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Leading a National School of Character Through the Lens of Organizational Change

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Leading a National School of Character

Through the Lens of Organizational Change

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. The study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach in conducting research and formulating a conclusion. Respondents included eight middle school principals from across the United States who led a National School of Character in the past three years. Transferability and credibility were enhanced through the participation of the researcher in a bracketing interview to identify potential biases, double coding by an outside analyst of the regular interviews, and checks with respondents regarding transcriptions and codes. The findings of this study suggests the organizational change process evolved differently in each of the eight schools and the change process did not follow a consistent linear pattern. Common practices were identified in the change process among the National Schools of Character in this study represented by themes. Themes were codes that occurred in at least six of the eight interviews. Themes included Principal Forming a Leadership Team; Principal Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication; Use of the 11 Principles Framework; Building Momentum/Changing Mindsets; Staff Contributing to the Identification of the Need or Rationale for Character Education; Staff Contributing to the Identification and Removal of Obstacles; and Staff Contributing to the Creation of the School's Mission, Vision, Plans, Values, and Common Language and/or Common Expectations. This study focused on the perspective of middle school principals. Additional qualitative research should explore the experiences of staff members in the character education change process, the change process at various levels (elementary and high school), and keys to sustaining character education.

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Chapter I: Introduction

A great deal of literature has been written about the history of character education (Edmonson, 2009; Hunter, 2000; Lerner, 2006; Lickona, 1991; McClellan, 1999; Watz, 2011) with its foundation going back to the philosophical writings of Socrates (Elias, 1995; Glanser & Milson, 2006), embraced in the first school charters (McClellan, 1999), and prophesied by Horace Mann (1838). Navaro, Frugo, Johnston, and McCaulley, (2016) defined character education as "the intentional and unintentional activities and actions of school leaders, faculty, staff, and students to create a school-wide culture grounded in effective character education practices aimed at developing citizens who not only know the good, but do the good" (p. 23). This comprehensive definition of character education is based on the work of several key character education scholars, including Marvin Berkowitz (2011), Lickona and Davidson (2005), and Ryan and Bohlin (1998).

From the classroom to the workplace, the impact of character and character education has been well documented (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Center for Curriculum Redesign, 2015; Davidson, 2014; Edmonson, Tatman & Slate, 2009; Elias, White, & Stepney, 2014; Lickona, 1993). Researchers recognize the importance of character education in schools. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2006), character education has been demonstrated to be associated with academic achievement, conflict-resolution skills, responsibility, respect, self-control, and social skills. Furthermore, effective character education has been demonstrated to reduce absenteeism, discipline referrals, suspensions, and school anxiety.

Although the role of character education in schools has ebbed and flowed through the decades, its purpose has remained constant—the development of character in students (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006). Elias (2014) argued that a skill set beyond basic academics is needed

for all students from all demographics to be successful in a complex, global, and diverse 21st century. Schools implementing character education effectively unlock the power of character (Davidson & Lickona, 2006) by forging these skills through the development of moral and performance character (Elias, 2014). According to Davidson and Lickona (2005), performance character is a mastery orientation and consists of qualities such as a strong work ethic, perseverance, positive attitude, and self-discipline. These qualities are needed to realize one's potential in school, extra-curricular activities, and in the workplace. Davidson and Lickona (2005) defined moral character as a relational orientation consisting of qualities such as cooperation, caring, justice, and integrity. Performance character and moral character support each other. Moral character allows individuals to achieve their performance goals ethically (Davidson & Elias, 2005).

Many scholars, politicians, business, and educational leaders believe character education should be at the forefront of one of the most pressing educational and economic issues (Benniga et al., 2006; Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013; Davidson, 2014). Maurice Elias (2014) described schools as the "crucible of democratic society and the commitment to the common good" (p. 37). Subsequently, there has been a resurgence of character education reflected in the Common Core National Standards, 21st Century Skills, College and Career Readiness (Davidson, 2014), and educational policies to create safer, supportive, and civil schools (Thapa, Guffey & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Research recognized the school principal as the single most important variable in shaping and sustaining the culture, climate, and achievement within a school (Allen, Grigsby & Peters, 2015; Leithwood, 2004). Specific to leadership and character education, Berkowitz (2009)

emphasized, "No school reform initiative can thrive without the principal as its champion, and no successful initiative is principal-proof. Character education needs a champion at the helm of the school" (p. 104). Although many principals see the value and need for a character education initiative, they are often unsure of how to implement one (Berkowitz, 2009). Principals must understand the leadership behaviors, beliefs, roles, and practices necessary to successfully implement character education (Francom, 2016). Thus, research based practices to train principals is key (Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2005).

Character education is a comprehensive school reform effort. Fundamental to this reform effort is changing the entire culture, and consequently many of the practices of a school. Key to this change is the principal (Berkowitz, 2011). The challenges of leading change may have an impact on a principal's ability to successfully implement character education. According to Kotter (2007), change leadership is the single greatest challenge for organizations around the world and successful change is rare. The capacity of the principal serving as a lead change agent is turning out to be one of the most prized educational roles in education today (Fullan, 2002).

Research shows the failure of organizational change efforts range from 33% to as high as 80% (Higgs & Rowland, 2011; Kotter, 2012). Low success rates of change efforts often are attributed to resistance to change by employees (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Ford et al., 2008). Resistance to change can be created and compounded by the actions and inactions of change agents (Ford et al., 2008) who do not understand the phases of the change process (Curtis & Stoller, 1996; Kotter, 2007). One of the most common practices compounding resistance to change is a misunderstanding of the role and impact of the change recipient in the change process. Ford et al. (2008) used the term "change recipients" to represent those people who are responsible for implementing, adopting, or adapting to the change(s). In this study, "change

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recipients" represent teachers and counselors within the school setting. Recognizing leadership is critical to school reform and knowledge about organizational change is at a premium, researchers therefore need to turn to the practices of principals who are successfully leading change. Spillane et al. (2004) argued that investigating leadership practice is essential to understanding leadership in organizations.

Two of the most influential and effective leadership models emerging in the field of education over the past 30 years are transformational leadership and shared leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). At the heart of transformational leadership is an influential leader with the ability to motivate members to exceed the goals of the organization (Bass, 1990). The shared leadership model focuses on collective, rather than singular leadership. In a shared leadership model, teachers play a critical role in the decision making process within a school (Harris, 2004; Spillane et al., 2004). The two leadership models are not mutually exclusive. Change leaders can improve the likelihood of successful change by using the knowledge, experience and input of the "change recipients" in the change process (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Lewin, 1951).

The research examining the principal's role in leading a character education initiative has been minimal (Berkowitz, 2011; DeRoche, 2001). Berkowitz and Bier (2005) noted the need for scholars to learn more about the stages of implementing character education. Leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal knows and does, but rather it is the engagement and interactions of the leader with others in unique context around specific tasks (Spillane et. al., 2004). According to Berkowitz, Battistich, and Bier (2008), there is a need for examining other processes that impact the implementation of effective character education including the complex interactions of different contextual and implementation variables. Noticeably lacking in the

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research are studies describing how principals engaged their teachers in the change process specific to the implementation of effective character education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the organizational change process of National Schools of Character and to understand how principals engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. Respondents included middle school principals who have lead schools recognized as a National School of Character in the past three years.

Research Questions

This study answered the following three questions:

RQ 1. How does the organizational change process evolve in schools recognized as National Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal?

RQ 2. How do principals describe how they engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

RQ 3. How do principals describe the ways in which staff members contributed (or not) to the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

Significance of the Study

The historical significance of character education has been well documented in the research (Elias, 1995; Hunter, 2000; McClellan, 1999) and the current presence of character education in schools can be found in recent education policy with the support of politicians and educational leaders (Davidson, 2014). Research has shown the positive impact character education is making in the areas of student behavior, attendance, academic achievement, school

climate, and life outcomes (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Center for Curriculum Redesign, 2015; Davidson, 2014; Elias, White, & Stepney, 2014; Lickona, 1993; Edmonson, Tatman & Slate, 2009). The implementation of character education is limited in the United States (CEP Character Education Legislation, 2017).

Leading change is one of the greatest challenges facing any organization (Kotter, 2007) and knowing how to successfully lead change needs to be a core competency for organizational leaders (Beer & Norhia, 2000; Cummings & Worley, 2001). Learning from other principals who have successfully lead effective change is paramount. As Fullan (2001) summarized, principals can maximize their impact by seeking out the ideas, resources, and examples of model schools.

Specific to character education, the role of the principal in leading such a reform effort has been minimal in the educational research (Berkowitz, 2009; DeRoche, 2001; Francom, 2016). There is also limited research describing how principals engaged their teaching staff in this change process. Conducting a study on the organizational change process of National Schools of Character and how principals engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education will contribute to the current literature (Francom, 2016; Navarro et al., 2016) while providing research based practices for principals considering leading this comprehensive change effort specific to character education.

Definition of Terms

In order to best understand the concepts related to the study, definitions were given for terms that will be used repeatedly throughout the study. The following are definitions to key terms used throughout the study.

Change – "Change is a situation that interrupts normal patterns of organizations and calls for participants to enact new patterns, involving an interplay of deliberate and emergent processes that can be highly ambiguous" (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008, p. 363).

Change agent – Those who are responsible for identifying the need for change, creating a vision and specifying a desired outcome, and then making it happen (Ford et al., 2008).

Change recipient – Those people who are responsible for implementing, adopting, or adapting to the change(s) (Ford et al., 2008). In this study change recipients refer to teachers and counselors within a school setting.

Character – "Character is broadly conceived to encompass the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of the moral life" (Lickona, 1996, p. 93).

Character Education – "The intentional and unintentional activities and actions of school leaders, faculty, staff, and students to create a school-wide culture grounded in effective character education practices aimed at developing citizens who not only know the good, but do the good" (Navarro et al., 2016, p. 23).

Character.org – "Character.org, founded in 1993, is a nonprofit organization that strives to ensure every young person is educated, inspired, and empowered to be ethical and engaged citizens through the character transformation of schools" (Character.org, 2014, p. 24).

National School of Character – National Schools of Character are schools, early childhood through high school, that have demonstrated through a rigorous evaluation process as measured by CEP's 11 Principles of Effective Character Education (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2003) that character development has had a positive impact on academics, student behavior, and school climate. These schools become part of a network of Schools of Character that serve as

models and mentors to other educators and hold their designation for five years (CEP 2017

Schools of Character, 2017).

Resistance to change – "Resistance may be defined as a cognitive state, an emotional

state and as a behavior. The cognitive state refers to the negative mindset toward the change. The

emotional state addresses the emotional factors, such as frustration and aggression, which are

caused by the change. As a behavior, resistance is defined as an action or inaction towards the

change. Resistance in any form is intended to protect the employee from the perceived or real

effects of change" (Caneda & Green, 2007).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter II reviews literature relevant to this study, beginning with literature related to the

historical significance and positive impact of character education, continuing with literature

about leadership, organizational change, organizational change models and the role of the change

recipient in the change process. Chapter III describes the research procedures and methods.

Findings are presented in chapter IV and the implications of the findings are shared in Chapter

V.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The literature review provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), the literature review shares with the reader the results of similar studies and relates the study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature by filling in gaps and extending prior studies. In this section a historical perspective of character education is presented along with the positive outcomes of character education. Next, the review shares the role of Character.org in the character movement including the National School of Character program and the 11 Principles of Effective Character Education framework. The literature review concludes with information pertinent to leadership and organizational change providing the theoretical framework for the study. This section shares the interrelated nature of leadership theory, organization theory, and the various organizational change models. The challenges of leading change and the role and impact of the change recipient in the change process are also discussed.

Historical Perspective of Character Education

Influences of ancient Greece. The development of the moral or virtuous person has been a primary aim of education since the beginning of time (Elias, 1995). Character education is as old as education itself and the foundations of character education can be traced to the historical documents of ancient Greece (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). In the classical position of Greek philosophy, Socrates raised the question, "Can virtue be taught?" (Elias, 1995). Socrates saw a close connection between intellectual and moral wisdom (Elias, 1995). Plato, a disciple of Socrates, believed all parts of culture, including teachers, were responsible for training the youth in these virtues. Aristotle, a disciple of Plato, believed the goal of man is happiness arrived through living a virtuous life while striving for excellence in all we do (Peters, 1906).

Early America. European Protestants, particularly from Great Britain, had great influence on American life and culture and were instrumental in bringing moral education to the 13 colonies (McClellan, 1999). Edward McClellan (1999) provided one of the most extensively researched texts on the history of moral education in America. He spoke to the concerns of our early colonists in the late 17th and early 18th century. McClellan stated the first settlers, in both Virginia and Massachusetts, exhibited tremendous anxiety about the moral well-being of their children and began to seek ways to provide for their education even before they had secured the physical survival of their colonies. The moral development of youth in the 17th and 18th century was the responsibility of the family through the memorization of basic Christian doctrine in various catechisms as official schooling was reserved for the privileged minority (McClellan, 1999).

The Founding Fathers of the United States of America were well-aware that the success of the new democracy would rest on the virtues of its people, beginning with the education of its youth (Ryan & Bohlin, 2001). Thomas Jefferson did not see how a democracy could survive without public education for all citizens. He believed that democracy is a hollow shell without citizens (Barber, 1998).

Other political and intellectual leaders shared the same concern as Jefferson, including Benjamin Franklin. Worried about the survival of the new nation, they proposed the creation of public schools designed to teach "republican values." Further, Franklin (1749) clearly identified the "aims of education" to include the topic of morality by observing the causes of the rise and fall of man's character including the advantages of temperance, order, frugality, industry, and perseverance. However, few Americans shared this same concern and were unwilling to turn over the moral education of their children (McClellan, 1999). The relaxed style of moral

education in the 18th century was replaced with a tone on "rigid self-restraint, rigorous moral purity, and a precise cultural conformity" (p. 16) lasting through the 19th century as a result of westward expansion and economic opportunities for young Americans (McClellan, 1999).

Early public schools. A "standardized pattern of moral education" (p. 22) took place with the growth of the public school between 1830 and 1860 (McClellan, 1999). In New York state alone, in 1839, over 10,000 school districts were in operation (Mann, 1839). The purpose of public schools was to make education universal providing a relative level of equal opportunity for white children of all backgrounds. For many fearful leaders and supporters, public schools were a way to promote harmony and order for all children in an age of instability (McClellan, 1999).

Moral lessons occupied spelling, reading, and math textbooks, and the values taught were a combination of religious morality and proper citizenship (McClellan, 1999). As Lickona (1993) noted during this era, students practiced reading and math while learning lessons about honesty, patriotism, courage, hard work, loving thy neighbor, and kindness to animals.

Immigration, religion, and the public school. In the infancy of the United States of America, the teaching of character education was uncomplicated by separation of church and state (Prestwich, 2004). The end of the 19th century would witness one of the most controversial and heated debates in education, the role of religion specific to moral education in public schools (McClellan, 1999). Horace Mann, considered the most significant influence on character development in early American education (Watz, 2011) and co-editor of *The Common School Journal*, wrote with conviction the necessity of religion in the moral development of children in public schools, "A work, devoted to education, which did not recognize the truth, that we were created to be religious beings, would be as though we were to form the human body forgetting to

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put in a heart" (Mann, 1838, p. 14). With the impact of predominantly Catholic Irish and Italian immigrants, William Fowles, co-editor of *The Common School Journal*, like many Americans was fearful of "millions of hard to assimilate immigrants unschooled in democratic values" (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 21). It was clear; a major purpose of the common school was assimilation and national unity with an ideology focusing on republicanism, Protestantism and capitalism (Monsma & Soper, 2009).

