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How Exemplary High School Principals Who Utilize Heart-Led Principles Achieve  
Extraordinary Results

A Dissertation by  
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Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

August 2022

Committee in charge:

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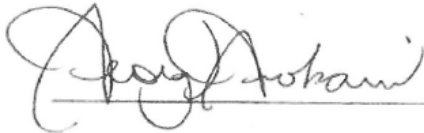
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Jeyan Danesh is approved.



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August 2022

How Exemplary High School Principals Who Utilize Heart-Led Principles Achieve

Extraordinary Results

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## ABSTRACT

How Exemplary High School Principals Who Utilize Heart-Led Principles Achieve

Extraordinary Results

by Jeyan Danesh

**Purpose:** The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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.

**Methodology:** Semistructured interviews were conducted with 8 high school principals to better understand how the use of heart-led principles can lead to extraordinary results on a high school campus. Interview data were collected, transcribed, and coded for themes, allowing the researcher to triangulate data and draw conclusions with the data. Nine key findings were identified, describing how the use of heart-led principles lead to success on the high school campuses.

**Findings:** This qualitative phenomenological study utilized principals' lived experiences to identify how Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles help high school principals achieve extraordinary results on their campuses. Each interview was transcribed and coded for emerging themes. The data generalized by the researcher revealed 12 themes identified as they related to each heart-led principle and research question. Nine key findings were identified, describing how the use of heart-led principles lead to success on the high school campuses.

**Conclusions:** The major findings of this study help to describe how exemplary high school principals use heart-led principles to lead their staff toward extraordinary results. Each of Crowley's (2011) 4 heart-led principles prioritize an investment in an organization's human capital to produce results. Although the findings of the study present equal importance of all 4 heart-led principles, 2 notable conclusions were found. The first conclusion from this study is that principals should invest time to build trusting, meaningful relationships. The second conclusion derived from this study is that principals should get to know the various needs of their campuses to better serve their organizations and lead them to success.

**Recommendations:** Recommendations for further research involve replicating the study to include continuation and other types of alternative secondary schools. Additionally, a mixed methods approach to the study where quantifiable data related to employee perception of exemplary principalship could yield more thorough and alternative viewpoints on the data.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	4
Types of Leadership.....	6
Heart-Led Leadership .....	8
High School Principals .....	9
Gap in Research .....	11
Statement of the Research Problem .....	12
Purpose Statement.....	14
Research Questions .....	14
Significance of the Problem.....	15
Definitions.....	17
Operational Definitions.....	17
Theoretical Definitions .....	18
Delimitations.....	19
Organization of the Study .....	20
 CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	 21
Introduction to Leadership.....	21
History of Leadership Development.....	22
Leadership in Education .....	23
Leadership Styles .....	24
Servant Leadership.....	25
Transactional Leadership .....	27
Emotional Intelligence .....	30
Transformational Leadership .....	33
Theoretical Framework: Crowley’s Heart-Led Principles.....	36
Building a Highly Engaged Team.....	36
Connecting on a Personal Level .....	39
Maximizing Employee Potential.....	42
Valuing and Honoring Achievements.....	43
Significance of Heart-Led Leadership .....	45
The Impact of Exemplary High School Principals .....	48
The Historic Role of High School Principals .....	49
Direct and Indirect Principalship .....	51
The Impact of COVID-19 on High School Principalship.....	51
Parallels Between High School Principals and Organizational Leaders .....	54
Identified Gaps in Literature.....	56
Summary .....	57
Synthesis Matrix .....	59
 CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY .....	 60
Purpose Statement.....	60
Research Questions .....	60
Rationale for the Methodology .....	61

Population .....	63
Target Population.....	63
Sample.....	64
Sampling Procedure .....	64
Instrumentation .....	65
Field Test .....	66
Validity and Reliability.....	67
Data Collection .....	67
Data Analysis .....	69
Limitations .....	69
Population .....	70
Time... .....	70
Researcher Bias.....	71
Summary.....	71
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS.....	73
Purpose Statement.....	73
Research Questions.....	73
Population .....	74
Sampling Frame .....	74
Sample.....	74
Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures .....	75
Interviews.....	76
Participant Demographics.....	76
Presentation and Analysis of Data .....	78
Data Analysis .....	78
Reliability.....	79
General Findings.....	79
Data By Research Question .....	80
Research Question 1: Building a Highly Engaged Team .....	80
Research Question 2: Connecting on a Personal Level .....	82
Research Question 3: Maximizing Employee Potential .....	85
Research Question 4: Valuing and Honoring Achievements .....	87
Key Findings.....	89
Key Findings: Building a Highly Engaged Team.....	90
Key Findings: Connecting on a Personal Level.....	91
Key Findings: Maximizing Employee Potential.....	91
Key Findings: Valuing and Honoring Employee Achievements.....	91
Summary.....	91
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	93
Purpose Statement.....	93
Research Questions.....	93
Major Findings.....	94
Research Question 1 .....	95
Major Finding 1: Making everyone feel as if they are part of the team .....	95
Research Question 2 .....	96

Major Finding 2: Knowing the needs of the campus .....	96
Research Question 3 .....	96
Major Finding 3: Discovering the interests of employees .....	96
Research Question 4 .....	97
Major Finding 4: Principals should prioritize making themselves open and available to employees .....	97
Unexpected Findings .....	97
Conclusions .....	98
Conclusion 1: Principals Should Invest Time to Build Trusting, Meaningful Relationships .....	98
Conclusion 2: Principals Should Get to Know the Various Needs of Their Campuses to Better Serve Their Organizations and Lead Them to Success .....	99
Implications for Action .....	100
Implication 1: Focus on Building Meaningful Relationships .....	100
Implication 2: Administrative Professional Development .....	101
Implication 3: Strategic Hiring and Assignment of Administrators .....	101
Implication 4: Incorporation of Employee Recognition and Celebratory Practices .....	102
Implication 5: Publication of Findings .....	102
Recommendations for Further Research .....	102
Final Reflections .....	104
REFERENCES .....	106
APPENDICES .....	124

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Comprehensive High School Participant Demographics.....	77
Table 2. Comprehensive High School Exemplary Participant Criteria .....	78
Table 3. Building a Highly Engaged Team Themes Frequency Count .....	81
Table 4. Connecting on a Personal Level Themes Frequency Count .....	83
Table 5. Maximizing Employee Potential Themes Frequency Count .....	85
Table 6. Valuing and Honoring Achievements Theme Frequency Count.....	88
Table 7. Overall Frequency and Key Findings .....	90

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Leadership’s effect on knowledge and performance .....	29
Figure 2. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs .....	39
Figure 3. Results of positive leader presence, team information sharing, and team innovation .....	41
Figure 4. Group processes involving flawed, toxic, or ineffective leaders and susceptible followers interacting within conducive environments .....	47
Figure 5. Percentage of teachers by age range in public and private schools.....	53
Figure 6. Frequencies of heart-led principles. ....	80

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Data from school principals suggest that focusing on school culture can increase student achievement and teacher morale (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). Through extensive professional development and genuine support, principals can enhance their school's culture. By supporting staff, principals can achieve desirable results in schools (Beatty & Campbell-Evans, 2020). The tremendous impact of the SARS-COVID-19 global pandemic has caused a shift in the types of support school principals provide to staff. Until recently, principals have been responsible for the professional growth, development of school staff, and the day-to-day operations of the school. Since the outbreak of the global pandemic, the method by which principals focus on their school's culture has shifted to supporting staff with unconventional methods of development and assistance. Principals were faced with supporting teachers in nontraditional areas, including staff mental health and problems related to remote learning, and assisting them in more traditional areas of pedagogy and curriculum development. Additionally, principals were forced to evaluate how they delivered support as the pandemic caused a shift away from in-person meetings. Unlike their elementary and middle school counterparts, high school principals have a larger staff to manage and support. With higher numbers of staff members come greater numbers of personalities, worker classifications, and opinions to manage. High school principals have a higher likelihood of encountering staff members who are less satisfied with their jobs compared to their elementary and middle school counterparts. When working with a large staff, principals must possess certain qualities to build cohesive, effective teams that help reestablish a sense of normalcy and reprioritize student achievement and mental health.

Effective high school principals have been shown to positively impact their schools' culture (Lesinger, Altinay, Altinay, & Dagli, 2017). The educational community is increasingly aware that high school principals with specific personality traits, including being strategic, possessing emotional intelligence, and exhibiting perseverance, remain on the job longer and have a more positive organizational culture (M. Hamilton, 2020). Like other organizational leaders, effective high school principals have an increased likelihood to have staff who are more satisfied with their jobs and are more likely to have campuses with high levels of student achievement (Lu, Zhang, & Jia, 2018). Conversely, ineffective school principals drive lower school culture levels where teachers are generally unsatisfied with their jobs and students have been shown to lack the motivation to excel academically (MacNeil et al., 2009). A school's culture is rooted in student achievement, school pride, and a productive staff (Teasley, 2017). One study has suggested that a principal's impact on a school is not made through specific actions, somewhat indirectly by increasing its culture and climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

An organization with a positive culture is also understood to have employees with increased job satisfaction levels. According to Crowley (2011), leaders whose style focuses on building strong connections and positive organizational culture have more emotionally vested employees and are committed to achieving higher success rates compared to others. Evidence suggests that successful high school principals who focus on school culture as a driver for increasing staff morale are more likely to raise student achievement (MacNeil et al., 2009). However, it is worth noting that the style of leadership one possesses can "either energize or demotivate people" (Goleman, 2006, p. 78). High School principals who do not focus on building positive school culture often

face increased employee turnover and a lack of trust from school staff (Pittman, 2019). Therefore, principals who consistently build positive, trusting relationships with staff, foster compassion, and celebrate their staff's achievements are more likely to have a positive organizational culture and higher rates of job satisfaction.

High school principals who embody transformational leadership over other leadership styles have been shown to increase teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2007). The distinct advantage of the transformational leadership model is that it allows more significant relationship building between leaders and employees. High school principals who leverage this leadership model can build more personal connections and foster deeper trust levels with their employees. In addition to trust and personal connection, Crowley (2011) expanded on the transformational leadership model, noting purpose and fulfillment lead to higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, Crowley stated that four heart-led principles rooted in the transformational leadership model can lead employees to achieve extraordinary results.

The evolving role of high school principals and issues brought on by the global pandemic mean that leaders must focus on rebuilding a cohesive staff and creating a positive school culture to achieve extraordinary results. The pandemic has caused a shift in the support high school principals provide to teachers concerning the delivery of curriculum and concerns about the campus community's mental health. Research has already established the benefits for high school principals to focus on culture to obtain favorable results. Additionally, research has noted the benefits of transformational leadership style for school principals.



## **Background**

Leadership is a difficult concept to define because of the various aspects associated with it. Leadership is generally understood as people using influence over others to better themselves or an organization (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Effective leaders carry the skill set required to lead their teams to success, but ineffective leaders fail to yield results beneficial for their organization (Thoroughgood, Sawyer, Padilla, & Lunsford, 2016). Leaders who are considered effective typically improve their organizations' culture, increase job satisfaction, raise productivity, and positively impact workplace efficiency (Nguni et al., 2007).

Leadership styles have seemingly evolved to meet organizational needs and the individual styles of leaders. The first observed differences between leadership styles were identified when transactional and transformational leadership styles were distinguished (Downton, 1973). Before that, psychologists analyzed behaviors of those in leadership positions during the 1930s leading to leadership theories' research and development (Thoroughgood et al., 2016). The history of leadership development has associated strong leaders with organizational culture and employee job satisfaction. Researchers can form correlations observing the impact of tangible rewards for employees as drivers for improved organizational culture. With time, financial incentives such as pay and benefits, commonly known to increase job satisfaction, lost effectiveness. More recent research suggests that nonfinancial rewards such as recognition from superiors can similarly motivate employees (Tessema, Ready, & Embaye, 2013). This implies that leadership style and organizational culture can play a significant role in employee job satisfaction and positively impact the organization.

History has shown that ineffective leaders fail to inspire growth in employees, and ineffective leaders do not communicate in a manner conducive to inspiring teams to advance their organization (Bower, O'Connor, Harris, & Frick, 2018). Consequences for destructive leadership practices in organizations involve high employee turnover, employees who feel isolated, a lack of workplace collaboration, and exhaustion, all of which jeopardize organizational culture (Pittman, 2019). Most importantly, destructive leadership practices impact trust within the employee–management relationship, which takes years to repair (M. Hamilton, 2020).

Alternatively, those who lead by example, model desired behaviors, and engage employees in dialogue have a higher likelihood of transformative results within their workplace by improving culture (Ahmad Tatlah & Mehmood Aslam, 2012). Another study by Pittman (2019) generalized great leaders' descriptors as those who empower, whose teams achieve success, and who are committed to the organization and the employees they serve. Studies also show that exemplary leaders help employees feel motivated, inspire personal success in the workplace, and promote productivity (Goleman, 2006).

In the context of education, principals are the leaders driving change within their schools. In education, leadership is the conduit by which problems are addressed, trust is established, and employees grow professionally (Lesinger et al., 2017). A high school principal's role is continually evolving, shifting from a manager of people and operations to an exemplar, visionary, and lifelong learner (M. Hamilton, 2020). As the role of the principal changes, it becomes increasingly important to understand how these leaders can positively impact their employees and drive success in schools.

## **Types of Leadership**

Leadership is the process of facilitating learning by setting an example for others to follow (Lesinger et al., 2017). Various leadership styles have been identified by researchers, the most notable being transactional, servant, and transformational leadership. This study focused on the impact of transformational leadership practices.

Transformational leadership theory analyzes how managers empower their subordinates using relationships and purposeful actions (Lis, Glińska-Neweś, & Kalińska, 2015). This leadership style involves managers using their knowledge of an employee's strengths and preferences to perform tasks efficiently. Transformational leadership practices view employees with the potential to collaborate and solve problems to serve organizations better. Transformational leaders are known to develop their employees and collaborate to overcome obstacles and achieve companywide objectives (Hay, 2006). Furthermore, transformational leaders share other characteristics, including having a defined vision, possessing interpersonal skills, and improving how employees interact with their jobs (Hayati, Charkhabi, & Naami, 2014).

Transactional leadership involves typically associated behaviors between managers and their subordinates. Transactional leaders seek to use employee talents without regard to employee well-being, but other leadership styles use acknowledgment, praise, and rapport (Burns, 1973). In transactional leadership, a manager dictates the systems subordinates adhere to and the tasks they must complete. Conceptually, transactional leadership will assign either a reward or consequence to an employee's actions to encourage employee productivity. This validates the worker/leader

relationship's common understanding and likens it to a monetary transaction (Bryant, 2016).

In contrast, servant leadership, believed to have first been studied in the 1970s, utilizes managers in a servant capacity to tend to employees' needs. A manager's role is to support employees so they can better serve their organizations (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Through acts of appreciation and personal engagement, servant leadership appeals to employee bases who value significant emotional intelligence levels (Pittman, 2019). Servant leadership is a leadership style that has become known to put employees' needs at the forefront of the organization. Servant leaders establish connections with employees, engaging them personally and responding to employees' emotional needs and well-being. Compared to servant leadership, the concept of transformational leadership is understood to remove the manager solely as support for employees and to use him or her more in a facilitator's role.

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in a leader's ability to read and understand the employees' current status (Ahmad Tatlah & Mehmood Aslam, 2012). Recent studies have shown that emotional intelligence, desirable personality traits, political awareness, and academic intelligence create successful leaders (M. Hamilton, 2020). Variations of emotional intelligence are present in leadership styles albeit with varying degrees of prominence.

Notable leaders such as Steve Jobs have incorporated elements of transformational leadership practices to improve their organizations' outlook and productivity (Bryant, 2016). Jobs promoted his vision to redefine and simplify personal computing for consumers by challenging his employees to achieve what was believed to

be impossible achievements. This study aimed to identify how exemplary leaders' transformational leadership theories and heart-led principles can lead to extraordinary results (Crowley, 2011).

### **Heart-Led Leadership**

Crowley (2011) expanded on transformational leadership practices by identifying common leadership principles to enhance organizational success and culture. The heart-led principles expand on transformational leadership theories by explicitly outlining how leaders can use their hearts to make transformational changes in their organizations. It is implied that through the improvement of culture, happier, more productive employees help their organization achieve success. The use of Crowley's heart-led principles is a crucial factor of this study, which includes building highly engaged teams, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and honoring employees' achievements (Crowley, 2011).

Highly engaged teams can positively impact employees and contribute to organizational success. According to Crowley (2011), the principle of building highly engaged teams requires managers to assemble groups using specific criteria to ensure talent, performance, and passion are compatible with organizational success. Engaged teams maintain a commitment to goals, have high motivational levels, and have higher innovation and creativity (Costa, Passos, Bakker, Romana, & Ferrão, 2017).

Leaders who build personal connections with employees can better understand their needs and provide support when needed. Building personal connections involves establishing appropriate boundaries between the manager and employee and building a professional relationship that fosters employee development and organizational growth.

Because interpersonal connections can impact what a person thinks, feels, and does, the need for high-quality relationships is vital to enhance productivity in the workplace (Lis et al., 2015).

Maximizing employee potential allows companies to get the highest value from employees by tapping into their unknown talents. This principle describes a leader's need to assess employee strengths, develop their skills, and encourage growth. In doing so, a leader can encourage more passion in subordinates' work and help them grow professionally. One study has revealed that when employees have a vested interest in their job, leaders see an increase in employee job satisfaction and efficiency rates (Abdullah & Wan, 2013).

