis of Data

A qualitative data analysis collected from eight exemplary charter school executive directors resulted in the findings of how the exemplary leaders used Crowley's four heart-led principles, building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data increases the credibility of findings and decreases researcher bias (Patton, 2015). The semistructured open-ended interviews were conducted using Zoom Communications with the transcription feature available through its settings. Additionally, a separate handheld device was used to record as a backup. The data were then transcribed and downloaded as a PDF and sent to participants to confirm their accuracy to the interview. Once transcripts were approved and validated, the researcher uploaded transcripts into NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The data was coded for themes relating to Crowley's four heart-led principles. After coding each interview and artifact, the number of sources and frequencies provided the data for each theme and were synthesized. The researcher further reviewed the data for key findings leading to conclusions of the data collected.

Research Questions

For this qualitative research study, the thematic team established four questions related to Crowley's heart-led principles:

1. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

4. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

To conduct the research study, the researcher used interviews and coded artifacts for themes related to the four heart-led principles. The interviews consisted of eight semistructured interviews with 12 questions each. All interviews were conducted using Zoom video conferences and were completed Monday through Saturday between 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. The artifacts collected included weekly updates, professional development PowerPoint presentations, email communication, well-being messages, and photographs of motivational quotes. Coding resulted in 21 themes and 409 frequencies. Themes were constructed based on the information presented during interviews and artifacts. The calculation of frequencies was established by adding all artifacts and interviews together. Building an engaged team and connecting on a personal level generated six themes. Valuing and honoring achievements were coded with five themes, and maximizing employee potential presented with four themes. Combined, the coding process revealed 21 themes.

Based on the 409 frequencies coded, connecting on a personal level had 129 frequencies representing 31% of the total frequencies. The second highest frequency was building a highly engaged team with 28% of the 114 frequencies coded. The third highest frequency came from valuing and honoring achievements with 25% of the 102 frequencies coded. Maximizing employee potential came with the fewest frequencies with a percentage of 16% and coded at 64. Frequency refers to the number of times from the interview sources and artifacts that the theme was referred to. Figure 3 represents the number of frequency codes and themes within the four heart-led principles.

FREQUENCY OF CODING OF EACH PRINCIPLE

- Building a highly engaged team
- Connecting on a personal level
- Maximizing employee potential
- Valuing and honoring achievements

Valuing and honoring achievements 25%

Building a highly engaged team 28%

Maximizing employee potential 16%

Connecting on a personal level 31%

5 themes
102 frequencies

6 themes
114 frequencies

4 themes
64 frequencies

6 themes
129 frequencies

Figure 3. Number of frequencies and themes coded in each heart-led principle.

Research Question 1

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

Building a highly engaged team was defined as using strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging, where relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision, and where values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees et al., 2013; Senge et al., 2007). The coding for themes in building a highly engaged team resulted in six themes and had 114 references. Building a highly engaged team generated the second highest number of frequencies with a percentage of 28% of all

thematic codes. Table 2 represents the interview and artifacts number of times for each

theme for this heart-led principle.

Table 2

Building an Engaged Team Themes

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency
Communicating with staff members builds authentic relationships	8	4	12	28
Working alongside staff	7	1	8	24
Involving staff members in projects that impact school success	7	2	9	23
By being transparent builds an emotional connection with staff members	6	0	6	14
Providing personalized professional development for staff members	8	0	8	14
Hiring employees who are a right fit	7	0	7	11

Communicating with staff members builds authentic relationships. The

theme was referenced 28 times in 12 sources. This theme represented 25%, the most

prominent frequency for the heart-led principle of building a highly engaged team.

Communicating with staff members builds relationships and allows leaders to step up to

the challenge of speaking with employees in a personal, authentic, and transparent

manner (Groysberg & Slind, 2012b; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). When leaders

communicate with their employees in a caring way, they know their staff; as an effect,

employees know their leaders care about them and work harder (J. E. Glaser, 2016;

Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). Communication builds relationships between the employee

and leader.

Every charter school executive director, 100% of the participants, referenced communication in building relationships with their staff. One charter school executive director shared how communicating about their connection with the school, builds authentic relationships among staff:

I shared what this position, and what this school particularly means to me. I shared with them, the connection that I had with the school over a decade ago. I think part of that piece is being vulnerable and really being authentic and honest and transparent about everything the good, and the bad. They share with me, sharing the milestones along the way, some concerns that they have just to keep me in the loop. I mean, I think those are ways that they're showing me that they care about their job, their position, and their relationship.

Another charter school executive director shared that communicating authentically is showing that you care for staff as human beings:

One thing is to, those emotional connections are just to start out letting people know that I care about their life. I care about their work; I want them to be successful. . . . I think humility helps drive more understanding and helps drive communication.

A charter school executive director shared the following statement that addressed how they communicate with their staff members: "I always ask you know about how they are doing, how they're feeling. Everything okay? This is my personality." Communicating about staff members' well-being relates to many of the statements made by the participants. A charter school executive director shared a similar statement:

I'm constantly asking my coordinators, how are the teachers doing? Does one

need any support because, there are a few who don't come to me directly and I

hear things through the grapevine, and I wish they would. But I still want to keep

a pulse and ensure that they're okay.

Another charter school executive director shared a similar idea: "They'll tell me about

what's going on, even in their personal lives, you know and sometimes that personal life

will leak into their work."

Four artifacts also provided content supporting that communicating with staff

builds authentic relationships. In one artifact, the following statement was shared in a

weekly newsletter: "Success depends on trust, and trust is often built on staff willingness

to be honest and vulnerable with students and each other." In another artifact, this

statement was made: "Positive communication . . . is about finding opportunities to

communicate positively as often as possible." One artifact came directly from a charter

school executive director who wrote about the importance of reaching out for help and

support when it comes to mental wellness; the charter school executive director ended the

letter with the following: "You are important to me and important to our family. If you

need assistance, please let me know. My door is always open to you."

Working alongside staff. This theme was referenced 24 times in eight sources.

This theme represented 21% of the code in alignment with building a highly engaged

team. Leaders who encourage participation engage their employees' hearts and minds

(Gebauer et al., 2008). When organizations work together, tremendous success can be

generated (Huguet, 2017). When leaders are engaged in their work, staff members tend

to adopt the exact characteristics of their leaders.

During the interviews, 87% of participants provided content related to the theme working alongside staff. One charter school executive director explained that directors must be in the trenches with their team to show how much they appreciate them:

I am in the trenches with them as well, so I'm not the first one here but I'm the last one to leave all the time, so they know that I'm working just as hard as they are.

Be truthful, communicative, appreciate them, but then also do the hard work with them. Don't be one of those for you assign it drop off the work and then you go off and you are out the door by three o'clock. Teachers do not like that, when the boss is not working along with them.

Another charter school executive director talked about bringing all staff members together to work together:

We're all on the same level here. There is nobody that's higher than anyone else and so in doing so it made it possible for my classified staff to bring a lot of ideas to the table that would normally be ignored.

A charter school executive director went further to explain that "no one can do this work alone, no one can have success alone. There's always you know other people, supporting and helping. No one individual can do any of this on their own." Another similar thought came from another charter school executive director: "They know that I am here working hard with them." Also, another charter school executive director shared, "willing to go and walk the walk with you. It's a team effort."

This theme was also referenced in one artifact source. One of the charter school executive directors shared in a leadership model, "it's not a one-person show."

Involving staff members in projects that impact school success. This theme was referenced 23 times in nine sources. This theme represented 20% of the code in alignment with building a highly engaged team. The more engaged employees feel at work and the more they believe that impacts the organization's success, the more confidence and commitment they have to make a positive action (Gebauer et al., 2008).

During the interviews, 87% of participants showed content related to valuing staff members in projects impacting school success. One charter school executive director shared how involving staff member shows that everyone is part of the process:

> I think that helps with morale and making feel like okay everyone, everyone is valued. . . . So everybody feels like everybody has a part. In the success of our kids.

Another charter school executive director shared that staff members are part of the process:

> What specific things are you going to get better at and letting them know that you know it's just not me telling you what to do, but you're going be part of the process . . . you're going to build greater things because you're all headed in the right direction.

The same charter school executive director shared, "I say guys, I've never done this before. How do you want to go about it? What's the best way that we can approach this?"

Another charter school executive director shared that providing these opportunities for employees opens the door of inclusion and engagement:

They remember when they were given an additional responsibility by their

principal or somebody that they trusted. So, somebody came and said, "Hey

listen, can you help me?" . . . They remembered those things were meaningful to

them and made them appreciate, you know and be part of the family.

This theme was also referenced in two artifacts. Emails represented the charter

school executive directors sharing their appreciation toward the team members'

involvement and participation in the process.

By being transparent builds an emotional connection with staff members.

This theme was referenced 14 times in six sources. This theme represented 13% of the

code in alignment with building a highly engaged team. Building trust through

transparency creates a safe place for people to connect emotionally (Brown, 2018; J. E.

Glaser, 2016; Groysberg & Slind, 2012b). Leaders who are open and available can

connect with themselves and make it easier for others to connect with them too (Gelb,

2017; Maxwell, 2010).

During the interview, six of the eight, making up 75% of the charter school

executive directors, shared the word *transparency* and how that builds the emotional

connection. One charter school executive director explained how transparency leads to

authenticity:

I think the transparency is what leads to probably authenticity because you need

to be transparent to allow them to recognize. Look times have been tough.

There's been new things, I recognize your workload has changed. I understand,

how can we best meet the compliance requirements. Ask them for their input.

Communicate with them, don't do a top down.

Another charter school executive director shared thoughts about how transparency builds trust:

> I was very transparent and look, this is what's coming next. Be prepared or nope don't listen this is what we're doing. This is what's going on. They just truly appreciated that even when it was tough, people can handle the truth. But you got to be truthful, you got to be straight with them. Be truthful, communicative, appreciate them, but then also do the hard work with them . . . I do want people to feel comfortable about what they can say, or to be truthful or whatever it might be.

Another charter school executive director explained connecting with one's staff members is communicating honestly and builds connection and trust:

> Communicate and again be honest and sincere about it. I think if they know that you care they're much more willing to go down that road, and you know jump over the hurdles that need to be jumped over. So, to me, there is no other way to communicate, because the minute you lose that, I don't know then you become very corporate.

Providing personalized professional development for staff members. This theme was referenced 14 times in eight sources. This theme represented 12% of the code in alignment with building a highly engaged team. Highly engaged employees are more likely to be the top performers in their organization (Trahant, 2009). When employees are engaged, they display initiative and approach work passionately (Crowley, 2011; Groysberg & Slind, 2012b). They are willing to go beyond what is expected in their job responsibilities to help their organization flourish (Britt, 2003; Gebauer et al., 2008).

During the interview, 100% of the participants provided content related to providing personalized professional development. One charter school executive director shared how providing personalized professional development is done each year:

> I have a list of everyone in my organization and every year . . . I make sure that they received some type of professional development, specific to their job classification. . . . The gardener learns how to trim a rosebush better . . . they learn something better, and when they're successful they're seeing things happening.

Another charter school executive director shared about taking needs assessment each year to determine which professional developments to pursue for the school:

> Figure out appropriate like growth metrics for them and it's the same principle for our teachers and ourselves so perform a needs assessment for each individual and then find the overlap, or where the staff is at and that's where you create sort of this dichotomy between individual coaching and collective professional development.

A couple of charter school executive directors shared creating SMART goals and stretching employees are ways to help them grow:

> It's helping them to set their own personal goals and then recognizing when they meet them, so we still use SMART goals at our school because I felt like you know what it is important to have.

> My things are for each staff member; we always develop our SMART goals at the beginning of the year. The SMART goals are for everybody to recognize and say set a goal for which you need to extend yourself, something that may be uncomfortable.

Hiring employees who are a right fit. This theme was referenced 11 times in seven sources. This theme represented 10% of the code in alignment with building a highly engaged team. According to Crowley (2011), "Leading with the heart is not soft or sentimental, it's a necessary means of restoring worker commitment to the ambitions and goals of their organizations" (p. 58). Leaders and employees staying aligned and focused with the school's goals allows them to lean on each other during times of uncertainty (Marzano et al., 2001). Employees committed to their work are more engaged at work, resulting in retention, productivity, customer service, and increased profits (Schaufeli et al., 2008).

The interview exhibited 87% of the charter school executive directors sharing hiring as a factor in building a highly engaged team. Of the eight interviews, seven of them shared that hiring begins the process of witnessing whether the candidate will support and honor the school's mission. One charter school executive director stated that it is not about the qualifications but the right fit:

> When I hire someone, I'm kind of like they're you know credentialing and all
> that's important but it's more like if they're going to be the right fit.

Another charter school executive director with the same thought shared that it is about building a team and not mission alignment:

> While the people who hired me were looking for mission alignment, I was really
> focused in on what does it look like to build a team first.

One charter school executive director shared that building a team is about finding strengths that they need within their organization:

So, you build a team to their strengths and interests, and you built in that way, as

opposed to predetermining what type of people, you might be hiring. Then they

fit a box and that box might be filled with all sorts of weaknesses, but also outside

that box might be strengths that you're not utilizing.

The same charter school executive director shared, "I was hired because of my strengths

and so you want to keep the employee's strength strong because that's why I hired you."

Hiring employees who are the right fit to the school and who may bring in strengths that

will benefit the school's success is what the interviewees shared.

Research Question 2

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish

extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

Connecting on a personal level was defined as seeing and acting on behalf of

others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by

humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell,

2010). The coding for themes in connecting on a personal level resulted in six themes.