Although these reformers held anti-immigration and anti-Catholic sentiments, they realized the preservation of the nation was dependent upon the teaching of all students regardless of their ethnic or religious background (McClellan, 1999). The role of religion in education began to deteriorate in 1857 as the city of Chicago banned required reading of the Bible in its public schools forcing schools to search beyond scripture for moral instruction and character building (McClellan, 1999).

A changing focus of schooling. The support for character education began to crumble under the impact of several powerful forces in the 20th century (Lickona, 1993). With technological advances and economic well-being, new found personal freedoms existed with greater opportunities for pleasure and recreation (McClellan, 1999). In the early 1900s, schools were now forced to provide students with courses necessary to meet the needs of an ever progressing modernized economy and society leaving less time for moral education (Leming, 2008; McClellan, 1999).

Nonetheless, in an era of newfound freedoms and the modern, specialized schooling of the early 20th century, efforts to promote character education remained with strong support at the state level (McClellan, 1999). In 1917 the Department of Superintendents of the National Education Association announced that an anonymous businessman offered a $5,000 prize for the

National Morality Codes Competition resulting in 52 submitted plans (Fairchild, 2006). The monetary impact would later be raised to $20,000 to be awarded to the winning submission for the best method of character education in public schools. According to Cunningham (2005), this proved very little was known about training children in morality or character at the time. The competition resulted in states spending considerable energy on character education and may be solely responsible for the rapid increase of articles related to character and moral education through the 1920s and early 1930s (Cunningham, 2005). Although character education was a widely accepted practice in schools at this time, there continued to be increasing disagreement about the methods of character education. Further complicating the issue was the question of accountability since there was no way to evaluate or measure students' moral development (Cunningham, 2005).

Character education after World War II. The atrocities of World War II led to a renewed emphasis on "moral and spiritual" values in the early 1950s through a "whole curriculum" approach emphasized through the National Education Association's Policies Commission (Cunningham, 2005). Character education would soon become tertiary due to the launching of Sputnik and the passage of the National Defense Act in 1958. According to Cunningham (2005), Sputnik resulted in greater emphasis on academics. Math and science in particular received renewed attention while any concerns for the character and morality of students were pushed aside.

Many political conflicts impacted education in the 1960s and 1970s including desegregation, the Vietnam War, and the Hippie Movement. Two devastating blows occurred in the mid-1960s through two pivotal Supreme Court decisions. In 1962, the Supreme Court outlawed required school-sponsored prayer in the Engel v. Vitale (1962) decision and later the

Supreme Court would outlaw mandatory Bible reading in Abington School District v. Schempp (1963). As a result, two forms of what many interpreted as state-mandated character education were no longer allowable (Glanzer & Milson, 2006). This era also witnessed a decrease in the discussions of the importance of moral or character education with the exception of the "Values Clarification" movement based on the work of Sidney Simon. According to Clouse (2001), "Values Clarification offered a way of making classrooms more relevant to a world of change, a world in which students were expected to choose their own values rather than be told by someone else what their values should be" (p. 24). Simon believed no school had the right to "indoctrinate" children with a set of moral beliefs, but rather the teacher's job is to help students discover their own values and not to attempt to change those values (Cunningham, 2005). Later, Thomas Lickona (1991) would say the "personalism" of the 1960s and 1970s gave birth to Values Clarification spawning a "new selfishness" and a general rebellion against parents and teachers (p. 9).

Building on the work of Simon, Lawrence Kohlberg believed children went through stages of moral development. In his view teachers could help students by identifying their stage of development and then help guide them to the next stage. Kohlberg's "Moral Development" approach was widely received in the late 1970s and early 1980s, spawned more than 5,000 studies by the late 1980s (Clouse, 2001), and was the primary mode for moral education at the time (Cunningham, 2005).

The 1980s and 1990s saw an increase in immigration, school violence, and conservatism in religion leading to a newly rediscovered interest in character education (Lickona, 1991). As a result, preserving American values, the moral development of youth and a recommit to traditional Judeo-Christian values drove the character movement in the 1990s (Cunningham,

2005). Contributing to the movement were a number of political leaders and educators advocating for a focus on virtue rather than "Values Clarification" (Glanzer & Milson, 2006). According to Glanzer and Milson (2006), contemporary character educators argued schools and teachers had failed in their responsibility for character development and proposed that character education should be made explicit in schools.

In an attempt to make character education a national agenda in schools, the early 1990s saw the birth of Character Counts and the Character Education Partnership resulting in character education models incorporating moral development theory (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Unprecedented, the contemporary character education movement found growing executive and legislative support. In 1990, six national goals were established by the President of the United States along with the nation's governors. Goal six called for all schools to be drug and violence free by the year 2000. This goal led to an increase in the number of programs targeting character education (Cunningham, 2005) incentivized by the U.S. Department of Education as they issued large grants at the state level to develop character education pilot projects. Gaining further legislative support between 1993 and 2004, 23 states passed new character education laws or modified existing laws pertaining to moral or civic education (Glanzer & Milson, 2006).

In the mid-2000s, Lickona and Davidson (2005) conceptualized character education to include two related but individually unique factors to include moral character and performance character. According to Lickona and Davidson (2005), performance character "consists of those qualities-such as diligence, perseverance, a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, ingenuity, and self-discipline-needed to realize one's potential for excellence in academics, extracurricular activities, the workplace, or any other area of endeavor" (p. 18) while moral character "consists

of those qualities—such as integrity, justice, caring, and respect— needed for successful interpersonal relationships and ethical behavior" (p. 18).

In 2017, 23 states have legislation mandating character education, 18 states have legislation written encouraging character education, and nine states support character education without legislation (CEP Character Education Legislation, 2017). Although historically character education has been one of the primary goals of education in the United States dating back to the Founding Fathers, it is evident not all schools are implementing character education despite the benefits found in the research.

The Need for Character Education

Character education gained momentum in the 1990's as the central leaders of contemporary character education (Benniga & Wynn, 1998; Lickona, 1991) pointed to signs of moral decline in society. Thomas Lickona (1991) presented distressing statistics representative of negative behavior among youth. He described statistics on murder rates, vandalism, stealing, and cheating. He identified trends of racism, bullying, drug abuse and teen suicide. Lickona (1991) pointed to the breakdown of the family unit, poor parenting, poor role models, peer pressure, and the media for the moral decline in society. Lickona stated, "The premise of the character education movement is that the disturbing behaviors that bombard us daily-violence, greed, corruption, incivility, drug abuse, sexual immorality, and a poor work ethic-have a common core: the absences of good character" (2004, p. xxiii). The proponents of contemporary character education intended their programs and policies to reduce or eliminate these destructive behaviors (Lockwood, 2009).

As many of these trends continued into the 21st century, the call for character education is the same. According to the former Secretary of Education Rod Paige (2007):

Sadly, we live in a culture without role models, where millions of students are taught the wrong values—or no values at all. This culture of callousness has led to a staggering achievement gap, poor health status, overweight students, crime, violence, teenage pregnancy, and tobacco and alcohol abuse. Good character is the product of good judgments made every day. (p. 1)

Before schools can embrace educating students on moral and performance character, schools and especially school leaders, must understand the value and need for character education (Navarro et al., 2016). The goal of character education is for students to become better people by developing their positive moral, social, and emotional competencies so they can contribute to an ethical society (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2014). As Berkowitz and Bier (2006) bluntly stated, "the role of the schools in the formation of civic character is a vital national interest" (p. iii). Character development is influenced by positive, caring adults who model good character and play a significant role in the life of a child (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006). According to Rich (2005), helping to shape the next generation of citizens should be at the heart of every parent, teacher, and school.

The greatest influence on character development is the family (Berkowitz, 2002; Lickona, 1983). However, as a result of the breakdown of the family, more children enter school without effective training in character and behavior (Bulach, 2002a). Schools can fill this void and can contribute to the positive character development of children (Berkowitz, 2002). According to Berkowitz (2006), when schools create a caring community where students feel valued, safe, and empowered and are held to high academic and behavioral expectations, they are more likely to engage in positive behaviors, work harder, and ultimately flourish.

Character education is needed to prepare students with the skills for working in and contributing to our ever changing global society-skills such as collaboration, teamwork, non-violent resolution, perspective taking, creative problem solving, and service to community (Elias, 2014). According to Elias (2014), "These skills are needed by all individuals, at all social strata, to have a chance to be successful, autonomous, efficacious, effective, and confident contributors to society and the common good" (p. 37).

The moral and civic development of students has long been the aim of education (Elias, 1995; McClellan, 1999). However, the current climate of high-stakes standardized testing has led to a narrowed focus on curriculum more easily measured (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer 2004). In some cases, schools are dropping entire subject areas that are not being assessed on state measures in hopes of better results (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Achievement test scores predict only a small fraction of the variance in later-life success. According to Heckman and Kautz (2014), adolescent achievement test scores only explain at most 15% of the variability in later-life earnings. Non-cognitive skills such as perseverance, work ethic, empathy, and collaboration are universally valued across different cultures, religions, and societies (Heckman & Kautz, 2014).

Schools, especially struggling schools, can benefit from the impact character education has on the school environment (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Cohen, 2006). A positive and safe school climate impacts a number of positive outcomes including academic achievement (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins D'Alessandro, 2013). According to Durlak et al. (2011), schools attempting a turnaround, or seeking to improve their students' academic performance, must realize that academic development cannot be fostered unless students' character is also developed.

The Benefits of Effective Character Education

Character education produces a range of benefits that are linked to effective schooling (Benniga et al., 2006). Character education can have a positive impact on student behavior (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2014; Bulach, 2002), attendance, academic achievement (Benniga et al, 2006; Elias, White, & Stepney, 2014), and school climate (Elbot & Fulton, 2008; Lickona & Davidson, 2005).

The benefits of developing character strengths extend into work life (Heckman & Kautz, 2013). Character strengths can be defined as "positive traits reflected in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors" (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004, p. 603). While Park, Peterson, and Seligman use the term "traits" to describe character strengths, Heckman and Kautz (2014) prefer the term "skills." According to Heckman and Kautz (2014), character is malleable while the heritable nature of the term "traits" conveys a sense of permanence or fixedness.

Positive benefits of effective character education on school climate. School climate refers to the quality and character of school life (National School Climate Center, 2019). According to the National School Climate Center (2019), school climate is based on "patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures."

The research demonstrated that a positive school climate is associated with violence prevention (Astor, Benbenishty & Estrada, 2009), academic achievement (Brand et al., 2003), student self-esteem (Hoge, Smit, & Hanson, 1990), and decreased absenteeism (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1989). For example, the general public often assumes that schools in communities with high violence also have high rates of school violence (Astor, Benbenishty & Estrada, 2009).

However, in a three-year, mixed method study of nine atypical schools, Astor, Benbenishty and Estrada (2009) identified several key organizational variables within these schools that may buffer community influences. These schools emphasized a school reform approach to school violence; demonstrated outward oriented ideologies; created a school wide awareness of violence; provided consistent procedures; displayed a visual manifestation of student care; and emphasized a beautification of school grounds. The most important variable in all these atypical schools was the leadership of the principal (Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrada, 2009).

An example of a large scale study on the impact of school climate was conducted by Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas (2003). This study of 105,000 students in 188 schools was among the first to find a relationship at the school level between students' reports of peer self-esteem and depression and their experiences of school climate. The study further found that students' grades were found to be correlated not only with climate, but also with students' perceptions reflected in teacher support, the structure and clarity of rules and expectations, instructional innovation, and support for cultural pluralism. Their findings concerning students' behavioral adjustment suggested that students' experiences of climate are related to problems with attendance and classroom behavioral problems. In addition, their findings suggested that at the middle-grade level, students' experiences of school climate are related consistently with their substance abuse, attitudes, and behavior (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003).

The research (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Bulach, 2002; Cohen et al., 2009) suggests the quality and character of a school's climate is shaped by a number of complex factors and forces. A positive school climate is shaped by values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe; staff and students who are engaged and respected; multiple stakeholders contributing to the development of a shared school vision, and educators

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who model and nurture an attitude of lifelong learning and good character (Cohen et al., 2009). These factors contributing to a positive school climate mirror the practices of effective character education practices found in Table 2.

  Positive benefits of effective character education on academic achievement. Research has repeatedly shown effective character education results in academic gains for students (Battistich, 2001; Benninga et al., 2003; Character.org, 2010; Flay & Allred, 2010). For example, in a four-year study of 525 students, Battistich (2001) studied the impact of the Child Development Project (CDP) on student achievement among other behaviors. The CDP is a comprehensive, whole-school intervention program. The CDP influences all aspects of the school curriculum, pedagogy, organization, management and climate. The characteristics of the CDP are similar to the effective practices of other character education frameworks found in the research (Table 1). Findings from the study revealed program students had significantly higher grade point average and achievement test scores than comparison groups. In addition, program students scored significantly higher than comparison students in sense of efficacy, reported being victimized at school less often, engaged in less misconduct, were more involved in positive youth activities, and less involved in negative behaviors (Battistich, 2001).

  Correlations between higher levels of academic achievement and high levels of character education implementation have been replicated by National Schools of Character. National Schools of Character have been identified by Character.org through a rigorous application process and serve as exemplary models of character education development (Character.org National Schools of Character Application Process). The 67 National Schools and Districts of Character in 2015, serving a wide range of socio-economic differences, saw an average graduation rate of 97% compared to the national average graduation rate of 81%. National

Schools of Character also reported 93% of their students attend a two-year or four-year universities compared to the national average of 66% (Character.org, 2015 Annual Report).

Positive benefits of effective character education on life outcomes. Non-cognitive skills such as perseverance, self-control, attentiveness, self-efficacy, resilience to adversity, empathy, humility, tolerance of diverse opinions, and the ability to engage productively in society, are valued in the labor market, in school, and within our communities (Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Heckman & Kautz, 2014). According to Heckman and Kautz (2014), these skills enable people to shape their lives and to flourish. Character skills generate economic productivity and create social well-being. Non-cognitive skills rival IQ in predicting educational attainment, labor market success, health, and criminality (Almlund et al., 2011; Heckman & Kautz, 2014). Non-cognitive skills are malleable (Heckman & Kautz, 2014). Schools can influence and shape these non-cognitive skills through effective character education practices (Berkowitz, 2002).

Effective Character Education Practices

Character education is comprehensive school reform and requires attention at all facets of schooling including academics, discipline policies, governance structures, mission statements, and the overall culture (Berkowitz, 2011; Bulach, 2002; Elias, 2014). Character education is much more likely to work when it is well designed. Effective character education is built upon research-based principles within a meaningful, conceptual, and comprehensive framework (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004).

Similarities exist within the research identifying key indicators of effective character education practices (Battistich, 2001; Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016; Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center for Character and Virtue, 2019; McKay, 2001). These similarities can be

compared in Table 1. According to Berkowitz (2002), character education should be intentional and comprehensive. Sometimes it is intentional and rarely is it comprehensive (Berkowitz, 2002).