Valuing and honoring the achievements of employees allows leaders to show employees appreciation for their work. When employees feel valued by a superior for their work, they are more likely to remain motivated and satisfied with their job (Allen & Helms, 2002). Leaders who value their employees' achievements, recognize them with genuine and sincere gratitude. According to Crowley (2011), the most effective ways of valuing and honoring employee achievements is to do it in a systematic way that shows genuine and sincere appreciation to employees.

### **High School Principals**

Historically, a high school principal's role has been observed as a rule enforcer and building manager (M. Hamilton, 2020). Principals are known to provide school-wide discipline for students as needed and address various needs within the school. However, a high school principal's role has evolved to include leaders who are politically aware, visionary, and able to foster professional growth in their teams (Pepper, 2010). With the

introduction and evolution of standards-based education in the 1980s, principals must understand classroom practices, know how to facilitate teacher professional development, and support all staff to meet students' social–emotional needs (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001). As time progresses, the role of a principal will continue to evolve to meet society's needs.

The environment of a comprehensive high school mirrors that of a larger organization. Comprehensive high schools generally contain a large employee base with a variety of employee classifications for managers to oversee. As a principal, building a cohesive staff and investing in school-wide culture are key avenues by which leaders can obtain extraordinary results. Exemplary principals who have the power to build collaborative teams and share a sense of purpose with their staff foster a cohesive environment on their campuses, inspire success, and build a positive culture (Beatty & Campbell-Evans, 2020). Like large organizational leaders, high school principals must work with their large employee base to share a common vision for the school and find commonality by expanding on or building culture. To do this, high school principals build trust with their staff, communicate effectively, and find ways to validate the excellent work that staff members do when they work toward a shared vision (R. Brown, 2004). In doing so, a school principal can positively impact student achievement (Branson, Baig, & Begum, 2014).

Leading during a crisis can change the dynamics of any organization. The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic has caused a shift in education, complicating how schools operate and endangering the lives of students and staff. In addition to the complexities of running a school, since March 2020, high school principals have been responsible for shifting how teachers deliver and how students receive their education.

During the pandemic, the role of high school principals again shifted to adapt to the critical needs to keep schools operational. Responsibilities ranged from securing critically needed technology to providing emotional comfort and support to the campus community members impacted by the global pandemic (L. Hamilton, Kaufman, & Diliberti, 2020).

### **Gap in Research**

Despite the research outlining the benefits of empathetic leaders and transformational leadership practices, further detail is needed in the areas of the study relating to identifying leadership characteristics. Although research has been conducted successfully linking principals to school culture, little research has been conducted involving the success of the mechanisms responsible for increasing culture. In Branson et al.'s article (2014), paths were discussed outlining four influences that principals indirectly make that impact student achievement. However, these paths only highlight areas, not the mechanisms required to impact student achievement and campus culture positively.

The complications arising from the COVID-19 global pandemic have impacted how high schools operate. School leaders' roles shifted to finding technology and providing technical assistance while simultaneously tending to the campus community's social-emotional needs (Hayes, Flowers, & Williams, 2021). The need for principals to focus on school culture is more critical now as school communities have continually adapted to meet their students' needs (L. Hamilton et al., 2020). As a result, building cohesive teams and providing clear communication are substantial needs as these positive culture drivers will likely help with the mental exhaustion associated with the pandemic.



Further research is required to assess how heart-led principles can positively impact comprehensive high schools.

Principals' inability to respond to the needs of their school can have significant consequences. Destructive leadership practices cause employees to lose satisfaction in their jobs and stifle productivity (Thoroughgood et al., 2016). A principal who negatively impacts the school creates distrust with staff. The significance of emotional intelligence to assess a school's needs becomes a valuable but not a sole asset for school principals (M. Hamilton, 2020). Given the hardships experienced by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become critical for principals to explore options to prioritize positive school culture and student academic achievement. Further research is needed to assess how this can occur using Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Fundamental changes in the education system have caused a shift in the way teachers deliver curriculum and students' needs are addressed (Bogler, 2001). Research has concluded that high school principalship's evolving position requires those in that role to be leaders in curriculum, politics, educational law, and emotional intelligence (M. Hamilton, 2020). The continually changing environment means that their success ultimately lies in the strength of the school culture that the principal fosters and the staff's willingness to achieve extraordinary results. These two key factors are believed by researchers to be addressed when high school principals lead from the heart.

The recent impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to a shift in education. As a result of students being forced to learn in unconventional circumstances, teachers have been required to rethink how to best deliver instruction. High school

principals have needed to provide unconventional levels of technical and emotional support for school staff who have faced substantial hardships transitioning to an online learning environment or have been impacted by the novel Coronavirus (L. Hamilton et al., 2020). Research has concluded that principals addressing their staff's immediate needs provide reassurance in distressing times (Hayes et al., 2021). Teachers and students have faced increased challenges with their mental health and academic performance as a result of the sudden and unprecedented changes to education caused by the global, COVID-19 pandemic. High school principals are challenged with addressing these concerns to better support the teachers and students in an attempt to normalize school.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in legislature caused increased measures of accountability for student achievement (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001). The increased accountability for student achievement places a more significant burden on high school principals who disseminate plans to address these achievement disparities with school staff. The changes implemented by high school principals to address student achievement, combined with other expected changes, emphasize the need for high school principals to focus on school culture. Studies have linked a correlation between positive school culture and more extraordinary student achievement (R. Brown, 2004). Research has shown that tangible rewards such as pay increases or benefits provide limited organizational culture increases and are limited in the educational field (Tessema et al., 2013). Furthermore, research suggests that leadership style and emotional intelligence help school staff be more productive and satisfied with their jobs (Bogler, 2001). Therefore, a need exists to examine how high school principals can effectively lead staff

to make a positive impact in student achievement or obtain other types of extraordinary results.

Though studies have shown that good organizational culture can increase workplace efficiency and employee job satisfaction, a greater depth is required to understand the mechanism by which good culture can be attained (González Gómez de Olmedo, Fernández-Castro, & Mehrad, 2020). This study is significant because it intended to validate *how* exemplary high school principals can promote strong school culture using heart-led principles. By focusing on how high school principals foster highly engaged teams, build personal relationships, maximize employee potential, and value employees, this study examined how exemplary high school principals lead their staff to achieve extraordinary results.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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 high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

### **Significance of the Problem**

High school principals are responsible for their staff's professional growth and the academic achievement of their students (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001). Changes to policy and educational standards, coupled with increased accountability measures, cause frustration among educators, requiring principals to skillfully balance how and when to further staff development (Pepper, 2010). Furthermore, the significant changes brought on by COVID-19 have reshaped how teachers educate their students and how principals lead their staff (Hayes et al., 2021). A recent study shows that 20% of teachers are still teaching in a manner similar to the one they used before the pandemic (L. Hamilton et al., 2020). The research outlined in this study is significant because it validates how exemplary high school principals who use Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles can achieve remarkable results.

Currently, research suggests that improving school culture can lead to an increase of up to 55% in student achievement and other remarkable results by the strength of effective leadership (MacNeil et al., 2009). Effective high school principals can better motivate teachers, foster a climate of trust within their schools, and support stakeholders (R. Brown, 2004). Study findings show that establishing a vision and developing staff are ways that school principals can help improve school culture (Jacobson & Pashiardis, 2011). Studies suggest that 95% of school principals learn on the job the importance of

developing their staff and school culture to have a more positive and confident experience achieving results (M. Hamilton, 2020).

The leadership style that a high school principal utilizes can lead to varying degrees of teacher satisfaction and, thus, remarkable results in schools. Data from studies measuring the impact of leadership styles on teacher satisfaction show that high school principals who employ transformational leadership practices have higher teacher satisfaction rates. Data suggest that teachers who viewed themselves as professionals and were made to feel valued saw their principals as transformational leaders and had higher job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001).

This study's significance is that it demonstrates how exemplary high school principals can lead their staff to make positive improvements in their schools. No data exist linking how exemplary high school principals can lead their staff to achieve remarkable results using Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles. Researchers believe that Crowley's heart-led principles and transformational leadership practices would lead to reduced employee turnover, high rates of job satisfaction, increased operational efficiency, and higher student achievement.

This study intended to validate existing data that organizational leaders, such as high school principals, with higher emotional intelligences have more satisfied employees. Although studies exist suggesting principals who use transformational leadership practices have higher rates of teacher job satisfaction, additional information is needed to outline the mechanisms that lead to increased job satisfaction (Pepper, 2010). High school principals who show characteristics of caring leadership and building cohesive teams are more likely to have staff members willing to put extra effort into

making their schools a better place. To do this, the study noted how Crowley's (2011) principles and leadership skills can help transform organizations and bring out the best in teams.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this study, the following selected terms were defined to provide clarity to the study:

#### **Operational Definitions**

**Caring leadership.** Caring leadership is showing kindness, empathy, and understanding that builds 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; Maxwell, 2013; Tomkins & Simpson, 2013).

**Exemplary leadership.** For the purposes of this study, exemplary leadership exhibited by a high school principal is when a person meets a minimum of two of the following criteria: recognition by their peers; recommendation by one or more recognized regional executive leaders; membership in a professional organization in their field; or articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences.

**Extraordinary results.** Extraordinary results are defined as those that are remarkable, surprising, and exceptional and go beyond what is usually expected, above normal expectations.

**High school principal.** For the purposes of this study, the administrator or leader of a school with Grades 9-12 is referred to as the high school principal.

**Professional development.** Professional development at school sites means the opportunities staff have to update and learn new abilities to improve their job skill set. In doing so, staff increase effectiveness in their jobs and have a higher likelihood of positively impacting student achievement (Karacabey, 2020).

**School culture.** The beliefs, values, and traditions followed by campus staff and students. A school's culture guides members of the campus community to think positively about their school or think negatively about it.

### **Theoretical Definitions**

**Building a highly engaged team.** 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, Käufer, Bradbury, & Carroll, 2007).

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

**Maximizing employee potential.** 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.** 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 & Krulik, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013).

### **Delimitations**

This study was delimited to eight exemplary comprehensive high school principals located in Southern California. More specifically, the study focused on high school principals located in the areas of Riverside and San Bernardino counties who work in public, K-12 school districts. Additionally, this research examined principals who demonstrate caring about people to accomplish extraordinary results. An exemplary high school principal in this study is a leader who demonstrates at least two of the following criteria:

- Recognition by their peers
- Recommendation by one or more recognized regional executive leaders
- Membership in professional associations in their field
- Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences.

An additional delimitation of the study was 3 years of experience as a high school principal. All but two of the exemplary principals in the study had over 3 years of experience. Two of the principal participants in the study were completing their third years of principalship during their participation in the study.



## **Organization of the Study**

The first chapter in this five-chapter study articulated the problem and purpose of the study. Additionally, the first chapter presented research questions, definitions, and significance of the study. The second chapter provides a review of the literature related to the topic, highlighting the various types of leadership and context to the significance of Crowley's (2011) work. The third chapter delineates the design and methodology of the study. The chapter provides rationale for selecting a phenomenological research design. The fourth chapter provides the researcher's findings and an analysis of the research findings from the study. In Chapter V, conclusions gathered from research findings and recommendations for future studies are provided by the researcher.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The study's literature review is intended to provide background and context to the variables within the authors' area of study (Roberts & Hyatt 2019). Additionally, a literature review should link existing research conclusions to guide the proposed study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This literature review intends to establish the connection between transformational leadership, exemplary high school principals, and the use of heart-led principles in leadership. The chapter contains sections intended to give a background to the importance of the study and on Crowley's work with transformational and heart-led leadership used by exemplary high school principals. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the significance of heart-led leadership; the history of leadership, including how leadership is defined today; the most common types of leadership; the research behind Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles; and finally, the impact of high school principals on their campuses. The final section provides context to this study about the significant impact high school principals have on staff and student achievement and how they lead their staff to achieve extraordinary results.

### **Introduction to Leadership**

Leadership is a difficult concept to define because of the various aspects associated with it. Leadership is generally understood to be a person using influence over others to better themselves or an organization (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). The U.S. appellate court further defines a leader as someone who commands or exerts the power of control over others (Scordato, 2015). Both definitions help to conclude that a leader can contribute significantly to an organization's culture. To further clarify, effective leadership is understood to be characterized by someone who is empathetic, provides

clear direction, and is capable of moving an organization toward achieving its goals (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009).

Conversely, characteristics of ineffective leadership include dismantling trust, having unproductive systems, and missing organizational targets and objectives (Thoroughgood et al., 2016). Regardless of the type of organization, leadership style can be an excellent predictor of the culture and success of the corporation. For leaders, an organization's culture is essential to focus on because good culture leads employees to feel secure in their jobs while positively impacting productivity and influencing employee job satisfaction. In the context of this study, high school principals lead their employees, guiding them to offer high-quality learning opportunities for students. Effective principals who prioritize employee engagement and other principles outlined in Crowley's framework are more likely to have a positive campus culture. Alternatively, characteristics of ineffective high school principals include not prioritizing employee engagement, building trust, or utilizing opportunities to address unsuccessful systems on their campuses. Ineffective leaders are less likely to have positive campus culture and have a decreased likelihood of extraordinary results.

### **History of Leadership Development**

Understanding the historical perspective of leadership helps researchers understand the purpose and impact Crowley's heart-led principles can have. Following World War II, the rapid development of economic prosperity in the United States prompted more successful corporations to initiate a need for more detailed studies of organizational leadership (Lemler, 2013). The first notable distinction of leadership styles was observed while describing the differences between what are now known to be

transactional and transformational leadership theories (Downton, 1973). A more apparent distinction between leadership styles developed when James Burns (1973) observed the interpersonal actions of managers, leading to the formal development of transformational leadership theory. Burns later concluded that leadership was a concept requiring further observation to understand the significance between each type better. According to Day and Harrison (2007), because of leadership's complex, multidimensional nature, a single encompassing definition would be difficult to develop.

As leadership styles evolve, the need for Crowley's principles has become increasingly apparent as workplace dynamics have also evolved. Leadership styles, such as transactional leadership, exchanged rewards for employees who achieved workplace objectives, while differing leadership styles used acknowledgment, praise, and rapport to achieve results (Burns, 1973). Conversely, servant leadership became known to put the needs of employees at the forefront of the organization. Regardless of leadership styles, throughout written history, the characteristics of influential leaders have been known to possess a clear vision, be inspirational to employees, and establish successful organizational systems (Bryant, 2016). History has shown that ineffective leaders do not inspire growth in employees and do not communicate in a manner conducive to the advancement of organizations (Bower et al., 2018).

### **Leadership in Education**

As it relates to this study, a more distinct definition of leadership is required within the scope of education. Among leaders in education, leadership is the process of inspiring employees, managing their performance, and promoting the achievements of the school staff (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Educational leaders are commonly known as

site administrators, district administrators, executive cabinet members, and superintendents. Historically, school principals in the United States were considered traditional managers, managing teachers and students, enforcing rules, and ensuring the smooth operation of the campus (L. Hamilton et al., 2020). This implies that school principals were not likely to have focused on employee engagement or other areas of Crowley's heart-led framework. With time, the role of school principals evolved to being the lead learner on campus, someone who develops and empowers staff members while being politically sensitive and strategic (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Principals are now viewed as the chief executive officer of their schools, being solely responsible for student achievement and the school's day-to-day operations (Ayers & Sommers, 2009). School principals have the tremendous ability to change their organization through their leadership. Principals impact culture by promoting collaboration among staff members, establishing high professional standards, and building trust with school staff (Teasley, 2017). Second to teachers, school principals are the second most influential staff member on campus contributing to student achievement and overall success (Leithwood et al., 2010).

### **Leadership Styles**

Leadership styles weigh heavily on the success of organizations and the ability for employees to be engaged in their work. In his seminal research, James MacGregor Burns (1978) described the concept of leadership as a heavily observed yet generally unknown phenomenon. Leadership involves the process of facilitating learning by setting an example for others to follow (Lesinger et al., 2017). Various leadership styles have been

identified by researchers, the most notable being transactional, servant, and transformational.

Some leadership theories closely align with Crowley's framework while others do not. Leadership styles that are authoritative in nature do not align with the heart-led concepts Crowley outlined whereas more empathetic styles do. Throughout his work, Crowley utilized transformational leadership as a basis for his philosophies of leadership and heart-led principles. Additionally, he cited emotional intelligence as a leadership skill for building effective workplace relationships to build rapport with employees. This study focused on transformational leadership practices and the impact they have in education.

### **Servant Leadership**

One style of leadership frequently observed across organizations is servant leadership. Servant leadership was believed to have originated in the 1970s, utilizing managers in a servant capacity to tend to the needs of employees so they could better serve their organizations (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The phrase *servant leader* was developed by Robert Greenleaf in 1977, describing a style of leadership in which one wants to serve others by nature (Greenleaf, 2002). Servant leadership is a style of leadership by which employers build open and noninvasive relationships and the leaders' focus lies on the emotional well-being of employees (Lu et al., 2018). Servant leadership in the workplace involves creating an atmosphere of safety where a manager is humble and respectful of personality differences.

This leadership style has seen an increase in popularity because of changes in society and workplaces. The increase in more caring forms of leadership can be partially

attributed to increases in women in the workplace and a desire by organizations to retain talented employees by increasing job satisfaction (Smylie, Murphy, & Louis, 2016). The impact of increased job satisfaction can impact the educational sector. Research conducted by the University of Chicago shows that competent and caring leadership creates more effective environments for students to learn (Allensworth, Gwynne, Moore, & de la Torre, 2014). Servant leadership can be deemed a caring form of leadership by closely examining characteristics identified by researchers, including Laub (1999). This researcher identified six characteristics commonly shared by servant leaders. These characteristics include

1. Valuing people
2. Developing people
3. Providing leadership
4. Sharing leadership
5. Building community
6. Displaying authenticity (Laub, 1999).