The six themes were referenced by the eight participants with a frequency of 129 times.

Connecting on a personal level generated the highest number of frequencies with a

percentage of 31% of all thematic codes. Table 3 represents the number of interviews

and artifacts for each theme for this heart-led principle.

Investing time to connect with employees. This theme was referenced 32 times

in 12 sources. This theme represented 25% of the code in alignment with connecting on

a personal level. Leaders who are open and accessible can connect with themselves and

with others (Gelb, 2017). Leaders connecting with the hearts of staff bring their whole

selves to their staff and their job (Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). J. E. Glaser (2016) shared

that connecting with employees is essential to establish trust and hold relationships

together.

Table 3

Connecting on a Personal Level Themes

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency
Investing time to connect with employees	8	4	12	32
Providing gratitude through verbal and nonverbal communication	7	3	10	25
Having one-to-one conversations builds connection	7	1	8	23
Listening authentically to develop staff relationships	6	2	8	18
Recognizing accomplishments collectively	7	1	8	17
Sharing personal experiences	5	2	7	14

During interviews, 100% of participants provided content related to investing

time to connect with employees. One charter school executive director shared that

investing time to connect shows how providing one's time is the most valuable in

supporting and showing care:

> Any kind of support or care or time that you give you know time is the most
>
> valuable commodity, right? And so, anytime I can sit and plan and support
>
> someone, who needs it, it is definitely a show of, I care, I'm giving you, my time.
>
> Which is the most valuable thing I could give you.

Another charter school executive director shared that investing time is why the

participant was here for them. The participant shared,

> Because I hear all the time, I know you're so busy I don't want to bother you and
>
> I literally say it every single meeting never think I'm too busy. If I'm too busy to
>
> support, you, then I don't belong here. That is my job, my job is to support you
>
> all this other stuff keeps me busy, you're right, but I will pause that in a moment's
>
> notice to support you in your moment of need or celebration.

A third charter school executive director shared a similar response about making space to

connect:

> I think that's because it's in our human nature to need to connect first. . . . It is
>
> like a foundational value and then on top of that if you can pursue your purpose
>
> great. In building that one-to-one relationship it's about listening first. It's about
>
> making space to connect.

A fourth charter school executive director shared that it is about investing the time to

make their work more engaging:

> A lot of that is investing the time, my time, especially my time because a lot of
>
> times you don't have principals that spend very much time going out and
>
> speaking with their staff. Or speaking with parents or speaking with students, so I
>
> invest a lot of my time diving deeper in building relationships with my staff . . .
>
> once you get that you can kind of really start sharing ideas of how they can make
>
> their work more engaging.

This theme was also referenced in four artifact sources. Three artifacts referenced

a charter school executive director's reaching out to staff for opportunities to meet and

connect. Artifacts included a Google spreadsheet and calendar of scheduled check-ins with staff along with an email to all staff sharing the following statement: "You are important to me and important to our family. If you need assistance, please let me know. My door is always open to you." Another artifact showed a meeting norm that exhibited connecting to each other to stay engaged.

Providing gratitude through verbal and nonverbal communication. This theme was referenced 25 times in 10 sources. This theme represented 19% of the code in alignment with connecting on a personal level. Ulrich and Woodson (2011) shared that leaders communicate caring when they know their staff. It is about leaders connecting with the hearts of those you lead (J. E. Glaser, 2016; Ulrich & Woodson, 2011).

During the interviews, 87% of participants provided content related to providing gratitude through verbal and nonverbal communication. One charter school executive director provides gratitude through communicating verbally to staff:

I send a video recording of myself, saying a thank you or a welcome or some sort of inspiration and so I'll do that. I'll sneak those in, and you know say, I wish I was with you.

Two of the charter school executive directors shared that providing gratitude is about appreciating them verbally:

It's like I appreciate you calling the kids by name and making a funny joke. . . . We do have moments, where in those meetings you know we will openly praise those folks that have done something that has really stood out.

I tell them, I say I love you guys. I do. I say I love you guys.

Another charter school executive director shared gratitude nonverbally through actions:

Hearing humility is playing a huge role in showing that and just demonstrating

that you care, through your thorough your actions.

The same charter school executive director hands out pins to staff members when they

perform an action beyond what is expected for their job position:

I have superman pins. . . . When somebody does something like, we had an office

clerk help a mom who come to work drunk. She notices that the parent was

drunk, so she stopped the mom and said stop. Can you come to the office I need

to talk to you? We called the police, so the mom won't drive home drunk. I gave

her you know the hammer award the Thor hammer because she stopped

something bad from happening before it began. I gave that in front of the

office . . . you know you are awesome. It just makes them feel like they're

appreciated and want to be there.

This theme was referenced in three artifact sources. One artifact was a graphics

interchange format (GIF) that shared a daily reminder of how important staff is to the

organization. The GIF included words of affirmation and encouragement: "This is your

daily reminder that you are SO important. Today might feel impossible; you might go

home feeling defeated, underappreciated, underpaid, and exhausted." The remaining two

artifacts were emails thanking an individual for their contribution to a big project.

Phrases such as "I love it! As always you add on to ideas with your best thinking" and

"Words matter!" were included.

Having one-to-one conversations. This theme was referenced 23 times in eight

sources. This theme represented 18% of the code in alignment with connecting on a

personal level. Leaders who can connect during one-to-one conversations with staff

members in their organization build relationships that become stronger, grow their community, and increase teamwork (Maxwell, 2010). Spending time with employees to see what motivates them shows that executive directors genuinely care about what is occurring in their lives (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Having one-to-one conversations builds the relationship between employee and employer.

During interviews, this theme was referenced by 87% of the charter school executive directors who participated in this research study. One charter school executive director shared how having one-to-one conversations builds the relationship. The participant shared,

> I take a relationship based . . . so it's really important for me to get to know each
> of the people working in this organization, on a personal level as well . . . it's the
> personal story . . . I shared with them, the connection that I had with the school
> over a decade ago. I think part of the piece is being vulnerable and really being
> authentic and honest and transparent about everything the good and the bad.

Another charter school executive director shared that it is about hearing their voice and seeing them face-to-face that shows employees how much the participant cares for them. The participant shared,

> But there's something else that comes out when you can hear their voice, or if we
> hop on a Zoom, or if I can meet them for coffee where they know, that there's an
> extra layer. They can tell that I really do genuinely care . . . it's also helping them
> see that they're capable of so much more than even where they're at and you
> know they always say leaders don't always see themselves as leaders, but others

see the qualities in them, and you can encourage them and inspire them to take

that next step by just recognizing.

A third charter school executive director shared having one-to-one conversations is about

digging deeper in understanding what makes their employees' heart tick:

So, I invest a lot of my time in diving deeper in building relationships with my

staff. Really find out more about what makes their heart tick.

This theme also referenced in one artifact source. One of the charter school

executive directors listed in the agenda of meeting with their staff members in various

times and locations.

Listening authentically to develop staff relationships. This theme was

referenced 18 times in eight sources. This theme represented 14% of the code in

alignment with connecting on a personal level. Through listening, one opens the heart

and connects to the emotions, including better decision making and critical thinking

(Brown, 2018). Leaders who take the conversation seriously know when to stop

speaking and start listening (Groysberg & Slind, 2012b).

During interviews, 75% of participants provided evidence related to listening

authentically builds relationship with staff. Two of the charter school executive directors

shared that listening authentically is being able to listen first and see whether help is

needed:

She's talking . . . then I say how can I help? And if they say I don't know what to

do, this is why I am coming to you, I say okay. Then I go into fixer mode. But if

they say, I just want someone to talk to, then I'm the listener.

Making myself available to listen. You know a lot of them and try to problem

solve together.

Another charter school executive director shared that listening authentically is about

listening first:

In building that one-to-one relationship it's about listening first. It's about

making space to connect.

This theme was also referenced in two artifact sources. One artifact was part of

the norms displayed for a professional development meeting, where one of the norms was

to practice mindful listening and to avoid planning what to say and listen to others and

practice listening with one's whole self. The other artifact also was part of group norms

that were displayed to listen attentively, which included to care, have compassion, and

connect.

Recognizing accomplishments collectively. This theme was referenced 17 times

in eight sources. This theme represented 13% of the code in alignment with connecting

on a personal level, celebrating the big wins and the small wins collectively to cultivate a

place with meaning and contribution (Brown, 2018).

During interviews, 87% of participants provided content related to recognizing

accomplishments collectively. One charter school executive director shared thoughts

about recognizing staff members:

You all did it and you did an amazing job and or we share with them feedback

that our families are sending us. We just roll out a few of those and like that it

made a difference.

A charter school executive director shared about how celebrating together supports the culture of the school. The participant shared,

> Having that generally that culture and embracing that and celebrating the successes with each other as well. . . . That the struggles don't go unknown, we know about the struggles, but look the highlights and let's appreciate those and celebrate those with whatever little things we can do.

A third charter school executive director shared that recognizing accomplishments is about acknowledging everyone and their importance to the school:

> We're all equal. We're all just a machine, with different components. We look different, we sound different, but if one of us wasn't here, then we would not be able to work smoothly, and the machine would be broken. So, we want everyone to feel like they're part of this organization. They're equal partners to the organization and play an important role.

> This theme was also referenced in one artifact source. One charter school executive director shared in a weekly update the recognition of a team member sharing resources and ideas to everyone in the organization.

> **Sharing personal experiences**. This theme was referenced 14 times in 7 sources. This theme represented 11% of the code in alignment with connecting on a personal level. According to Brown (2018), empathy is the heart of connection and opens up people's feelings, which results in reflecting on shared experiences. Being vulnerable helps build trust (Brown, 2018).

During interviews, 62% of participants provided content related to sharing personal experiences. One charter school executive director shared that sharing personal stories is showing vulnerability:

It's sharing personal stories of my successes, whether it worked in my life and letting them understand, that I'm not, I'm not perfect.

Another charter school executive director shared that sharing personal experiences is about sharing personal life outcomes that builds connection within staff:

We celebrate personal life outcomes. Whether it's getting married or having a baby or getting a degree. So those are the milestones in people's lives that we really need to attend to. Because people bring their whole selves to work.

A charter school executive director spoke to connecting more with staff members by supporting them in their personal goals through personal stories:

I'm also taking into consideration a lot of their own hobbies that they like to do. I have one teacher who's a runner and is planning to run in the marathon and you know it's really supporting them. Asking them questions like how's the training going and really interesting because then they'll come back, and they give you more information . . . so that they know that you value them beyond what they produce at school. You're interested. You're genuinely interested in what they interest, and passions are.

This theme was also referenced in two artifact sources. One artifact was through an email to staff informing them of a personal story, and the other artifact was through a weekly update that referenced how individuals in the organization were sharing personal stories to their staff and the positive impact it brought to their community.

Research Question 3

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish

extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

Maximizing employee potential was defined as igniting emotional drivers by

promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building

people toward high achievement (Crowley, 2011; Burnett & Lisk, 2019). The coding for

themes in maximizing employee potential resulted in four themes. The four themes were

referenced by the eight participants with a frequency of 64 times. Maximizing employee

potential generated the lowest number of frequencies with a percentage of 27% of all

thematic codes. Table 4 represents the number of interviews and artifacts for each theme

for this heart-led principle.

Table 4

Maximizing Employee Potential Themes

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency
Providing constant feedback and reflection time	7	4	11	27
Promoting professional development for staff growth	7	3	10	17
Providing an ongoing assessment of employees emotional wellness	5	3	8	11
Supporting committees to promote human well-being	4	2	6	9

Providing constant feedback and reflection time. This theme was referenced

27 times in 11 sources. This theme represented 42% of the code in alignment with

maximizing employee potential. Leaders who can listen and reflect with their employees

instead of flooding them with information help their employees grow their self-confidence (Gebauer et al., 2008; Huguet, 2017; Murari, 2015). Motivating and providing feedback encourages growth and employee engagement in an organization (Gebauer et al., 2008).

During interviews, 87% of participants provided content related to providing feedback and reflection with staff members. One charter school executive director shared that providing feedback and reflection is a way to motivate and encourage team members to push forward:

Helping them to see that they're capable of so much more than even where they're at. They always say leaders don't always see themselves as leaders, but others see the qualities in them. You can encourage them and inspire them to take that next step by just recognizing.

Going wow this percent of kids all bumped up a level and it's interesting that they were all in live classes too, and so then drawing those connections. Being able to celebrate those teachers that provided that instruction.

Another charter school executive director spoke about setting goals with employees to provide feedback and reflection:

We always develop our SMART goals at the beginning of the year. The SMART goals are for everybody to recognize and say set a goal for which you need to extend yourself. Something that may be slightly uncomfortable.

A third charter school executive director shared that it is the constant feedback and reflection that keeps everyone accountable:

I observed formally and informally. I provide feedback both formally and

informally.

Also, reflection I think that's super important because, once you provide

feedback that reflective component it's not there, then you will not see a change

in behavior.

I think that reflection component is critical to supporting high achievement.

This theme was also referenced in three artifact sources. Two of the artifacts

were about goal setting opportunities. One artifact was an email a charter school

executive director shared with a staff member about feedback they had to the classroom

observation. The last artifact was shared through an agenda that stated, "We get feedback

even though we might know what to do."

Promoting professional development for staff growth. This theme was

referenced 17 times in 10 sources. This theme represented 27% of the code in alignment

with maximizing employee potential. Leaders who encourage staff members to grow

professionally in their organization create opportunities to expand their potential

(Gebauer et al., 2008; Maxwell & Maxwell, 2005).