One comprehensive character education framework was designed by Tom Lickona, Eric Schaps, and Catherine Lewis (2007) for Character.org. Character.org is a non-profit, non-partisan national advocate and leader for the character education movement supporting schools with the implementation of character education (Character.org Mission). The framework, along with the Character Education Quality of Standards, serve as a research-based, comprehensive guide for school leaders seeking ways to implement quality character education practices within their school (Lickona, Schaps & Lewis, 2007).

Another model with similar effective character practices can be found in the CHARACTERplus program. CHARACTERplus was designed to unite the school, home, and community in the character development of children (McKay, 2001). According to McKay (2001), the strength of the program lies in its design, implementation, resources, and evaluation. McKay (2001) described 10 principles essential to the success of any character education program (Table 1).

Further review of the literature revealed more similarities of effective character education in the P.R.I.M.E Model (Berkowitz, Bier, & McCauley, 2016). More recently, the Jubilee Center of Character and Virtue (2017) identified 11 key principles for character education reflective of the other models reviewed in the literature (Table 1). Finally, the Child Development Project in Oakland, California, provides substantial research (Battistich, 2001) about a comprehensive character education approach. Four practices in particular have strong empirical support for promoting character development, including (a) promoting student autonomy and influence; (b)

student participation, discussion, and collaboration; (c) social skills training; and (d) helping and

social service behavior.

Table 1

Models of Effective Character Education

	11 Principles of Effective Character Education	CHARACTERPlus	P.R.I.M.E Model	Jubilee Center of Character and Virtue
1	Promotes core values.	Community participation.	Prioritizing character education as central to the school's (or classroom's) mission and purpose.	Character is educable and its progress can be assessed holistically.
2	Defines "character" to include thinking, feeling, and doing.	Character education policy.	Promoting positive relationships among all school stakeholders.	Character is important: it contributes to human and societal flourishing.
3	Uses a comprehensive approach.	Identified and defined character traits.	Fostering the internalization of positive values and virtues through Intrinsic motivational strategies.	Good education is good character education.
4	Creates a caring community.	Integrated curriculum.	Modeling character by adults.	Character is largely caught through role modeling and emotional contagion: school culture and ethos are therefore central.
5	Provides students with opportunities for moral action.	Experiential learning.	Emphasizing a pedagogy of empowerment which gives authentic voice to all stakeholders.	A school culture that enables students to satisfy their needs for positive relationships, competence, and self-determination facilitates the acquisition of good character.
6	Offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum.	Evaluation		Character should also be taught: direct teaching of character provides the rationale, language and tools to use in developing character elsewhere in and out of school.

Table 1

Models of Effective Character Education continued…

	11 Principles of Effective Character Education	CHARACTERPlus	P.R.I.M.E Model	Jubilee Center of Character and Virtue
7	Fosters students' self-motivation.	Adult role models.		Character should be developed in partnership with parents, employers and other community organizations.
8	Engages staff as a learning community.	Staff development.		Character education is about fairness and each child has a right to character development.
9	Fosters shared leadership.	Student leadership.		Positive character development empowers students and is liberating.
10	Engages families and community members as partners.	Sustaining the program		Good character demonstrates a readiness to learn from others.
11	Assesses the culture and climate of the school.			Good character promotes democratic citizenship and autonomous decision making.

Principles of Effective Character Education (2003); CHARACTERPlus (McKay, 2001); P.R.I.M.E Model (Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016); Jubilee Center of Character and Virtue (2017)

When synthesized (Table 2), similarities within the various character education models were discovered. The effective character education practices found within these models align to Character.org's 11 Principles of Effective Character Education and the Character Education Quality Standards Assessment. These tools are used by the evaluators at Character.org in their National Schools of Character Program.

Table 2

A Synthesis of Effective Character Education Practices

	Effective Character Education Practices	Research
1	Adult Modeling	Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016; Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center of Character & Virtue, 2017; McKay, 2001
2	Parent and Community Involvement	Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016; Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center of Character & Virtue, 2017; McKay, 2001
3	Student Leadership, Voice and Empowerment	Battistich, 2001; Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016; Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center of Character & Virtue, 2017; McKay, 2001
4	Embedded Character Education in the Curriculum	Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016; Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center of Character & Virtue, 2017; McKay, 2001
5	Positive Relationships	Berkowitz, Bier & McCauley, 2016; Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center of Character & Virtue, 2017; McKay, 2001
6	Assessment or Evaluation	Character.org, 2017; Jubilee Center of Character & Virtue, 2017; McKay, 2001

This synthesis also aligns with Berkowitz's (2011) review of the literature on effective character education practices. In his review of the literature, Berkowitz identified the following practices most often found in effective character education programs:

1) Professional development.

2) Leadership.

3) Mission-driven initiative.

4) Social-emotional skill training.

5) Role models

6) Direct teaching

7) Intrinsic motivation

8) Serving others

9) Integration into the core academic curriculum

10) Family and/or community involvement

11) Nurturant relationships

12) High expectations

13) A pedagogy of empowerment

One of the elements of effective character education explicitly included in Berkowitz

(2011) is the role of leadership. According to Berkowitz,

A growing body of evidence has focused attention on the importance of school leadership

in character education, and in school change and reform in general. School leaders truly

need to value character education, understand deeply what it entails, and have the

competency to be character education instructional leaders. (p. 2)

Character Education and Leadership

The literature on character education and leadership is clear that the first component of an

effective character education initiative is strong leadership (Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrad, 2009;

Berkowitz, 2011; DeRoche & Williams, 2001). Character education in schools needs a strong

leader who assumes responsibility for keeping the program a priority (DeRoche, 2000). The

leadership responsibilities of principals leading character education programs align to and

support the elements of effective character education. DeRoche (2000) shared the following

responsibilities for leadership at the school site to develop an effective and viable character education program:

- Leader as Visionary: Leaders typically set the vision of a school. Leaders of effective and viable character education programs have elements of character in their vision for the school.

- Leader as Missionary: The school leader's role is to help the character education stakeholders develop a mission for the program. Goals are at the center of any successful organization and are directly written into the school's mission. Goals should be created that are long-term, that are agreed on by the stakeholders, and that are measurable.

- Leader as Consensus Builder: The school leader must help all stakeholders agree to the values and their definitions before they are taught in the school and reinforced at home and in the community.

- Leader as Knowledge Source: The leader has to be a resource of information relevant to character education which include (a) the foundations of character education; (b) the history and development of the current efforts to implement character education in schools; (c) the moral and ethical development of children and youth; (d) best practices in character education in today's schools; and (e) the programs, curriculum, and instructional materials that are available.

- Leader as Standard Bearer: A leader should ensure that the character education program is guided by standards that can be used to guide and judge the effectiveness of the implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of the program.

- Leader as Architect: Leaders should consider creating two major school committees to organize stakeholders to assist them in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Character Education Committees can be established to be responsible for the program implementation and evaluation. Committees should have representative membership including administrators, teachers, other school personnel, parents, students, and community leaders.

- Leader as Role Model: The leader must be seen as modeling the values promoted in the program.

- Leader as Risk Taker: Given today's emphasis on testing and raising test scores, it is risky for principals to suggest that schools have another purpose or have other responsibilities. The leader has to take the stand that there is more to educating children and youth than increasing their test scores.

- Leader as Communicator: In order to build confidence, gain support, and encourage participation, leaders must effectively communicate internally and externally about the school's character education program.

- Leader as Collaborator: A collaborative leader recognizes that he or she cannot "do" character education alone. A leader helps stakeholders clarify their roles and responsibilities, builds trusting relationships, and engages staff in professional development opportunities specific to the character education program.

- Leader as Resource Provider: A leader knows where and how to obtain resources to support character education including teacher training, curriculum, special projects, student needs, parent initiatives, and evaluation efforts.

- Leader as Evaluator: The leader's role is to help the stakeholders assess the processes they use for program delivery and management, program goals, and outcomes. (pp 41-46)

Under the leadership of principals who value these roles and responsibilities, many schools have been recognized as National Schools of Character for their exemplary implementation of effective character education practices (Navarro, 2016).

National Schools of Character

Since the inception of Character.org's Schools of Character program in 1998, more than 547 schools and 35 districts have been designated as National Schools or Districts of Character, impacting more than three million lives (Character.org, National School of Character Press Release, 2018). According to Character.org's website, the National Schools of Character award program recognizes schools that exemplify effective and comprehensive character education initiatives. National Schools of Character, through a rigorous evaluation process, have demonstrated that character development has had a positive impact on academics, student behavior, and school climate.

Through the National School of Character application process (Character.org, National School of Character Application, 2019), schools must provide evidence by submitting artifacts aligned to the 11 Principles Framework through the Character Education Quality Standards Assessment. Further, academic, attendance, participation, and discipline data is submitted. Once the application is submitted, evaluators review the artifacts and data to determine if a site visit is warranted. During the site visit, evaluators from Character.org collect more evidence by touring the building and interviewing parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and students. The evaluators then review all components of the evaluation process before making a

final determination. If selected as a National School of Character, these schools become part of a network of Schools of Character that serve as models and mentors to other educators. The designation of a National School of Character is held for five years (Character.org, National Schools of Character, 2019).

Critics of Character Education

Critics of character education exist (Hunter, 2000; Kohn, 1997; Lockwood, 2013). The general theory of contemporary character education was criticized for the bleak view of human nature including the erroneous impression that children do not already hold the values that character education intends to promote (Lockwood, 2013). Students are viewed as self-centered and lacking self-control (Kohn, 1997). Contemporary character education emphasizes personal responsibility for bad behavior rather than the impact of environment on a student's character development (Kohn, 1997; Lockwood, 2013). Critics of character education also argue the historical and contemporary consensus on the nature of values (Lockwood, 2013) and view character education as the indoctrination of conservative ideology (Kohn, 1997).

The style or method of character education has also been criticized (Hunter, 2000; Kohn, 1997; Lockwood, 2013). Hunter (2000) acknowledged the effectiveness of comprehensive character education practices, but cautioned comprehensive approaches to character education are rare. Kohn (1997) was critical of schools promoting character education and changing behaviors through extrinsic rewards. Kohn (1997) believed, in part, change agents need to focus more on changing the environment or culture of schools.

Some critics even argue character is dead. According to Hunter (2000), "The social and cultural conditions that make character possible are no longer present, and no amount of political rhetoric, legal maneuvering, educational policy making, or money can change that reality. Its

time has passed" (p. 53). Hunter (2000) argued that character is dead because our culture has increasingly refused to accept objective good and evil.

The Connectedness of Leadership Theory and Organization Theory

Leadership models, organization theory, and organizational change models are interrelated. Leadership models have their origins in organization theory (Bush, 2015). Leadership models are distinguishable by four common characteristics of organizational theory: goals, structure, culture, and context (Bush, 2015; Avolio et al., 2009). One of the most studied leadership models over the past 30 years is transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Leithwood, 2004). One of the more influential leadership models in the 21st century is shared leadership (Avolio et al., 2009; Spillane, 2004). A key skill of effective principals is the ability to lead change (Leithwood, 2004). Leading change successfully requires knowledge about the change process (Waters & Cameron, 2007). Leading change is inherently difficult in part due to the impact of resistance to change (Ford et al., 2008). Staff participation in the change process reduces resistance to change (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Lewin, 1953; Spillane et al., 2004).

Similarities exist within various change models (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1951), including: establishing and communicating the vision for change, engaging staff in the change process, removing obstacles, determining short term wins, and embedding the change in the culture. Organizational Change Models are distinguishable, in part, by the leadership models required to lead the change. These organizational change models differ based on the role and degree of involvement of the principal comparatively to the role and degree of involvement of the staff in the change process (Bush, 2015).

Organizational Theory and Organizational Change

Organizational theories typically consist of four aspects: (1) goals, (2) structure, (3) culture, and (4) context (Bush, 2015). According to Bush (2015), the purposes of organizations are at the heart of theory and practice in education. First, the goals established within an organization often align to the purpose of the organization. The level of involvement in the decision making process by the stakeholders in determining the goals of the organization can have an impact on the successful attainment of the goal (Leithwood et al., 2004). Second, the structure of the organization often determines the level of involvement in the decision making process (Bush, 2015). The structure of an organization can be described as vertical or horizontal. A vertical structure places more of the decision making responsibility on the leader (Bush, 2015). According to Bush (2015), a horizontal structure would have more regard for the individual talents and experience within the organization in the decision making process. Third, the differences within organization theory as it relates to culture are how the culture is developed and sustained (Bush, 2015). Finally, organizational theory is viewed through the lens of context. Although schools are a feature in every community throughout the world, there are vast differences in the context of schools that may impact a principal's approach and decision making within the organization (Bush, 2015).

An enduring quest of scholars in management, among other disciplines, is the challenge in explaining how and why organizations change (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Organizational change can prove challenging for leaders due to the volume, complexity, and conflicting theories on organizational change (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). To illustrate, Van de Ven & Poole (1995) found over one million articles relating to organizational change. In addition to the volume of articles and theories surrounding organizational change, the change process is itself complex.

According to Van de Ven and Poole (1995), the sequences of events that unfold in the change process have been very difficult to explain, let alone manage.

Change has been defined as the act or process of undergoing a transformation or to become different (Hall & Hord, 2006). Change has been described as the movement out of a current state (how things are today) and into a future state (how things will be done) (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Change is letting go of the old and embracing the new. Change elicits emotions similar to a feeling of loss and a struggle of acceptance. On a larger scale, organizational change can then be described as numerous individuals experiencing a similar change process at the same time (Wirth, 2004).

From the public sector to the private sector, change leadership is the single greatest challenge for organizations around the world and successful change is rare (Kotter, 2007). According to Eaker and DuFour (2002), schools have not witnessed successful change or improvement historically due to a variety of reasons including the complexity of change, ineffective strategies, lack of clarity and a lack of understanding of the change process. Adding to the challenge of leading change are the increased demands on building principals. In the 2013 MetLife survey of 500 principals, 69% of principals say the job responsibilities are not very similar to five years ago. 75% of principals feel the job has become too complex. Marzano (2005) believed creating positive change in education is so difficult it ultimately takes a great personal toll on a school leader and might explain why many promising practices get abandoned.

Effective change leadership requires a fundamental understanding of the change process (Waters & Cameron, 2007). Although abstract, organizational change theory can serve as a guide for principals. According to Batras, Duff, and Smith (2016), organizational change theory has a valuable contribution to make in understanding organizational change, for identifying influential

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factors that should be the focus of change efforts, and for selecting the strategies that can be applied to promote change. Leading a complex organization through the change process can be explained, at least in part, by combining organization theory and leadership theory (Brazer & Bauer, 2013).

Leadership Theory

Leadership has two main functions: providing direction and exercising influence (Leithwood et al., 2004). Principal leadership is key to implementing a comprehensive character education initiative (Berkowitz, 2011; DeRoche & Williams, 2001; Frontera & Jackson, 2012; Navarro et al., 2016). DeRoche and Williams (2001) indicated that "there is sufficient evidence to suggest that if there is no leadership at the school site, educational reform, school change, or new programs will diminish" (p. 35). According to Leithwood, et al. (2004), "effective" or "successful" leadership is critical to school reform so scholars and leaders alike need to understand a great deal more about how it works. Leadership theory serves as a foundation for understanding effective leadership.