This leadership style closely aligns with Crowley's leadership principles because of the nature of focusing on an employee's intrinsic needs. Specifically, heart-led principles that align with servant leadership include maximizing employee potential, connecting with them on a personal level, and finally, valuing and honoring employee achievements. The remaining principle of building highly engaged teams does not directly align with the philosophy of servant leadership because there is no formal practice for hiring employees or placement into teams (Lu et al., 2018). However, this principle does focus on building positive organizational culture and a sense of community

(Laub, 1999). Conversely, Crowley (2011) referred explicitly to the placement of individuals into teams and supporting the members to connect with one another and foster a team atmosphere.

A recent study of school principals found that caring and empathetic leadership helps to contribute to a sense of trust and respect within school staff (Branson et al., 2014). Servant leadership, by definition, allows for principals to serve their staff and meet their needs so they are better able to do their jobs (Ingram, 2016). Where servant and transformational school principals vary is through the use of charisma to influence and foster change within schools (Barbuto, 1997). Charismatic leaders leverage their personality to build trust, which can then be used as a catalyst for change (Bono & Judge, 2004).

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership is an authoritative style of leadership that is not aligned with Crowley's principles. Transactional leadership practices involve leader-to-employee relationships in which each party understands his or her responsibilities, expectations, and needs for compliance (González Gómez de Olmedo et al., 2020). In this leadership style, an employee receives direction from his or her superior and carries out responsibilities. According to Bass (1997), two commonly known forms of transactional leadership exist. One style involves the leader taking corrective action when an employee fails to meet expected standards. The more passive style involves the leader taking corrective action, if any action at all, should a problem arise with an employee. Transactional leadership and styles like it directly contradict Crowley's heart-



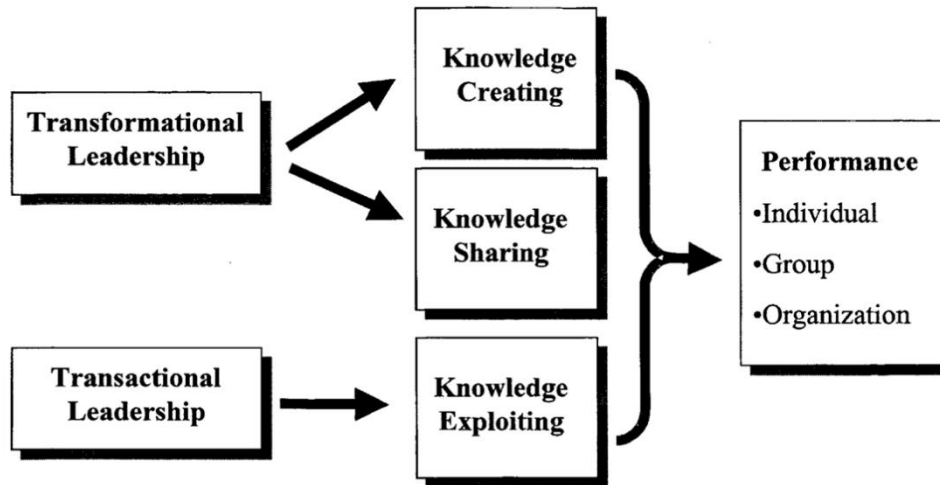
led practices by not offering a supportive environment where effective employee dialogue could occur.

Research has found that high school principals who employ transactional leadership practices have varying levels of success. Compared to transformational leadership, transactional leadership utilizes an employee's talents to enhance an organization. Represented in Figure 1, Bryant (2016) illustrated the collaborative nature of transformational leadership compared to transactional leadership theory. In his study, Bryant suggested that transactional leadership exploits an employee's talents for the benefit of an organization. In an educational setting, studies have concluded that teachers experience lower levels of job satisfaction when they are not included in critical decision making that impacts their day-to-day jobs (Imper, Neidt, & Reyes, 1990). Alternatively, leadership theories that foster collaborative work environments create avenues where engaged teams share information and innovate new ideas. Teacher job satisfaction was shown to increase when given increased levels of autonomy and trust, practices commonly associated with transactional leadership theory (Maslanka, 2004). Collaborative environments therefore are more likely to contribute to organizational success compared to leadership practices that do not foster innovation and collaboration (Bryant, 2016).

According to Bass (1985), transactional-style leadership requires a clear definition of manager-worker exchanges, identified into four principles:

1. Contingency reward: According to Bono and Judge (2004), this principle of transactional leadership offers rewards and incentives for workers who meet performance objectives set by managers. Conversely, an accountability factor exists

for employees who do not meet the objective. In a high school setting, this can be likened to a teacher's students obtaining standardized testing objectives outlined by the school principal.



*Figure 1.* Leadership's effect on knowledge and performance. From "The Role of Transformational and Transactional Leadership in Creating, Sharing and Exploiting Organizational Knowledge" by S. E. Bryant, 2016, *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 9(4), p. 38 (<https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190300900403>).

2. Management by exception – active: Active management by exception describes leaders who use extensive documentation to track the activity of their employees (Nguni et al., 2007). High school principals who exhibit this principle of transactional leadership keep extensive records of their employees and provide thorough, often excessive feedback. School employees may view the extensive feedback as overwhelming or confusing to grow professionally.
3. Management by exception – passive: This transactional leadership style describes the opposite of active management by exception. These leaders have minimal employee performance records, which could lead to a failure to address concerns that arise within an organization (Bogler, 2001). In a school setting, this is best demonstrated

- by principals who do not provide their staff with regular feedback. Studies have shown that employees with minimal connections to work and a lack of communication have lower rates of job satisfaction (Bryant, 2016).
4. Laissez-faire leadership: Teacher engagement is directly impacted by the actions of a principal (M. Hamilton, 2020). Laissez-faire-style leaders assume minimal responsibility and fail to make significant decisions for their organizations (Nguni et al., 2007). These leaders provide minimal feedback to their employees and neglect to provide direction or guidance to their workers. On a high school campus, this leadership style is best aligned with a minimally vested principal who has limited interactions with teachers or critical stakeholders.

School leaders who utilize transactional leadership practices have been met with varying degrees of success. Previous research has shown that by not prioritizing caring and empathetic leadership, campus culture and student learning are negatively impacted (Nguni et al., 2007). One study noted that laissez-faire forms of transactional leadership practices contributed to a lack of direction and guidance for teachers during the onset of the COVID-19 school closures in early 2020 (M. Hamilton, 2020).

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in a leader's aptitude to read and understand their employees (Ahmad Tatlah & Mehmood Aslam, 2012). Although emotional intelligence has not been recognized as a leadership style, it has been identified as a characteristic of successful leaders. According to Taylor, Passarelli, and Van Oosten (2019), emotional intelligence is a leader's ability to recognize the emotions of others for motivation, rapport building, and skill enhancement. Recent studies have shown that

emotional intelligence, desirable personality traits, political awareness, and academic intelligence create successful leaders (M. Hamilton 2020). According to Joseph (2012), successful leaders connect, build, and develop relationships with others to leverage successful relations to increase employees' productivity. Emotional intelligence is present in leadership styles albeit with varying degrees of prominence. A study by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) expanded on the concept of emotional intelligence to five components, which include

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

Goleman et al. found that leaders who self-reflect on their performance and embody these components have higher levels of emotional intelligence.

A study by Macey and Schneider (2012) found that leaders with higher levels of emotional intelligence can hold more empathetic discussions with subordinates.

Conversely, a lack of emotional intelligence can prevent leaders from resolving complex issues within their organization (Thompson & Miller, 2018). Furthermore, research shows that leaders with lower levels of emotional intelligence cannot comprehend the opinions and feelings of their employees, leading to higher probabilities of lower organizational culture (C. S. Long, Yaacob, & Chuen, 2016).

Regarding high school principals, M. Hamilton (2020) found that principals frequently encounter work-related problems where emotions are frequently attached.

Research has found that principals with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better able to self-manage their reactions to challenges and therefore experience higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced levels of stress, and higher levels of staff engagement (Colomeischi, 2015). Furthermore, studies have shown that the longevity of principals can be attributed to self-managing their emotions and those of their staff to facilitate positive outcomes to problems (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Principals who are caring about their role and enthusiastic are more likely to positively influence their workers (Karacabey, 2020). Similarly, these findings reflect teachers who utilize their high levels of emotional intelligence in the classroom and with colleagues. According to Barrios (2016), behaviors of leaders who embody characteristics of high emotional intelligence include

1. Understandings their own emotions.
2. Understanding the consequences of their actions.
3. Reflectiveness
4. Not letting emotion control their behavior.
5. Understanding others and reacting appropriately to achieve goals.
6. Being aware of student emotions.
7. Being supportive of students.
8. Building relationships/trust with others.
9. Recognizing needs of self.
10. Recognizing the needs of students and setting clear expectations

Several of the behaviors exhibited by leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence directly align with the heart-led principles outlined by Crowley. High school

principals who focus on building a stable work environment where staff members feel empowered and valued are more likely to achieve remarkable results. When principals produce a caring environment for staff members, students have a higher likelihood of success.

### **Transformational Leadership**

The style of leadership this study focused on primarily is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership theory analyzes how managers empower their subordinates using relationships and purposeful actions (Lis et al., 2015). This leadership style involves a manager using his or her knowledge of an employee's strengths and preferences to determine how to effectively get a task done in the most efficient manner possible. Transformational leadership was described by Bono and Judge (2004) as a process involving a leader who creates a connection that raises the motivation of employees and themselves. According to Hay (2006), transformational leaders were known to develop and collaborate, but transactional leaders sought to strictly utilize employee talents without regard to an employee's well-being. The literature identifies four critical principles of transformational leadership:

1. Intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders are visionary, gifted, and prolific and can think of unimaginable things. Transformational leadership inspires employees to be creative and seek innovative solutions to common problems by creating an atmosphere where shared vision, ideas, and growth are valued.

Transformational leaders' goal is to inspire their team and cultivate them to change (Northouse, 2016). For transformational leadership to be effective and inspire change, innovation must be faithfully practiced.

2. Idealized influence. Transformational leaders must be able to explain goals and ideas to their teams. According to Bass (1985), charisma, or idealized influence, is a trait common to transformational leaders. Bryant (2016) further clarified that charisma equates to the feeling of respect, pride, and encouragement leaders give to their workers. These leaders should have a clear understanding of their vision and goals and articulate their ideas clearly to teams. Bodell (2016) stated, “It requires a focused mindset toward what your customers need and how streamlining will improve staff morale and the bottom line” (p. 73). Leaders who encompass simplicity can act quickly and motivate those around them to do the same.
3. Inspirational motivation. According to Bass (1997), “The transforming leader provides followers with a cause around which they can rally” (p. 26). Research frequently cites motivation as a common theme in transformational leadership theory, directly influencing creativity and engagement. According to Bryant (2016), motivation stems from inspiring workers through established expectations, high standards, and goals. Goals can influence an individual’s intentions, which are defined as the “cognitive representations of goals to which the person is committed. This commitment will continue to direct employee behavior until the goal is achieved or until a decision is made to change or reject the goal” (Sahakiants, 2015, p. 454). Maslow’s theory suggests that people are motivated by various wants and groups human needs into five categories that are arranged lowest to highest, often in pyramid form (Bolman & Deal, 2013).
4. Individualized consideration. According to Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010), transformational leadership theory allows for a more excellent perception of

the needs of an organization and its individuals, allowing leaders to respond to hardships with a greater understanding of the problem. Authenticity requires vulnerability, transparency, and integrity. According to Northouse (2016), “Being sensitive to these events and using them as springboards to growth may be relevant to many people who are interested in becoming leaders who are more authentic” (p. 209). Individualized consideration is the degree to which leaders devote energy to leading, encouraging, and developing their workers (Bryant, 2016).

High school principals who utilize transformational leadership practices focus on bettering school employees to enhance the student learning process (Nguni et al., 2007). According to Kafka (2009), the role of a school principal is continually evolving, requiring a concentrated focus on staff development to enhance the growing needs of students. Principals incorporating transformational leadership practices can transfer their passion and enthusiasm to influence school employees and make positive changes within their school (Mencl, Wefald, & van Ittersum, 2016). This is done to ensure educators are equipped to handle students’ dynamic social, emotional, and academic needs.

Given the complex nature of leadership and the frequent need for problem solving, high school principals often face new concerns requiring innovative solutions (Leithwood et al., 2010). Attentive principals use self-reflection and data to determine appropriate strategies for responding to issues that arise. According to Hay (2006), a principal who inspires confidence can suggest solutions to problems that require change with reduced hesitation. A Canadian study of high school principals found that leaders who frequently focused on vulnerable situations and transparency with the intent of



fixing a situation build confidence, which highlights the principle of individualized consideration (Wood, 2006).

### **Theoretical Framework: Crowley's Heart-Led Principles**

Research shows that using Crowley's heart-led principles can increase engagement within an organization and increase job satisfaction. Employees who receive or witness peers being recognized are more likely to seek the same acknowledgment on a repeated basis (R. J. Long & Shields, 2010). Leaders who focus on the quality of interactions with their subordinates and creating an atmosphere of trust as outlined in Crowley's framework are more likely to have employees with higher rates of job satisfaction. In a high school setting, principals who foster heart-led principles create a positive culture that focuses on students' academic achievement rather than common workplace grievances (Leithwood et al., 2010). By building highly engaged teams, connecting on a personal level, valuing and honoring achievements, and maximizing employee potential, high school principals can lead their employees to achieve exemplary results.

### **Building a Highly Engaged Team**

Building a highly engaged team involves 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). Creating an atmosphere of teamwork and collaboration benefits both the employee and organization. Training school administrators to build highly engaged

teams with their staff can lead to better school culture and higher student achievement levels. Leaders who develop employees into highly engaged teams use one of the four principles outlined in the book, *Lead From the Heart* (Crowley, 2011). Although Crowley stressed the importance of hiring the right employees, Harvey and Drolet (2005) suggested highly effective teams are created when employees share a purpose-driven, common goal. Highly engaged teams are characterized by members who generally have positive interactions with one another (Costa et al., 2017). When principals are trained to increase the adoption of effective teams in schools, better relationships are established among school staff members (Smylie et al., 2016). Schools that focus on building effective teams have increased staff morale and lower attrition rates in school employees (Wilson, 2013).

The benefits of teaming have also increased professional collaboration among teachers, which yields benefits in student achievement (Hasselquist & Graves, 2020). Recent studies highlight the significant role principals play in fostering a collaborative environment conducive to effective professional learning communities (B. D. Brown, Horn, & King, 2018). DuFour and Eaker (2009) clarified that effective teacher collaboration improves student achievement by not only addressing what students learn but also helping teachers learn how to respond to students who require interventions to achieve learning targets. When principals involve the entire school community, learning can be reinforced by nonteaching staff. Studies have found that teaming and enhanced collaboration extends beyond teacher-to-teacher relationships, including teacher and classified staff relationships (Tzeni, Ioannis, Athanasios, & Amalia, 2019). This implies

that principals who build highly engaged teams can profoundly impact student achievement when their staff are engaged.

When leaders build successful groups, they complement some of the intrinsic needs that employees require to be happy and better fulfill their duties. As indicated in Figure 2, Maslow's hierarchy of needs demonstrates that human beings possess a necessity to have a sense of belonging and a sense of self-worth (Aanstoos, 2019). When leaders fulfill these required needs through competent collaboration, they reduce attrition, build higher levels of staff morale, and likely increase student achievement. Research conducted by Goodwin and Cameron (2015) suggests that purposeful collaboration and clear expectations provide school staff with an understanding of their roles and how to increase the likelihood of success for their school. High school principals who build highly engaged teams are more likely to have staff members with a clearer sense of the school's vision, staff who are more likely to collaborate, and staff with more innovative thinking (MacNeil, Prater et al., 2009). Furthermore, one study noted that engaged teams are more enthusiastic about their work and have higher probabilities of overcoming challenges compared to other employees in dysfunctional teams (Costa et al., 2017). Principals who have enthusiastic and engaged staff members develop a participatory school culture where empowered staff make lasting changes to improve the student learning experience (Zahed-Babelan, Koulaei, Moeinikia, & Rezaei Sharif, 2019).

Effective, engaged teams in a high school setting can directly impact student achievement. Studies have noted that successful principals utilize a style of leadership that emphasizes collaboration and teamwork to move schools forward (Preston & Barnes, 2017). Teachers who engage in professional learning communities collaborate, reflect,



Figure 2. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. “Part 1: Foundational Theories of Human Motivation,” by J. Johnson, M. Irizarry, N. Nguyen, and P. Maloney, 2018, *Motivation 101: A Guide for Public Servants*, p. 9 (<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/motivationforpublicservants/1>).

and build more effective instruction. High school principals who focus on building highly engaged teams must be selective and strategic when hiring new team members. According to Crowley (2011), “Leaders must be conscious of the effect and impact every single hire will have on the performance of the team, on its momentum and on its future” (p. 62). Although principals do not always have control over the teachers working at their schools, they are able to create higher levels of engagement in existing teams. Crowley stressed the importance of team development, which is a particularly significant concept for high school principals.

### **Connecting on a Personal Level**

Connecting on a personal level is thinking and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (B. Brown, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010). As it relates to transformational leadership, Crowley (2011) stated that leaders can connect

personally by frequently scheduling uninterrupted time to meet with teams or individual employees. Leaders who connect on a personal level put the feelings and well-being of their employees in high regard, making themselves available when needed (Habecker, 1978; Maxwell, 2018). As the definition implies, connecting on a personal level is driven by humility and demonstrated by exhibiting concern and love to employees.