During the interviews, 87% of participants provided information related to

promoting professional development for employee growth. One charter school executive

director shared how she provides professional development each year related to the goals

of the school:

So, for example, we have 5 days of in-service in August and they want all that

time just for like to do some meetings and then have some classroom time and I

say, well, no. We have to do some professional readings or something together.

Because that is professional development. As a leader I need to assist you with

that because I need to help you grow and make you better, but the professional

readings, that I choose for them are I feel very relevant and specific to our

students here at school.

Another charter school executive directors, shared a similar statement:

Providing training and support you know. Recognizing that we, as a school have

the responsibility to make sure that our staff are well equipped and prepared.

This theme was also referenced in three artifact sources. Two artifacts showed a

PowerPoint presentation that provided information regarding the professional

development. The other artifact listed professional development as part of the norms for

productive conversations.

Providing an ongoing assessment of employees' emotional wellness. This

theme was referenced 11 times in 10 sources. This theme represented 17% of the code in

alignment with maximizing employee potential. According to Gebauer et al. (2008), to

create an environment where team members are engaged, organizations need to care for

their employees' well-being and deliver a sense of pride in their work.

During interviews, 62% of participants provided information related to the theme

of providing an ongoing assessment of employees' emotional wellness. One charter

school executive director explained how they make time to do an ongoing assessment

each day to assess their employees' emotional wellness:

A communal mediation session together. It's about 10 minutes it's about 10-15

minutes, where before we start a meeting. Especially a staff meeting, we want to

get everyone in the right place. I think part of it is once you're finished because

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our staff meetings or you know, at the end of the day, once you finished a long

day and you jump into something like a staff meeting, you need to give folks a

break.

Another charter school executive director established a wellness center to help support

staff members with their wellness mindset:

With the wellness center it is going to be open for teachers. It's a place that its

very cozy . . . where they can go to relax. It's not no talking, or you know gossip

or anything. It's a place to unwind.

A third charter school executive director shared that the participant sends out a letter to

employees to remind them of the supports available for staff in regard to emotional well-

being:

I send home a letter and it's from my heart and it basically tells them that we have

emotional supports . . . if you have any concerns or questions about your mental

health or struggling at home or work you can call.

This theme was referenced in three artifact sources. One artifact was part of a

professional development that showed the organization investing additional money

toward emotional wellness for staff. Another artifact was the letter a charter school

executive director shared with staff regarding supports available to them for their

emotional well-being. The third artifact was shared in a leadership model supporting

administrators' emotional wellness as an ongoing agenda item.

Supporting committees to promote human well-being. This theme was

referenced nine times in six sources. This theme represented 14% of the code in

alignment with maximizing employee potential. According to Gebauer et al. (2008),

working alongside employees helps them believe that organizations care for their well-being.

During interviews, 50% of participants provided content related to supporting committees to promote human well-being. One charter school executive director shared promoting human well-being is about encouraging committees to support human well-being:

> The teacher wellness program. That is really focused on ensuring that my staff has the support they need.

Another charter school executive director also encourages a social emotional program:

> We actually have a tremendous social emotional program, and we extend that program not just to our students but to our staff and parents as well.

A third charter school executive director has a sunshine club that promotes human well-being:

> Another thing we have is the sunshine club. It celebrates personal life outcomes, whether it is getting married or having a baby or getting a degree. So those milestones in people's lives that we really need to attend to. Because people bring their whole selves to work. I think celebrating those times, really helps employees connect better with the organization.

This theme was also referenced in two artifact sources. One artifact displayed a committee named "coffee with a cause" where staff members shared resources and ideas to support one another. The second artifact was in relation to a sunshine committee and how to collect funds for birthdays.

Research Question 4

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Valuing and honoring achievements was defined as praising, acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and/or nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013). The coding for themes in valuing and honoring achievement resulted in six themes. The six themes were referenced by the eight participants with a frequency of 102 times. Valuing and honoring achievements generated the lowest frequencies with a percentage of 25% of all thematic codes. Table 5 represents the number of interviews and artifacts for each theme for this heart-led principle.

Table 5

Valuing and Honoring Achievements

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency
Appreciating employees through various ways of communication.	8	9	17	34
Appreciating employees through email communication	4	9	13	21
Showing appreciation to employees through personal gifts	6	2	8	19
Hosting celebrations to acknowledge employees accomplishments	8	3	11	18
Providing opportunities for shout outs during meetings	4	2	6	10

Appreciating employees through various ways of communication. This theme was referenced 34 times in 17 sources. This theme represented 33% of the code in alignment with valuing and honoring achievements. According to Marzano et al. (2001), recognitions are reminders and opportunities to say to everyone how much employees are valued and essential to the organization.

During interviews, 100% of the participants in this study referred to this theme. When asked how they appreciated employees through multiple ways of communication, one charter school executive director shared,

> Just walking to them and saying hey, I appreciate you. I really appreciate what you did, and this is how you supported so, and so or this is how you supported the school or your students. Whatever it is.
>
> Then texting cards and accolades and meetings like I said and emails. A simple, thank you really goes a long way.

Another charter school executive director shared a spreadsheet the participant created, given out to each employee, on which the participant individualized how much the participant appreciated each one of the participant's employees:

> I put something together last year . . . its gratitude. It was for either Thanksgiving or Christmas. I had created something. . . . I wrote everybody's name down on the spreadsheet and gave it to them. Let them, hear openly how I really felt about what made them so special to the school and so special to the work they did.

A third charter school executive director shared that going into classrooms and passing out notes is how she shows appreciation to her staff:

Once a month I go in the classroom, I'll leave notes in their boxes that just say the

nice things that I saw when I walked around. They always appreciate that.

The participant later shared in the interview:

I send funny memes . . . through the notes, texting or when I see them in the hall,

or different things like that. Then you know, some of them don't want that or

need that but at least I feel like they know that I'm there for them if they need me,

for anything.

Nine artifacts were represented in this theme. Of the nine artifacts, three of them

were words of appreciation through a weekly update to teams and individuals. Words

included, "Team members are so helpful," "He encourages the team," "She is always

available to help her students and other teachers." The remaining words of

encouragement and appreciation were displayed as memes, PowerPoint presentations,

thank you cards, jam boards, quotes, and part of group norms. Words included in the

presentations showed words of gratitude including thank you for caring, thank you for

everything, thank you for the help, thank you for always going out of your way to plan,

thank you for being such a fantastic leader, thank you for your friendship, and so forth.

Appreciating employees through email communication. This theme was

referenced 21 times in 13 sources. This theme represented 20% of the code in alignment

with valuing and honoring achievements. Employees want to be recognized that they

contribute to their organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). This may be as simple as a

personal note or email or a comment in a meeting but acknowledging them for their

excellent work (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

During interviews, 50% of participants shared content related to appreciating

employees through email communication. One charter school executive director shared

that every Friday an email is sent out to staff that includes appreciation to their staff:

Every Friday I send out an email to the staff and I put you know bits of

appreciation in there.

Another charter school executive director shared sending out email communication to

employees to say they appreciates them:

Things like just an email saying I really appreciate you; I really appreciate you.

Multiple ways I could send emails to the individual. I may send an email to the

individual or email to the team.

The theme referenced nine artifacts that shared appreciation communication

through email. One of the artifacts was a jam board that shared notes of gratitude for

team members. Another artifact was sent to a group of staff members thanking them for

their contribution for a team project. Four artifacts were emails sent to the entire staff,

giving thanks to team members. Two artifacts were short memes given out to staff

members giving words of encouragement. The last artifact collected was given out

individually to a team member thanking them for inviting them to their classroom to see a

student presentation.

Showing appreciation to employees through personal gifts. This theme was

referenced 19 times in eight sources. This theme represented 19% of the code in

alignment with valuing and honoring achievements. When leaders create an environment

where employees feel valued and cared for, they see exceptional results (Crowley, 2011).

During interviews, 75% of all participants provided information related to showing appreciation through personal gifts. One charter school executive director shared how the participant enjoys purchasing individual gifts for employees to show how much the participant appreciates their hard work:

I do love to give gifts and that this, it gets harder and harder, as we get bigger. I love to buy gifts for my staff. I just buy them, sometimes I buy meals, I bring doughnuts.

Another charter school executive director shared that the participant tries to provide outside gifts to employees:

Let's do a yoga class, let's bring in someone who does table massage or chair massage. Everybody can get a 10-minute massage. Little things like that or just again expressing hopefully that they're valued and that they're appreciated.

A third charter school executive director shared that the participant provides gifts on special occasions to their staff to show appreciation:

Administrative secretaries' day, I take my office staff out to lunch, and I buy them gifts. Whenever it we have our application period in January because it's a stressful time, I'll take the whole office staff out to lunch afterwards, because it's like it's a lot of work. It's counselor's week, I take my counselors out to lunch, and you know this is all just money of my own that I spend because it's important to me that they feel appreciated. They feel love from me, I appreciate your hard work that you do here at this school because that makes a difference. You know, when I feel like it's kind of like that top down of you know when they feel love

from me then they're going to feel loved and then they let the students and the students are happy and then it's just this total cycle that goes on.

Two artifacts displayed this theme with the participants. One artifact displayed locations of events where team members were going to meet for luncheons with their director. Another artifact displayed a gift drawing taking place for team members who were recognized for accomplishments.

Hosting celebrations to acknowledge employees' accomplishments. This theme was referenced 18 times in 11 sources. This theme represented 18% of the code in alignment with valuing and honoring achievements. Marzano and Waters (2009) shared affirmation is when leaders recognize and celebrate school accomplishments collectively and acknowledge failures. Leaders hosting celebration is about rewarding and recognizing individual accomplishments that they are valued in their organization.

During interviews, 100% of all participants provided content related to hosting celebrations to acknowledge employees accomplishments. One charter school executive director shared that making traditions is needed to build a culture of celebrations within a school:

> The first thing you need to do is create, create traditions. So, a good environment has traditions. Some of the traditions that we have we we've done, for example, we every year we do a corn hole tournament. Every year we do it, we do a barbecue every year. We do a winter holiday dinner for every employee. Where I barbecue and I cook we celebrate. So, we've established clear traditions that show that we are a family that were together.

Another charter school executive director shared they do a lot of events to show appreciation:

> We do a lot of events to show appreciation. We have recognitions for our teachers. Like for example, for Cinco de Mayo; it's called appreciation week. We always try to appreciate them.

A third charter school executive director shared the various celebrations the participant provides for her staff to show recognition:

> For example, Mother's Day, I send them all our teachers who are moms, a text wishing them a happy Mother's Day. We treat them for the holidays and for the end of the year. We may treat them for lunch and sometimes in between, you know when we come back in the summer, I treat them for lunch.

> Three artifacts also provided three frequencies for this theme. Two of the artifacts displayed details of when celebratory events were going to take place for the entire organization through email. One of the artifacts was presented in an agenda that displayed spending time recognizing achievements together.

> **Providing opportunities for shout outs during meetings**. This theme was referenced 10 times in six sources. This theme represented 10% of the code in alignment with valuing and honoring achievements. Leaders need to find time to stop and celebrate one another for their victories, no matter how small it may be (Brown, 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Marzano et al., 2001).

> During interviews, 50% of the participants in this study referred to this theme. When discussing how providing opportunities for shout outs about values and honors achievements during meetings, one charter school executive director shared,

We also have this thing called Monday shout outs. Which is really cool where I'm at 11:45 outside just before lunch, all the classes come out. We have a little speaker, and we do Monday shout outs. Where you know where we say, like hey I want to thank you, for putting together the fashion show. Or I want to thank this other person . . . it was really beautiful. But there's also this is done in front of the whole community. All of the students, so the students get to see you know that we are united front and that you know we're open about praising each other in public.

Three other interviewees shared that they do shout outs and celebrate successes together during in-services and meetings. One charter school executive director shared she does this for every staff meeting:

What are some successes, let's celebrate together? We do awards or recognitions and shout outs.

Two artifacts were referenced for this theme. One artifact was part of an agenda that listed a time to recognize achievements. The second artifact was a weekly update that had a section stating shout outs and listed a team member and their accomplishment.

Key Findings

In this qualitative research study, interviews and artifacts were used in the data analysis. After the coding and analysis of the data, 21 findings emerged. From these 21 findings, those with greater than 20% of the frequencies recorded in each heart-led principle were selected as key findings. This process resulted in the selection of seven key findings. Table 6 represents the key findings in a summary table.

Table 6

Key Findings Summary Table

Themes	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Frequency	Percentage
Building a highly engaged team				
Communicating with staff members builds authentic relationships	8	4	28	25%
Working alongside staff	7	1	24	21%
Valuing staff members in projects impacting school success	7	2	23	20%
Connecting on a personal level				
Investing time to connect with employees	8	4	32	25%
Maximizing employee potential				
Providing constant feedback and reflection time	7	4	27	42%
Promoting professional development for staff growth	7	3	17	27%
Valuing and honoring achievements				
Appreciating employees through various ways of communication.	8	9	34	33%
Appreciating employees through email communication	4	9	21	20%

The key finding most often referenced from the charter school executive directors

was providing time for constant feedback and reflection with their staff members. It

represented 42% of the coded frequencies related to maximizing employee potential.

According to Britt (2003), employees who feel personally responsible and committed to

their job's effectiveness are said to be engaged in their work. Leaders who instill purpose in their workplace generate a more productive and committed workforce. They create an environment where employees can make a difference and will be astounded by the outcomes (Gebauer et al., 2008). Leaders who provide their staff with feedback and reflection create the opportunity to see unexpected and amazing things.