Leadership theory has evolved over the past 100 years, saturating the literature. Traditional leadership theories have historically focused on the traits of leaders. The "leaders' traits" approach defined leadership chiefly as a function of individual personality, ability, and traits (Spillane et al., 2004). Traits such as self-confidence, sociability, adaptability, and co-cooperativeness, among others, are thought to enable leaders to inspire others, and thus get others to follow. This tradition of explaining leadership failed to address the specific behaviors of leaders. Up until the 1980s there was considerable disillusionment with leadership theory due to the narrow and simplistic explanation of leaders in their role as change agent (Conger, 1998). Further, there was a lack of research linking leadership models with performance outcomes such

as productivity and effectiveness (Avolio et al., 2009). The transformational leadership model (Bass, 1990) emerged from these deficits in the research helping to explain how leaders can effectively implement organizational change by motivating members to achieve organizational goals.

Today the field of leadership is no longer described as an individual characteristic, but rather is depicted in various leadership models to include the role of the followers in the change process (Avolio, 2009). Although subtle differences exist, these models are referred to interchangeably in the literature as participatory leadership, distributed leadership, collective leadership, shared leadership, and teacher leadership (Avolio et al., 2009).

Educational leaders have much to learn from leadership theory provided it is grounded firmly in the realities of practice (Bush, 2006; Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al., 2004). According to Bush (2006), the relevance of theory should be judged by the extent to which it informs the actions of leaders and contributes to the resolution of practical problems in school. Louis (2015) argued the central organizational problem facing schools is change and that researchers need to work on helping those who work in schools acquire navigational tools to chart a course through the challenges of change. Leadership models along with organizational change models help serve as a guide for principals leading complex organizations (Brazer & Bauer, 2013).

Leadership Models

All leadership models have their origins in organization theory (Bush, 2015). There are many alternative and competing models of school leadership: managerial leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, distributed leadership, teacher leadership, and contingent leadership, among other models. One of the most studied leadership models over the past 30 years is transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Leithwood, 1994). One of the more

influential leadership models in the 21st century is shared leadership (Avolio et al., 2009;

Spillane, 2004). Both models will be shared and differentiated through the lens of the four

characteristics of organization theory: (1) goals, (2) structure, (3) culture, and (4) context (Bush,

2015).

Transformational Leadership

In the 1980s and 1990s proponents of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985;

Leithwood, 1994) sought to describe and explain how organizational and political leaders

appeared to profoundly influence others. According to MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001),

transformational leaders implement change through a clearly articulated vision, building

acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, and establishing high performance

expectations. The four dimensions of transformational leadership include: (1) charisma or

idealized influence, (2) inspirational motivation, (3) intellectual stimulation and, (4)

individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Transformational leaders heighten the

motivation and morality of followers (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Through the lens of organization theory, transformational leadership is largely a vertical

structure because of the heavy influence of the leader (Bush, 2015). According to Conger (1999),

the transformational model is built around the leader who articulates an inspirational vision and

who engages in behaviors that build intense loyalty, trust, and empowerment. Within a

traditional transformational leadership model, there is limited opportunities for followers to

contribute in the decision making process (Bush, 2015). The main assumption in this hierarchical

relationship is that the principal is able to persuade followers of the worth of his or her vision

(Bush, 2015). A unified culture is often linked to the principal's vision for the school. Goal

setting is also largely the role of the principal. The defining characteristic of transformational

leadership is their ability to secure subordinate's commitment towards the organizational goal (Popper, Landau & Gluskinos, 1992). Leaders use their charismatic personality to persuade others to endorse the goals and to work towards their achievement (Bush, 2015).

The Transformational Leadership model has demonstrated effective in multiple organizational settings including business, education, medicine, and military. Kotter (2012) argued, to produce significant change in an organization with 100 employees, at least two dozen must go beyond the normal call of duty. Transformational leaders inspire their followers to put forth extra effort and go beyond their job responsibilities to achieve personal, group, and organizational goals (Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Empirical studies indicate a positive relationship among transformational leadership, employee performance, job satisfaction, and job commitment (Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999; Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Mert, Keskin & Bas, 2010; Tseng & Kang, 2008).

Specific leadership practices have been associated with the success of large scale reform efforts in schools. These leadership practices typically fall into three categories: (1) setting directions, (2) developing people, and (3) redesigning the organization (Leithwood et al., 2004). Many of these categories of leadership practices reflect a transformational approach to leadership.

Setting direction. A central component of transformational leadership is the notion of vision (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Kotter, 2012). According to Hallinger and Heck (2002), personal vision relates to the values held by a leader. A clearly formed vision helps shape the actions of leaders and bring meaning to their work. Several studies have demonstrated the impact vision has made in school improvement efforts including the successful adoption of change

(Mayronwetz & Weinstein, 1999), impact on school culture (Leithwood et al., 1998), and the acceptance of group goals for improvement (Kleine-Kracht, 1993).

A collective vision can be a catalyst for transformation. Closely tied to vision is the development of a school's mission. According to Hallinger and Heck (2002), an organizational mission is present when the personal visions of a critical mass of people come together in a common purpose. The power of a school mission is the motivational force of participating in a shared purpose to accomplish something special (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). According to Bandura (1986), people are motivated by goals they find personally compelling, challenging, and achievable. Group commitment toward a common goal based on a shared vision is viewed as a key factor in organizational effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Developing people. The ability to help develop people depends, in part, on the leaders' technical knowledge required to improve the quality of the school (Leithwood et al., 2004). According to McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002), transformational leaders strive to maximize the performance of their employees to achieve organizational goals. A leader's personal attention to the employee's needs increases the employee's enthusiasm, reduces frustration, transmits a sense of mission, and indirectly increases performance (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002).

Redesigning the organization. Transformational leaders develop schools as effective organizations that support and sustain the performance of teachers as well as students (Leithwood, 2004). According to Leithwood et al. (2004), this key transformational leadership practice develops structures to strengthen the school's culture, modify organizational structures and develop collaborative processes that match the school's improvement agenda.

The style of the transformational leader is considered to be particularly important in achieving organizational goals. However, the leader's style alone cannot be responsible for the performance of workers, nor for the attainment of organizational goals (Leithwood et al., 2004). According to Leithwood et al. (2004), neither the superintendent nor principals can carry out the leadership role by themselves. Successful leaders develop and count on leadership contributions from many others in the organization. Teachers play an important role in the change process (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002).

Shared Leadership Models

Today the field of leadership theory focuses not only on the leader but also on followers (Avolio et al, 2009). As Spillane et al. (2004) noted, leadership is best understood as a practice distributed over leaders, followers, and their situation rather than solely viewed as a function of an individual's ability, skill and/or charisma. Shared leadership models have been described as collective, distributed, and participative. Although subtle differences exist within these models, the titles are used interchangeably in the literature. Shared leadership is defined as "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1). According to Choi, Kim, and Kang (2017), in a shared leadership model specific characteristics exist among team members including a collaborative leadership process, participative decision making, and quality relationships among leaders and members of the organization. The literature demonstrates a number of positive benefits when leaders engage their staff in the decision making process of the school (Qualia, 2014; Leitwood, et al., 2004).

Teacher voice and teacher leadership. A school system can improve with the support and participation of the staff that make up the community (Quaglia, 2014). Increased teacher

participation in the decision making process within a school system has many positive benefits including: (1) greater commitment to organizational goals, (2) teacher loyalty, (3) enhancing job satisfaction, (4) improving morale, (5) higher levels of professional self-efficacy, and (6) distribution of intellectual capacities resulting in better decisions (Leithwood, et al., 2004).

A number of positive attributes are associated with teachers who feel they have opportunities to lead and be heard (Quaglia, 2014). Between 2010 and 2014 over 8,000 school staff members completed the Teacher Voice Survey (Quaglia, 2014). The results of the survey prove worthy of notice for building principals and district leaders. The Teacher Voice Survey (2014) revealed that teachers who agreed with the predictor variable "I have a voice in decision making at school" are three to four times more likely to work hard to reach their goals, believe they can make a difference in the world, and be excited about their future career in education (Quaglia, 2014). Staff who see themselves as leaders are seven times more likely to believe they can make a difference in the world. According to Quaglia (2014), administrators should make it a high priority to encourage and develop teacher voice and teacher leadership. A teaching staff can provide practical classroom wisdom and experience that can help a school achieve its goals (Quaglia, 2014). The research of Leithwood et al. (2004) and Quaglia (2014) on teacher voice and teacher leadership aligns closely to the attributes of distributed leadership theory.

Distributed leadership. From a distributed perspective, followers are an essential element of leadership activity (Spillane, 2004). A key characteristic of distributed leadership is that all teachers are entitled to initiate and lead change, share their knowledge, and have influence within their own schools (Frost, 2011). The school principal plays a critical role in creating a culture of distributed leadership by engineering a professional community so the capacity for teacher leadership is enhanced (Bangs & Frost, 2012).

Through the lens of organization theory goals arise in a distributed leadership model through collaboration (Harris, 2004) between leader and follower. A distributed leadership model resists the traditional distinction between vertical and horizontal structures and may include both structures depending on the specific context. Influence can occur from the bottom-up or from the top-down (Bush, 2015). Within a distributed leadership setting, culture is described as emerging and reinforced through collegial activity rather than being set at the top of the organization (Bush, 2015).

Distributed leadership is about voice beyond mere consultation from the principal (Gronn, 2000). The essence of distributed leadership is that it gives teachers the responsibility for leading in particular areas of schooling including pedagogy, development of the curriculum and in responding to the social, emotional and wellbeing needs of students (Bangs & Frost, 2012). A distributed leadership perspective recognizes that leadership involves collaborative and interactive behavior through which organizations are maintained, problems are solved and practice is developed (Gronn, 2000, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004). The distributed view of leadership in schools incorporates the activities of the multiple individuals who work to mobilize and guide a school's staff (Spillane et al., 2004).

The Challenges of Leading Organizational Change

The challenges of leading change may have the greatest impact on a principal's ability to successfully implement a comprehensive character education initiative. One of the greatest challenges of leading change is the complexity of the process (Kotter, 2012). Change is challenging, in part, due to the interrelatedness of organizations. According to Kotter (2012), without much experience, leaders do not adequately appreciate the fact that change impacts

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nearly every element in the organization. For this reason, change is difficult, time consuming and can never be accomplished by just a few people.

Research shows the failure of organizational change efforts range from 33% to as high as 80% (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Higgs & Rowland, 2011; Kotter, 2007; Meaney & Pung, 2008). A recent survey of more than 3,100 executives revealed only one-third of organizational change efforts were considered successful by their leaders (Meaney & Pung, 2008). Low success rates of change efforts often are attributed to resistance to change by employees (Ford et al., 2008).

Resistance to Change

Individuals in organizations resist change for a variety of reasons. According to Caneda and Green (2007), resistance may be defined as a cognitive state, an emotional state, and as a behavior. For example, accepting a vision of the future can be a challenge intellectually and emotionally (Kotter, 2012), especially if the ideas for change are ill conceived or unjustified (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). Resistance to change may be partially due to the desire not to feel the loss, confusion, and uncertainty that are associated with change (Verra, 2009). According to Bridges (2003), when people have not sought change themselves, but rather are having changes imposed on them, they are more likely to be resistant due to the need to feel in control of their lives. Unexpected or unplanned change can elicit strong emotions such as depression, shock, anger, and helplessness leading to resistance (Zell, 2003). Behaviorally, resistance to change takes on many forms in the workplace including, foot dragging, lack of cooperation, low work quality, and loss of trust (Pieterse, Caniels & Homan, 2012). According to Zell (2003), the difficulty of overcoming resistance to change may be the reason why efforts to bring about change in school systems are usually described as slow, messy, and often unsuccessful.

The predominant perspective on resistance is often one-sided in favor of the change agent (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008). According to Ford et. al. (2008), change agents are presumed to be doing the right and proper things while change recipients are presenting unreasonable barriers in an effort to sabotage the change. In this perspective, change agents are portrayed as undeserving victims of irrational and dysfunctional responses of change recipients. However, resistance to change can be created and compounded by the actions and inactions of change agents (Ford, 2008) who do not understand the phases of the change process (Kotter, 2007).

Kotter (2007) has identified common pitfalls of organizations going through the change process. These common errors identified by Kotter lead to higher levels of resistance which is considered one of the greatest barriers to a successful change process. First, organizations cannot rush the process. Skipping steps in the process creates only the illusion of speed and never produces a satisfying result. A second general lesson is that critical mistakes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact, slowing momentum and negating hard-won gains. Perhaps because leaders have relatively little experience in renewing organizations, even very capable people often make at least one big error. Drawing from his research and directly related to his change model, Kotter identified eight common errors of leading change as shown in Table 3.

Kotter's (2007) eight common errors of leading change can be found throughout the literature specifically poor communication (Pieterse, Caniels, & Homans, 2012; Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Ford et al., 2008), and lack of change recipient participation (Lewin, 1951; Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Ford et al., 2008). These common mistakes are directly related to a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge regarding key phases and leadership strategies associated with successful change. Principals leading change efforts can benefit from studying

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organizational change models from the perspective of the change agent and the change recipient (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Ford et al., 2008).

Table 3

Kotter's Eight Common Errors of Leading Change

Error	Description
1	Not Establishing a Great Enough Sense of Urgency
2	Not Creating a Powerful Enough Guiding Coalition
3	Lacking a Vision
4	Under Communicating the Vision by a Factor of Ten
5	Not Removing Obstacles to the New Vision
6	Not Systematically Planning for, and Creating, Short-Term Wins
7	Declaring Victory Too Soon
8	Not Anchoring Changes in the Corporation's Culture

Organizational Change Models

There are many competing models of school leadership. However, what they have in common is their origins in organizational theory (Bush, 2015). Leadership theory along with organizational theory helps explain how educational leaders might apply strategies to address situations that are initially unfamiliar or challenging. This is particularly true when leaders attempt to make change (Brazer & Bauer, 2013) which is a critical leadership behavior (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Hallinger and Heck (2011) referred to school improvement as a process that involves change in the state of the organization over time. The ability to manage change successfully needs to be a core competence for organizations (Burns, 2005). Based on the historically high failure rate of change initiatives, it would appear the majority of organizational leaders lack this competence (Burns, 2005; Kotter 2007). Better understanding of the organizational change process could have many positive outcomes, including more effective change implementation (Hallinger, 2003; Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

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Leadership within the organizational process plays a key role in facilitating the improvement process by building collaboration and commitment through the fluid participation of individuals in solving problems (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). School improvement needs to begin with a clear framework for what changes are to be made along with a roadmap for organizational leaders to follow to increase the likelihood of successful change (Adelman & Taylor, 2007).

Leadership is an organizational quality (Spillane, 2014). According to Spillane (2014), investigations of leadership practice that focus exclusively on the work of individual position leaders are unlikely to generate comprehensive understandings of the practice of school leadership. Teacher leaders often assume leadership roles that are distinct from that of positional leaders. The character and structure of these interactions are vital to understanding leadership practice (Spillane, 2014). An understanding of the interactions and roles of the change agent and the change recipient in the change process can increase the likelihood of successful change (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Ford et. al., 2008).

Multiple organizational change models (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1951) have been created to help guide organizational leaders in the change process. For the purpose of this study, a targeted literature search was conducted to identify influential organizational change models from the perspective of the change agent and the change recipient. According to Armenakis and Harris (2009), change must be implemented by change recipients, therefore understanding their role and motivations to support organizational change provides leaders with practical insights into how to best lead change. Preference was given to theorists whose work appeared to have a foundational influence in the field of leadership and organizational change.