School leaders have used personal connections with employees to increase positive culture, reduce turnover, and increase productivity within their organizations (Pittman, 2019). Personal connections are known as generally positive relationships with quality connections between individuals (Lis et al., 2015). In the context of this study, personal connections involve a school leader–employee-style relationship. As indicated in Figure 3, there is a strong correlation indicating collaboration and information sharing leads to innovation when a positive leader presence has been established. Another study adds that leaders who invest time in demonstrating care and building relationships can improve an employee’s creativity and proactive behaviors (Mostafa & El-Motalib, 2019). The study noted that strong personal connections, driven by positive, caring leaders and supportive teams, lead to more significant workplace discoveries and higher levels of productivity (Madrid, Totterdell, Niven, & Barros, 2016). The care that a school leader demonstrates by getting to know employees can impact an organization tremendously (Steinbinder & Sisneros, 2020). Caring school leadership is attributed to teachers feeling valued and respected and more likely to reciprocate levels of care for their students (Smylie et al., 2016). Employees who have confidence and establish trust in their leadership are more receptive to constructive feedback and less likely to be defensive when concerns are presented to them (Eggers & Suh, 2019).

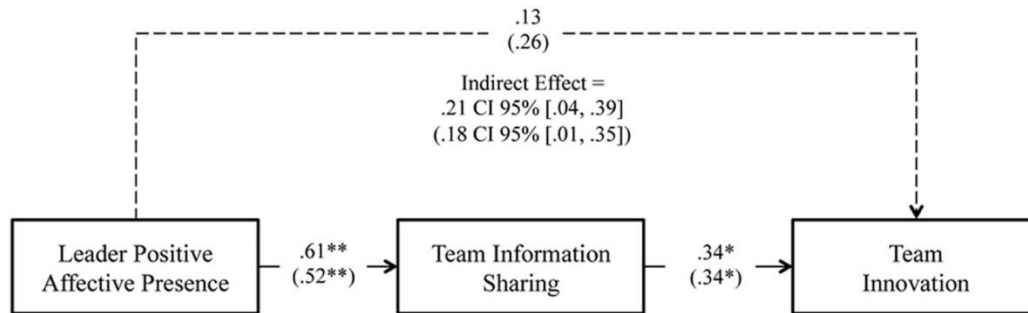


Figure 3. Results of positive leader presence, team information sharing, and team innovation. From “Leader Affective Presence and Innovation in Teams,” by H. Madrid, P. Totterdell, K. Niven, and E. Barros, 2016, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(5), p. 679 (<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000078>).

Leaders who show concern for their employees are fully present when called on and better able to build a genuine rapport with employees (Gelb, 2017). Concerned leaders value feedback and the intrinsic motivations of their employees as it helps them build more engaging work environments and trust. Additionally, leaders demonstrate concern for their employees by integrating systems that ensure employees feel welcome to engage in productive dialogue that is meaningful, relevant, and professional (Maxwell, 2018).

The concept of love in the workplace is uncommon as professionalism and emotional connections are not typically associated with one another. However, it is worth noting that leaders can express love for their organization by developing their teams and creating opportunities for vulnerability through employee self-reflection (R. Brown, 2018; Crowley, 2011). By providing opportunities for employees to reflect, they better their practices and are in better positions to provide meaningful, relevant feedback to enhance their work environment. Finally, leaders who show love exude approachability, a collaborative demeanor, and humility that inspires confidence in their employees.

By showing love, concern, and humility, leaders can see and gain a better understanding of their employees as they connect on a personal level. Seeing employees at work is understood in the context of transformational leadership as recognizing the value of employees and noticing their individual contributions. Leaders who identify with their employees affirm and acknowledge each person's valuable contributions to the organization (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

### **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). Adults spend a significant amount of time working jobs that they are disconnected from or dissatisfied with (Crowley, 2011). Emotional drivers such as job satisfaction, engagement, and development help increase motivation and job satisfaction (McNeff & Irving, 2017). A fundamental principle outlined by Crowley is the ability to maximize an employee's potential by meeting his or her needs as a human. Self-actualization is an essential aspect of human development found in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). Research has shown that the need for self-actualization in humans helps them achieve their fullest potential (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). Therefore, a need for leaders to encourage their employees exists to maximize their potential and increase job satisfaction. More specifically, helping employees establish a sense of belonging within their organization helps to create the feeling of ownership and pride leading to increased job performance (R. Brown, 2004).

Crowley's (2011) interpretation of maximizing employee potential involves developing capabilities for increased job satisfaction and higher contributions to an organization. Recent studies noted that maximizing potential by increasing the skill set of an employee leads to higher levels of motivation and decreased turnover within an organization (Gawali, 2009). Additionally, one study highlighted the use of teaming as a means of peers effectively developing one another via interprofessional contributions (Cooper-Duffy, 2017). This study indirectly validates Crowley's principle of building highly engaged teams as a successful leadership tactic. When employees are in engaged teams, they are likely to develop one another to maximize the potential of the team. The connection between the two principles highlights the interconnectedness of Crowley's principles.

### **Valuing and Honoring Achievements**

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 & Krulik, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013). Recent research has shown that valuing and recognizing employees' positive contributions to an organization help to promote retention and higher levels of productivity and commitment (Henryhand 2009). Other studies have concluded that emotional labor leading to a fulfilling job experience was linked to higher rates of job satisfaction regardless of the type of reward offered by organizations (Grandey, Chi, & Diamond, 2013). This helps to promote the idea that valuing and honoring the achievements of employees can lead to higher rates of job satisfaction, and in some cases, regardless of reward or incentive.



According to Crowley (2011), organizational leaders should recognize the accomplishments of employees when they are earned, providing appropriate recognition that is both genuine and sincere. He further stated that recognition “is an act of giving and reinforcing the value and contributions of people” (Crowley, 2011, p. 46). Additionally, the importance of not just running through motions as recognition that is not heartfelt is noticeable and diminishes the value of an employee’s contributions. Crowley went as far as to say that systemizing recognition by honoring employees as a regular, monthly occurrence or ritual can help to encourage employees to be their best while at work. Research has shown that employees who have a positive work experience are more vested in their jobs and work at higher levels of engagement and productivity (Reina, Rogers, Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2018). Additionally, Crowley (2011) highlighted that positive acknowledgment and praise increases levels of job satisfaction and a feeling of self-worth among employees. One study found that a focus on employee development and regular recognition of achievements led to higher satisfaction among employees (McNeff & Irving, 2017).

Job satisfaction is generally defined as employees’ positive feeling of their job resulting from the characteristics of the job or a positive evaluation (Tessema et al., 2013). Additionally, job satisfaction is also known to be a person’s positive attitude toward a specific dimension of his or her job or their work environment (McShane & von Glinow, 2000). Studies show that job satisfaction is tied to employee turnover, commitment to the organization, and workplace efficiency (Henryhand, 2009). Therefore, organizational leaders who have higher levels of job satisfaction are more likely to have dedicated employees who work efficiently and are less likely to leave the

organization. Furthermore, employees who experience low levels of job satisfaction are more likely to leave the organization or perform in a manner not conducive to producing extraordinary results.

Valuing and honoring employees' achievements varies depending on the type, size, and purpose of an organization. One study found that valuing employees is consistently demonstrated by respecting employees, taking an interest in feedback related to their position, and praising employees for their hard work (McNeff & Irving, 2017). Valuing and honoring achievements can include providing employees with financial and nonfinancial rewards. Financial rewards include raises, bonuses, or other opportunities to gain additional money, and nonfinancial rewards include employee development and promotional opportunities. Other studies have shown that rewards for positive workplace performance directly correlate with job satisfaction (Grandey et al., 2013). According to Crowley (2011), the increased sense of self-worth that comes with a genuine acknowledgment from a superior can directly impact the quality of work the employee does. A recent study shows that organizational leaders who, at a minimum, build positive relationships with their employees and acknowledge their contributions are more likely to have increased levels of job satisfaction (James, 2020).

### **Significance of Heart-Led Leadership**

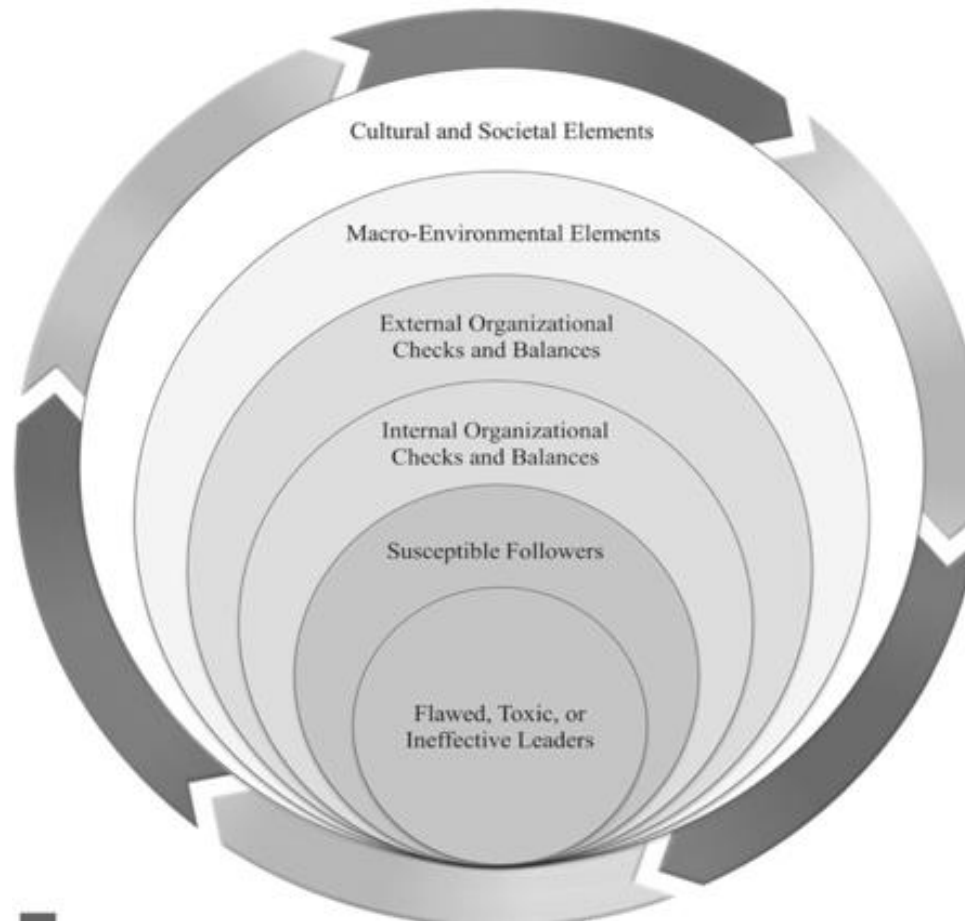
The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. Exemplary high school

principals have the power to transform school cultures, leading students to greater levels of academic achievement through a more engaged staff. It is significantly important for high school principals to use a style of leadership that increases staff morale and job satisfaction. An engaged and fulfilled employee is more likely to help organizations achieve performance targets and goals (Crowley, 2011). According to Crowley (2011), leaders who create highly engaged teams, connect on a personal level, celebrate achievements, and maximize employee potential have a higher likelihood of achieving success in their organizations. Within the scope of public education, leaders with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to have their staff achieve tremendous results in their schools. As it relates to this study, exemplary high school principals prioritize building positive school cultures, have high standards for academic achievement, and focus on the development and personal well-being of the campus community. Exemplary high school principals utilize Crowley's heart-led principles to

1. Build highly engaged teams by training, hiring, and positioning for maximum employee engagement.
2. Connect on a personal level by listening, engaging with, and being transparent with teaching and nonteaching staff.
3. Maximize employee potential by understanding employees' motivations, identifying their talents, and encouraging personal and professional growth and development.
4. Value and honor the achievements of staff by recognizing their contributions and achievements made to the school.

A recent study found that leaders who account for employees' well-being and personal situations have higher satisfaction and engagement levels (González Gómez de

Olmedo et al., 2020). This validates Crowley’s belief that leaders who fail to build relationships and understand employee strengths have a more difficult time establishing trust within their organizations (Crowley, 2011). Effective leaders are successful at building trust and using persuasion to help employees achieve higher levels of effectiveness in their positions. Conversely, ineffective leaders’ impact on their organizations extends far beyond the susceptible followers in their sphere of influence, as represented in Figure 4 (Thoroughgood et al., 2016).



*Figure 4.* Group processes involving flawed, toxic, or ineffective leaders and susceptible followers interacting within conducive environments. From “Destructive Leadership: A Critique of Leader-Centric Perspectives and Toward a More Holistic Definition,” by C. N. Thoroughgood, K. B. Sawyer, A. Padilla, and L. Lunsford, 2016, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 151(3), p. 634 (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3257-9>).

Ineffective leaders impact spheres of influence outside their organization while simultaneously harming an organization's systems and culture. Additionally, ineffective leaders have a seeming ripple effect that ultimately impacts the culture of an organization and employee engagement. As Crowley (2011) and several researchers concluded, disengaged employees lead to decreased levels of productivity and decrease the likelihood of success. When employees lack confidence in organizational leadership, they are less likely to implement organizational change or change in their job performance (Eggers & Suh, 2019). Specifically, ineffective leadership in schools can lead to lower levels of student achievement (Preston & Barnes, 2017). It therefore becomes critical to examine the magnitude of effectiveness leaders reach when utilizing elements of heart-led principles.

Empathetic leadership, specifically heart-led principles, could help to mitigate the perceived adverse effects leaders carry when implementing change. High school principals are often charged with implementing new educational mandates in their schools, creating an environment that teachers might find challenging. According to Ahmad Tatlah and Mehmood Aslam (2012), skillful transformational leadership and high levels of emotional intelligence are necessary when implementing sustainable change in secondary schools. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public education, it is significantly important to research how secondary educational leaders can help their school staff alleviate the challenges brought on by change.

### **The Impact of Exemplary High School Principals**

High school principals are the leaders driving change within their schools. In education, leadership is the conduit by which problems are addressed, trust is established,

and employees grow professionally (Lesinger et al., 2017). A high school principal's role is continually evolving, shifting from a manager of people and operations to an exemplar, visionary, and lifelong learner (M. Hamilton, 2020). As the role of the principal changes, it becomes increasingly important to understand how the purposeful actions of these leaders can positively impact their employees and drive success in schools. Exemplary principals shape the vision of their campuses, foster climates of student success, and build capacity in their staff (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2008). Research notes a significant correlation between school principals and student achievement largely attributed through effective leadership practices (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

### **The Historic Role of High School Principals**

Historically, a high school principal's role has been observed as a rule enforcer and building manager (M. Hamilton, 2020). The earliest known school principals were often referred to as headteachers, schoolmasters, or headmasters in the 19th century (Lesniak, 2020). According to Kafka (2009), a person in this position was responsible for assigning classes, managing the building, and disciplining students. A report by the Institute for Educational Leadership summarizes the previous role of the school principal:

Being an effective building manager used to be good enough. For the past Century, principals were expected to comply with district-level edicts, address personnel issues, order supplies, balance program budgets, keep hallways and playgrounds safe, put out fires that threatened tranquil public relations, and make sure the busing and meal services were operating smoothly. Principals still need to do all those things, but now they must do more. (Kafka, 2009, p. 319)

With the addition of compulsory attendance laws and increased student enrollment, the role of the high school principal evolved with time. According to Rousmaniere (2013), the oversight of instructional practices on campus has always fallen within the purview of school principals; however, newer state and federal initiatives and increasing political hierarchies have made the position more complex. Furthermore, in districts where parent engagement is high, school leaders have become viewed as pillars within the community, which makes their decisions feel significant beyond their school campuses (Preston & Barnes, 2017).

Principals are known to provide school-wide discipline for students as needed and address various needs within the school. However, a high school principal's role has evolved to include leaders who are politically aware and visionary and foster professional growth in their teams (Pepper, 2010). With the introduction and evolution of standards-based education, principals must understand classroom practices, know how to facilitate teacher professional development, and support all staff to meet students' social-emotional needs (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001). The adoption of standards-based curriculum in core content areas including language arts, math, and science through No Child Left Behind created high-stakes accountability for school principals and districts (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Exemplary principals improve teaching and learning through their influence on staff and fostering favorable working conditions (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2019). As time progresses, the role of a principal will continue to evolve to meet society's needs.

## **Direct and Indirect Principalship**

Research suggests that the relationships principals build define the climate and culture of their schools (MacNeil et al., 2009). The leadership style that principals utilize therefore has a significant impact on the ability of the school to produce remarkable results. Direct leadership in a school setting is represented by a principal who has direct impact on a teacher's instructional abilities. Principals who use direct leadership are focused the effectiveness of instruction by teachers or school employees. Conversely, a principal's indirect leadership involves actions leading to conditions that help teachers increase student achievement. This is best represented by principals who focus on building culture and employee engagement so their schools produce remarkable results (Bendikson, Robinson, & Hattie, 2012).

Crowley's principles are primarily focused on indirect leadership, helping principals create an environment conducive to higher job satisfaction. Principals who have a greater understanding of concerns facing school employees can better make decisions leading to increased student achievement (Beatty & Campbell-Evans, 2020). By connecting on a personal level, high school principals can better assess their school's strengths and areas of focus.