The second highest referenced theme was appreciating employees through various ways of communication. It represented 33% of the coded frequencies related to valuing and honoring achievements. Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated that a simple gesture, personal note, comments during a public meeting, or saying that you heard great things about them shows appreciation for one's employees. Appreciating employees through multiple forms of communication shows that charter school executive directors recognize their behavior and accomplishment and want to value them for their contribution (Marzano et al., 2001).

The third most important finding was found in the heart-led principle, maximizing employee potential. Promoting professional development for staff growth was referenced 17 times and represented 27% of the coded frequencies. According to Gebauer et al. (2008) and Maxwell (2010), leaders who motivate and encourage their employees to stretch their strengths know, inspire, and grow them within their organizations. It is by discovering what motivates the employee that helps the leader guide and support the employees in achieving their goals (Gebauer et al., 2008). Gebauer et al. (2008) shared that helping employees reach their goals opens more possibilities for the employees to be invested in the organization and engage others to reach their goals, which may become an ongoing cycle of personal and professional growth.

The fourth and fifth themes that represented the most references were communicating with staff members, which builds authentic relationships, and invests time to connect with employees. Both themes represented 25% of the coded references. When leaders communicate a caring environment, they show their staff they care by knowing their staff (Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). When leaders bring their whole self to work and invest time to connect with their employees, that builds authentic relationships (Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). Building relationships holds people together, which creates trust and understanding (Brown, 2018; J. E. Glaser, 2016).

The sixth theme most often referenced from the charter school executive directors was working alongside staff. It was referenced 24 times and had a frequency of 21%. Jackson (2019) shared, "As leaders, being of service is our true power. And servant leadership is a natural application of selfless leadership" (p. 128). Charter school executive directors working alongside staff aligns with the definition of servant leadership where servant leaders focus on the service to their followers (Rehman et al., 2020). When leaders work alongside their employees, they are willing to show their employees the title does not matter—it is about achieving the goal together (Greenleaf, 1977; Rehman et al., 2020).

Both the seventh and eighth themes, valuing staff members in projects impacting school success and appreciating employees through email communication had the same frequencies with 20%. According to Huguet (2017), leaders who support their teachers are more successful in impacting teacher and student achievement. They provide the opportunity for communication and collaboration to increase the opportunity to receive feedback, positive and negative, from their teams (Huguet, 2017). This opens the door

for leaders to hear from their teams honestly and with transparency, resulting in thoughtful decisions (Gebauer et al., 2008; Huguet, 2017; Murari, 2015). Employees want to feel a part of the school. When leaders create an environment where employees feel empowered, it increases teamwork in organizations (Murari, 2015). Employees who are more engaged feel part of the solution and included in the organization's success when they are given an opportunity to work alongside their staff (Gebauer et al., 2008).

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to describe the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors who lead from the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. This chapter discussed 21 themes aligned to the four research questions related to Crowley's four heart-led principles. Themes and key findings emerged from coding eight interviews and 22 artifacts. The analysis of these 21 findings resulted in seven key findings that described the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors.

Chapter V presents a final summary of this qualitative research study, including key findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This phenomenological study was designed to describe the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors who lead from the heart using Crowley's four heart-led principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The researcher interviewed eight exemplary charter school executive directors to describe how they lead their schools through Crowley's four heart-led principles. A data analysis derived from the interviews and artifacts revealed 21 themes and eight major findings. Chapter V presents a summary of the purpose of the study and research questions, major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

4. How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

This qualitative research study was conducted through interviews and a review of artifacts. Eight semistructured interviews with exemplary charter school executive directors provided the primary data collected for this study, and the artifacts were used for triangulation. To be included in this study, participants from the target population must have fit the description of exemplary as defined by the thematic group and faculty advisors. The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary charter school executive directors who demonstrated at least four of the following criteria; the first two were required.

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization

2. A minimum of 3 years' experience as a charter school executive director

3. Evidence of extraordinary results

4. Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences of association meetings

5. Recognition by peers

6. Membership in professional association in their field

Major Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to describe the lived experiences that exemplary charter school executive directors engage in to lead their organizations through Crowley's four heart-led principles (building a highly engaged

team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). There were four research questions related to each heart-led principle of leading from the heart that guided the analysis of the data collected. The analysis of data resulted in key findings within each heart-led principle of Crowley's heart-led principles. A total of seven key findings surfaced.

Research Question 1

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

Key Finding 1: Communicating with staff members builds authentic relationships. Exemplary charter school executive directors recognized that it is vital to communicate authentically with employees to show that they care for them as human beings and not just as workers. All the participants referenced communication as the way to build relationships with their staff. Through scheduling one-to-one conversations and communicating through emails, shout outs, and notes, charter school executive directors shared how much they cared and appreciated their employees. Artifacts communicated how exemplary charter school executive directors built those relationships with trust, vulnerability, and honesty. According to Kerfoot (2006), leaders who display honesty, integrity, and transparency model authentic leadership in their organizations, building relationships for staff to follow their passions and interests. Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated that working in an environment where employees feel cared for significantly impacts an employee's productivity and longevity in an organization. As a result, leaders who build authentic relationships with their followers build a team with purpose, engagement, and value, resulting in extraordinary results (Crowley, 2011).

Key Finding 2: Involving staff members in projects builds a feeling of belonging. In their responses, exemplary charter school leaders described how involving staff members in projects shows that everyone is part of the process. An exemplary charter school director stated, "I think that helps with the morale and making it feel like okay everyone, everyone is valued. . . . So everybody feels like everybody has a part. In the success of our kids." The more involved staff members are at work, the more it raises their engagement to the organization's success and their further growth within the organization (Gebauer et al., 2008; Rees et al., 2013). According to Murari (2015), employees who feel empowered in their organizations feel more connected. This finding aligns with Gebauer et al.'s (2008) notion that the more people are engaged and valued at work, the more it positively impacts the organization's customer satisfaction, innovation, and overall profitability.

Key Finding 3: Working alongside staff builds a caring culture. Exemplary charter school leaders shared in their responses that when leaders are engaged in their work, staff members tend to adopt the same characteristics. An exemplary charter school leader shared, "No one can do this work alone. No one can succeed alone. There's always other people, supporting and helping." A similar statement was shared by another charter school executive director: "No one individual can do this alone, but together as a team, we definitely support one another in order to realize our goals . . . our mission and vision." Another charter school director shared, "They know that I am here working hard with them." This shows the importance of leaders recognizing that work is done together, not by one person or position. This aligns with Huguet (2017) who stated that tremendous success can be generated when organizations work together. This alignment

is seen with assertions from multiple authors that when organizations work alongside each other regardless of position, work engagement is increased (Bickel, 2009; McKee et al., 2008; Rees et al., 2013).

Research Question 2

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

Key Finding 4: Investing time to connect with employees builds relationships. All exemplary charter school executive directors explained that investing the time with employees shows you care and builds the relationship. The interviewees shared that making space to connect with employees raises engagement within the school. A charter school executive shared,

> A lot of that is investing the time, my time, especially my time because a lot of times you don't have principals that spend very much time going out and speaking with their staff. Or speaking with parents or speaking with students, so I invest a lot my time diving deeper in building relationships with my staff . . . once you get that you can kind of really start sharing ideas of how they can make their work more engaging.

According to Arenas (2019), transformational leadership involves creating a personal relationship with followers that raises their motivation and self-worth. This connection tends to have more committed and gratified followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This finding aligns with Kouzes and Posner's (2012) assertions that employers need to spend time to find out what motivates each employee. Additionally, providing space for

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employees to share their voice builds trust and respect and creates a strong culture of inclusion (Rees et al., 2013).

Research Question 3

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

Key Finding 5: Professional development for staff promotes value to their work. Exemplary charter school leaders shared in their responses that maximizing employee potential takes place by setting goals with their staff and supporting them along the way. A charter school executive director shared, "Recognizing that we, as a school, have the responsibility to make sure that our staff are well equipped and prepared." Artifacts shared by the participants communicated information on professional development and growth. Artifacts showed that staff members need to consider areas of growth; they may experience discomfort, and everything is a learning opportunity. According to Gebauer et al. (2008) and Maxwell and Maxwell (2005), leaders who encourage staff members to grow professionally in their organization create opportunities to expand their capabilities. The finding supports the idea that engagement of being personally responsible for one's job performance is the driver for growth and change (McKee et al., 2008).

Key Finding 6: Providing constant feedback and reflection improves performance. In their responses, exemplary charter school leaders explained that providing feedback and reflection is a way to motivate and encourage team members to push forward. One exemplary charter school executive director stated,

Helping them to see that they're capable of so much more than even where they're at. They always say leaders don't always see themselves as leaders, but others see the qualities in them. You can encourage them and inspire them to take the next step by just recognizing.

Providing feedback and reflection time is within exemplary leaders' control and jurisdiction. This aligns with Wiseman et al. (2013), who stated that results exceed expectations when leaders inspire employees to stretch themselves. Motivating and providing feedback encourages growth and employee engagement in an organization (Gebauer et al., 2008).

Research Question 4

How do charter school executive directors lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Key Finding 7: Appreciating employees through various ways of communication. Exemplary charter school leaders shared in their responses that sending out email communication with appreciation is a great way to show how much one cares. Several artifacts, which included emails to the entire staff, giving thanks to team members, or individualized emails showing appreciation for their contribution to the school, were in alignment with this finding. One executive director stated, "Every Friday I send out an email to the staff and I put you know bits of appreciation in there." This finding aligns with Kouzes and Posner's (2012) proposition that employees want to be recognized and appreciated for their contributions to their organizations, which can be as simple as a personal note or email acknowledging the employee of their excellent work.

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All exemplary charter school executive directors described the various ways to communicate with their staff to show how appreciative they are to their school. An exemplary charter school executive director stated, "Just walking to them and saying hey, I appreciate you. I really appreciate what you did, and this is how you supported so, and so or this is how you supported the school or your students. Whatever it is." Another charter school executive director shared,

> I send funny memes . . . through the notes, texting or when I see them in the hall, or different things like that. Then you know, some of them don't want that or need that but at least I feel like they know that I'm there for them if they need me, for anything.

This finding is further supported by artifacts that included words of appreciation, weekly updates showing appreciation through email, PowerPoint presentations, thank you cards, jam boards, quotes, and so forth. According to Marzano et al. (2001), recognitions are reminders to say to everyone how much employees are valued and needed by the organization. Brown (2018) similarly stated that people need to stop and celebrate each other's victories no matter how small. This finding aligns with Kouzes and Posner (2012) who shared that a simple gesture shows employees they are being seen and valued. Appreciating employees through various ways of communication was evident with the participants in this study.

Unexpected Findings

This study resulted in two unexpected findings: the impact of connecting with employees and the impact of feedback and reflection with employees. Literature supports connecting and feedback; however, both themes resulted in unexpected results.

Unexpected Findings 1: The Impact of Connecting With Employees

The first unexpected finding was that of the four heart-led principles, connecting on a personal level had the highest percentage of references with 129 frequencies of the total 409. However, it resulted in having only one key finding, investing time to connect with employees. The remaining themes in this heart-led principle resulted in high frequency percentages ranging from 11% to 25 %; however, they did not produce more than a 20% response rate to make it a key finding. Literature supports that connecting with employees builds success within an organization. Developing authentic relationships results in trust and supports risk-taking, innovation, and connections between followers (Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). A leader who can connect with his or her team is a person who has self-awareness, is not afraid to be vulnerable, and someone who can relate to employees' personal and professional lives (Gelb, 2017; Maxwell, 2010). Connected leaders relate to their team and encourage honest conversations and feedback in return (Groysberg & Slind, 2012b).

The themes that emerged from connecting on a personal level were conversations about listening authentically, recognizing accomplishments collectively, having one-to-one conversations, and sharing personal experiences. Having one-to-one conversations builds relationships. A charter school executive director shared, "It's the personal story . . . I think part of this piece is being vulnerable and really being authentic and honest and transparent about everything the good and the bad." Having one-to-one conversations represented 18% of all coded content with 23 references. Providing gratitude through verbal and nonverbal communication also was referenced 25 times. It represented 19% of the heart-led principle connecting on a personal level. Participants shared how

gratitude is produced through their actions: "hearing humility plays a huge role in showing that and just demonstrating that you care, through your actions." Both themes, however, fell short of hitting on a key finding in the theme of connecting on a personal level.

Unexpected Findings 2: The Impact of Constant Feedback and Reflection With Employees

The second finding was the highest coded frequency of constant feedback and reflection and had the fewest number of total references for the theme, which showed feedback and reflection are apparent in extraordinary schools within this study. According to Maxwell and Maxwell (2005), employees go above and beyond their job responsibilities because their leaders help them grow. The literature addressed the emotional drivers that maximize employee potential (Gebauer et al., 2008). However, based on the interviews, employee accountability is created through goals and reflection on the outcomes of their choices, not so much through emotional drivers. The participants shared responses such as, "SMART goals are for everybody to recognize and set a goal for which you need to extend yourself, something that may be slightly uncomfortable." Another charter school director shared, "Then you find like even being bigger critics on themselves, than I ever would have been. So, they self-reflect and then we reflect on their self-reflection." Further research regarding how leaders keep their staff members accountable may be necessary for this theme.

<div align="center">

Conclusions

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Through the data analysis of the qualitative research collected in this phenomenological study, seven key findings led to the following conclusions describing

the lived experiences of exemplary charter school executive directors who exhibit Crowley's four heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements).

Conclusion 1

Charter school executive directors who authentically communicate with their staff members will build relationships imperative to accomplishing extraordinary results in their charter schools.