The first change model that will be discussed in greater detail is Kotter's (2012) Eight Step Change Model. This change model is characteristic of a transformational leadership model from the perspective of the change agent. The second change model is based on the work of Armenakis and Harris (2009). This change model revealed characteristics of a shared leadership model. Their research focused on the perceptions and motivations of the change recipients. Transformational leadership and shared leadership should not be considered as mutually exclusive (Pearce & Sims, 2002). The role of a transformational leader and the active participation of the change recipient in the change process are both necessary for effective change. Transformational leadership is related to output effectiveness, whereas shared leadership positively relates to organizing and planning effectiveness (Choi, Kim & Vang, 2017). Leaders can gain maximum benefit for team effectiveness by emphasizing both transformational leadership and shared leadership, especially for empowered teams that have complex tasks by focusing on process and outcomes (Choi, Kim & Wang, 2017).

The Kotter 8 Stage Change Model (2012) and the change model of Armenakis & Harris (2009) will serve as the conceptual framework for this study to explore the role of the principal and the role of the change recipients in the change process specific to the effective implementation of character education. Both models were cited with high levels of frequency throughout the literature and both models build on the historical work of Kurt Lewin (1951) in the field of organizational change.

Kurt Lewin's change theory. Kurt Lewin's (1951) historic change model (Figure 1) serves as the foundation of many of the organizational change models of today (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012). This framework was the first to reveal the change process from the perspective of the change agent and the change recipient.

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Figure 1

Lewin's Change Model

Organizational change process showing different stages
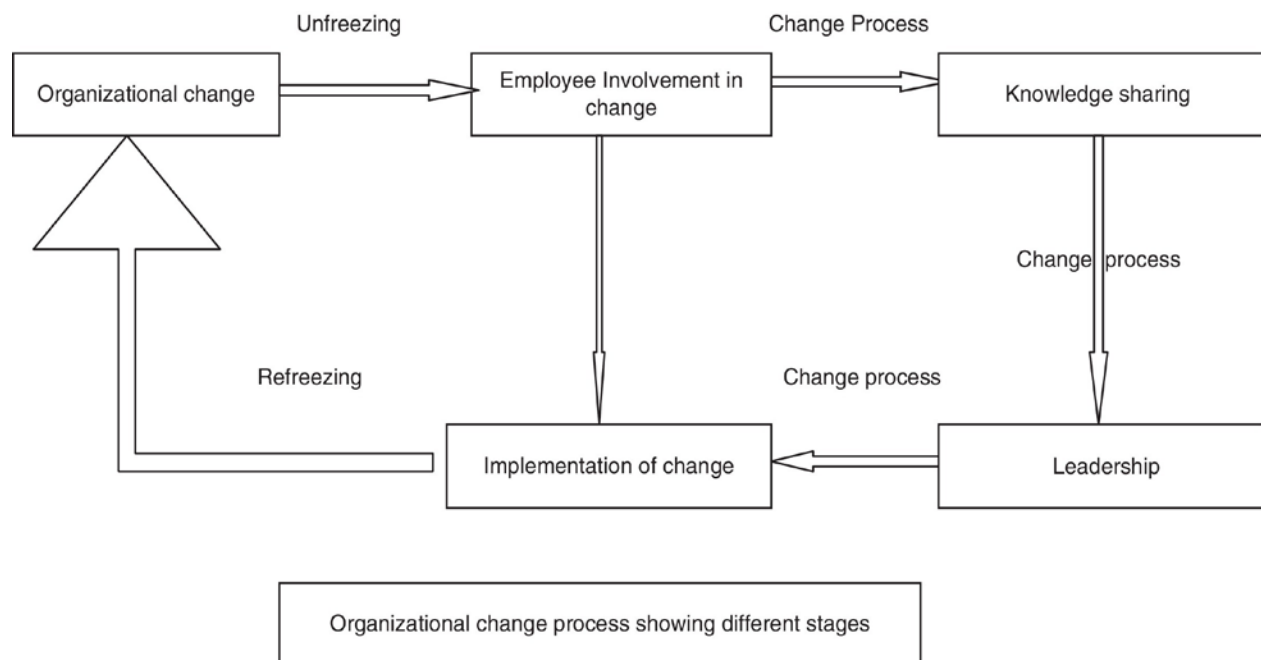
Lewin described the change process as linear progressing through three phases called unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. In this model, Lewin described behavior as a balance of driving forces in opposition with restraining forces. Driving forces accelerate change while restraining forces impede change.

According to Lewin (1951), unfreezing is the first step in the process and the first measure in overcoming individual or group resistance. The goal is to change the behavior by unfreezing the status quo or "the way things have always been done." Lewin (1951) identified three ways to overcome resistance: (a) increase the driving forces that will positively impact change; (b) remove or reduce the restraining forces and, (c) a combination of increasing driving forces and reducing restraining forces. Lewin (1951) recommended creating opportunities for group participation. Motivation increased and trust was built within the organization when

members were involved in the identification of the problems facing the organization and were then part of the solution process.

Moving is the second step in the process (Lewin, 1951). The goal is to move the organization to a new status quo or future state. After getting out of the status quo, the leaders are required to support employee's involvement for accelerating the change in the organization (Hussain et al., 2016). Lewin (1951) identified three actions to accelerate movement: (a) enabling the group to share their knowledge and expertise; (b) sharing the benefits of the new status quo to the stakeholders; and (c) connecting the group to well-respected leaders and colleagues who also support the change.

Refreezing occurs after the change has been implemented and is needed to establish the change as the new status quo (Lewin, 1951). This is where the change becomes permanent in the organization through the development of formalized structures such as policy and practices and the integration of new values.

Numerous scholars have built multiphase change models based on Lewin's Change Theory (Judson, 1991; Kotter, 2012; Galpin, 1996; Armenakis, Harris, & Field, 1999). A review of the literature identified similarities within the various change models. The steps in the change process found most frequently in the literature include: (1) identifying a sense of urgency or need to change (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1951), (2) establishing a clear vision and goals (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012), (3) engaging staff in the change process (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1951), (4) establishing quick wins (Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1951) and (5) removing barriers (Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1951).

Kotter's eight stage change model. John Kotter (1995, 2012), a professor at Harvard University, has extensively studied, analyzed and documented the success of organizations that

have gone through the change process resulting in an eight-stage change framework shown in Figure 2. The framework has served as a roadmap for thousands of leaders and has helped people talk about transformations, change problems and change strategies (Kotter, 2012). Kotter (2012) has been cited over 13,000 times in Google Scholar. The framework is hands-on and practical and explicitly connects the change process to leadership. The framework is cited in the field of business and is referenced in the literature in the field of education (Bowman, 1999). Unlike the more fluid change model of Armenakis and Harris (2009), Kotter's (2012) Eight Step Change Model is linear in nature requiring the leader to follow the steps in the right order to increase the likelihood of a successful change.

Figure 2

Kotter's Eight Step Change Model

Implementing
and Sustaining
the Change

Institutionalize
the change

Consolidate
and build on
the gains

Create
short-term wins

Engaging
and Enabling
the Organization

Empower people
to act on the vision

Communicate
the vision

Develop a clear
shared vision

Creating the
Climate for
Change

Create a
guiding coalition

Create a
sense of urgency
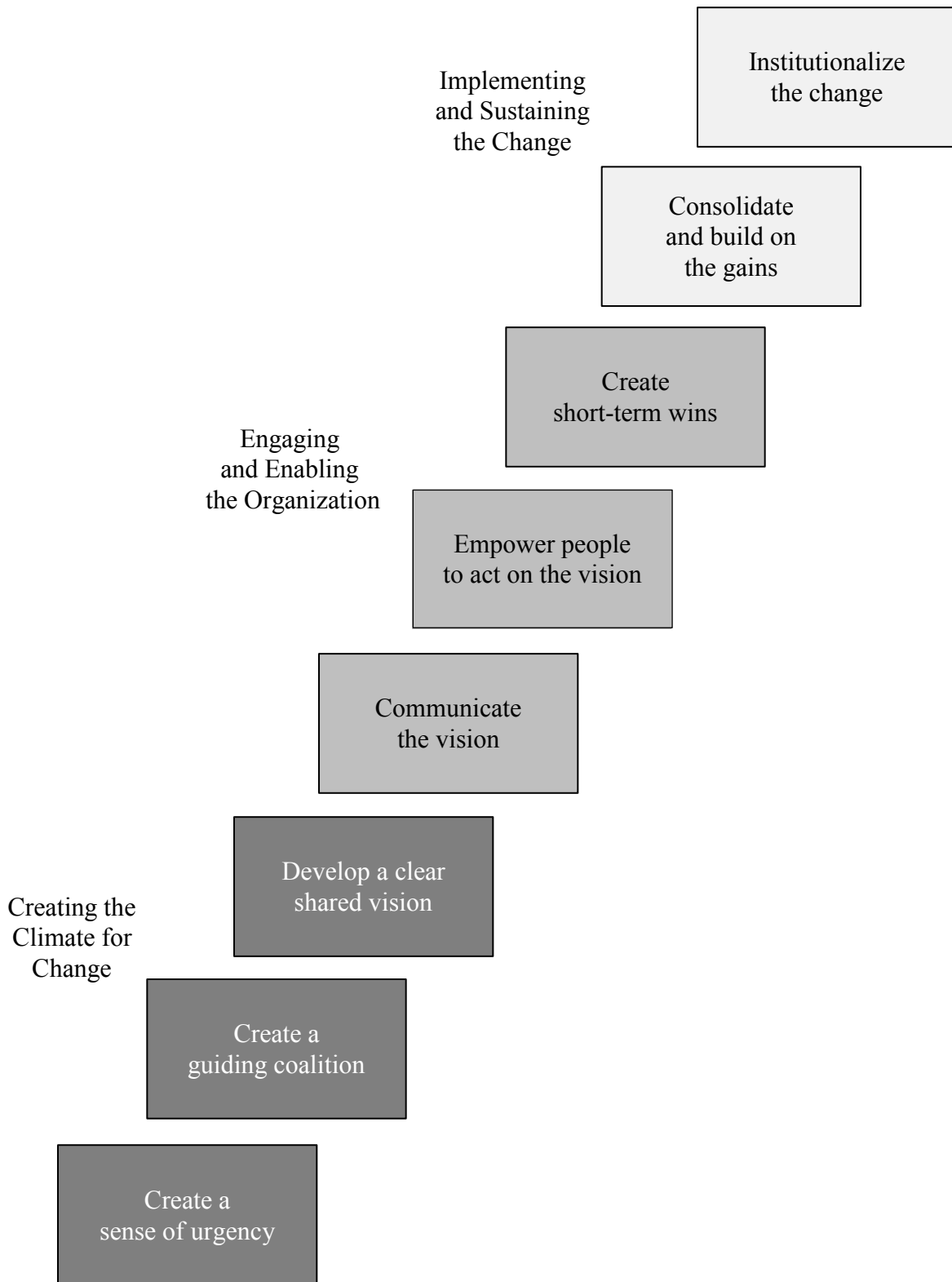
Kotter's (2012) phases of change can be traced to Lewin's (1951) Model of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Kotter's first three steps in his change model can be identified as key elements for change agents to consider when creating the climate for change. This first phase aligns with Lewin's "unfreezing" phase. These three steps include: (1) creating a sense of urgency, (2) creating a guiding coalition, and (3) developing a clear shared vision.

Establishing a sense of urgency by demonstrating a discrepancy in the organization is crucial to gaining needed cooperation. Numerous studies (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Lewin, 1951; Pettigew, 1990) have shown the need for change recipients to believe a discrepancy exists between the current state of the organization and where the organization should be. According to Kotter (2012), transformation efforts always fail to achieve their objectives when complacency levels are high. The biggest mistake leaders make when trying to lead a change initiative is to move ahead quickly without establishing a high enough sense of urgency (Kotter, 2012). Leaders fail to create sufficient urgency at the beginning of a transformation for many different but interrelated reasons including: (1) overestimating how much they can force big changes; (2) underestimating how hard it is to move people out of their comfort zone; (3) failure to recognize how their own actions can inadvertently reinforce the status quo; (4) lack of patience; and (5) fear of the negative possibilities associated with reducing complacency such as defensiveness and a slip in morale (Kotter, 2012).

No matter how competent or charismatic, individuals alone never have all the assets needed to overcome the challenges when leading a change effort (Kotter, 2012; Leithwood, 2008). Successful leaders form strong guiding coalitions of committed people to improving the organization's performance (Kotter, 2012). According to Kotter (2012), the coalition is always powerful in terms of formal titles, information, reputations, relationships and capacity for

leadership. In order to develop the right vision, communicate it effectively to large numbers of people, eliminate obstacles, generate short-term wins and anchor new approaches in the culture of the organization, the selection of a powerful guiding coalition is an essential part of the early stages of any change effort (Kotter, 2012). No one individual is able to do this alone (Kotter, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2004). The three keys to building a coalition that can make change happen include: (1) finding the right people; (2) creating trust; and (3) developing a common goal (Kotter, 2012).

The next phase for change agents to consider when creating a climate for change is the development of a clear vision. Whelan-Berry and Somerville (2010) agree and define the change vision as a key part of the change process. According to Kotter (2012), vision plays a key role in the success of a transformation by helping direct, align and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people. This is at the heart of transformational leadership (Burns, 1985). Kotter (2012) defines vision as "a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future" (p. 68). A vision serves three purposes in a change process. First, by clarifying the general direction for change it simplifies hundreds or thousands of more detailed decisions. Second, it motivates people to take action in the right direction. Third, it helps coordinate the actions of different people in a fast and efficient way (Kotter, 2012). According to Kotter (2012), without a good vision, a well-developed strategy or a logical plan can rarely inspire others to take action.

The next phase in Kotter's model relates to the change agents' ability to engage and enable the organization. There is wide support for employee empowerment in change literature (Kappelman et al., 1993; Lines, 2007; Paper et al, 2001). Creating team ownership and empowerment in a bottom-up employee based approach is important to help an organization

transform successfully (Paper et al, 2001). Lewin (1951) referred to this stage as "moving." In this phase the change agent must (1) clearly communicate the vision of the change; (2) empower people to act on the vision and (3) create short term wins.

The first step in engaging and enabling the organization in the change process is clearly communicating the vision (Kotter, 2012). A common error in many transformational efforts is a poorly communicated or under communicated vision. According to Kotter (2012), the real power of a vision is unleashed when there is a common understanding of its goals and direction throughout the organization. A shared sense of a desirable future helps to motivate and coordinate the kinds of actions necessary to create successful change. This is supported by the work of Nelissen and van Selm (2008) who found correlations between employee satisfaction and management communication. The study found the employees who were satisfied with the management communication saw more personal opportunities and had a positive state of mind on the organizational change. Further, Frahm and Brown (2007) found a link between the communication during organizational change and the employees' receptivity to the change stating that weekly team meetings allowed employees to be trusting and open.

The purpose of step five is to empower a large number of people to take action by removing barriers in the way of implementing the change vision (Kotter, 2012). According to Kotter (2012), even when urgency is high and a guiding coalition has created and communicated an appropriate vision, numerous obstacles can stop employees from helping assist in the change.

The final step change agents need to consider when engaging and enabling the organization is the generation of short term wins. A good short term win has at least three characteristics: (1) it is visible; (2) it's unambiguous; and (3) it's clearly related to the change effort (Kotter, 2012). The role of short term wins has a positive impact on the organization when

a transformation effort is happening. The importance of short term wins in the change process is well documented in the literature (Drtina et al, 1996; Ford et al, 2008; Pietersen, 2002; Reichers et al, 1997). According to Pietersen (2002), large-scale change can be a long, daunting undertaking, so it is important to create short term wins. Celebrating small wins provides employees and management confidence their efforts are on the right track (Marks, 2007).