## **The Impact of COVID-19 on High School Principalship**

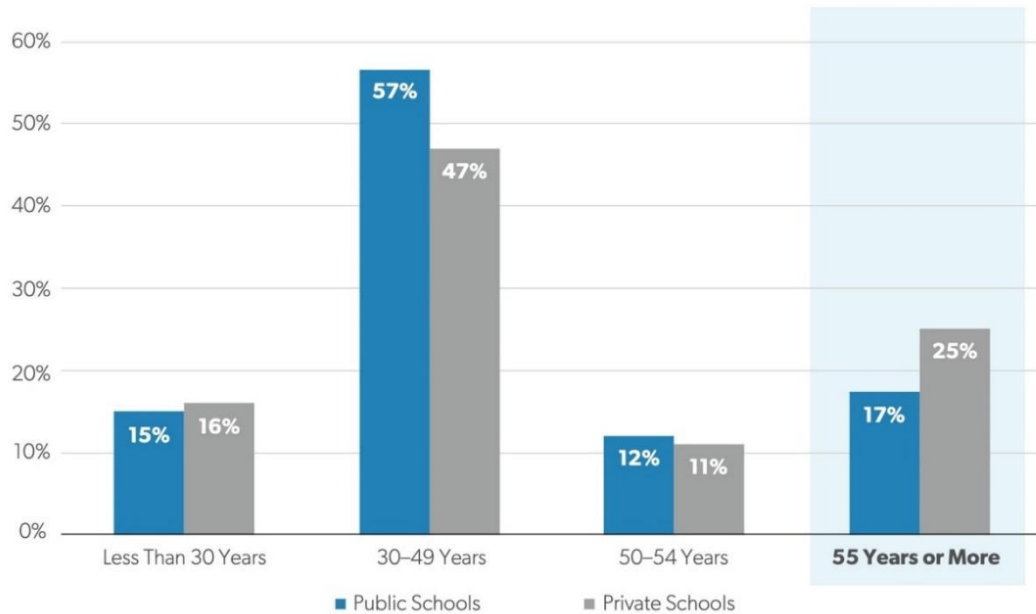
Leading during a crisis can change the dynamics of any organization. The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic has caused a shift in education, complicating how schools operate and endangering the lives of students and staff. Principals have carried the expectation of being great managers and exceptional leaders for their communities while also being a source of comfort for families and staff members during a crisis



(Pollock, 2020). Since March 2020, in addition to the complexities of running a school, high school principals have been responsible for shifting how teachers deliver and how students receive their education. Principals' roles have expanded to include securing critically needed technology to provide emotional comfort and support to the campus community members impacted by the global pandemic (L. Hamilton et al., 2020). Studies have found that because of the vast inequities exposed by the pandemic, high school principals' motivation has been focused on the idea of what is best for students (Stone-Johnson & Miles Weiner, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, the primary role of a high school principal is to ensure that students are physically present and learning in schools that are safe and well-staffed.

Staffing shortages caused by increased numbers of COVID-positive school employees unable to come to work creates a growing challenge to keep schools running (Bailey & Schurz, 2020). The most critical responsibility faced by principals is coordinating staffing for on-site learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. High school principals must leverage personal connections and balance placing additional duties on school staff available to work, being mindful not to cause employee burnout. Additionally, principals must be considerate when attending to staffing shortages that impact those nearing retirement age as well as the unvaccinated. Figure 5 represents the percentage of American teachers by age range regardless of vaccination status. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 17% of public school teachers nationwide are over the age of 55, a demographic highlighted by the Centers for Disease Control for being at higher risk to severe cases of COVID-19. Principals who establish relationships with their staff are more likely to know the impact the pandemic

has caused and how to best keep them engaged and supported. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a substantial shift in the day-to-day roles high school principals play on their campuses.



*Figure 5. Percentage of teachers by age range in public and private schools. From COVID-19 Is Creating a School Personnel Crisis (p. 4), by J. P. Bailey and J. Schurz, 2020, Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute (<https://education.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/American-Enterprise-Institute-COVID19-is-Creating-a-School-Personnel-Crisis.pdf>).*

Because Crowley’s heart-led principles embody qualities of empathetic leadership, the demands brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic provide an opportunity to examine their effectiveness in practice. During the pandemic, school principals have been noted as listening to the needs of staff members, engaging them in conversation when COVID-19 created personal crisis or uncertainty in school operations (Shamir-Inbal & Blau, 2021). These actions align with Crowley’s principle of connecting on a personal level, which Crowley inferred allows for “heart to heart” connections (Crowley, 2011, p. 60). Furthermore, high school principals who acknowledge the hard work and

extra time put in by employees and recognize them for their actions employ Crowley's principle of valuing and honoring achievements. According to Pollock (2020), at the onset of the pandemic, school staff members worked without considering their emotional or social well-being, often focusing more on maintaining normalcy for students.

### **Parallels Between High School Principals and Organizational Leaders**

A comprehensive high school environment mirrors that of a larger organization. Comprehensive high schools generally contain a large employee base with a variety of employee classifications for managers to oversee. According to the Wallace Foundation (2013), there are five practices that align with functions of other types of organizational leaders that principals practice regularly:

1. Creating a vision: Principals must create a vision of academic success for all students on campus.
2. Creating a welcoming atmosphere: Principals are responsible for creating a culture that promotes high-quality education.
3. Instilling leadership skills in others: Principals should encourage leadership at all teaching and nonteaching staff levels.
4. Emphasis on building and refining high-quality systems: Principals must build and maintain expectations for high-quality instruction and conduct on campus.
5. Effectively manage systems, data, and staff: Principals must foster reflection and improvement within the school to make data-informed decisions to enhance operations.

Like employees in some large organizations, school employees belong to labor unions. Like other organizational leaders, high school principals must maintain labor

relations and uphold contractual agreements with the teacher and nonteaching unions. Although labor relations have improved since the 1990s, growing concerns related to changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic ensure that principals must be cognizant of their relationship with labor unions (Cooper & Sura, 2008). When principals focus on addressing the needs of their employees, labor relations and organizational culture improve (Stolp, 1994). Therefore, similar to an organizational leader, the decisions made by a school principal must take into consideration contractual agreements between labor unions.

As a principal, building a cohesive staff and investing in school-wide culture are vital avenues by which leaders can obtain extraordinary results. Exemplary principals who have the power to build collaborative teams and share a sense of purpose with their staff foster a cohesive environment on their campuses, inspire success, and build a positive culture (Beatty & Campbell-Evans, 2020). Like prominent organizational leaders, high school principals must work with their large employee base to share a common vision for the school and find commonality by expanding on or building culture. To do this, high school principals build trust with their staff, communicate effectively, and find ways to validate staff's excellent work when they work toward a shared vision (R. Brown, 2004). In doing so, an indirect influence of a school principal is established that can impact student achievement (Branson et al., 2014).

Exemplary high school principals leverage resources to engage their school communities when hardships arise or there are necessary changes. Over the years, high school principals have been responsible for implementing various state and federal policies, including but not limited to Race to the Top, No Child Left Behind, School

Plans for Student Achievement, COVID-19 safety protocols, and Local Control Accountability Plans. The ability of school principals to successfully implement new policies lies mainly in the relationships they have established and their ability to persuade staff members to change (Escalante, 2019).

### **Identified Gaps in Literature**

Leadership styles are well studied in the literature, namely the benefits of transformational leadership practices on organizational culture. A study correlating the impact of transformational leadership on workers found that “the effect of this type of leadership on work engagement and its facets is positive and significant” (Hayati et al., 2014, p. 1). The same phenomenon is documented in school settings where school staff are more likely to have higher job satisfaction under the leadership of a transformational leader. When school employees have higher levels of job satisfaction, student achievement and success are higher, leading to extraordinary results. Additionally, exemplary principalship leads to lower levels of stress in employees and students who are more engaged in learning and vested in their school community (Branson et al., 2014).

A wealth of knowledge exists regarding various leadership styles and their histories. Additionally, literature has provided insight into the significance of emotional intelligence and elements of Crowley’s heart-led principles. Research has shown how emotionally intelligent leaders who focus on building connections can improve organizational culture and increase worker engagement and motivation (Goleman, 2006).

Although findings from existing studies support the correlation between effective leadership and culture, a gap in the literature exists to support the effectiveness of Crowley’s four principles on organizational success. Many of Crowley’s principles are

touched upon in other studies; however, the specific use of his principles has not been formally studied for effectiveness in a high school setting. Furthermore, the collective use of Crowley's principles versus individual use on organizational leadership has not been identified in literature.

Additionally, a gap exists identifying to what frequency exemplary high school principals utilize heart-led principles in their positions and the level of success they encounter with staff. This leads to further questions related to the study, including whether exemplary high school principals use all of Crowley's heart-led principles to achieve remarkable results in schools. Are some principles used more frequently than others? Are any of the principles more efficiently utilized than others? Can the use of heart-led principles help to alleviate the added stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Additionally, significant research outlines the benefits of valuing employees, honoring their achievements, and communicating appreciation as a means of improving organizational culture. However, gaps exist in literature identifying mechanisms leaders use to show appreciation to employees. Which strategies specifically help exemplary high school principals convey their appreciation to school staff? How often do these strategies change? What additional strategies can be identified for Crowley's remaining principles?

### **Summary**

The practices outlined in Mark Crowley's book are described as the "prescription for restoring the effectiveness of American leadership" (Crowley, 2011, p. 58). This literature review outlined various leadership styles and the significance caring leadership has on organizational culture. This phenomenological study describes how exemplary

high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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.

Studies find that the roles and responsibilities of public high school principals have changed over time, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the expectations of high school principals remain high because of the impact their decisions carry within their school and outside in the community. The increased responsibilities and changing federal and state-level policies have increased the need for politically and emotionally savvy principals to initiate change in schools successfully. At a time when school employees and other job sectors are impacted significantly by staffing shortages, effective leaders must leverage relationships and resources to keep organizations functioning. Studies show the parallels between high school principals and organizational leaders and the significance of their roles and responsibilities. An analysis of previous literature shows how empathetic and transformational leaders have higher likelihoods of job satisfaction and workplace engagement with school staff, leading to increased student achievement.

Although effective leadership has been shown to yield positive results within schools, research is still needed relating to the use of Crowley's four heart-led principles in public education. The specifics of *how* exemplary high school principals use personal connections, build highly engaged teams, maximize employee potential, and value employee achievements to achieve exemplary results remains. Although elements of

Crowley's principles appear in research, there is a need to examine the collective use of his theories by high school principals to affirm their value and significance.

### **Synthesis Matrix**

The synthesis matrix summarizes the literature used to synthesize the Chapter II literature review. The researcher constructed the synthesis matrix, aligning key variables and themes and identifying important gaps in research. The matrix was constructed to provide a straightforward, meaningful method for identifying supporting literature for the study. The synthesis matrix for this study can be found in Appendix A.



## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study describes how high school principals use heart-led principles to lead their employees to accomplish extraordinary results. The first chapter provided an introduction and overview of the intended study, presenting a statement of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, the significance of the study, relevant definitions, delimitations, and organization of the study. Chapter II, the literature review, examined previous studies involving leadership theories and the historical perspective of school principalship. Additionally, Chapter II presented other relevant information to the study, bridging Crowley's philosophy of transformational leadership and heart-led principles to exemplary school principals. Chapter III is intended to describe the methodology involving the qualitative approach to this study. Chapter III explains the rationale for the methodology, including the research questions, and outlines the method by which data were collected, the population studied, and considerations for the research.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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**

The researcher worked with a thematic team to develop the following research questions:

1. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?
3. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

### **Rationale for the Methodology**

Qualitative research is often used to begin explaining concepts behind previously unresearched areas of interest (Patton, 2015). For this study, a qualitative research design allowed the researcher to understand better the impact of exemplary high school principals and their ability to lead staff to achieve extraordinary results. Qualitative studies are defined as a type of research in which interviews, observations, or other types of nonquantitative methods are used to collect data from people in their natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative studies are intended to help a researcher collect data intended to detail the experiences of the study's participants (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). A qualitative method was appropriately suited to this study as the data intended to gather descriptors from respondents indicating how high school principals use each of the four heart-led principles to lead their staff to accomplish extraordinary results.

The researcher's approach for this qualitative study was a phenomenological design. A phenomenological research approach is described as examining perceptions to acquire knowledge about the world (Newhart & Patten, 2018). Phenomenological studies

are described as types of studies that allow researchers to understand their participant populations' experiences related to the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Because the study intended to collect the perception and experiences of comprehensive high school principals, phenomenology was appropriate for this study. The utilization of a phenomenological design allowed the researcher to understand the impact of Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles on school staff through the lived experience of exemplary principals.

Furthermore, a phenomenological approach was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to understand the reality experienced by participants when they viewed the impact of high school principals using heart-led principles in their leadership (Newhart & Patten, 2018). Patton (2015) also inferred that phenomenology, when used within the context of an organizational or cultural study, "aims to capture the essence of program participants experiences" (p. 105). The framework used in this study is often described as "one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (Patton, 2015, p. 105).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), data from the 2017–2018 school year showed that 90,900 principals were employed across the United States. Given a large number of principals, it is crucial to capture how this critical role in school leadership can impact schools whose leaders use Crowley's (2011) four heart-led principles. In this study, the researcher interviewed comprehensive high school principals to describe how they use Crowley's heart-led principles to lead their staff to achieve extraordinary results. By capturing the experience of school staff, the researcher

could better understand how the individual or collective use of the heart-led principles can impact school performance.

### **Population**

A population may be large or small groups of individuals on whom a researcher intends to focus (Patton, 2015). The intended population for this study included public high school principals in California. According to data obtained by the state of California, there were 1,322 high school principals leading schools during the 2019–2020 academic year. This number includes comprehensive public, private, charter, and continuation high schools. Each high school had one principal who would be considered part of the intended population for the study.

### **Target Population**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the target population of a study is a refined selection of candidates within the population a researcher collects data from. Because of the large number of high school principals within the state of California, the researcher selected the Southern California region, further narrowing the target population to high school principals leading in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. This geographic area was selected because of its proximity to the researcher and extensive quantity of active, public, comprehensive high schools. The high school principals leading the identified schools represented the target population for this study or the group of individuals from which data were generalized to obtain conclusions about the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The intended target population for the study allowed the researcher to determine how each principal uses heart-led principles to guide his or her staff effectively.

## **Sample**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a sample is a group of participants who provide data for a researcher within the target population. The researcher focused on a sample population of exemplary public, comprehensive high school principals who lead schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Data obtained from the state of California indicated that there are 128 public, comprehensive high schools within the two counties. The researcher studied comprehensive high school principals instead of others because comprehensive sites have more extensive staff than charter, private, or continuation schools. The sample included principals who met the qualification of exemplary as defined by their ability to identify with two or more characteristics below:

- Recognition by their peers
- Recommendation by one or more recognized regional executive leaders
- Membership in professional associations in their field
- Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences or association meetings.
- Serving at least 3 years in the capacity of a high school principal.

## **Sampling Procedure**

To address the identified research questions, an appropriate sampling procedure needs to be identified. The researcher used two-sample approaches to identify research participants for use in the study. For this study, convenience and purposeful sampling were appropriate as they helped the researcher obtain the most relevant and best-suited participants for the study.

Researchers use convenience sampling to identify participants for research who are able and willing to provide input to the study (Newhart & Patten 2018). For this study, convenience sampling allowed the researcher to interview qualified participants based on their availability. As a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, school districts were forced to make staffing changes across campuses. Consequently, the researcher determined that qualified research participants might not have been readily accessible for the study, prompting the need for convenience sampling.

The second sampling method used by the researcher was purposeful sampling. This method allows the researcher to select research participants who are best suited to provide data for the study (Newhart & Patten, 2018). This sampling method was selected because it allowed the researcher to ensure that comprehensive high school principals were selected who have no other specialized programs or academies on campus. In recent years, schools have added academies focusing on the arts, math, and sciences, creating schools within schools (Bicer, 2015). Because of the possibility of varying administrative structures, the researcher selected purposeful sampling to ensure that the selection of high school principals remained relevant to this study.

### **Instrumentation**

The objective of this study was to describe the lived experiences of high school principals to determine how their use of heart-led principles leads their campuses to achieve remarkable results. Appropriate instruments help determine the accuracy of results and the reliability of the data procured from the study. Qualitative studies use interviews and observations to collect relevant data and draw conclusions about the research topic (Patton, 2015). Therefore, a qualitative, phenomenological study was

appropriate because the primary tool for data collection was a personal interview with high school principals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

According to Patton (2015), interview questions should be derived in a manner that does not indicate bias or lead the participant to deliver a specific response. Interview questions should be developed, which allows the research questions to be answered and the study's objective to be reached (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher worked with a thematic team to develop interview questions intended to answer the team's identified research questions. Each member of the thematic team researched varying leadership roles and how heart-led principles led their teams to achieve remarkable results. The interview questions were developed to be open-ended and allow researchers to gather data regardless of their leadership roles. Each of the interview questions, developed by the researcher and thematic team, was created to align and address the study's research questions. A total of 12 questions were developed for this study. Each member of the thematic team interviewed eight participants within their leadership area of study.

### **Field Test**

A field test is conducted by researchers to evaluate their interview process for clarity and to evaluate the potential for bias (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Once interview questions were agreed on, a script was developed (Appendix B), and a field test was conducted with a qualifying participant whose data were not used in the results. The field test was conducted to ensure the interview questions' validity and ensure that no perception of biases existed within the research interviews. Each member of the thematic team provided field-testing feedback to refine the interview script further.

All participants were provided with relevant definitions for the study, purpose statement, research questions, and interview questions (Appendix C), University of Massachusetts Global Institutional Review Board Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix D), and informed consent notice (Appendix D).

### **Validity and Reliability**

The validity of a study ensures that the instrument's intended purpose will provide reliable and accurate data to the study (Newhart & Patten, 2018). Alternatively, the reliability of a study occurs when data are obtained consistently and predictably (Newhart & Patten, 2018). If a test is valid or an instrument appropriate for the study, it would provide the researcher with data to answer the study's research questions (Salkind, 2017).