Exemplary charter school executive directors who participated in this study shared that communication is the key to building authentic relationships within their charter schools. Communicating with staff members creates a connection, which opens the opportunity to lead others and take the initiative (Maxwell, 2010). When staff members can feel emotionally connected to their work environment, they are more engaged and satisfied with their job and their responsibilities (Bickel, 2009; Gebauer et al., 2008). This engagement develops when leaders communicate to their staff members in ways that are "personal, authentic, and transparent" (Gebauer et al., 2008, p. 16). A charter school leader shared, "Emotional connections are just to start out letting people know that I care about their life. I care about their work; I want them to be successful." When leaders communicate with their staff members in a caring way, they exhibit that they appreciate their well-being, which translates to the employee working harder (J. E. Glaser, 2016; Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). These emotional connections contribute to the strength of the relationship between charter school executive directors and their staff members.

Exemplary charter school executive directors who participated in this study reported that communicating authentically shows that you care for your staff members. According to Rees et al. (2013), staff members are engaged at work when their work is meaningful and shared between upper and lower management over issues that matter. Leaders who invest their time communicating authentically with their staff members build an organization centered on engagement, purpose, and perseverance to the school's mission and vision. Additionally, because staff members have this sense of connection, they can overcome any challenges and demands their jobs may overcome (Bickel, 2009), resulting in a staff capable of tackling any challenges presented to the infrastructure of charter schools.

Conclusion 2

Charter school executive directors who invest time in connecting with staff on a personal level will experience positive results in their charter school.

Exemplary charter school executive directors who participated in this study shared that investing their time to connect with their staff members impacted the success of their school. Employees who are connected with their jobs are more likely engaged with the work they are doing (Crowley, 2011). According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), employers need to spend time with their staff members to determine what motivates them. By spending this time with a staff member, the charter school executive director allows the opportunity to feel connected and have a purpose for their involvement in the charter school. Through this time of seeing staff members in the workplace, leaders build a positive connection that results in sustained performance for an organization (Dutton, 2003).

Exemplary charter school executive directors who participated in this study shared that by connecting with their team members, they can witness how to best support and assist them to grow within the organization. Connecting to the heart of staff members allows the leader to understand the feelings of others, share experiences, and not be alone (Brown, 2018). According to J. E. Glaser (2016), this creates a safe space for staff members to connect heart-to-heart with compassion and understanding that builds the relationship in an organization. Creating this space and time allows staff members to be part of an environment where concern and love are part of the values and culture of the school, positively capturing and connecting staff members' hearts to higher organizational performance (Crowley, 2011; Ulrich & Woodson, 2011). Charter school executive directors who invest time to communicate with their staff members create an environment of caring and love that channels through to their students, parents, and stakeholders.

Conclusion 3

Charter school executive directors who provide consistent feedback and time for reflection to their staff members will experience increased engagement.

Exemplary charter school executive directors who participated in this study reported sharing feedback and reflecting on goals with their staff members on an ongoing basis. According to Gebauer et al. (2008) and Huguet (2017), leaders who can listen and reflect with their employees help them grow their self-competence. Leaders can motivate and provide feedback that encourages growth and employee engagement (Gebauer et al., 2008). According to Maxwell and Maxwell (2005), staff members go above and beyond because their leaders support them along the way to reach their goals. Providing learning

opportunities can help promote an employee's "heart and mind" to grow within an organization (Gebauer et al., 2008, p. 63). Charter school executive directors who are committed to meeting the goals for their staff members and school provide opportunities for feedback and reflection. Through in-person conversations, notes in the classroom, and email communication, charter school executive directors may display feedback to staff members and provide opportunities to maximize their potential.

Conclusion 4

Charter school executive directors who communicate appreciation in a variety of ways will foster a supportive culture and improve employee relations.

Exemplary charter executive directors who participated in this study reported displaying appreciation to their staff members through various ways of communication, such as in-person, shout-outs, notes, video conferencing, and emails. According to Marzano et al. (2001), recognitions are reminders and opportunities to say to one's employees that they are valued and essential to the organization. Appreciating staff members informs the team what values are honored (Marzano et al., 2001).

Exemplary charter executive directors who participated in this study reported sharing appreciation and gratitude to staff members for their contribution to the school through various forms of communication. According to Brown (2018) and Kouzes and Posner (2012), leaders need to find the time to stop and celebrate the wins with their staff members no matter how small the accomplishment. Additionally, appreciation and gratitude are shown through devoting time to getting to know one's staff. Leaders can genuinely recognize achievement when it happens in the workplace (Brun & Dugas,

2008). Leaders who communicate gratitude to their staff members in various ways convey to them that they appreciate and value their contributions.

Implications for Action

This research study described the four heart-led principles exemplary charter school executive directors perform to lead their charter schools. Key findings and conclusions resulted in the implications for action to improve outcomes for charter school executive directors, teachers, students, and stakeholders.

Implication 1

All leadership preparation and credential programs must incorporate the four foundational heart-led principles of leading from the heart. The program would consist of coursework covering the development and implementation of building effective teams and strong relationships. Concluding the preparation program, leaders would create a professional portfolio that includes reflection and feedback using the four foundational heart-led principles within their schools. It would consist of strategies and goals formulated to build a successful team.

Implication 2

To improve organizational outcomes, research on leading from the heart must be shared with leaders. By collaborating with each other, the 14 thematic researchers who studied Crowley's four heart-led principles across the five professions (education, corporate organizations, human resources, entrepreneur, and sales/marketing) could develop scholarly articles for submission to a variety of academic publications that focus on how to utilize Crowley's heart-led principles in their organizations.

Implication 3

The California Department of Education (CDE), working with the California legislature and professional organizations, must develop and fund a mentoring/coaching program for all public, private, and charter schools TK-12 education leaders. Principals, including charter schools' executive directors, would first receive training on mentoring and coaching their staff, allowing them to have the tools and resources to support their staff. The program would be designed to dedicate time to meet individually with each staff member. Each principal would meet with the teachers and classified staff monthly for 30-60 minutes and develop SMART goals aligned with the school's mission and vision. Leaders would also incorporate team-bonding activities, including but not limited to inviting family and friends to participate, enabling leaders to connect more with their staff members' lives authentically.

Implication 4

Charter schools exhibiting extraordinary results need to be showcased across the state and modeled to other charter schools. The CDE would formulate a dedicated team to coordinate, collect, and provide professional development to struggling schools across California. This team would identify charter schools exhibiting extraordinary results and offer them the opportunity to participate in the schools showcased across the state. Exemplary charter school executive directors would present virtually or in person to share experiences and advice with other charter school executive directors. Exemplary charter school executive directors would pair up with a few struggling charter school leaders and meet with them once a month to help guide them through their school goals and strategies. Evidence of progress and monitoring would be displayed to show

accountability. A few of the in-person events that exemplary charter school directors could present would be in various charter schools' organizations, including but not limited to Charter Schools Development Center (CSDC), California Consortium for Independent Study (CCIS), and California Charter Schools Association (CCSA).

Implication 5

It is recommended that the utilization of a recognition platform be incorporated into public, private, and charter schools. A recognition platform would help build a culture where employees feel valued and have a purpose. The platform would allow employees to share appreciation, recognition, and accomplishments in a secured platform regardless of position. Staff members would log in to the platform and select which appreciation, recognition, or accomplishment they would like to share with the staff. They would be able to do it daily, weekly, or monthly, allowing them to write messages, quotes, gifs, or videos. It would also incorporate additional features to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, baby announcements, and so forth. It would allow charter school executive directors to set reminders to recognize their employees using the platform and help them make this a much-needed routine when time is limited. It would also enable leaders to provide monetary or nonmonetary gifts via the Internet to their employees.

Implication 6

State legislators must provide additional funding for recognition rewards and incentives in public, private, and charter schools. Leaders can use the additional funding to honor staff employees who go above and beyond in their organizations. Additional funding can be used to provide bonuses, gift cards, presents, and so forth to employees

who have excelled in their job responsibilities and duties. Charter school executive

directors would follow specific criteria provided by the CDE to determine employees

who meet the requirements of receiving awards and incentives. Evaluations generated

from each district would also be used to determine whether staff members fit the criteria.

Therefore, employees could be honored for their contributions without leaders having to

spend their own money.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings resulting from this research study, additional research in the

area of Crowley's heart-led principles is necessary:

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted to a larger target

population of charter school executive directors across California, starting first with

exemplary Executive Directors from the five Southern California counties not included in

this research, including Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial

Counties. Once these studies are completed, another study should be conducted cross-

examining the three sectors of California—Southern, Central, and Northern—to examine

the similarities and differences between the demographic regions.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted that examines

how elementary, middle school, and high school executive directors across California use

Crowley's heart-led principles to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Once these studies are completed, another study should be conducted to examine the

similarities and differences between how each grade span uses Crowley's heart-led principles to lead within their charter schools.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that a meta-analysis be conducted of the thematic research team to describe Crowley's four heart-led principles that are important across each institution. The scholarly work completed by UMASS Global University's heart-led thematic research team increases the research currently available in this emerging field. The findings of these research studies should be analyzed to understand better the impact of incorporating these heart-led concepts into any organization's culture.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that a mixed methods study be conducted to focus on the impact Crowley's heart-led principles have on stakeholders. This study did not examine how stakeholders receive the heart-led principles within their organization. To begin this process, it is recommended to start interviewing teachers, listening to their descriptions of the research questions, and responding to survey questions regarding the stories told in their schools.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that a mixed methods study be conducted to determine the charter school executive director's description that teachers perceive as the most important characteristics to build a highly engaged team. Following the charter school executive director's interviews, teachers from the organizations should be surveyed. An alignment of the perceptions between charter school executive directors and teachers related to the heart-led principle of building a highly engaged team would be identified.

Following this study would be to conduct a mixed methods study for the remaining three heart-led principles of Crowley.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted to describe Crowley's heart-led principles to charter school leaders in a variety of roles. Within the schools, there are many leadership roles for leaders. Charter school leadership roles that could be included in this study are director of finance, director of human resources, director of operations, director of student achievement, director of school culture, and so forth. Leaders serving either classified or certificated staff should be included.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that a single case study of a charter school ranked in the top 10% of state testing of all schools in California be conducted. The researcher would visit the school, participate in staff meetings, shadow the leader, and speak with teachers, classified staff, students, and parents to develop a profile of the school's successful strategies.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

This study has opened my eyes to the possibility of coming into work feeling engaged and valued. Throughout my leadership career, I have encountered leaders who are heartless, dishonest, egotistical, and unscrupulous, leaders who have worked people to burn out and self-doubt. In reading the literature, listening to the interviews, and analyzing the artifacts, a light was shown that extraordinary leaders are present in charter schools. Listening to the participants' testimonies and stories of appreciating their employees, acknowledging their efforts, stretching their mindsets, and providing the

space for them to share their passions, I see that it is possible to feel valued and appreciated at work. Throughout each interview, I found words of wisdom, encouragement, motivation that I will share with others. For me, the research and literature within this study confirmed there is a formula to create an environment filled with love and compassion. There is a recipe to work in an environment where people feel valued, cared for, and engaged. People can share ideas and are open to communicating, not worrying about what others may think, a place where sharing thoughts and ideas is welcomed and curiosity is desired. Leading from the heart provides all of that in charter schools.

As I look at all educational institutions, I can imagine coming into work feeling valued, appreciated, and filled with purpose. I see myself engaged and ready to think about how else to make someone's day better or make a process more efficient. I would be looking for things to improve in the organization even though I may need to spend a little extra time doing it. Still, I am willing because I am invested in the organization. I feel a part of their organization and feel part of the process, an owner, a stakeholder. I feel included in the process, which resonates with having ownership as a valuable member of the organization's success.

After witnessing Crowley's heart-led principles in charter schools, I believe that creating extraordinary work can be done in charter schools. Leaders can invest time to meet with their staff members. They can show appreciation through various forms of communication. They can connect with their employees to reach their personal or professional goals, which affects to what degree employees feel a sense of belonging to something greater than themselves. Leaders do not want to let the organization down and

strive to uplift and support others along the way. Crowley (2011) stated, "What people

feel in their hearts has tremendous influence over their motivation and performance in the

workplace. The human heart is the driving force of human achievement" (p. 41).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Vitae for Dr. Cindy Petersen and Dr. Laurie Goodman

Dr. Cindy Petersen Vitae

Dr. Cindy Petersen has been the Superintendent/CEO for Gateway Community Charters (GCC) in Sacramento California for over 18 years. Dr. Petersen is a life-long learner and a committed educator, having served in education in a wide array of roles and settings. Cindy has been a leader within public education for over 30 years. Integral to her various roles have been her strong vision and dedication to educational opportunity for all students regardless of circumstance.

Dr. Petersen graduated from CSU, Stanislaus with a Bachelor's in Mathematics, while simultaneously pursuing coursework in computer technology and physical education. Concurrent to graduating from CSU, Stanislaus, Cindy earned her Single Subject Credential from Chapman University. In 2005 she achieved her Masters' in Education and Administrative Credential from the University of La Verne. Dr. Petersen went on to complete her doctorate in Organizational Leadership in June 2009 with a dissertation focused on innovation and the superintendency and currently invests in the growth of new leaders in her own organization as well as in her role as an adjunct professor in Brandman University's doctorate program in transformational change.