The final phase in Kotter's (2012) model is the challenge of leaders to implement and sustain the change. Lewin (1951) referred to this as "refreezing." In this phase the change agent must keep the momentum moving by (1) consolidating and building on the gains, and (2) institutionalizing the change by embedding the new practices and values into the culture of the organization. Pfeifer et al. (2005) argue that the credibility of the vision and strategy can be verified through the use of measurable results proving the new way is working.

Letting up before the changed practices have been driven into the culture can lead to regression. Kotter (2012) defines culture this way, "Culture refers to norms of behavior and shared values among a group of people" (p. 148). Culture is important because it can powerfully influence human behavior, it can be difficult to change, and because its near invisibility makes it hard to address directly (Kotter, 2012). According to Kotter (2012), culture changes only after leaders have successfully altered people's actions, producing a group benefit over a period of time, and after people see the connection between their new actions and the improved performance. Therefore, most cultural changes take place at stage eight and not at stage one.

Armenakis and Harris change model. Like Lewin's (1951) Change Model, and Kotter's (2012) Eight Stage Change Model, Armenakis and Harris (2009) identify in their change model (Figure 2) three phases of the change process: readiness, adoption, and industrialization. This organizational change model emphasizes the role of the change recipient

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in the change process in a horizontal structure. Their quest to understand the individual

motivations to support change efforts led them to the identification of key change beliefs

(Armenakis & Harris, 2009).

The beliefs identified by Armenakis and Harris (2009) include: discrepancy,

appropriateness, efficacy, principal support, and valence. These five beliefs do not follow a

linear pattern but rather need to be considered by change agents throughout the change process.

Discrepancy is the belief that change is needed and there is a gap that exists between the current

state of the organization and what it should be. To embrace change, change recipients must

believe a gap exists (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Discrepancy is similar to "establishing a sense

of urgency" which is stage one in Kotter's (2012) change model. Appropriateness reflects the

belief that the action or designed change is the right one to address the discrepancy and move the

organization forward. Efficacy is the belief that the change recipient and the organization can

follow through and successfully implement the change. Principal support is the belief that the

leader of the organization is committed to the change rather than a passing fad. Finally, valence

is the belief that the change will benefit the change recipient. The challenge facing change agents

is to anticipate, consider, and plan to influence these beliefs in pursuit of readiness for change,

implementation support, and change commitment.

Figure 3

Armenakis and Harris Change Model
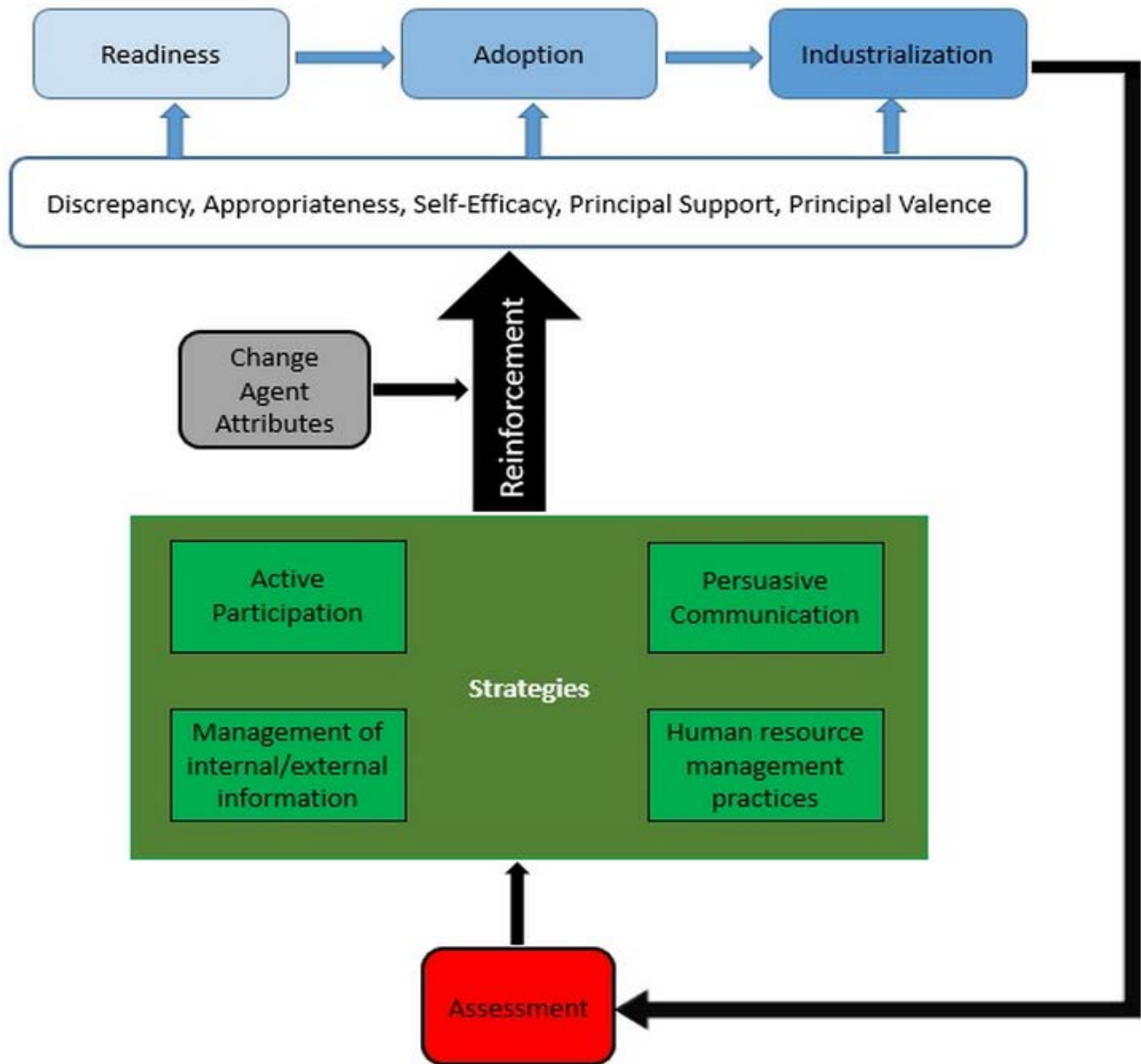
Armenakis and Harris (2009) also identified key leadership elements for change agents to consider in order to positively influence the five change beliefs. These interrelated leadership elements are needed to increase the likelihood of successful and sustainable change. These key

leadership elements include: change recipient involvement and participation; effective

organizational diagnosis; creating readiness for change; and managerial influence strategies.

A recurring theme in the literature on effective organizational change strategies includes

change recipient involvement and participation in the change process (Armenakis & Harris,

2009; Leithwood et al., 1997; Lewin, 1951). Allowing change recipients to identify the gaps in

the organization along with change solutions enhanced their sense of discrepancy and increases

the change recipients' readiness for change. This is the first leadership element identified by

Armenakis and Harris (2009).

The second key leadership element identified by Armenakis and Harris (2009) is the

ability of the change agent to accurately diagnose the organization. An accurate diagnosis

includes looking at problem symptoms. In the field of business, the symptoms could be low

profits or high employee turnover (Kotter, 2012). In the field of education, the symptoms could

be low job satisfaction, unhealthy school climates, low academic achievement, or high numbers

of behavioral referrals (Leithwood et al., 2004). Participation in the diagnosis process helps

prepare the change recipient of the possibility of a change. The communication of the diagnosis

creates a sense of urgency or need for a change (Kotter, 1996). Change recipients must also be

included in helping to identify the appropriate change to correct the root cause of the problem

facing the organization (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 1996). This high level of change

recipient participation in the change process is reflective of a shared leadership model (Avolio et

al., 2009; Choi et al., 2017; Spillane et al., 2004).

Readiness is the third leadership element change agents need to consider when leading

change. Readiness is defined by Armenakis et al. (1993) as the cognitive precursor of the

behaviors of resistance to, or support for organizational change. The readiness model created by

Armenakis and Harris (2009) heavily focuses on the leader's ability to deliver a change message directly addressing the change beliefs. Armenakis and Harris (2009) argued that it is the responsibility of change leaders to take the necessary actions that will sell the change recipients on the merits of an organizational change. This is a key characteristic of a transformational leader.

Managerial influence strategies are the fourth leadership element identified by Armenakis and Harris (2009). This element identifies influential strategies for leaders to motivate change recipients. Participation is one influential strategy discussed earlier in this section. Other strategies include persuasive communication, formalization activities, diffusion practices, and rites and ceremonies. Assessment of change throughout the change process is a critical step identified by Armenakis and Harris (2009). Critical to the success of any change effort is the ability to monitor the progress of the change at each stage in the process, beginning with readiness through the adoption and industrialization stage (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012).

Conclusion

Between the nationwide emphasis on school improvement and keeping pace with the changes in the business world, the need for knowledge about organizational change is at a premium, yet theory, research, and practice is underdeveloped compared to the need that exists (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Beer & Nohria, 2000). In short, the ability to manage and lead change successfully needs to be a core competency for organizational leaders (Cummings & Worley, 2001; Beer & Norhia, 2000) including principals (Curtis & Stoller, 1996).

Modern change models have built and improved upon Lewin's (1951) Change model consisting of three phases. In order to reduce resistance to change and increase the likelihood of

successful change, leaders must consider the perspective of the change agent and the change recipient. John Kotter (2002, 2012) provided a vertical structure change model from the perspective of the change agent that is reflective of transformational leadership. Armenakis and Harris (2009) focused their research from the perspective of the change recipient. Their model focused on five key change beliefs held by change recipients increasing the likelihood of successful and sustainable change. Due to the high level of participation from the change recipient in the change process, this change model is reflective of shared leadership. Together these two organizational change models, from the perspective of transformational leadership and shared leadership, provide the theoretical framework for this study and influenced the interview questions that will be asked of the eight principals who have lead effective character education initiatives.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. The study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach in conducting research and formulating conclusion. In this section, the research methodology is described in greater detail, including the research design, the questions and sub questions, the participants involved in the study, the data collection procedures, and the methods used to analyze the data.

Research Design Strategy

Research design is the type of inquiry within a study providing specific procedural direction to the researcher (Creswell, 2014). In other words, research designs are logical blueprints (Yin, 2011) and are based on the purpose and nature of the study (Roberts, 2010). Large variations of formally recognized methodologies exist within qualitative research. Yin (2011) noted the variations of methodology do not group into orderly categories and often can overlap.

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research defies a simple definition due to the complexity of the method. However, similarities do exist within the varying definitions (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009, Yin, 2011). Qualitative researchers are interested in "how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). The process of qualitative research takes place in the setting of the problem or phenomenon where the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research is an inductive process. Researchers pursue a qualitative study because there is a lack of theory or an existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon.

Therefore, the researcher gathers data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories (Merriam, 2009). In this study, the literature demonstrated a lack of theory to adequately explain the phenomenon specific to the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the change process relating to the implementation of effective character education.

The type of qualitative design exercised for this study was through a grounded theory approach that can be described as constructive in nature (Merriam, 2009). Charmaz (2006) introduced the constructivist version of grounded theory. In a constructivist approach to grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) argued that categories and theories do not emerge from the data, but are constructed by the researcher through the interaction with the data. In the constructionist version of grounded theory, the researcher's decisions, the questions asked of the data, the method, as well as the researcher's personal, philosophical, theoretical and methodological background shape the research process and ultimately the findings.

Constructivist grounded theory studies can be found in nearly all disciplines (Charmaz, 2008). Grounded theory differentiates from other types of qualitative research as its focus is on building theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory allows researchers to learn about the worlds they study and a method for developing theories to understand them. Grounded theory is usually "substantive" rather than "grand" theory (Merriam, 2009). Substantive theory has a usefulness to practice (Merriam, 2009). The grounded theory approach is currently the most widely used and popular qualitative research method (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Grounded theory is particularly useful for addressing questions about process (Merriam, 2009). According to Creswell (2007), grounded theory is,

> A good design to use when a theory is not available to explain a process. The literature
> may have models available, but they were developed and tested on samples and

populations other than those of interest to the qualitative researcher. Also, theories may

be present, but they are incomplete because they do not address potentially valuable

variables of interest to the researcher. On the practical side, a theory may be needed to

explain how people are experiencing a phenomenon, and the grounded theory developed

by the researcher will provide such a general framework. (p. 66)

Data in grounded theory studies can come from interview, observations and

documentation (Merriam, 2009). Through this constructivist approach to grounded theory, data

was collected through interviews of middle school principals who have lead National Schools of

Character. A theory and concept map were constructed around the phenomenon specific to the

role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the change process relating to the

implementation of effective character education.

Theoretical Framework

In traditional grounded theory, novice grounded theorists were urged to develop fresh

theories and advocated delaying the literature review to avoid seeing the world through the lens

of pre-existing ideas (Charmaz, 2006). In response to scholars questioning whether researchers

can conduct grounded theory free from bias or preconceived thoughts, constructivist grounded

theories have emerged (Mitchell, 2014). The introduction of a theoretical framework in a

constructivist grounded theory study departs from traditional grounded theory. According to

Charmaz (2006), researchers should use the theoretical framework to provide an anchor for the

reader and to demonstrate how the grounded theory refines, extends, challenges or supersedes

pre-existing concepts held by the researcher.

Constructivist grounded theorists believe the interests, beliefs and preconceived thoughts

are not absent from researchers when they decide to explore research questions using a grounded

theory approach (Mitchell, 2014). Charmaz (2006) argued researchers and many graduate students already have a sound footing in their discipline before they begin their research project. Those background ideas that inform the overall research problem is referred to as sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2003). These concepts influence what the researcher sees and how they see it, similar to how other researchers' perspectives influence them. These concepts provide the researcher with initial ideas to pursue and sensitize the researcher to ask particular questions about the topic (Charmaz, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006), researchers may begin their studies from these vantage points but need to remain as open as possible to whatever they see and sense in the early stages of the research. In grounded theory, the researcher does not force preconceived ideas and theories directly upon the data (Charmaz, 2006).

A theoretical framework is the underlying structure or frame of a study and is formed based on the disciplinary orientation or position of the researcher. The framework is built upon the terms, concepts, models, and theories that supports and informs the research (Merriam, 2009). The framework of this study was based on leadership theory, organizational change theory and organizational change models with a focus on the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. In this study the theoretical framework shaped the research questions, data collection and analysis, and the findings.

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

RQ 1. How does the organizational change process evolve in schools recognized as National Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal?

RQ 2. How do principals engage their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

RQ 3. How do principals describe the ways in which staff members contributed (or not) to the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

Instrumentation and Measures

This study utilized a semi-structured interview approach that allowed flexibility in wording of questions and flow of the interview (Merriam, 2009). Intensive interviewing has long been a useful data-gathering method in various types of qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006), intensive qualitative interviewing fits grounded theory methods particularly well. Both grounded theory methods and intensive interviewing are open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted (Charmaz, 2006). Qualitative interviewing provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight. An intensive interview permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic with a person who has had the relevant experience (Charmaz, 2006). The structure of an intensive interview may range from a loosely guided exploration of topics to semi-structured focused questions (Charmaz, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006) intensive interviews allow an interviewer to:

- Go beneath the surface of the described experience(s)
- Stop to explore a statement or topic
- Request more detail or explanation
- Ask about the participant's thoughts, feelings, and actions
- Keep the participant on the subject

- Come back to an earlier point

- Restate the participant's point to check for accuracy

- Slow or quicken the pace

- Shift the immediate topic

- Validate the participant's humanity, perspective, or action

- Use observational and social skills to further the discussion

- Respect the participant and express appreciation for participating.