Having performed a literature review, the researcher of this study formulated an appropriate methodology that helped the researcher determine conclusions to the research questions outlined in the study. The methodology included using appropriate instruments to help obtain the most relevant and reliable data for the researcher's conclusions. The researcher's participation in a thematic study further enhanced the validity of the study as critical components of the methodology such as the field test were developed by several researchers.

### **Data Collection**

In qualitative research, data collection should be viewed as a series of overlapping steps that include planning, data collection, and the completion stage of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In the planning stage, researchers locate and obtain the necessary approvals to conduct their proposed research. Researchers obtain data and interpret the initial understanding of the participants' responses in the data collection



stage. The final completion stage of data collection occurs at the end of the last interview; the researcher begins to formally analyze the data and construct methods to present it purposefully. The school districts employing the identified participants were contacted for this study, and permission was sought to conduct research. As a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted through the Zoom videoconferencing application. Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions, allowing the researcher to understand the participants' experience better. After completing the interviews, the researcher conducted fundamental data analysis by looking for trends in the data. Additionally, the researcher reviewed artifacts referenced in the interview process. The artifacts reviewed by the researcher included social media posts from the high school aligned to Crowley's principles. After the data collection process, the researcher began the data analysis process, interpreting the data clearly and meaningfully.

The primary data collected by the researcher were via interview. According to Newhart and Patten (2018), interviews are the most common data collection form for qualitative research. Interviews were conducted to allow high school principals to respond to questions and expand on responses if needed. This approach allows the participant to explain, in detail, methods by which they can build highly engaged teams, connect on a personal level, value and honor the achievements of their employees, and maximize employee potential. The researcher interviewed eight exemplary high school principals to gather data intended to answer the research questions.

## **Data Analysis**

The analysis and interpretation of data in a study should be made to allow readers to understand and interpret data in a transparent manner (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). In qualitative phenomenological studies, researchers collect and analyze descriptive data to conclude a participant's lived experience related to the study. This grounded theory approach to the study allows the researcher to validate the use of Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles and extraordinary results in high schools.

Using the research questions as a framework for data analysis, the researcher coded each participant's interview transcripts. The researcher coded the recorded data by identifying patterns or ideas to facilitate data analysis and draw conclusions. The data coding process involved categorizing codes, analyzing the data for themes, and developing themes to arrive at conclusions about the participants' responses. The researcher elected to not report lower participant responses in terms of themes, focusing on higher frequency counts. The data helped the researcher describe how exemplary high school principals who use strategies derived from Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles can accomplish extraordinary results on their campuses.

## **Limitations**

Limitations in research studies are factors impacting the study, which may cause issues with the data or the ability to generalize findings (Salkind, 2017). Identifying limitations helps the researcher understand potential issues and shortcomings within the methodology of the study. According to Roberts and Hyatt (2019), limitations are factors that the researcher has minimal or no control over. Because every participant was interviewed in this qualitative study, the researcher had to look at the potential limitations

within the field research or the interpretation and triangulation of the resulting data. The researcher identified the most significant limitations for this study: population, time, and researcher bias.

### **Population**

This study was limited to comprehensive, public high schools located in the Southern California area of Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Private, charter, and continuation high schools were not considered for the study. The selection of eight exemplary high school principals within a geographic area could be interpreted as a limitation considering the total number of schools in the state. Furthermore, the limited sample size of this study makes it difficult to determine the impact the study has in real-world scenarios. According to Patton (2015), research studies with larger sample sizes are more likely to present findings from more applicable data to real-world scenarios.

### **Time**

Time was a potential limiting factor for this study for multiple reasons. The research study was limited to a specific window of time; therefore, scheduling interviews with participants at a time convenient to them was potentially a limiting factor for the study. Additionally, the specific time the interview was conducted could also be viewed as a limiting factor. Exemplary high school principals are often in high demand on campus. These leaders are frequently meeting with members of the campus community or resolving issues on their campuses. As a result, the availability to schedule interviews was a limiting factor to this study.

## **Researcher Bias**

Researcher bias is a considerable factor limiting qualitative research studies (Newhart & Patten, 2018). In qualitative studies, researchers interpret interview data using their perceptions and understandings of the interview experience. The purpose of the interviews was to gather the lived experience of each principal regarding the practices they use to lead their schools. Because the researcher in this study works as a high school assistant principal, a deliberate effort was made to remain as unbiased as possible so the data and findings were represented as transparently and accurately as possible. The researcher's participation helped to reduce the potential of researcher bias by ensuring a thorough and consistent methodology. Multiple researchers helping to construct definitions, interview scripts, interview questions, and the field test helped to reduce the potential for researcher bias in the study. Finally, during the coding of data, interrater reliability helped to ensure the minimization of bias when analyzing for themes.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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. Through a qualitative, phenomenological research design, the researcher was able to describe the lived experiences of effective high school principals who have demonstrated to their staff their ability to lead from the heart. As campus communities recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study will help to provide insight into the effective practices

high school principals use to achieve extraordinary results in their organizations. This study aimed to validate the impact caring high school principals have on their staff when they show a genuine interest toward their employees. Through the findings of this study, the researcher aimed to show a correlation of Crowley's heart-led principles, caring leadership, and extraordinary results in a public high school setting.

## CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This chapter reviews the purpose of the study, research questions, methods, population, sample, and methodology. Chapter IV presents the data collected from the phenomenological study, which examines extraordinary results achieved by exemplary high school principals who use heart-led principles. Interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data intended to address the research questions presented in this study. This chapter concludes with a summary of findings from the interviews.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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 high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?
3. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

## **Population**

As Patton (2015) indicated, this study intended to focus on high school principals located in the state of California. According to data gathered by the state of California between 2019-2020, there were over 1,300 active high schools. This number includes a variety of schools including public, private, charter, and continuation high schools. Given the large population of high school principals, the researcher focused on high school principals in Southern California to help narrow the number of potential participants.

## **Sampling Frame**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described the sampling frame of a study as a narrow selection of candidates from within a researcher's population from which data are intended to be collected. For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose to study traditional, comprehensive public high schools serving students between grades 9-12. Research participants were selected from the inland region of Southern California within Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The researcher selected this geographic region because of proximity and the extensive list of qualifying comprehensive high schools.

## **Sample**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a sample is a group of participants who provide data for a researcher within the sampling frame. The researcher focused on a sample population of exemplary public, comprehensive high school principals who lead schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Data obtained from the state of California indicated that there are 128 public, comprehensive high schools within the two counties. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a sample size

between three to 10 is recommended when target populations are large. The researcher focused on eight exemplary high school principals who were interviewed. The researcher studied principals from comprehensive high schools because these sites have more extensive staff than charter, private, or continuation schools. The sample obtained by the researcher included principals who met the qualification of exemplary as defined by their ability to identify with two or more of the following characteristics:

- Recognition by their peers
- Recommendation by one or more recognized regional executive leaders
- Membership in professional associations in their field
- Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences or association meetings.
- Serving at least 3 years in the capacity of a high school principal.

The eight research participants demonstrated various evidences of extraordinary results by achieving high rates of achievement during the COVID-19 pandemic, recognition by accreditation committees and notable success, partnership with outside organizations, and participation on high stakes assessments. All eight participants were interviewed using questions developed by the researcher's thematic team to ensure consistency in data collection.

### **Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher utilized a qualitative, phenomenological methodology to gather the lived experiences of each of the comprehensive high school principals. The researcher intended to learn how their leadership practices aligned with Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles and their schools' extraordinary results. All eight comprehensive high school



principal participants were interviewed virtually using the videoconferencing platform Zoom. After each interview was completed, transcripts were approved by the participants and analyzed using NVivo software. The data were coded, allowing the researcher to develop themes and generalize the data.

### **Interviews**

The researcher worked with a thematic team to develop an interview protocol in conjunction with faculty from the UMass Global. The interview instrument included protocol to begin the interview, open ended interview questions, and probing questions to help gather additional insight, if needed, from the participants. Prior to participating in the interview, each participant received a copy of the interview questions, an introduction including the purpose of the study, informed consent, and UMass Global's Research Participants Bill of Rights. Each of the eight participant interviews was conducted using Zoom videoconferencing software. Participant interviews lasted between 40 to 65 min and were recorded to provide a transcript used by the researcher. Each transcript was sent to participants prior to being coded by the researcher.

### **Participant Demographics**

Each participant's name, school, and district information were withheld to uphold their confidentiality. Participants were assigned a numeric pseudonym that corresponded to their data within the study. Listed in Table 1 is general demographic information about each participant including gender and year they were first credentialed in the state of California. This information is included to give perspective on the types of principals interviewed for the study. Participants in this study included three female principals and five male principals. The longest serving participant principal began his career in

education starting in 1994, and the principals with the fewest years of service began their educational careers in 2009.

Table 1

*Comprehensive High School Participant Demographics*

Participant	Gender	Year first credentialed in California
1	F	2009
2	F	2003
3	M	1994
4	M	2001
5	M	2009
6	F	1997
7	M	2003
8	F	2001

Participants in the study were required to demonstrate at least two of the following characteristics:

- Recognition by their peers
- Recommendation by one or more recognized regional executive leaders
- Membership in professional associations in their field
- Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences or association meetings.
- Serving at least 3 years in the capacity of a high school principal.

Table 2 demonstrates how each participating high school principal met the criteria to be labeled exemplary. Of the eight participants, three met every criterion required for

the study. Additionally, two participants met all but one of the criteria required for participation in the study.

Table 2

*Comprehensive High School Exemplary Participant Criteria*

Participant	Recognition by peers	Recommendation by executive leader	Membership in professional association	Articles, papers, or published/presented materials	Serving 3 years as a principal
1	X	X	X	X	
2	X	X	X	X	X
3	X	X	X		X
4	X		X		X
5	X		X		X
6	X	X	X	X	X
7	X	X	X	X	
8	X	X	X	X	X

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

Each of the eight participants responses was coded using themes aligned with Crowley’s (2011) four heart-led principles. Data from each of the interviews were synthesized to identify frequently recurring themes, allowing the researcher to generalize data and answer the four research questions. Within this chapter, a summary of data is organized by research question to present the findings for each of Crowley’s principles.

**Data Analysis**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), phenomenological studies describe the lived experience of participants to share insight and perspective related to the

research topic. For the purposes of this study, participants shared their experience as high school principals and how they use heart-led characteristics to achieve extraordinary results. Each participant interview was conducted via Zoom online video conferencing. At the conclusion of each interview, transcripts were sent to participants for their review and approval prior to the interpretation of data. Once approved, the researcher coded the recorded data by identifying patterns or ideas to facilitate data analysis and draw conclusions. The data coding process involved categorizing codes, analyzing the data for themes, and developing themes to arrive at conclusions about the participants' responses. For a theme to be included in the research findings, it needed to have been mentioned by five of the eight participants with an overall frequency of 10 or higher.

### **Reliability**

The researcher collaborated with a thematic team to ensure the development of a reliable study. The thematic team developed research questions aligned to the purpose of the study in conjunction with university faculty. Interview scripts were developed to ensure the consistent delivery of questions to participants and to eliminate ambiguity and confusion. Additionally, a peer researcher with experience in qualitative, doctoral research reviewed 10% of the obtained qualitative data to determine consistency in coding. After reviewing one of eight interviews, the peer researcher coded themes within 80% accuracy.

### **General Findings**

The data generalized by the researcher revealed 12 themes identified as they related to each heart-led principle and research question. The frequency of responses related to each of Crowley's (2011) principles is outlined in Figure 6. As represented in

the figure, the researcher identified that valuing and honoring achievements yielded the highest frequency percentages from high school principal respondents at 31%.

Connecting on a personal level yielded the second highest frequency at 30% followed by building a highly engaged team at 24% and maximizing employee potential at 15%.

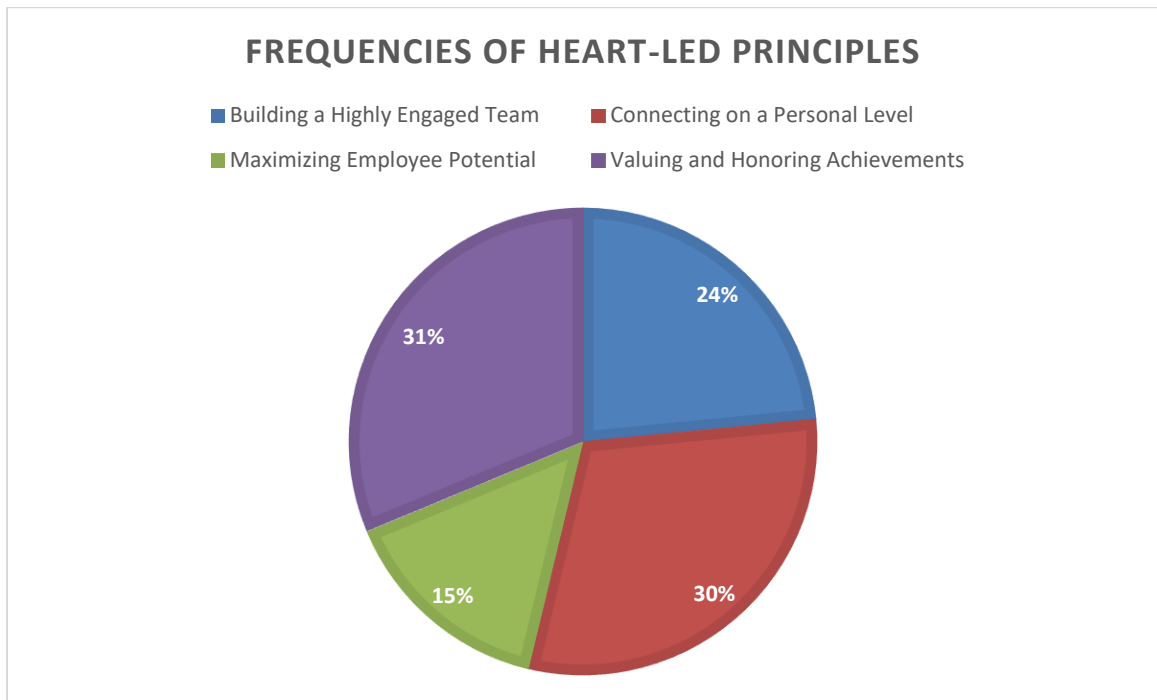


Figure 6. Frequencies of heart-led principles.

### Data By Research Question

#### Research Question 1: Building a Highly Engaged Team

The first research question was “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?” The thematic team defined the concept of a highly engaged team as using strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work that they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging and by 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 et al., 2013; Senge et al., 2007). Each participant answered three questions related to building highly engaged teams within their organization. Coding for responses for principals who build highly engaged teams yielded two themes: (a) establishing a purpose and (b) ensuring everyone is made to feel part of a team. Table 3 shows the frequency of the themes as they were mentioned in high school principal interviews.

Table 3

*Building a Highly Engaged Team Themes Frequency Count*

Theme	Frequency	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Establishing a purpose	30	8	100%
Making everyone feel as if they are part of a team	42	8	100%

According to Mombourquette (2017), high-performing schools are generally led by principals who establish a purpose by communicating to their staff a vision, mission, and goals that are rooted in their organization’s beliefs. Each of the eight exemplary principals noted the significance of communicating a mission and vision to their staff.

Participant 4 stated,

It’s important that my staff, my team, sees the importance of what we’re doing and why we’re doing it. If I can sell them on the “why,” which usually is not hard to do because we’re talking about students and our community. . . . It’s fairly easy to get them moving in the right direction, with, of course, the appropriate support.

Related artifacts of this theme include prominent references on five school websites referencing each campus mission, vision, and beliefs. Many participants stressed the importance of providing frequent reminders of purpose or goals to maintain employee engagement.

The theme of ensuring everyone is made to feel part of a team was also recorded across all participants and had a frequency of 42, more than double the previous theme. Studies have noted the importance of team building, which promotes employees to problem solve more effectively, address challenges, and achieve organizational goals (Cooper-Duffy & Eaker, 2017). Participant 1 stated,

I do make sure that everyone on this campus understands that they're part of this team. The work that we do is teamwork, and everything and all things, regardless of our titles, we are all here for the same purpose and the same goal. We focus collectively so we can make sure the work that we're doing achieves our goal.

### **Research Question 2: Connecting on a Personal Level**

The second research question was “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?” The thematic team defined the concept of connecting on a personal level as thinking and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (B. Brown, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010). Each of the participants answered three questions related to connecting on a personal level within his or her organization. Coding for responses for principals who connect on a personal level yielded four themes: (a) getting to know employees’ families, (b) personal face-to-face conversations, (c) knowing the needs of

the campus, and (d) being transparent. Table 4 shows the frequency of the themes as they were mentioned in high school principal interviews.

Table 4

*Connecting on a Personal Level Themes Frequency Count*

Theme	Frequency	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Getting to know employees' families	19	7	88%
Personal face-to-face conversations	10	4	50%
Knowing the needs of the campus	39	8	100%
Being transparent	25	8	100%

Studies have identified a need to resolve the conflict between work and family demands (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013). Participants spoke to the importance of a healthy work–life balance and prioritizing, when necessary, the needs of family first. Many principals expressed levels of concern for employees and their families during unexpected medical hardships or the creation of family-friendly atmospheres when permissible to create a campus community that feels like family. Participant 2 stated,

Spouses and kids are invited to everything, so when we have an end of the year admin party, you have to bring your spouse and your kids because we're all doing this together. When we go to dinner before prom, spouses come. Being on that same emotional level and connecting with your school community helps you to understand their passion for kids.