As a single mother raising four children and her nephew, Dr. Petersen took on increasing roles of leadership responsibility in the traditional public school system – coach, curriculum development, mentor teacher - before transitioning to the charter school

platform. Her experience broadened within the innovative world of charter schools; from teacher to coordinator to program director, to site administrator, director and ultimately superintendent. Cindy has also been active in a variety of education related organizations and often gives presentations in programs and conferences on topics related to education, charter schools and leadership. Dr. Petersen has always had a heart for supporting women leaders and for nearly the last decade has worked to create and support the annual ACSA Region 3 Women's Leadership Event which has since grown to include regions 2 and 4 and honors an Outstanding Woman Leader from each region annually.

Some of Dr. Petersen's past honors and awards include; three times nominated and awarded Who's Who Among America's Teachers; UC Davis Northern California Math Project Fellowship, K. Alpaugh Excellence in Leadership Award 2003, CASBO Mentorship Project Cohort 3, FCMAT Board service, ACSA State Board service, EdSource Board service, JGP Environmental Superintendent Award 2012, ACSA Region 3 Outstanding Woman Leader 2020 and the ACSA Region 3 Superintendent of the Year in 2013 and 2019. Cindy has taken an active role in ACSA and is a past President of Region 3 and former ACSA Region 3 State Board Director, former ACSA North State Conference planner and lead and coordinated the annual ACSA Regions 2, 3 and 4 Women's Leadership Network Spring Event for nearly a decade. Dr. Petersen has successfully completed the ACSA School Business Managers Academy, Special Education Academy, Categorical Academy, Personnel Academy, Curriculum and Instruction and Superintendent's Academy. Cindy is also proud to have achieved the Innovative Technology Leading Edge Certification. One of the organizational

commitments to excellence made by Petersen has led to the organization twice being named National Showcase Districts for Capturing Kids Hearts and three times being named Best Places to Work in Sacramento. Dr. Petersen was also honored to have been recently recognized in 2019 ACSA's Exemplary Woman in Education as well as ACSA Region 3's Outstanding Woman Leader for 2020.

Petersen has a deep passion and commitment to creating, implementing and leading the vision of an exemplary school choice organization with a particular focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations in cooperation with local Sacramento area school districts.

Cindy L. Petersen, Ed. D.

Superintendent/CEO Gateway Community Charters

Laurie Goodman, Ed.D

Contact

1515 Mary Street
Hanford, California 93230
(559) 999 – 5030
lgoodman@csu.edu
www.linkedin.com/in/lauriegoodmanedd

Profile

Student focused leader with a record of student success. Experience leading unified and elementary districts. Proven record for successful problem solving and strategic systems thinking to produce sustainable change. A collaborative team builder who fosters trust through open communication.

Professional Accomplishments

Student Learning: Supervised and implemented Common Core transition and professional development for all schools. As a Superintendent, the district met all targets for English Language Learners as well as upper grade math students exceeding 80% proficient and advanced on State Testing. As Director of Curriculum for Kingsburg Elementary Charter District, all schools in the district exceeded 800 API scores.

Technology: Initiated a district-wide conversion to document cameras and interactive learning with the use of technology in all classrooms. Coordinated the used of 21st skills in conjunction with Common Core training and classroom implementation.

Community Engagement: Initiated a district-wide conversion to document cameras and interactive learning with the use of technology in all classrooms. Coordinated the used of 21st skills in conjunction with Common Core training and classroom implementation.

Program Development: Developed and implemented a systematic student attendance review system bringing together community services and law enforcement to increase student attendance. Organized and executed Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) training and development of systems at all K-8 schools causing a reduce in bullying at all sites.

Strategic Planning: Coordinated the reconfiguration of two schools into K-5 schools with community forums and educator teams. Developed the Unified Local Education Plan (LEAP) working closely with school sites and CDE. Developing the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) with district team and community groups.

Student Support: Promoted a monitoring system for support services for students with emotional and

Administrative Experience

2019—Present
Executive Director • Yosemite Valley Charter School • Fresno, CA

2019—Present
Executive Director • Monarch River Academy • Porterville, CA

2018-2019
Director of Leadership Development • Inspire Charter Schools • Fresno, CA

2014-2018
Superintendent • Winship Robbins •Meridian, CA

2011-2014
Deputy Superintendent • Exeter Unified • Exeter, CA

2009-20011
Director of Curriculum • Kingsburg Elementary Charter District • Kingsburg, CA

2003-2009
Junior High School Principal • Kingsburg Charter School District • Kingsburg, CA

2002-2003
CA State and Federal Projects Coordinator • Selma Unified School District • Selma, CA

Teaching Experience

Monarch River Academy • Homeschool Teacher

Brandman University • Adjunct Professor • Educational Leadership

behavioral needs as well as students in need of intervention. Established common course codes between the comprehensive high school and alternative education.

Facilities Planning: *Successfully planned and executed the reorganization of two K-5 schools including movement of over 50 classrooms.*

Budget and Finance: *Coordinated budget expenditures with finance department to successfully align new funding system with Local Control Accountability Plan. Monitored all categorical expenditures to optimize funding of personnel and programs to increase achievement.*

Board Governance: *Facilitated board sub-committee meetings through unification of the elementary and high school districts in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Worked closely with school board through daily operations.*

Human Resources: *Developed and executed the employee training each year of all new employees, certificated and classified. With the collective bargaining unit, designed a rubric based evaluation system for certificated staff to build capacity in all employees and within school site. Strengthened the communication, hiring, and retention systems of certificated personnel to establish and retain long term successful employees.*

Honors and Awards

2017 Congressional Woman of the Year
Kingsburg Elementary School District
Administrator of the Year
Kings County Teacher of the Year
American Literacy Cooperation Distinguished
Educator Award Finalist
Administrator of the Year Fresno County Office
of Education

Professional Affiliations

Associated of California School Administrators
Credential Counselors and Analysts of California
Center for Leadership Equity and Research
California State University
Fresno Doctorate Alumni Association

California State University • Fresno Adjunct Professor • Educational Administration

Pioneer Charter Middle School • English and History

Parkview Middle School • English and History

Education

California State University, Fresno and UC Davis - Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and Doctor of Education
California State University, Fresno -Administrative Credential
California State University, Fresno - Master of Arts • Reading/Language Arts
California State University, Fresno - Bachelor of Arts • Liberal Studies

Professional Training

ACSA Superintendents Academy
Central Valley Rural Schools Network
ACSA Personnel Academy
Interest Based Bargaining
Common Core and Assessment Development

Publications

Creative Vocabulary: 50 Creative Strategies, Pearson Learning, 2008
Literature Circles an Interactive CD, Prentice Hall, 2002
Strategic Teaching and Learning: Standards Based Instruction for Grades 4-12, California Department of Education, 2000
Leadership Practices in California Middle Schools: Sustaining Organizational Change That Promotes Student Academic Success Dissertation, 2007

Presentations

ACSA Tulare Charter Region XI Assessment and the Common Core
National Council of Teachers of English, NY Language Development and Origins of English Pivot Learning Partners/Springboard Middle School Best Practices

Recommendations

"Laurie Goodman has the personality, the personal skills, professional experience, and knowledge, as well as the vision to lead a school district to higher student achievement." – Dr. Craig Wheaton, Superintendent, Tulare County Office of Education

"Dr. Goodman works well with bringing the district vision to the community. She works tirelessly with parent groups on student needs. I have always found her to have an open door to sit down and work out any concerns of the teachers association." – Nora Allstedt, President, Exeter Teachers Association

"I thought I had amazing bosses but then I had Dr. Goodman as my leader. She has set a standard that would be difficult for anyone to surpass and leads others to become great leaders themselves." – Mariah Jordan, Executive Administrative Assistant, Yosemite Valley Charter School

Center for Leadership Equity and Research Community Partnerships in Mentoring California Commission of Teaching Credential English Standards Committee California Reading Association Conference Content Area Literacy
CSU, Fresno – Master Teacher Conference Developing a Partnership for Success
San Joaquin Valley Writing Project Writing that Supports High Achievement
Association for Supervision and Curriculum School-wide Literacy Development

References

Dr. Lupe Solis, Asst. Superintendent - TCOE Retired (559) 288-9703

Dr. Craig Wheaton, Superintendent - TCOE Retired (559) 679-9996

Bryanna Brossman, Director of Governance - Inspire Charter Schools (951)290-3013

Ed Ezaki, Charter Trustee - Kingsburg Elementary (559) 897-2388

Dr. Ken Magdaleno, Department Chair - CSU Fresno (559) 278-0309

Steph Johnson, Co-Director – Yosemite Valley Charter School & Monarch River Academy (559) 289-7069

Mariah Jordan, Executive Administrative Assistant - Yosemite Valley Charter School (559) 270-5827

APPENDIX B

Invitation Letter for Potential Participants

September 2021

Dear Charter School Executive Director,

I am a doctoral candidate in UMASS Global Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program in the School of Education. I am conducting a qualitative phenomenological research study to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

I am asking for your assistance in the study by participating in an interview which will take approximately 60 minutes and will be set up at a time convenient for you through a virtual setting. If you agree to participate in the interview, you can be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files, accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the interview information. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time. You are also encouraged to ask any questions that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. Further, you may be assured that the researchers are not in any way affiliated with your charter schools. The research investigator, Giovanna Arzaga, is available at xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx or by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Giovanna Arzaga, Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D.

Interview Guide: Heart Thematic Interview Script

I would like to start by thanking you for sharing your valuable experiences with me. I know your time is precious and I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. Making this personal connection with you will be of great benefit to my research and I truly appreciate your contribution to this study.

My name is Giovanna Arzaga and I charter school director of operations and transformational leadership for Blue Ridge Academy. I'm a doctoral candidate at UMASS Global in the area of Organizational Leadership. I'm a part of a team conducting research to describe how exemplary leaders lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Our team is conducting 112 interviews with leaders like yourself. Our hope is that the information we gather will provide a clear picture of what exemplary leaders do to lead their organizations through the use of Crowley's four principles and our work will add to the body of research currently available.

Informed Consent (START RECORDING to obtain verbal consent)

Prior to this interview you received information concerning the purpose of the research, a copy of the interview questions, UMASS Global's Participant's Bill of Rights, and the Informed Consent form. After reviewing the protocols, you were offered an opportunity to ask questions concerning the research and the consent process. At that time, you provided verbal consent to be a participant in the interview. For purposes of verifying

your consent would you again provide a verbal yes as to your consent that will be included in the recording of this interview. Thank you.

I will now begin the interview. When our interview is complete, I will stop the recording and conclude our interview session. After your interview is transcribed, you will receive a copy of the complete transcripts to ensure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. Following your review and approval of the transcription, the data will be analyzed along with the data I have collected from the other respondents.

I would like to remind you that any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. I will be looking for themes that are present across all of the interviews. In reporting out the data, I will refer to respondents by pseudonyms and not by name, work location, or employer. The digital recording will be erased three years after the publication of the dissertation in accordance to the strict guidelines set forth by the UMASS Global Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) whose major function is to protect respondents.

Please remember that anytime during this process you have the right to stop the interview. If you do not understand the questions being asked, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Is there anything I can clarify before we begin?

Okay, let's get started, and again, thanks so much for your time.

Interview

Before we begin our interview questions, I want to review the purpose of this study and the four research questions that will be the focus of our interview today.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary leaders (superintendents, principals, city managers, police chiefs, corporate leaders, military leaders, etc.) lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions:

1. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

4. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievement

The interview questions will be preceded by a definition of the Crowley principle that is connected to those questions. The first principle is found in research question one, **Building a Highly Engaged Team**.

Definition:

Building a highly engaged team is using strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging, where relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision, and where values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees, Alfes & Gatenby, 2013; Senge, Lichtenstein, & Kaeufer, 2007).

Interview Questions:

1. How do you develop a team that is dedicated to their collective work?

   Probe: Please share a time when you supported one of your teams that was having difficulty.

2. How do you make work meaningful for your team?

   Probe: Please share an example?

3. How do you develop relationships on your team that are built on emotional connections?

   Probe: How did the development of relationships lead to a shared vision?

We now move to our second principle from research question #2, **Connecting on a Personal Level.**

Definition:

Connecting on a personal level is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010).

Interview Questions:

4. How do you communicate authentically with members in your organization?

   Probe: Please share a time when this was important to the organizations' success.

5. Please describe how your humility helps you in your work. Probe: How has this developed personal connections with employees?

6. How do you show concern and love for your employees? Probe: Please share an example of how this made a difference in the performance of your employees.

Our third principle from research question #3 is **Maximizing Employee Potential**.

Definition:

Maximizing employee potential is igniting emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011).

Interview Questions:

7. How do you promote emotional well-being in your organization?

   Probe: Please share a time when you experienced the benefits of promoting emotional well-being in your organization.

8. How do you create an environment that motivates staff members to high levels of achievement? Probe: Please provide a specific example.

9. How do you strengthen and build employees in a way that supports high achievement?

   Probe: Please share a story of the specific strategy that you used that led to high achievement.

Our fourth principle found in research question #4 is **Valuing and Honoring Achievements**.

Definition:

Valuing and honoring achievements is praising, acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and/or nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema, Ready, & Embaye, 2013).

Interview Questions:

10. Valuing and Honoring Achievements is important to inspiring employees to a higher level of satisfaction. How do you acknowledge employees' achievements at work?

    Probe: Can you elaborate on how you recognize their achievements?

11. How do you ensure that your employees see that their work is valued?

    Probe: Describe specific non-monetary and/or monetary practices that you use for this purpose.

12. Can you share an example of when you provide an expression of care for an employee?

    Probe: Please tell me a little more about that.

This concludes the interview questions. I would like to again thank you very much for your time. If you would like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings.