Semi-structured interviews are typically a mix of more and less structured questions. The semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to probe deeper by asking follow-up questions when the interviewer deemed it necessary or important to the study. This style of interview allowed the interviewer to respond to the worldview of the respondent and the new ideas emerging on the topic (Merriam, 2009).

For a project concerning organizational processes, Charmaz (2006) recommended researchers direct questions to the collective practices first and, later, attend to the individual's participation in and views of the process. The interview questions were derived from the key components of the change process identified in the literature on organizational change (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1947), and the research on shared leadership models (Avolio et al., 2009; Bush, 2015; Choi, Kim & Wang, 2017; Frost, 2011; Quaglia, 2014; Spillane, 2004). An interview protocol shown in Appendix A was used for asking questions and demonstrates the origins of the interview questions. National School of Character is noted as (NSOC) in Appendix A. For this study, the first research question pertained to the overall change process of schools implementing effective character education. The second and third research questions were specific to how the principals engaged their staff in the change

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process and the contributions of the change recipients in the change process relating to the implementation of character education. The data was recorded using a web conferencing tool. The interview was transcribed by an outside service.

Sampling Design

A unique, purposeful sampling was used in this study. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight from a select sample of experts because of their unique experience and competence in the area of study (Merriam, 2009). Unique sampling is based on a unique phenomenon of interest to the researcher. The selection criteria in choosing the experts or sites to be studied was based on middle school principals who have led National Schools of Character. All middle schools selected served students in grades six through eight ranging from 500 to 1200 students. The first selection criterion, middle school principals, was chosen due to the particular interest to this level of leadership. The second selection criteria in choosing the sites to be studied, National Schools of Character, was used because these schools have demonstrated best practices in character education through a rigorous evaluation process from the evaluators at Character.org. The schools chosen, based on Character.org's evaluation criterion, have been recognized as implementing character education effectively.

In 2016, Character.org recognized eight middle schools as National Schools of Character. In 2017 Character.org recognized 10 middle schools as National Schools of Character. In 2018, Character.org recognized four middle schools as National Schools of Character. From the 22 possible schools, eight schools will be randomly chosen. If a school declined, a school was randomly chosen as a replacement.

Data Collection Procedures

In this qualitative constructivist grounded theory study, data was collected through intensive interviews of eight principals who have led National Schools of Character. The eight principals were contacted by telephone requesting their participation in the study. Potential candidates were contacted by telephone using the phone numbers found on their school website. The purpose of the study was shared with the respondents as their unique perspective and insights of leading a National School of Character could be helpful information for current and future principals. For consistency, the initial conversation regarding the purpose of the study followed the script included in Appendix B. If the potential candidates were unable to be reached directly by phone, a voice message was left and a copy of the script was e-mailed to the candidate. The informed consent letter in Appendix C was sent to the candidates and collected prior to interviews. Respondents were assured that neither their personal identity nor the identity of the school would be released. The interviews for this study were conducted and recorded using a web based conferencing tool.

Data Analysis

The practical goal of data analysis is to find answers to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). Interviews were transcribed from recordings by the researcher. Once all interviews were transcribed, the researcher read through the transcripts in their entirety and compared them with the recordings to ensure accuracy. The researcher removed any personally identifiable information, including place and people names. After all transcripts had been reviewed for accuracy and protected against the provision of personally identifiable information, all respondents received a copy of the transcript and recording to check for accuracy. No respondents noted any discrepancies or changes other than a clarification regarding the title of

one staff member in one transcription. Once the accuracy of all transcripts was verified, the researcher read through all transcripts two times to gather a sense of the entirety of the data set. These readings were meant to orient the researcher to the data and reaffirm alignment between the data and the research questions.

Coding was the first step in making analytic interpretations based on the concrete statements in the data (Charmaz, 2006). According to Charmaz, "Grounded theory coding generates the bones of your analysis. Theoretical integration will assemble these bones into a working skeleton. Thus, coding is more than a beginning; it shapes an analytic frame from which you build the analysis" (p. 45). Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data (Charmaz, 2006). Coding is the critical link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data (Charmaz, 2006).

The themes and concepts used to explain the grounded theory in this study were formed using a process of open, focused, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Open coding was the analysis process that identified the emerging concepts from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For this first round of coding the researcher used line-by-line coding. According to Charmaz (2006), line-by-line coding works particularly well with detailed interview data fundamental to processes. Through the line by line coding the researcher identified meaning units and wrote memos in the margins of the transcripts for the purpose of building and informing the coding system. During the open coding, the researcher cut and pasted each transcript specific to each interview question. The researcher then used a color coding system to highlight any information that seemed to relate to the change process, the role of the principal engaging staff in the change process, and the contributions of the staff in the change process. The

initial code list had 20 codes for research question one regarding the overall change process, 15 codes for research question two regarding how principals engaged their staff in the change process and 17 codes for research question three regarding the contributions of the staff in the change process.

After establishing strong analytic direction through the line-by-line coding process, the researcher began to synthesize and explain larger segments of data through the process of focused coding (Charmaz, 2006). Focused coding is appropriate for the development of major categories or themes from the data (Saldana, 2016). Focused coding is a streamlined adaption of grounded theory's Axial Coding (Saldana, 2016). In the focused coding process, the researcher used the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes constructed in the open coding process to sift through the large amounts of data from the interview transcripts. Themes were constructed from codes appearing in at least six out of eight interviews. Focused coding required the researcher to make decisions about which initial codes could stand independently or could be combined with other codes. In this study 13 themes were constructed between the three research questions with several themes overlapping between multiple research questions. Next, the selective coding process was used to develop a narrative of the grounded theory by integrating the concepts and connections that were proposed during the focused coding process. In the selective coding process, the researcher selected key narratives from the transcripts and made connections the constructed themes.

In all three methods, reflective analytic memo writing was used to generate codes and construct themes. Analytic memo writing constitutes a crucial method in grounded theory because it prompts the researcher to analyze the data and codes early in the research process (Charmaz, 2006). Certain codes stand out and take form as theoretical categories as the

researcher writes successive memos (Charmaz, 2006). Analytic memos create a space and place for the constant comparison method to take place by making comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes and category and category and concept (Charmaz, 2006). An analytic memo reveals the researcher's thinking process about the codes and categories developed thus far serving as a code- and category-generating method (Saldana, 2016).

Lastly, the researcher created a concept map providing a visual picture of how the concepts are related to each other and represented in the data; this illustrated the grounded theory that emerged (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The final result was a theory that described the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the change process specific to the implementation of effective character education.

Field Test

The purpose of the field test was to test the interview questions for validity and did not involve those respondents in the study (Roberts, 2010). The field test for this study began with multiple rounds of feedback regarding the questions. The questions were sent via e-mail for feedback to one educational professional at the university level, one superintendent of schools, and one principal who has led a National School of Character. Feedback was gathered on the number of questions, clarity of the questions, and potential questions to add or delete resulting in a final draft of questions. Questions were re-drafted three times in the process. For example, feedback from one professional suggested I explore each respondent's definition of character education and why it is important for schools to engage in character education.

The final draft of questions was field tested through a mock interview of two principals who have led National Schools of Character who were not part of this study. The purpose of the field test was to measure the length of the interview and to determine if the questions produced

information relevant to the research objectives. The length of the field tested interviews were between 30 and 45 minutes. The field test allowed the researcher to create several guiding questions to dig deeper in future interviews. During one field test, a principal mentioned the use of the Quality Standards Assessment as a means to evaluate their implementation of character education. This was an important step in their change process so the researcher added this question to future interviews.

Limitations and Delimitations

Methodology limitations are specific features identified by the researcher that may negatively affect the results of the study (Roberts, 2010). Speaking honestly about the limitations of methodology allows the reader to determine for themselves the degree to which the limitations affect the study (Roberts, 2010). There are strengths and limitations to all research designs (Yin,2011).

The results of this study are not generalizable to all principals and schools. The purpose of this study was to share the experiences of middle school principals leading National Schools of Character adding to the larger conversation about leading change specific to character education (Francom, 2016; Navarro et al., 2016). A second limitation to this study was the small sample size which is limited to middle school principals who have led National Schools of Character. This was a practical time limitation for a single researcher.

Ethical Considerations

There are several ethical concerns unique to qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2011) argued research integrity is pivotal and should not be taken for granted because of the amount of discretionary choices made by the researcher in qualitative research. Research integrity means the researcher and the researcher's words can be trusted to represent the truth in

his positions and statements (Yin, 2011). The ethical considerations for this study included the following strategies for promoting validity and reliability: participant privacy, researcher positionality, and the reliability and validity of the data and the findings (Merriam, 2009).

Participant privacy. Participant privacy was ensured through the consent process (Appendix D). However, due to the small sample size, based on the limited number of middle schools receiving National School of Character recognition in the past three years, it is possible a participant may be identifiable. Precautions were established to protect the identity of the participants. Names and other identifiable characteristics were removed from the transcripts. Each respondent was assigned a pseudonym.

Researcher positionality. A characteristic of all qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis bringing with it biases that may have an impact on the study (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, instead of eliminating the biases, Merriam (2009) recommends monitoring the biases as to how they may be shaping the data collection and interpretation of the findings. As an acting principal of a National School of Character, the researcher came to this study with several assumptions. To increase personal awareness of those assumptions, the researcher engaged in a self-reflection exercise that resulted in the following considerations.

The researcher in this particular study could be described as "close" to the topic. As a parent, youth coach, and middle school principal, the researcher sees the value of character education in each of these areas. Further, this researcher has been a part of the National School of Character application process and the school in which he is principal was named a 2016 National School of Character. Second, the researcher also values and promotes teacher voice and

teacher leadership at the school he serves and works with other districts on developing a shared leadership model.

Bracketing interview. The bracketing interview is an attempt to get at the assumptions and beliefs the researcher brings to the study. Bracketing interviews are those in which the researcher is asked the same questions that will be asked of respondents (deMarrais, 2004). The bracketing interview was conducted by an acting education and research professional. The interview was transcribed and the researcher reflected upon the line by line coding making the researcher aware of the perspectives brought forward through his professional experiences leading a National School of Character. In a reflexive manner, the researcher's own experience helped foster deeper engagement with the participant and the data. In part, the bracketed interview led to the researcher to ask more specific questions regarding the character education change process.

Reliability and validity of the data and the findings. The validity and reliability of a study largely depends on the ethics of the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Ethical dilemmas in qualitative research are likely to arise with the collection of data and the circulation of the findings (Merriam, 2009). A study is considered valid when the data is properly collected and interpreted so the conclusions accurately reflect and represent the phenomenon that was studied (Yin, 2011). In order to increase the reliability and validity of the study, Guba (1981) recommended the collection of data from a researcher with a different perspective. In this study, an outside coder and respondent validation was used. In order to increase the reliability of the study, an outside coder was used to double code segments of multiple interviews. The outside coder has experience with qualitative research at the Arizona State University. The double coding process resulted in 89.5% accuracy. The researcher solicited feedback on the emerging

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findings from the respondents in the study to help rule out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of the participants. No discrepancies were reported. Respondent validation is also an important way for the researcher to identify his own bias and misunderstanding of what was said in the interviews.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. Respondents included middle school principals who have led a National School of Character in the past three years. The middle schools chosen for this study served students in grades six through eight. The student enrollment and demographics of the middle schools varied. Respondents participated in face-to-face interviews using a web-conferencing tool.

Discussion of the Sample

One criteria for respondents was that they led a middle school to a status of a National School of Character within the past three years. Due to the relatively small sample and the need to protect the identity of respondents, limited demographic information was collected. However, the researcher maintained descriptive notes about interview dates and times. A summary of demographic information and interview information is included in Table 4, sorted chronologically by the date of the interview.

Table 4

Data Collection Overview

Principal	Gender	State	Interview Date	Interview Duration
A	F	MI	8-16-18	39 minutes
B	F	NJ	8-23-18	43 minutes
C	M	MO	8-27-18	32 minutes
D	F	NY	9-7-18	50 minutes
E	F	TX	9-24-18	41 minutes
F	M	MO	9-25-18	34 minutes
G	M	NJ	9-27-18	42 minutes
H	F	NJ	10-2-18	29 minutes

Introduction to Themes

The first task of the analysis was to identify themes. Themes were codes that occurred in at least six of the eight interviews. There were 13 themes and one sub-theme. Based on research question one, there were four themes with one sub-theme found under theme two. Based on research question two, there were four themes, and research question three had four themes. A summary of themes under each research question is provided in Table 5. Each theme is described in detail later in this chapter.

Table 5

Themes Based on Research Questions

Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3
How does the organizational change process evolve in schools recognized as National Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal?	How do principals describe how they engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?	How do principals describe the ways in which staff members contributed (or not) to the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?
Theme 1: Principal Forming Character Education Leadership Team	Theme 1: Principal Forming Character Education Leadership Team	Theme 1: Staff Contributing to the Identification of the Need or Rationale for Character Education:
Theme 2: Principal Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication	Theme 2: Principal Gathering Input from Staff by Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication	Theme 2: Staff Contributing to the Identification and/or Removal of Obstacles
Sub-Theme 1: Creating a mission, vision, goals, common values, and common language and/or common expectations		
Theme 3: Use of the 11 Principles Framework	Theme 3: Principal Providing Opportunities for Professional Development and/or School Visits	Theme 3: Staff Contributing to the Creation of the School's Mission, Vision, Plans, Values, and Common Language and/or Common Expectations
Theme 4: Building Momentum/Changing Mindsets	Theme 4: Use of the 11 Principles Framework	Theme 4: Staff Contributing in the Reflection Process Based on the 11 Principles

Research Question One

How does the organizational change process evolve in schools recognized as National

Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal? The organizational change process

evolved differently in each of the eight schools and the change process did not follow a

consistent linear pattern. However, common practices were identified in the change process

among the National Schools of Character in this study as represented by the themes described below. Themes were codes that occurred in at least six of the eight interviews.

Theme 1: Principal forming character education leadership team. The theme of Principal Forming Character Education Leadership Team appeared in seven of the eight interviews. In the coding process this theme was used when respondents talked about the forming of teacher leadership teams, coalitions, or committees in the character education organizational change process and their role in the change process. Seven of the eight principals formed and engaged their character education leadership team from the beginning of the change process.

One key characteristic identified by principals regarding the composition of staff members on their character education leadership team was "passionate." According to Principal A, "The first thing was finding the teachers who are passionate about character education . . .and giving them the reins and putting them in charge." Principal B stated, "finding the people who have not just the vision, but have the enthusiasm to go out and actually get something started." Principal D stated, "This movement started with a core group of passionate teachers."

Three principals were intentional about inviting and including a wide variety of staff members to participate on their character education leadership team. Principal G reported he invited a wide variety of people to serve on his leadership team-not the same "go-to" people. Principal F stated everyone needed to be included in the change process, even the "naysayers." Principal C included staff members with a wide variety of personalities including "believers," "doubters but problem solvers," and "detailed oriented."