Studies have noted that leaders who actively listen to and engage employees build trusting relationships and help them feel appreciated (Escalante, 2019). Participant 2



noted that teachers are looking for a connection with their leader. Participant 2 also noted that when recognition is made to employees with a personal, face-to-face conversation, the genuine nature of the conversation likely results in more favorable sentiments toward the leader. Principal participants noted the need for face-to-face conversations to reestablish connections with staff members possibly lost during the COVID-19 school closures. Other participants commented on the significance of a face-to-face conversation helping to ensure accessibility to leaders when problems arise.

As Bower et al. (2018) noted, principals who are knowledgeable and considerate of the needs of their campuses and its workers have higher employee satisfaction levels. Other studies have linked the significance between employee satisfaction and principal effectiveness to a positive impact on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Participant 1 highlighted the importance of conducting needs assessments for newer principals to quickly know the pulse of the campus and assess its needs. Three principals indicated that knowing the needs of the campus helped leaders build trust in employees and lessen the need to micromanage. Participant 4 stated,

When I know the needs of my campus, I don't have to micromanage because I know their hearts are in it, I know they see the same vision I do and I total trust them getting there.

Research has shown that transparency and empathetic leadership presented in a manner meaningful to employees positively impact productivity and job satisfaction (Jiang & Men, 2017). Participants noted how transparency has helped them to build trust with employees, especially with authentic, face-to-face communication. Participant 5 summarized how principals leverage transparency in their schools:

People want to understand why. When you're honest, I mean as simple as that sounds, you're honest with them and you're honest with the good and honest with the bad, when you come from a place of compassion, transparency is built into your communication. If you're an active listener and have a good pulse of the campus the decisions you make are rooted in what's needed and what people believe is good for the school.

### **Research Question 3: Maximizing Employee Potential**

The third research question was “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?” The thematic team defined the concept of maximizing employee potential as igniting emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011). Each participant answered three questions related to maximizing the potential of their employees within their organization. Coding for responses for maximizing employee potential yielded two themes: (a) being transparent and (b) self-accountability. Table 5 shows the frequency of the themes as they were mentioned in high school principal interviews.

Table 5

*Maximizing Employee Potential Themes Frequency Count*

Theme	Frequency	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Discovering employee interests	23	8	100%
Self-accountability	23	8	100%

Both themes were mentioned by all eight participants. The theme of discovering employee interests had a recorded frequency of 23. The other theme, self-accountability, also recorded a frequency of 23.

Participating principals shared that having an understanding of employee interests helps demonstrate their willingness to connect on a personal level. Additionally, principals shared that utilizing employee interests when possible helped to maintain engagement with employees. When managers acknowledge or utilize employee interests, research has shown considerable value is added to organizations because of the impact it has on employee engagement (Gableta & Bodak, 2014). One participant described the positive outcome of tasking the employee with an assignment she expressed interest in. Participant 4 noted,

Just to hear me acknowledge her work, she just lit up, she was excited about it. It only took me 2 minutes to tell her and now I know she'll work harder on it next year. Now that she knows where she didn't do great, she'll do even better next year.

Furthermore, other principals noted that leveraging employee interests can help employees build confidence to achieve positive results in nonpreferred tasks. Principal Participant 3 noted,

We are getting employees to believe that they can actually do it, that they can get achievement to occur in their class by building confidence and trying something new.

Several principals noted the importance of self-accountability to building trust and thereby helping to maximize employee potential. Participant 1 provided insight into how

she publicly acknowledges mistakes and makes appropriate corrective action to rectify the issue to build trust and model reflective behaviors. Participant 1 stated,

I've made mistakes and when I do I send out a public email. I'll apologize and let them know I was incorrect with my information. If I want them to recognize and reflect when they've done something and made a mistake, I have to model that so they know it's okay. It's important to not just model it but to do so authentically and be humble.

Research has shown that a positive school culture requires trust as a major component of effective school leadership. Trust requires persistence and patience from principals, slowly accumulating over time (Maine, 2020).

#### **Research Question 4: Valuing and Honoring Achievements**

The fourth research question was “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?” The thematic team defined the concept of valuing and honoring achievements 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 (Crowley, 2011; Brun & Dugas, 2008; Posamentier & Krulik, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013). Each participant answered three questions related to valuing and honoring the achievements of employees. Coding for responses for valuing and honoring employee achievements yielded three themes: (a) celebrating success publicly, (b) principals making themselves open and accessible, and (c) communicating authentically. Table 6 shows the frequency of the themes as they were mentioned in high school principal interviews.

Table 6

*Valuing and Honoring Achievements Theme Frequency Count*

Theme	Frequency	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Celebrate success publicly	25	8	100%
Principals making themselves open and accessible	35	8	100%
Communicating authentically	36	7	88%

Each of the three themes was mentioned by all eight participants. The theme of communicating authentically yielded a frequency of 36, the highest for this principle. The theme of principals making themselves open and accessible recorded a frequency of 35. Last, the lowest frequency of 25 was recorded for celebrating success publicly.

All participating high school principals indicated that celebrating their employees' success publicly can have a profound impact on their motivation. Principal Participant 4 stated, "People like to be recognized and they should be for the hard work they put in," inferring the importance of validating employees' work. Research has specifically mentioned that intentional, sincere, and timely recognition can invoke a sense of pride in their organization (Tessema et al., 2013). Principal 2 spoke to the importance of utilizing social media for recognizing employees, speaking to the power of personally recognizing and celebrating their success. By celebrating success publicly, principals honor the hard work of their employees.

The next theme was principals making themselves open and accessible. As the title of the theme infers, principal participants repeatedly spoke to the power of humility and making the time to be present for their staff. Participant 7 stated,

I try not to give anybody the impression that I am more important than anyone because I sit in a particular office or possess a certain title. The staff appear grateful when you take the time to provide them with feedback or hear their suggestions or concerns.

Principal Participant 1 shared that in-person communication helps the staff member to build a trusting relationship with her. Furthermore, this participant shared that by making herself available, she is able to enhance her communication with her teams and get a better feel for the culture of the school. By making herself available, she helped staff members to feel valued and appreciated because their leader took the time to acknowledge their work.

Participants stated that communicating authentically helped to gain the trust of employees. By communicating authentically, staff members have confidence that affirmations from their principal are met with sincerity. Principal 1 stated,

I've been here long enough now to where they know my heart and they know my perspective. I'm very transparent about it. When I say something, they know who I am so they understand where it is that I'm coming from. I believe that's the best way to communicate authentically.

Research has shown that school staff who view their leader with high humility and with other positive qualities, an atmosphere of high achievement is created on the campus (Escalante, 2019).

### **Key Findings**

This qualitative phenomenological study utilized principals' lived experiences to identify how Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles help high school principals achieve

extraordinary results on their campuses. Each interview was transcribed and coded for emerging themes. The key findings for this study include themes mentioned by six of the eight participants with a minimum frequency of 20. Each of the principles yielded two key findings outlined in Table 7. The key findings represent the most prevalent themes mentioned by high school principals in the study. Of the 10 themes identified, nine are considered key findings.

Table 7

*Overall Frequency and Key Findings*

Crowley's heart led principle	Key findings	Total frequencies
Building highly engaged teams	● Establishing a purpose	30
	● Making everyone feel as if they're part of a team	42
Connecting on a personal level	● Knowing the needs of the campus	39
	● Being transparent	25
Maximizing employee potential	● Discovering employee interests	23
	● Self-accountability	23
Valuing and honoring achievements	● Principals making themselves open and available	35
	● Celebrating success publicly	25
	● Communicating authentically	36

**Key Findings: Building a Highly Engaged Team**

- The theme of principals who establish a purpose was identified in all eight interviews and had a frequency count of 30.

- The theme of leaders who make everyone feel as if they are part of a team was identified in all eight interviews and had a frequency count of 42, the highest frequency count in the study.

**Key Findings: Connecting on a Personal Level**

- The theme of principals who know the needs of their campus yielded a frequency count of 39 and was mentioned in all eight interviews.
- The theme of leaders who are transparent with their staff had a frequency of 25 and was recorded in all eight interviews.

**Key Findings: Maximizing Employee Potential**

- The theme of discovering employee interests received a frequency count of 23 and was mentioned by eight participants.
- The theme of principals who are self-accountable yielded a frequency count of 23 and was mentioned by all eight participants.

**Key Findings: Valuing and Honoring Employee Achievements**

- The theme of principals making themselves open and available for their staff received a frequency count of 35 and was mentioned in all eight interviews.
- The theme of celebrating an employee's success publicly received a frequency count of 25 and was mentioned by all eight participants.
- The theme of principals who communicate authentically received a frequency count of 36 and was mentioned by seven of the eight participants.

**Summary**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles to accomplish



extraordinary results in their organizations. Semistructured interviews were conducted with eight high school principals to better understand how the use of heart-led principles can lead to extraordinary results on a high school campus. Interview data were collected, transcribed, and coded for themes, allowing the researcher to triangulate data and draw conclusions with the data. Nine key findings were identified, describing how the use of heart-led principles lead to success on the high school campuses. Chapter V of this study summarizes major findings of this study, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of this phenomenological study was to interview high school principals to examine ways they utilize Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles in their leadership. The researcher identified how exemplary high school principals used heart-led principles including building highly engaged teams, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring employee achievements to accomplish extraordinary results in their schools. Data from each of the principal's interviews revealed nine key findings that the researcher was able to conclude. The purpose of Chapter V is to review the purpose of the study and research questions before presenting an analysis of the results, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendation for further studies. At the conclusion of chapter are the researcher's final remarks and reflections.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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 high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

The researcher intended to learn how the leadership practices of high school principals in alignment with Crowley's heart-led principles result in extraordinary results. The researcher sought to gather the lived experiences of each comprehensive high school principal utilizing a qualitative, phenomenological methodology to gather data and draw conclusions. All eight comprehensive high school principal participants were interviewed virtually using the videoconferencing platform Zoom. After each interview was completed, transcripts were approved by the participants and analyzed using NVivo software. The data were coded, allowing the researcher to develop themes and generalize the data.

### **Major Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe how exemplary high school principals lead from the heart and achieve extraordinary results using Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). Of the nine key findings in Chapter IV, four major findings were found from themes with frequency counts from every participant, triangulated with data from at least two collected artifacts, and produced at least 20 frequencies. Each of the major findings directly relates to the research questions of how high school principals lead from the heart to achieve

extraordinary results on their campuses. The major findings from this study are reviewed in the next section.

### **Research Question 1**

The first research questions asked, “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?”

#### **Major Finding 1: Making everyone feel as if they are part of the team.**

Making everyone feel as if they are part of a team was a theme identified in all eight interviews and presented in three artifacts that yielded a frequency count of 42. Building cohesive, engaging teams empowers employees to be solutions oriented, address obstacles, and achieve goals (Cooper-Duffy & Eaker, 2017). Interview data from principals suggest that the COVID-19 school shutdowns created a need for certificated and classified staff to rethink how they did their jobs. Research has shown that leaders who respect and value employee interests and build inclusive environments foster employee trust and increase productivity (Gableta & Bodak, 2014). All eight high school principal participants spoke to the significance of creating an atmosphere on their campus where staff are listened to and incorporated into critical decision-making processes. High school principals are not commonly given the opportunity to hire their own teams, oftentimes inheriting the staff they lead at their schools. As a result, exemplary high school principals have made sure that everyone at their school is made to feel as if they are part of a team. Three principals, specifically, spoke to the need to create an inclusive, team-like atmosphere in which trust is embraced and the concept of change is not feared.

## **Research Question 2**

The second research questions asked, “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?”

**Major Finding 2: Knowing the needs of the campus.** Exemplary principals who get to know the needs of their campus was a theme identified in all eight interviews and four artifacts and recorded a frequency of 39. Research has shown that principals who get to know the needs of their staff build strong school cultures with good interpersonal relationships (Bower et al., 2018). Following the COVID-19 school shutdowns in 2020, principal participants noted the importance of talking with their staff and connecting on a personal level to get the know the needs of their campus. Principals reported making phone calls to assess the needs of staff and students physically and emotionally. Crowley (2011) shared that leaders who connect on a personal level connect with their staff to deepen their relationships and better understand their perspective when issues arise.

## **Research Question 3**

The third research questions asked, “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?”

**Major Finding 3: Discovering the interests of employees.** The theme of discovering employee interests was present in all eight interviews and three artifacts and recorded a frequency of 23. Discovering employee interests helps principals to maximize their potential by directly engaging and supporting them in an area of the job they show interest in. Research has shown that when principals take the time to get to know

employee interests and develop their skillset in those areas, they establish loyalty to the principal and the organization (Tonich, 2021). Additionally, Crowley (2011) stated that employees become more vested in their positions when there is support from their leaders.

#### **Research Question 4**

The fourth and final research question asked, “How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring employee achievements?”

**Major Finding 4: Principals should prioritize making themselves open and available to employees.** The theme of principals prioritizing making themselves open and available to their employees recorded a frequency of 35, obtained five artifacts, and was mentioned in all eight interviews. Participating principals stated that they prioritized visibility to show care and support to their staff. By increasing their visibility, principals reported being better able to respond to the needs of their employees, recognize their achievements and show them that they are valued. According to one study, evidence suggests that valuing and prioritizing relationships has a disproportionately strong impact on the culture of an organization (McNeff & Irving, 2017). Participants noted that when they took the time to celebrate success or be a figure of strength during difficult times, staff members expressed appreciation and fidelity to their organization. The simple act of recognition by a leader is a significant investment toward the satisfaction of an employee and the culture of an organization (Tessema et al., 2013).

#### **Unexpected Findings**

Within the study, the researcher observed two notable, unexpected findings:

- Trust was not directly identified by high school principals as a strategy to achieve remarkable results. Although trust was largely implied by participants, it was not directly mentioned as expected.
- The significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic had in generating robust results for the study. Principals' experiences gravitated toward their response to the COVID pandemic in addition to their traditional, lived experiences.

### **Conclusions**

The major findings of this study help to describe how exemplary high school principals use heart-led principles to lead their staff toward extraordinary results. Each of Crowley's (2011) four heart-led principles prioritize an investment in an organization's human capital to produce results. Although the findings of the study present equal importance of all four of heart-led principles, two notable conclusions were found.

#### **Conclusion 1: Principals Should Invest Time to Build Trusting, Meaningful Relationships**

To create sustainable, transformational change, a leader must build trust within their organization. Because high school principals commonly inherit their staff, they must prioritize building trusting and meaningful relationships to foster change within their schools. By investing in their teams, high school principals are able to leverage the power of their relationships to establish obtainable goals and move the school toward greater success. As one principal participant described,

They're looking for a connection with their principal. People always want you, people will be like "Oh I don't want to waste your time," that actually means that they want you to show up. They want to be around you, I've been here long

enough now to where they know my heart and they know my perspective, I'm very transparent about it. So they know when I say something, they understand where it's coming from.

This principal's perspective highlights the impact a meaningful relationship can have on school staff. This participant shared the experience of building relationships by being present for teachers, inferring that even if they make an unpopular decision, their staff knows where the principal's intention lies. Other participants shared the importance of building meaningful relationships in which actions are followed up with sincerity and genuine concern. When school staff feel they are valued and have a trusting, personal connection with the principal, their job satisfaction increases as does the likelihood of extraordinary results.

### **Conclusion 2: Principals Should Get to Know the Various Needs of Their Campuses to Better Serve Their Organizations and Lead Them to Success**

When principals understand the needs of their campuses, they are better able to publicize their success and address shortcomings. As principals assess the needs of their schools, they are better able to align their campus with district goals or state initiatives. Additionally, principals who understand the needs of their schools can lead them toward greater levels of success when meaningful, obtainable goals are set through an inclusive mission and vision. As one principal stated,

The first thing I do is conduct a needs assessment of the site first, so I can develop a mission and vision. We have to have goals that we set. I'm someone who believes that achieving them can't happen in 1 day, it can't happen in 1 year, you have to be strategic. I start thinking about who is going to be part of the work to



get to the goal. I do make sure that everybody on this campus understand that they are part of this team and that the work that we do is teamwork, and everything and all things, regardless of our titles, we're all here for the same purpose and the same goal.

The viewpoint of this high school principal was shared among other participants who spoke to the power of purposeful actions initiated by site needs. One participant spoke to the importance of addressing the social and emotional needs of their campus by opening a wellness center. By tending to the nonacademic need of students and the non-job-related concerns of employees, the principal is able to ensure that their campus is in a more positive environment.

### **Implications for Action**

This study sought to capture the lived experiences of eight exemplary high school principals and their use of Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles to achieve extraordinary results. The significance of this phenomenological study and the significance of the thematic team research was to improve the leadership practices of school principals, district-level administrators, and other organizational leaders. The following implications for action provide suggestions for improvements to educational leadership.

#### **Implication 1: Focus on Building Meaningful Relationships**

Educators often model behaviors they would like their students to learn. When educational leaders build meaningful relationships, the impact extends beyond site principals and district officials to classroom teachers and students. When adults on a school campus model what effective relationships look like, other adults and students begin to emulate the behavior, sparking the potential for positive shifts in school culture.

When a campus culture is built on the foundation of genuine concern for the school community, all stakeholders including parents, students, and staff can benefit. This can be especially beneficial for a campus community recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 school closures.

### **Implication 2: Administrative Professional Development**

Professional development is an essential component of an educator's job. The impact of school leaders extends well beyond classroom teachers to support staff, parents, and students. The findings of this research can be used to develop professional developments for school administrators that focus on strategies that develop extraordinary results from leaders who utilize heart-led strategies. By extending the impact of heart-led leadership and developing common practices across schools, district leaders are promoting high achievement standards and tending to the ever growing social and emotional needs of society. The results of this study can help to contribute to this by building more empathetic and resilient communities.