General Probes:

May be used during the interview when you want to get more information and/or expend the conversation with them. These are not questions you share with the interviewee. It is best to be very familiar with them and use in a conversational way when appropriate to extend their answers.

1. **"What did you mean by…..?"**
2. **"Do you have more to add…..?"**
3. **"Would you expand upon that a bit….?"**
4. **"Why do you think that was the case?"**
5. **"Could you please tell me more about…..?"**
6. **"Can you give me an example of…..?"**
7. **"How did you feel about that?"**

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent

Information About: A Phenomenological Study of Exemplary Charter School ExecutiveDirectors Leading from the Heart

Responsible Investigator: Giovanna Arzaga

The following will be Included in the Interview Protocol:

You are being asked to participate in a thematic research study conducted by Giovanna Arzaga, a doctoral student from UMASS Global, a nonprofit affiliate of the University of Massachusetts. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how charter school executive directors lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (buildinga highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that theInvestigators will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and researchmaterials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researchers.

b) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding the strategies that exemplary leaders use to create personal resiliency.

c) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact theresearcher using the information provided in the invitation to participate.

d) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the studyand I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during theinterview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. In addition, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

e) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that allidentifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. Iunderstand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of AcademicAffairs, UMASS GLOBAL, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact GiovannaArzaga xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx or by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or Dr. Keith Larick (Dissertation Chair) at xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx

 I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Billof Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   **Date**

UMASS Research Participant's Bill of Rights

UMASS GLOBAL
A nonprofit affiliate of the University of Massachusetts

UMASS GLOBAL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment,or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures,drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that mayhappen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what thebenefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worsethan being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing tobe involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without anyadverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree tobe in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the UMASS GLOBAL Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The UMASS Global Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 orby writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMASS GLOBAL, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

UMass Global IRB   Adopted   2021

Synthesis Matrix

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
1	Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management, 5* (1), 6-14.							X								
2	Anderson, D. L. V. (2017). *Organization development: The process of leading organizational change* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.							X								
3	Ackerman-Anderson, L.S., & Anderson, D. (2010). *The change leader's roadmap: How to navigate your's organization's transformation.* San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.						X									
4	Anderson, D., & Anderson, L.S.A. (2010). *Beyond change management: How to achieve breakthrough results through conscious change leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.						X						X			
5	Arenas, F.J. (2019). *A casebook of transformational and transactional leadership* . New York, NY: Routledge						X									
6	Avolio, B.J. & Gardner, W.L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly* , 16(3), 315-338.			X												
7	Barbuto, J.E., & Wheeler, D.W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management,* 31(3), 300-326.				X											
8	Bass, B. M. (2008). *The bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press			X	X	X	X						X			
9	Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers						X						X			
10	Berkovich, I., & Eyal, O. (2020)..*A model of emotional leadership in schools: Effective leadership to support teachers' emotional wellness* . New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group					X										
11	Bernard, H.R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropolgy: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield															X

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
12	Bickel, N. (2009). *Developing exemplary leadership in BCAS frontline supervisors.* (Masters Thesis). Retreived from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Order No. MR551919)					X			X	X	X	X				
13	Bixby, M. S., & Davis, T. R. (2018). *Charter storm: Waves of change sweeping over public education.* Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press	X	X										X	X		
14	Bradberry, T., & Greaves, J. (2009). *Emotional intelligence 2.0.* San Diego, CA: TalentSmart					X				X						
15	Bridges, E. M. (1982). Research on the school administrator: The state of the art, 1967-1980. *Educational administration quarterly*, 18, 12-33.							X								
16	Brink, H.I. (1993). Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis*, 16(2), 35-38.															X
17	Britt, T.W. (2003). Aspects of identity predict engagement in work under adverse conditions. *Self and Identity*, 2(1), 31-45								X							
18	Brown, B. (2015). *Rising strong: How the ability to reset transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. New York, NY: Random House					X	X			X						
19	Brun, J. & Dugas, N. (2008). An analysis of employee recognition: Perspectives on human resources practices. International Journal of *Human Resource Management*, 19(4), 716-730.										X	X				
20	Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead: Brave work. Tough conversations. Whole hearts.* New York, NY: Random House			X		X	X			X						
21	Burnett, J.R. & Lisk, T.C. (2019). The future of employee engagement real-time monitoring and digitial tools for engaging a workforce. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 49(1), 108-119								X		X	X				
22	Bush, T. (2009). Leadership development and school improvement: Contemporary issues in leadership development. *Educational Review*, 61(4), 375-389.							X						X		
23	Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2003). *School leadership: Concepts and evidence*. [PDF file]. Retreived from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252485640_School _Leadership_Concepts_and_Evidence							X						X		

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
24	Caldwell, B. J., & Hayward, D. K. (1999). *The future of schools: Lessons from the reform of public education* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.	X											X			
25	Campbell, C., & Gross, B. (2008). *Working without a safety net: How charter school leaders can best survive on the high wire.* Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education		X									X	X			
26	Campbell, C., & Gross, B. (2009). *Working smarter: How charter school leaders can get the help they need.* Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education.											X	X			
27	Campbell, C., & Grubb, B. J. (2008). *Closing the skill gap: New options for charter school leadership development* . Seattle, WA:Center on Reinventing Public Education		X									X	X	X		
28	Carpenter, D. M. & Peak, C. (2013). Leading charters: How charter school administrators define their roles and their ability to lead. *Management in Education* , 27(4), 150-158	X	X									X	X	X		
29	Campbell, J.L., Quincy, C., Osserman, JI, & Pedersen, O.K. (2012). *Coding in-depth semistructured interviews: Problems of unitization and intercoder reliability and agreement* (3), 294. Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspxdirect=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsbl&AN=RN352053294&site=eds-live															X
30	Chenail, R.J. (2011). Interviewing the investigator: Strategies for addressing instrumentation and researcher bias concerns in qualitative research. *Qualitative Report* , 16(1), 255-262															X
31	Consoletti, A. (2011). The state of charter schools: What we know and what we do not about performance and accountability. *The Center for Education Reform* , 7-8. Retrieved from https://edreform.com/wpcontent/uploads/2011/12/StateOfCharterSchools_CER_Dec2011-Web-1.pdf		X									X	X			
32	Cravens, X.C., Goldring, E. & Penaloza, R.(2012). Leadership practice in the context of US school choice reform. *Leadership and Policy in School* s, 11(4), 452-476	X												X		

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
33	Crawford, J.R. (2001). Teacher autonomy and accountability in charter schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 33(2), 186-200.	X	X										X	X		
34	Cresswell, J.W. & Plano, V. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed method research* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications															X
35	Crippen, C. (2005). The democratic school: First to serve, then to lead. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (47), 1-17				X			X						X		
36	Crowley, M. C. (2011). *Lead from the heart: Transformational leadership for the 21st centur*y. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press						X		X	X	X	X				
37	David, R. (2016). *National charter school management overivew*. Retreived from Washington, DC: www.publiccharters.org		X										X			
38	Dressler, B. (2001). Charter school leadership. *Education and Urban Society*, 33(2), 170-185.	X	X										X	X		X
39	Drucker, P.F. (1999). Knowledge-worker productivity: The biggest challenge. *California Management Review*, 41(2), 79-94	X														
40	Drucker, P.F (1999) *Management challenges for the 21st century*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Ltd.	X												X		
41	DuFour, R., & Fullan, M. (2013). *Cultures built to last: Systemic plcs at work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.	X					X		X		X					
42	Duncan, P., Mark, G., Esther, G. & Wenonah, E. (2017). Authentic leadership-is it more than emotional intelligence? *Administrative Issues Journal*, 7(2), 3.			X		X										
43	Dutton, J.E. (2003). *Energize your workplace: How to create and sustain high-quality connections at work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass								X	X						
44	Education, C.D. (2021). *Charter schools in California counties*. Retreived from https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/cs/ap1/imagemap.aspx		X													X
45	Edwards, B., Perry, M., Brazil, N., & Studier, C. (2004). Charter schools in California: An experiment coming of age. Palo Alto, CA: EdSource		X													

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
46	Epple, D., Romano, R., & Zimmer, R. (2015). Charter schools: A survey of research on their characteristics and effectiveness. *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, 5, 139-208.		X										X	X		
47	Fernandez-Berrocal, P. & Extremera, N. (2006). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical and empirical review of its first 15 years of history. *Psicothema* 18, 7-12.					X										
48	Fong-Yee, D., & Normore, A. H. (2013). *The impact of quality teachers on student achievement.* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=sferc							X						X		
49	Franklin, C. & Ballan, M. (2001). *The handbook of social work research methods* (Vol.4). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications															X
50	Gardner, H. (2008). *5 Minds for the future.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press	X		X												
51	Gasoi, E., & Meier, D. (2018). To strengthen democracy, invest in our public schools. *American Educator*, 42(1), 36.	X														
52	Gebauer, J., Lowman, D., & Gordon, J. (2008). *Closing the engagement gap: How great companies unlock employee potential for superior results.* New York, NY: Penguin.					X			X	X	X	X				
53	Geijsel, F., Sleegers, P. & van den Berg, R. (1999). Transformational leadership and the implementation of large-scale innovation programs. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 37(4), 309-328.						X							X		
54	Gelb, M. J. (2017). *The art of connection: 7 relationship-building skills every leader needs now.* Novato, CA: New World Library.					X				X						
55	George, P.S., & Stevenson, C. (1988). *Highly effective interdisciplinary teams: Perceptions of exemplary middle school principals.* ERIC Document retrieval no. ED303866.							X						X		
56	Glaser, J. E. (2016). *Conversational intelligence: How great leaders build trust and get extraordinary results.* New York, NY: Routledge.					X				X						
57	Goddard, R.D., Hoy, W.K, & Hoy, A.W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 479-507.	X												X		

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
58	Goff, P.T., Mavrogordato, M., & Goldring, E. (2012). Instructional leadership in charter schools: Is there an organizational effect or are leadership practices the result of faculty characteristics and preferences? *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 11(1), 1-25		X										X	X		
59	Goleman, D. Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Review Press					X										
60	Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A (2013). *Primal leadership: Unleashing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press				X	X								X		
61	Good, T. L., & Braden, J. S. (2000). Charter schools: Another reform failure or a worthwhile investment? *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(10), 745-750.	X	X										X	X		
62	Gove, A.K. & Meier, N.S. (2000). California charter schools: Forcing competition and innovation in public schools. *Research Gate*. [PDF File]. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amber-Gove/publication/242097141_California_Charter_Schools_Forcing_Competition_and_Innovation_in_Public_Schools/links/56d593e708ae5c281ca43e7d/California-Charter-Schools-Forcing-Competition-and-Innovation-in-Public-Schools.pdf		X													
63	Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness* (25th ed.). New York, NY: Paulist Press				X					X		X				
64	Groysberg, B., & Slind, M. (2012). Leadership is a conversation: How to improve employee engagement and alignment in today's flatter, more networked organizations. *Harvard Business Review*, 90(6), 76-84					X		X	X							
65	Guarino, C. Zimmer, R., Krop, C. & Chau, D. (2005). *Nonclassroom-based charter schools in California and the impact of SB 740.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation		X											X		
66	Hall, P., Childs-Bowen, D., Pajardo, P., & Cunningham-Morris, A. (2015). *Leadership Matters.* [PDF File]. Retrieved from http://simplifymy.s3.amazonaws.com/c%2Ftitlei%2Fsched%2Ffiles%2Fhandouts%2FWhitePaper_PrincipalLeadership.pdf							X						X		

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67	Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9(2), 157-191.													X		
68	Hallinger, P., Murphy, J., Well, M., Mesa, R. P., & Mitman, A. (1983). Identifying the specific practices, behaviors for principals. *NASSP bulletin*, 67(463), 83-91.													X		
69	Hanover Research - Academy Administration Practice (2012). *Best practices in charter school collaboration*. [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Best-Practices-in-Charter-School-Collaboration-1.pdf		X							X				X	X	
70	Hanushek, E. A. (2003). The failure of input-based schooling policies. The *Economic Journal*, 113(485), F64-F98.	X													X	
71	Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (2004). Why public schools lose teachers. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39(2), 326-354.	X						X						X	X	
72	Hayward, S. (2015). *Connected leadership: How to build a more agile, customer-driven business*. London, UK: Pearson UK								X							
73	Hess, F.M. (2001). Whaddya mean you want to close my school? The politics of regulatory accountability in charter schooling. *Education and Urban Society*, 33(2), 141-156.	X	X										X			
74	Heidegger, M., Macquarrie, J. & Robinson, E. (1962). *Being and time*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers	X		X			X							X		
75	Huguet, B. C. S. (2017). *Effective leadership can positively impact school performance.* On the Horizon, 25(2), 96-102.						X							X		
76	Humphrey, R. H. (2002). The many faces of emotional leadership. The *Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 493-504.					X										
77	Ibarra, P. (2016). Cultivating creative leadership: Realize extraordinary results. *Public Management*. [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://gettingbetterallthetime.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Ibarra-Culivating-Leadership.pdf						X			X						