### **Implication 3: Strategic Hiring and Assignment of Administrators**

Each school district's unique hiring practices help to select the best potential candidate for their position. Although these hiring practices screen for technical qualifications and a potential fit at a school site, they often do not assess whether a leader knows how to achieve results or positive school culture. A district that places a strategic focus on school culture, heart-led leadership attributes, and success allows superintendents and their human resources officials to select a candidate who is more likely to lead the team to extraordinary results. The results of this research can help district officials find attributes that help select exemplary high school principals.

#### **Implication 4: Incorporation of Employee Recognition and Celebratory Practices**

The findings of this study help school principals understand the significance of celebrating and recognizing employee achievements. This study highlights the positive impact on school culture as well as employee job satisfaction by using heart-led leadership practices. Principals who show their staff that they are genuinely valued for their hard work, recognized publicly, or are otherwise celebrated at work are likely to build a loyal and more satisfied staff. When this happens, school culture and student achievement likely increase.

#### **Implication 5: Publication of Findings**

The findings of this research and those of the thematic team can be used to help organizational leaders find greater success through heart-led leadership. As social and political climates weigh a heavy influence on the workforce, the use of heart-led principles and findings from the thematic team's research could be of tremendous benefit to organizational leaders. Results from the thematic team's research could be used to develop publications or presentations aimed at building more extraordinary workforces.

#### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This phenomenological study explored and described how exemplary high school principals achieve extraordinary results using Crowley's (2011) four heart-led principles of building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. Based on the results of this qualitative study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations for further research:

- Conducting a similar, mixed methods study of exemplary leaders and their extraordinary results. This study defined the phrase *exemplary leadership* by which

quantifiable data are obtained from a mixed method that would determine whether school staff would identify their principal as exemplary.

- Similarly, the researcher recommends conducting a mixed methods study to quantify the impact of heart-led leadership on student achievement.
- This study focused on exemplary high school principals and the use of heart-led strategies to achieve extraordinary results. A recommendation for future research relies on the power of teachers using heart-led strategies to achieve extraordinary results inside the classroom. A focus should be placed on the impact heart-led leadership by teachers has on student academic performance and overall classroom behaviors.
- It is recommended that the study be expanded to include additional counties within Southern California including those with varied socioeconomic status rather than the current study's population.
- This study focused on high school principals and their lived experiences serving in their capacity. One recommendation for future research is to compare how continuation or other alternative high school principals who use heart-led principles achieve extraordinary results. Students in a continuation or other alternative setting likely need school communities that foster exemplary leadership skills from administrators and teachers.
- The researcher recommended replicating the study after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided. A replicated study could compare how exemplary principals' strategies may differ given more traditional circumstances.

- This study focused on high school principals as organizational leaders and their impact utilizing heart-led leadership. The researcher recommends conducting a similar study using district leaders, such as superintendents, as the population of the study.
- It is recommended that the study be replicated to include all K-12 principals. The researcher and the thematic team focused on specific levels of school leadership including elementary, middle, and high schools. A study that includes all levels of school leadership could provide beneficial data for district leaders desiring to develop comprehensive, heart-led district initiatives.

### **Final Reflections**

The world has forever changed since I began my doctoral journey nearly 3 years ago. I began my journey believing I knew what effective leadership looked like and how to lead a comprehensive high school. When I began, I also believed I was stuck in my position with minimal opportunities for growth. Within 3 years, I have had the opportunity to learn and grow with the guidance and expertise of exemplary doctoral role models, colleagues, and cohort members. I learned that my view of leadership, although not incorrect, was also incomplete. The doctoral program, its teachings, and experiences have helped to make me a more complete and thoughtful leader.

Just under 3 years ago, everything came to a screeching halt as a result of COVID. The world as we knew it was forever altered with minimal guidance from anyone. As colleagues put it, we were “building the plane as we were flying it,” making decisions with little direction but with a common goal of ensuring the safety, security, and education of our children. Because of COVID, I was able to test my leadership

skills, make effective decisions, and reflect on the type of leader into which I was evolving. I elected to be a leader who refined my empathetic skillset, expanded my emotional intelligence, and began getting more comfortable with fostering change in an organization, even if it was not easy. I learned that setbacks should not always be viewed negatively, but as opportunities to test my leadership abilities and to grow. I have learned that relationships are key to building effective teams and that projecting optimism and fortitude go a long way in exemplifying strength in leadership.

Beyond the professional growth, I have also grown on a personal level. I have focused on being a more empathetic husband and father, viewing aspects of life as my wife and son see them. I have focused on growth and self-improvement, hopefully making me a better person, better leader, and better family member. A lot has happened in 3 years. I only hope that I will continue to grow so I can help make the world a better place.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321221>
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<https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450600565746>
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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Synthesis Matrix

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Aanstoos, C. M. (2019). <i>Maslow's hierarchy of needs</i> . America, NY: Salem Press.			X	X							X		
Ahmad Tariq, I., & Mahmood Adam, T. (2012). Emotional intelligence and transformative leadership style of principals in high schools. <i>International Journal of Asian Social Science</i> , 2, 556-566.	X			X							X		X
Allensworth, E., Gwynne, J., Moore, P., & De la Torre, M. (2014). <i>Looking forward to high school and college: Middle grade indicators of readiness in Chicago public schools</i> . Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.												X	
Antonakis, J., Ashkanasy, N. M., & Daeborough, M. T. (2009). Does leadership need emotional intelligence? <i>The Leadership Quarterly</i> , 20(2), 247-261.				X	X								
Barbuto, J. E. (1997). Taking the charisma out of transformational leadership. <i>Journal of Social Behavior and Personality</i> , 12, 689-697.			X										
Beatty, L., & Campbell-Evans, G. (2020). School leaders and a culture of support: Fostering student social emotional development. <i>Issues in Educational Research</i> , 30.			X		X						X		X

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Bogler, R. (2001). The influence of leadership style on teacher job satisfaction. <i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i> , 37(5), 662-683.	X				X						X		X
Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2004). Personality and transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analysis. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 89(5), 901-910.			X										
Bottoms, G., & O'Neil, K. (2001). <i>Preparing a new breed of school principals: It's time for action</i> . Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Board.					X						X		
Bower, G., O'Connor, J. Harris, S., & Frick, E. (2018). The influence of emotional intelligence on the overall success of campus leaders as perceived by veteran teachers in a rural mid-sized East Texas public school district. <i>Educational Leadership Review</i> , 19(1), 21.				X							X		X
Branson, C. M., Baig, S., & Begum, A. (2014). Personal values of principals and their manifestation in student behaviour. <i>Educational Management Administration &amp; Leadership</i> , 43(0), 107-128.					X						X		
Brown, R. (2004). <i>School culture and organization: Lessons from research and experience: A background paper for the Denver Commission on Secondary School Reform</i> . Retrieved from <a href="https://www2.dpsk12.org/indiv/culture_organization.pdf">https://www2.dpsk12.org/indiv/culture_organization.pdf</a>					X						X		

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Bryant, S. E. (2016). The role of transformational and transactional leadership in creating, sharing and exploiting organizational knowledge. <i>Journal of Leadership &amp; Organizational Studies</i> , 9(4), 32-44.	X		X		X								
Burns, J. M. A. (1973). <i>Leadership</i> . New York, NY: HarperPerennial PoliticalClassics.	X	X	X		X								
Burns, J. M. A. (1978). <i>Leadership</i> . New York, NY: Harper Row.	X	X	X		X								
Colomeischi, A. A. (2015). Teachers burnout in relation with their emotional intelligence and personality traits. <i>Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences</i> , 180, 1067-1073.				X							X		
Cooper, B. S., & Sarrea, J. (2008). Teacher unions and the politics of fear in labor relations. <i>Educational Policy</i> , 22, 86-105.											X		
Costa, P. L., Passos, A. M., Hakker, A. B., Romara, R., & Ferrão, C. (2017). Interactions in engaged work teams: A qualitative study. <i>Team Performance Management: An International Journal</i> , 23(5/6), 206-226.									X				
Crowley, M. (2011). <i>Lead from the heart: Transformational leadership for the 21st century</i> . Bloomington, IN, Ballboos Press.	X				X	X	X	X	X				

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Day, D. V., & Harrison, M. M. (2007). A multi-level, identity-based approach to leadership development. <i>Human Resource Management Review, 17</i> (4), 360-373.					X								
Dimmock, C. A. J., & Walker, A. (2005). <i>Educational leadership: Culture and diversity</i> . London, England: SAGE.	-				X						X		
Downton, J. V. (1973). <i>Rebel leadership: Commitment and charisma in the revolutionary process</i> . New York, NY: Free Press.	-				X								
Eggers, J. P., & Suh, J.-H. (2019). Experience and behavior: How negative feedback in new versus experienced domains affects firm action and subsequent performance. <i>Academy of Management Journal, 62</i> (2), 309-334.								X					
Escalante, D. (2019). <i>A mixed-methods study of how elementary principals build trust with staff using Rawson's five domains of trust model</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database (UMI No. 13808608)				X							X		

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Goleman, D. (2006). The socially intelligent leader. <i>Educational Leadership</i> , 64(1), 76-81.				X									
Grandey, A. A., Chu, N.W. & Diamond, J. A. (2013). Show me the money! Do financial rewards for performance enhance or undermine the satisfaction from emotional labor? <i>Personnel Psychology</i> , 66(3), 569-612.					X			X					
Greenleaf, R. (2002). <i>Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness</i> . New York, NY, Paulist Press.		X			X								
Hamilton, L., Kaufman, J., & Diliberti, M. (2020). <i>Teaching and leading through a pandemic: Key findings from the American educators panels spring 2020 COVID-19 surveys</i> . Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation											X	X	
Hamilton, M. (2020). <i>Impact of grit and emotional intelligence on longevity of expert</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database (UMI No. 27741525)	-			X							X		
Henryhand, C. J. (2009). <i>The effect of employee recognition and employee engagement on job satisfaction and intent to leave in the public sector</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3369470)					X			X					

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Imper, M., Neich, W. A., & Reyes, P. (1990). Factors contributing to teacher satisfaction with participative decision making. <i>Journal of Research and Development in Education</i> , 23, 216-225.							X				X		
Ingram, O. C. (2016). Servant leadership as a leadership model. <i>MSBT</i> , 1(1), 21-26		X											
James, K. (2020). <i>Strategies to mitigate employee turnover in the human services special needs industry</i> (Doctor of Business Administration, Walden University). Retrieved from <a href="https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11413&amp;context=dissertations">https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11413&amp;context=dissertations</a>						X							
Karacabey, M. F. (2020). School principal support in teacher professional development. <i>International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management</i> , 6(1), 54-75.											X		X
Leath, J. A. (1999). <i>Assessing the servant organization: Development of the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) instrument</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9921922)		X			X								

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2019). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. <i>School Leadership &amp; Management, 40</i> (1), 5-22.	X				X						X		X
Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Wahlstrom, K., Anderson, S., Mascall, B., & Gordon, M. (2010). How successful leadership influences student learning: The second installment of a longer story. In A. Hargreaves, D. Hopkins, M. Fullan, & A. Lieberman (Eds.), <i>Second international handbook of educational change</i> (pp. 611-629). New York, NY: Springer.	-				X						X		
Leithwood, K., & Mascall, B. (2008). Collective leadership effects on student achievement. <i>Educational Administration Quarterly, 44</i> (4), 529-561. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321221">https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321221</a>					X						X		
Lesinger, F. Y., Alinsky, F., Alinsky, Z., & Dagli, G. (2017). Examining the role of leadership, trust for school culture and policy. <i>Quality &amp; Quantity, 52</i> (S2): 983-1006.					X						X		



Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Lesniak, M. (2020). <i>Lead and achieve: A quantitative study of the correlation between high school principals' leadership behaviors and student achievement</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 28259715)	-				X						X		X
Long, R. J., & Shields, J. L. (2010). From pay to praise? Non-cash employee recognition in Canadian and Australian firms. <i>The International Journal of Human Resource Management</i> , 21(8), 1145-1172.								X					
Lu, J., Zhang, Z., & Jia, M. (2018). Does servant leadership affect employees' emotional labor? A social information-process in perspective. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 159(2), 507-518.		X											
MacNeil, A. J., Prater, D. L., & Busch, S. (2009). The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement. <i>International Journal of Leadership in Education</i> , 12(1), 73-84.					X						X		
Maslanka, A. M. (2004). <i>Evolution of leadership theories</i> (Master of Science, Grand Valley State University).					X								

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Build a Healthy Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Cantano, D. R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability or eclectic traits? <i>American Psychologist, 63</i> , 503-517.				X									
McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). <i>Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry</i> . Upper Saddle River, NJ, Pearson Education.									X				
McNeff, M. E., & Irving, J. A. (2017). Job satisfaction and the priority of valuing people: A case study of servant leadership practice in a network of family-owned companies. <i>Sage Open 7</i> (1):2158-2440166868. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016686813">https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016686813</a>		X				X							
Mencl, J., Wefald, A. J., & van Iersum, K. W. (2016). Transformational leader attributes: Interpersonal skills, engagement, and well-being. <i>Leadership &amp; Organization Development Journal, 37</i> (5), 635-657.			X			X			X		X		
Ngugi, S., Silegere, P., & Dennessen, E. (2007). Transformational and transactional leadership effects on teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior in primary schools: The Tanzanian case. <i>School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 17</i> (2), 145-177.	X		X								X		

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Pepper, K. (2010). Effective principals skillfully balance leadership styles to facilitate student success: A focus for the reauthorization of ESEA. <i>Planning and Changing, 41</i> (1/2).											X		X
Pieman, A. (2019). Leadership rebooted: Cultivating trust with the brain in mind. <i>Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership &amp; Governance, 44</i> (2): 127-143.					X				X				
Pollock, K. (2020). School leaders' work during the COVID-19 pandemic: A two-pronged approach. <i>International Studies in Educational Administration 48</i> (3), 38.											X	X	
Preston, J., & Barnes, K. E. (2017). Successful leadership in rural schools: Cultivating collaboration. <i>Rural Educator, 38</i> , 6-15.					X						X		
Rezaei Sharif, A., Moeinikia, M., Koubaei, G., & Zahed-Babolian, A. (2019). Instructional leadership effects on teachers' work engagement: Roles of school culture, empowerment, and job characteristics. <i>Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 9</i> , 137-156.							X		X		X		
Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2019). <i>The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning writing, and defending your dissertation</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.										X			

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connecting on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Building a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
Scorlato, M. R. (2015). A legal definition of leadership: Understanding Sec. 3B(1) of the federal sentencing guidelines. <i>Lewis and Clark Law Review, 19</i> (4), 1061-1082.		X											
Shamir-Inbal, T., & Blau, I. (2021). Facilitating emergency remote K-12 teaching in computing-enhanced virtual learning environments during COVID-19 pandemic - blessing or curse? <i>Journal of Educational Computing Research, 59</i> (7), 1243-1271. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633121992781">https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633121992781</a>		X									X	X	
Smylie, M. A., Murphy, J., & Seashore Louis, K. (2016). Caring school leadership: A multi-disciplinary, cross-occupational model. <i>American Journal of Education, 123</i> . <a href="https://doi.org/10.1086/688166">https://doi.org/10.1086/688166</a>		X									X		
Stohp, S. (1994). <i>Leadership for school culture</i> . Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research.	-				X						X		
Stone-Johnson, C., & Miles Weiner, J. (2020). Principal professionalism in the time of COVID-19. <i>Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 5</i> (3/4), 367-374.												X	X
Tesley, M. L. (2017). Organizational culture and schools: A call for leadership and collaboration." <i>Children &amp; Schools, 39</i> (1), 3-6.					X						X		

Reference	Transactional Leadership	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership-General	Connective on a Personal Level	Maximizing employee Potential	Valuing and Honoring Achievement	Build a Highly Engaged Team	Methodology	K-12 Education	COVID-19	High School Principals
<p>Tessera, M., Ready, K., &amp; Embaye, A. (2013). The effects of employee recognition, pay, and benefits on job satisfaction: Cross country evidence. <i>Journal of Business and Economics</i>, 4, 12.</p> <p>Thoroughgood, C. N., Sawyer, K. B., Padilla, A., &amp; Lunsford, L. (2016). Destructive leadership: A critique of leader-centric perspectives and toward a more holistic definition. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>, 151(3), 627-649.</p> <p>The Wallace Foundation. (2013). <i>The school principal as a leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning</i>. Retrieved from <a href="https://wallacefoundation.org">https://wallacefoundation.org</a></p> <p>Wilson, S. D. (2013). Caring leadership applied in the classroom to embrace the needs of students. <i>Journal of College Teaching &amp; Learning</i>, 10(1).</p>					X		X	X					X

## APPENDIX B

### **Heart Thematic Field-Test Script**

Thank 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 appreciate your contribution to this study.

My name is Jeyan Danesh and I am the Assistant Principal at Corona High School in Corona, California. I'm a doctoral candidate at University of Massachusetts 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, University of Massachusetts Global 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 University of Massachusetts Global Institutional Review Board 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?

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 1, 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, & Käufer, 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 (Crowley, 2011; Brun & Dugas, 2008; Posamentier & Krulik, 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 expand 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?"

1. "Can you give me an example of.....?"
2. "How did you feel about that?"

## APPENDIX C

### Participant Preinterview Information

**Purpose Statement:** The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe how exemplary high school principals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties 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 high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?
3. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary high school principals lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

#### **Interview Questions and Definitions:**

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?
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.
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.
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.

## APPENDIX D

### University of Massachusetts Global Participant's Bill of Rights

#### 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 may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be 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 any adverse 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 to be 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 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMASS GLOBAL, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.