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
78	Jackson, K. T. (2019). *Review of the mind of a leader: How to lead yourself, your people, and your organization for extraordinary results* by R. Hougaard and J. Carter. Journal of Business Ethics(3), 927.			X	X					X						
79	Johnson, J. F., Uline, C. L., & Perez, L. G. (2017). *Leadership in America's best urban schools.* New York, NY:Routledge.	X						X								
80	Kerfoot, K. (2006). Authentic Leadership. *MEDSURG Nursing,* 15(5), 319-320			X					X							
81	Kerfoot, K. (2007). Staff engagement: It starts with the leader. *Nursing Economic $,* 25(1), 47-48.								X							
82	Kirby, P. C., Paradise, L. V., & King, M. I. (1992). Extraordinary leaders in education: Understanding transformational leadership. *The Journal of Educational Research,* 85(5), 303-311.						X	X						X	X	
83	Klein, J. (2011). The failure of American schools. *The Atlantic,* 307(5), 66-77.	X												X		
84	Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organziations (5th ed.).* San Francisco, CA: A Wiley Brand				X	X	X			X		X		X		
85	Kowalski, T. J., Lasley, T. J., & Mahoney, J. W. (2008). *Data-driven decisions and school leadership: Best practices for school improvemen*t: Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.							X								
86	Kurasaki, K.S. (2000). *Intercoder Reliability for Validating conclusions drawn from open-ended interview data* (3), 179. Retreived from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsbl&AN=RN101339105&site=eds-live															X
87	Leithwood, K. (1995). *Effective school district leadership: Transforming politics into education*: New York, NY:State University of New York Press, Albany												X	X		
88	Leithwood, K.A. & Montgomery, D.J. (1986). *Improving principal effectiveness: The principal profile*.Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education												X	X		

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
89	Leithwood, K., & Prestine, N. (2002). *Unpacking the challenges of leadership at the school and district level.* Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 101(1), 42-64.							X								
90	Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership.* Division A of AERA. [PDF File]. Retrieved from http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/ data/ck/file/What_we_know_about_Sch oolLeadership.pdf								X	X	X		X	X		
91	Letizia, A. (2018). *Using servant leadership: How to reframe the core functions of higher education.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press				X											
92	Lussiez, Y.W. (2009). The empathic principal: The relationship between empathy, transformational leadership, and teacher self-efficacy. Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico											X	X			
93	Luthans, F. & Avolio, B.J. (2003). *Authentic leadership development.In positive organizational scholarship* [PDF File]. Retreived from https://cerf.radiologie.fr/sites/cerf.radiol ogie.fr/files/Enseignement/DES/Module s- Base/Luthans%20%26%20Avolio%2C %202003.pdf			X												
94	Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagment. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*,1(1), 3-30.								X							
95	Mack, N., Woodsong, C., Macqueen, K., Guest, G.E. & Namey (2005). Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide. Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International															X
96	Major, K. (1988). *Dogmatism, visionary leadership, and effectiveness of secondary principals* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database. (UMI No. 8821919)												X			
97	Mandelbaum, M., & Friedman, T. L. (2011). *That used to be us: How America fell behind in the world it invented and how we can come back.* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.	X											X	X		
98	Marks, H. M., & Printy, S. M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational administration quarterly*, 39(3), 370-397.							X								

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
99	Marzano, R. J., & Waters, T. (2009). *District leadership that works: Striking the right balance* .Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.												X	X		
100	Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2001). *School leadership that works: From research to results.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.	X				X		X	X		X			X		
101	Matteson, J.A. & Irving, J.A. (2006). Servant versus self-sacrificial leadership: A behavioral comparison of two follow-oriented leadership theories. *International Journal of Leadership Studies,* 2(1), 36-51.				X											
102	Maxwell, J. C. (2010). Everyone communicates, few connect: What the most effective people do differently. New York, NY: HarperCollins Leadership.									X						
103	Maxwell, J. C., & Maxwell, J. (2005). *The 360 degree leader* . United States: HarperCollins Leadership					X		X	X	X				X		
104	Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D.R. & Cherkasskiy, L. (2011). *Emotional intelligence.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press					X										
105	McKee, A., Boyatzis, R., & Johnston, F. (2008). *Becoming a resonant leader: Develop your emotional intelligence, renew your relationships, sustain your effectiveness.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press								X				X			
106	McMillan, J. H., Schumacher, S., & Pearson. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry (7th ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.															X
107	Mendels, P. (2012). The effective principal: 5 pivotal practices that shape instructional leadership. *The Learning Professional,* 33(1), 54.							X					X			
108	Miller, K. (2004). *Creating conditions for leadership effectiveness: The district's role. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED518629.pdf												X			
109	Murari, K. (2015). *Impact of leadership styles on employee empowerment.* India: Partridge Publishing.					X		X								
110	Neckerman, K. M. (2008). *Schools betrayed: Roots of failure in inner-city education.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.	X														

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
111	Nelson, S. W., & Slater, C. L. (2013). *Understanding the principalship: An international guide to principal preparation.* Bingley, U.K: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.													X	X	
112	Patten, L. M., & Newhart, M. (2018). *Understanding reserach methods: An overview of the essentials (10th ed.).* New York, NY: Routledge															X
113	Patterson, K. (2003). *Servant leadership: A theoretical model. School of Leadership Studies Regent University.* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.regent.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/patterson_servant_leadership.pdf				X											
114	Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (4th ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.															X
115	Payne, C. M. (2008). *So much reform.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press	X											X			
116	Peggy, C. K., Louis, V. P., & Margaret, I. K. (1992). *Extraordinary leaders in education: Understanding transformational leadership.* The Journal of Educational Research, 85(5), 303.						X							X		
117	Perry, E. (2008). *Charter school executives: Toward a new generation of leadership.* Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.		X										X	X		
118	Poggenpoel, M. & Myburgh, C. (2003). *The researcher as research instrument in educational research: A possible threat to trustworthiness?* Education, 124(2), 418-423															X
119	Posamentier, A. (2008). *The true meaning of rewarding excellence in education.* Retrieved 28 September 2020, from http://www.educationupdate.com/archives/2008/JUL/html/edit.html											X				
119	Powell, C. J. (2018). *A phenomenological study of exemplary elementary school principals leading through conversational intimacy, interactivity, inclusion, and intentionality.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.(UMI No. 10810757)					X	X			X				X	X	
120	Quick, J. (2020). *An investigation of the characteristics successful executive directors perceive to be most important in charter schools.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.(UMI No. 10937184)	X	X						X				X	X	X	

Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
121	Ravitch, D. (2020). The education reform movement has failed America. We need common sense solutions that work. *Time USA*. Retrieved from https://time.com/5775795/education-reform-failed-america/	X													X	
122	Rees, C., Alfes, K., & Gatenby, M. (2013). Employee voice and engagement connections and consequences. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(14), 2780-2798.								X		X					
123	Rehman, S.U., Shahzad, M., Farooq, M.S. & Javaid, M.U. (2020). Impact of leadership behavior of a project manager on his/her subordinate's job-attitudes and job-outcomes. Asia Pacific Management Review, 25(1), 38-47	X												X		
124	Research, H. (2012). *Best practices in charter school collaboration*. GSSA. [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Best-Practices-in-Charter-School-Collaboration-1.pdf		X										X	X		
125	Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2019). *The dissertation journey* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: Corwin A Sage Publishing Company							X								
126	Rockoff, J. E. (2004). The impact of individual teachers on student achievement: Evidence from panel data. *American economic review*, 94(2), 247-252.	X											X	X		
127	Rost, J.C. (1993). Leadership development in the new millennium. *Journal of Leadership Studies* (1), 92-100													X		
128	Salovey, P. & Mayer, J.D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, cognition, and personality*, 9(3), 185-211					X										
129	Seymour, A. & Dupre, K. (2008). Advancing employee engagement through a healthy workplace strategy. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 13(1), 35-40.								X							
130	Schaufeli, W. B., Taris, T. W., & Van Rhenen, W. (2008). Workaholism, burnout, and work engagement : Three of a kind or three different kinds of employee well-being? *Applied Psychology* (Print), 57(2), 173-203.								X	X						

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Source #	Charter School Executive Directors Leading from the Heart	Failure of Public Schools	Charter Schools	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Emotional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Educational Leadership	Building a highly engaged Team	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Charter School Executive Director Role	Leadership in Schools	Gaps in Research	Methodology
131	Sendjaya, S. & Sarros, J.C. (2002). Servant leadership: Its orgin, development, and application in organizations. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies,* 9(2), 57-64							X					X			
132	Senge, P.M., Lichtenstein, B., Kaeufer, K., Bradbury, H., & Carroll, J.S. (2007). Collaborating for systemic change. *MIT Sloan Management Review* , 48(2), 44.	X						X								
133	Sergiovanni, T. J. (1990). Adding value to leadership gets extraordinary results. *Educational Leadership* (8), 23.						X	X				X	X			
134	Shamir, B. & Eilam, G. (2005). What's your story? A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. *The Leadership Quarterly* , 16(3), 395-417.			X												
135	Smith, W. F., & Andrews, R. L. (1989). *Instructional leadership: How principals make a difference* . Alexandria, VA: ERIC.							X								
136	Spradley, J.P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview.* Long Grove, IL:Waveland Press							X								
137	Spears, L.C. & Lawrence, M. (2002). *Focus on leadership: Servant-leadership for the twenty-first century.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons				X											
138	Streshly, W. A., & Gray, S. P. (2008). A close look at six super star principals: Implications for educational leadership and administration programs. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development,* 20, 116-124.							X					X			
139	Taylor-Powell, E. & Renner, M. (2003). *Analyzing qualitative data. In Program development and evaluation.* Madison, WI: Cooperative Extension Publishing Operations															X
140	Tessema, M.T., Ready, K.J., & Embaye, A.B. (2013). The effects of employee recognition, pay, and benefits on job satisfaction: Cross country evidence. *Journal of Business and Economics* , 4(1), 1-12								X	X						
141	Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and deliminations in the research process. *Perioperative nursing* , 7(3), 155-163															X

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142	Trahant, B. (2009). Driving better performance through continuous employee engagement. *Public Manager*, 38(1), 54								X	X	X					
143	Ulrich, D., & Woodson, B. A. (2011). Connecting Hearts in the Workplace. *School Administrator*, 68(3), 33-37.	X											X			
144	U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Progress in our schools. U.S. Department of Education.* Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/k-12reforms?src=rn.	X											X			
145	Wang, F. (2020). Principals' self and leadership amid work intensification. *Journal of School Leadership*, 1-32. doi:10.1177/1052684620935383			X												
146	Weston, S. P. (1989). *Choosing a school for your child.* Washinton, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement	X											X	X		
147	Wildemuth, B.M.(2016). *Applications of social research mehtods to questions in information and library science*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited														X	
148	Winston, B.E. & Ryan, B. (2008). Servant leadership as a humane orientation: Using the GLOBE study construct of humane orientation to show that servant leadership is more global than western. International *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 3(2), 212-222													X		
149	Wiseman, L., Allen, L., & Foster, E. (2013). *The multiplier effect: Tapping the genius inside our schools.* Thousand Oaks, CA:Corwin Press.				X	X	X		X		X					
150	Witziers, B., Bosker, R.J., & Kruger, M.L (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 398-425.							X								
151	Young, M. D. & Carpenter, B. (2008). Preparing educational leaders to build transformative communities of involvement: The importance of trust. *Journal of School Public Relations*, 29 (2), 276-311.						X						X			
152	Zimmer, R., & Buddin, R. (2009). Is charter school competition in California improving the performance of traditional public schools? *Public Administration Review*, 69(5), 831.	X	X										X			

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153	Zimmer, R., Buddin, R., Chau, D., Gill B., Guarino, C., Hamilton, L., & Brewer, D. (1999). *Charter school operations and performance: New evidence from California*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation		X													

APPENDIX G

Observer Feedback Reflection Questions

Thank you for observing the field test used to validate the interview questions for this multiple case study. As a valuable participant, your answers to the following questions will be used to make necessary adjustments to the Leadership Competency Protocol, the interview questions, and the interview process.

1. How long did it take to conduct the interview? Do you believe this time was appropriate or should be adjusted?

2. What were your personal feelings while giving the interview? At what times did you feel comfortable, nervous, or confused?

3. How would you improve the clarity of the interview instructions, and how could the Leadership Competency Protocol be improved so both the interviewer and the interviewee are better prepared?

4. At what times during the interview, did you believe the process to run effectively. At what times during the interview, do you believe there were problems?

5. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the questions, the process, or the overall experience?

APPENDIX H

Field-Test Participant Feedback Questions

While conducting the interview you should take notes of their clarification request or comments about not being clear about the question. After you complete the interview ask your field-test interviewee the following clarifying questions. **Try not to make it another interview; just have a friendly conversation**. Either script or record their feedback so you can compare with the other two members of your team to develop your feedback report on how to improve the interview questions.

Before the brief post interview discussion, give the interviewee a copy of the interview

protocol. If their answers imply that some kind of improvement is necessary, follow up for

specificity.

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe what you do as a leader when working with your team or staff?

2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?

3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked? *If the interview indicates some uncertainty, be sure to find out where in the interview it occurred.*

4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?

5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview… (I'm pretty new at this)?

Remember, the key is to use common, conversational language and very user friendly approach. Put that EI to work☺

NOTE: Red font is for your eyes and support info only

APPENDIX I

Interview Feedback Reflection Questions

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set/experience. Gaining valuable insight about your interview skills and affect with the interview will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher you should reflect on the questions below after completing the interview. You should also discuss the following reflection questions with your 'observer' after completing the interview field test. The questions are written from your prospective as the interviewer. However, you can verbalize your thoughts with the observer and they can add valuable insight from their observation.

1. How long did the interview take? _____ Did the time seem to be appropriate?
2. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous?
3. Going into it, did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared?
4. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?
5. What parts of the interview seemed to struggle and why do you think that was the case?
6. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you change it?
7. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certificate

Completion Date 21-May-2020
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This is to certify that:

Giovanna Arzaga

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

Human Subjects Research	(Curriculum Group)
Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers	(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic	(Stage)

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