The role of the character education leadership teams or committees in the character education change process included establishing behavioral expectations, creating a mission or

vision for character education, establishing character education goals based on the 11 Principles, and/or providing professional development to staff. Principal A and B engaged their leadership committee to create common behavioral expectations. Principals B, C, and F discussed how they engaged their leadership teams in professional development aligned to the 11 Principles of Character Education. Principal C engaged his character education leadership team as an on-going "sounding board." Principal D engaged her leadership team by leading professional development with her staff. Principal F engaged his leadership team in writing character education action plans and board policy.

Theme 2: Principal providing opportunities for teacher voice in a culture of trust and open communication. The theme of Principal Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication appeared in seven of the eight interviews. In the coding process, this theme was used when respondents talked about how staff members had a voice in the CE organizational change process through the use of team time, PLC time, faculty meetings, committees, and/or surveys.

Principals explained how teachers had a voice in the character education change process. Principal A described how every voice was heard and captured, "It was just a constant back and forth between the committee and the whole staff." Principal B talked about the importance of providing teachers with opportunities where they know they can speak up and voice an opinion. Principal C discussed how powerful it was for staff members to hear from colleagues regarding their implementation of character education in the classroom. Principal D stated, "We got to the point where we wanted to make sure that all faculty members were having a voice on where we were going." Principal F stated his staff always had a voice in the character education change process.

Principals shared how they created opportunities for teacher voice in the character education change process including team time, PLC time, faculty meetings, committees, and/or surveys. Principal A and Principal E used PLCs as a platform to gather teacher input. Principals B, C, D, E, and G used their team time to gather teacher input. Principals A, B, C, E, F, and H used surveys to capture teacher voice. Principals C, D, and E used faculty meetings to gather teacher input in the character education change process. Principals C and F described how they utilized their leadership team or committee to generate ideas or to "bounce" ideas back and forth with the staff.

A culture of trust and open communication was evident in seven of the eight schools. Principal B stated, ". . . so from an organizational standpoint, giving the teachers opportunities where they know they can speak up to voice an opinion, to make suggestions, and to take on leadership roles." Principal D stated, "We got to the point where we wanted to make sure all of the faculty members were having a voice on where we were going." Principal G described the open-door policy they created welcoming staff to be honest and open. Principal A stated, "I created a safe environment for my staff to be able to come to me and articulate obstacles. That had not been a part of the culture in the past." Principal B met with her building union reps every other week where they know they can speak up to voice an opinion. A culture of trust and open communication was also demonstrated based on the large number of teachers engaged in the change process. Principal E stated one fourth of her staff voluntarily serves on their character education committee. Principal F invites staff to participate in a character education planning day each summer reporting that nearly all staff voluntarily participate.

Sub-Theme 1: Creating a mission, vision, goals, common values, and common language and/or common expectations. The sub-theme, creating a mission, vision, goals,

common values, and common language and/or common expectation, appeared in seven of the eight interviews. In the coding process this sub-theme was used when respondents talked about their staff contributing to the creation of their school's mission, vision, goals, values, and common language and/or common expectations in the character education organizational change process through team time, PLC time, faculty meetings, committees, and/or surveys.

Principals shared how their staff contributed to the character education change process in a number of ways. These contributions occurred in the first year of the change process. Principals A, B, C, D, E, F, and G described how their staff or committees contributed to the character education goals and/or mission for their school. Principal C stated his staff guided what character education looked like. Principal A stated the character education vision or plan was "all staff driven." Principals A, B, and D discussed how their staff contributed to creating common values for their school. Principal A and D described how their staff contributed to the establishment of common behavioral expectations.

Theme 3: Use of the 11 principles framework. The theme, Use of the 11 Principles Framework, appeared in seven of the eight interviews. In the coding process, this theme was used when respondents talked about the use of the 11 Principles Framework or Quality Standards Assessment (QSA) to identify strengths, areas for improvement, goal setting, growth, and alignment and/or direction. In the character education change process, four principals used the 11 Principles at the beginning of their character education journey while three principals used the 11 Principles later in their character education journey.

Principal A introduced the 11 Principles as a way to identify areas for improvement, measure growth, and recognize what the staff was doing well. Principal B shared the 11 Principles with a "coalition of teachers" about how character education becomes a part of your

classroom culture. Principal B also brought in a neighboring National School of Character to help provide feedback, align their current work with the 11 Principles, and set goals for improvement. Principal C was intentional about not "throwing" character out to the entire staff right away because "it's a little meaty to digest right away." Principal C focused on a small group of teachers with the QSA to identify areas for improvement. Principal D stated, "neither the 11 Principles or the QSA guided their work originally," but stated "we wish we had." Principal G introduced the 11 Principles to the character education leadership team to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Principal G stated the 11 Principles process was very helpful. Principal E used the 11 Principles and the QSA later in their character education journey. Principal E stated, "Using the 11 Principles actually helped us to define the good things we were already doing, and then be able to identify things that we needed to do better." Principal F introduced the 11 Principles as a guide to teach staff about character education.

Theme 4: Building momentum/changing mindsets. The theme, Building Momentum/Changing Mindsets was the most unexpected theme to emerge from this study. No specific questions were asked about "building momentum" or "changing mindsets." However, principals clearly spoke about this phenomenon in the character education change process. This theme appeared in six out of the eight interviews. Three principals were intentional about changing mindsets by providing opportunities for teacher voice, professional development and looking at data. In the coding process, this theme was used when respondents talked about how momentum was built and/or mindsets changed by engaging staff in professional development and providing opportunities for teacher voice and teacher leadership in the character education change process.

Examples included attendance at the National Character Education Conference, working with model schools, reflecting on data, creating a school mission, and applying for a Promising Practices Award.

Principal A involved staff members in the creation of their school's mission, vision, and values as a way to change their mindset that character education was necessary. Principal A looked at academic and behavioral data with staff as a way to motivate staff and give teachers a sense of efficacy. Principal A stated, "Once staff started seeing success, then it snowballed." Principal B also looked at discipline referral and academic data and described the impact on the school culture and climate and the importance of getting a coalition of teachers on board. She stated, "That's really how it starts with any change process, that if you don't build a coalition of people who are true believers, so to speak, then it just becomes a directive. . . This can't be, right, because it's a mindset." Principal C was intentional about changing mindsets by reflecting on student data and through professional development focused on the research and best practices. Principal D stated that momentum happened when the "nay-sayers" saw growth and good things happening. Principal D also referred to the character education change process as a "movement" that began with a core group of passionate teachers. Principal D stated that student mental health data also "sparked" staff to want to continue character education. Principal F stated winning the first Promising Practices Award "lit a fire" among his staff. Principal F gave testimony to how one of the staff's best teachers and biggest "nay-sayers" was "brought over" once she saw the positive results in her classroom and the reduction of discipline referrals. Principal G discussed how creating a culture of open communication with staff helped with "buy-in." Principal E described getting teacher "buy-in" by providing professional development and giving teachers a voice in the changes to their advisory time in addition to looking at engagement, academic, and

discipline data. Principals C, D, E, and F saw excitement build after sending staff members to the National Character Education Conference.

Research Question Two

How do principals describe how they engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

Introduction. Several similar themes emerged in both research question one, which focused on how the character education change process evolved, and research question two, which focused on how principals engaged their staff in the character education change process. The character education change process evolved differently for each school and did not follow a linear pattern. However, common practices in the character change process were demonstrated. The similar themes found in research question one and research question two include: Principal Forming Character Education Leadership Team, Principal Gathering Input from Staff by Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication, and Use of the 11 Principles Framework.

Theme 1: Principal providing opportunities for professional development and/or school visits. The theme, Principal Providing Opportunities for Professional Development and/or School Visits, appeared in seven out of eight interviews. In the coding process, this theme was used when respondents talked about engaging their staff in professional development such as attendance at the National Character Education Conference, learning from other schools, and/or learning from other staff members in the CE organizational change process.

Principals B, C, and D described how they worked with model National Schools of Character in their area as a means to engage their staff in the character education change process. Principals C, D, E, and F engaged their staff in the change process by sending staff members to

the National Character Education Conference. Principal D stated a core group of teachers became very excited about character education after attending the conference. Principals A, B, C, and F used the 11 Principles Framework at the beginning of their character education journey to teach their staff about character education. Several principals engaged their staff in the character education change process through their own specific professional development. Principal C focused his professional development on mindsets, social justice, and equity training. Principal D and her leadership team brought forward to their staff professional development focusing on "Lighthouse Leadership" and "the 7 Habits." Principal F stated he spent most of his professional development budget on character education through "character counts."

Theme 2: Principal forming character education leadership team. The theme, Principal Forming Character Education Leadership Team, appeared in seven out of eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about engaging staff through the formation of teacher leadership teams, coalitions or committees in the CE organizational change process, and their role in the change process. This theme was discussed in greater detail in Research Question One.

Theme 3: Principal gathering input from staff by providing opportunities for teacher voice in a culture of trust and open communication. The theme, Principal Gathering Input from Staff by Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication, appeared in seven out of eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about engaging staff in the CE organizational change process by providing opportunities for teacher voice through faculty meetings, feedback circles, team meetings, surveys, and or PLC time. This theme was discussed in greater detail in Research Question One.

Theme 4: Use of 11 principles framework. The theme, Use of 11 Principles Framework, appeared in seven out of eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about engaging staff through the use of the 11 Principles Framework or Quality Standards Assessment (QSA) for the purpose of: identifying strengths, identifying areas for improvement, goal setting, measuring growth, and alignment and/or providing direction. Four of the principals used the 11 Principles Framework at the beginning of their character education journey while three principals used the 11 Principles Framework later in their character education journey. This theme was discussed in greater detail in Research Question One.

Research Question Three

How do principals describe the ways in which staff members contributed (or not) to the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

Theme 1: Staff contributing to the creation of the school's mission, vision, plans, values, and common language and/or common expectations. The theme, Staff Contributing to the Creation of the School's Mission, Vision, Plans, Values, and Common Language and/or Common Expectations, appeared in seven out of the eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about how their staff contributed to the creation of their mission, vision, plans, values, and common language and/or common expectations in the CE organizational change process.

Principals shared how their staff contributed to the character education change process in a number of ways. These contributions occurred in the first year of the change process. Principals A, B, C, D, E, F, and G described how their staff or committees contributed to the character education goals and/or mission for their school. Principal C stated his staff guided what character education looked like. Principal A stated the character education vision or plan was "all

staff driven." Principals A, B, and D discussed how their staff contributed to creating common values for their school. Principal A and D described how their staff contributed to the establishment of common behavioral expectations.

Theme 2: Staff contributing to the identification of the need or rationale for character education. The theme, Staff Contributing to the Identification of the Need or Rationale for Character Education appeared in six out of the eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about their staff bringing the need or rationale for character education forward to the principal and/or to the rest of the staff. The needs or rationales for the implementation of character education identified included: "wanting to get better" (three out of eight interviews), increased student leadership opportunities (three out of eight interviews), high rates of discipline (three out of eight interviews), lower academics (four out of eight interviews), mental health/social-emotional wellbeing (two out of eight interviews), and low staff morale (two out of eight interviews).

Principal A stated the rationale for character education did not need to be pointed out by anyone because it was "pretty blatantly obvious to everyone." She mentioned high administrative turn-over, low academics, and discipline referrals that were out of control. Principal B pointed out how staff were frustrated with high administrative turnover and a need to focus on the culture and climate of the school. Principals C, F, and G discussed academic concerns as a rationale for character education. Principal C stated there was not a sense of urgency, but simply wanted to make improvements academically, and increase student leadership opportunities. Principal F stated his staff saw the immediate need as academic as their student achievement was "average at best" surrounded by three successful districts. Principal G mentioned the State Department of Education placed their school on an academic achievement plan due to a large achievement gap.

Principal G also stated the staff was frustrated with the high number of discipline incidents and high suspension rates. Principal D stated his staff identified the mental health data as their rationale for character education.

      Theme 3: Staff contributing to the identification and/or removal of obstacles. The theme, Staff Contributing to the Identification and Removal of Obstacles appeared in eight out of eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about how their staff contributed to the identification and removal of obstacles in the character education organizational change process such as; time (six out of eight interviews), high turnover in leadership (three out of eight interviews), scheduling (two out of eight interviews), and resistance from staff/changing mindsets (five out of eight interviews).

      Principal A stated the identification and removal of obstacles often occurred during their PLC time where the administration constantly sought feedback from staff. One activity focused on changing staff mindsets by identifying their biases when it comes to discipline referrals. Principals D and E also stated changing mindsets was the greatest obstacle. Principal E stated some of her staff struggled with the purpose of advisory. Staff were given a voice on how they wanted to "shape" their advisory and sharing of ideas.

      Principal B stated her staff identified high administration turn-over as a major obstacle and sought reassurance from central administration that the current administrative team would be stable in the future. Principal B also stated staff were looking for the administrative team and teachers in leadership roles to "walk the talk" when it came to character education.

      Principals D, H, F, and G stated their staff identified time as the greatest obstacle. Principal H stated it was the teachers who helped with the schedule revisions. Principal D stated staff were concerned with how academic time would be impacted by character education time.

Principal F stated teachers helped figure out how to "carve out time" for character education as they shared staff with the high school. Principal G also identified time as an obstacle as staff were asked to do more and more.

Theme 4: Staff contributing in the reflection process based on the 11 principles. The theme, Staff Contributing in the Reflection Process Based on the 11 Principles Framework, appeared in seven out of eight interviews. This theme was used when respondents talked about their staff contributions in the reflection process based of the 11 Principles Framework or Quality Standards Assessment (QSA) for the purpose of identifying strengths; identifying areas for improvement; goal setting; measuring growth; and alignment and/or providing direction. This theme was discussed in greater detail in Research Question One.

Concept Map

A concept map is presented in Figure 4. The concept map provides a visual representation of the principal's role in leading a National School of Character and the contributions and the engagement of staff in the organizational change process. The character education change process evolved differently for each school and did not follow a linear pattern; however, common practices in the character change process were demonstrated leading to momentum building and changing mindsets. One theme added to the concept map was based on an introductory interview question asking respondents to share the importance and impact of character education. This theme was added to the concept map due to the unique similarity in the responses. All eight principals indicated character education provided a common language, common vision, common expectations, and common values for their school creating a positive impact on the school culture and helping make a better world.

Figure 4

Concept Map: Principals leading a national school of character and the engagement and contributions of staff in the organizational change process.

Chapter V: Discussion

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the organizational change process of National Schools of Character and how principals engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. Respondents included middle school principals who have lead schools recognized as a National School of Character in the past three years.

Eight respondents participated in this study. All respondents were interviewed face-to-face using a web-conferencing tool, and interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes. After multiple iterations of coding and feedback from an independent analyst, thirteen themes emerged.

Research Questions

This study answered the following three questions:

RQ 1. How does the organizational change process evolve in schools recognized as National Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal?

RQ 2. How do principals describe how they engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

RQ 3. How do principals describe the ways in which staff members contributed (or not) to the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?

The themes under research question one included Principal Forming Leadership Team, Principal Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice, Use of the 11 Principles Framework, and Building Momentum/Changing Mindsets. There was also one sub-theme in research question one found under the theme Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice. This sub-theme was

Creating a Mission, Vision, Goals, Common Values, and Common Language and/or Expectations. The themes under research question two were Principal Forming Character Education Leadership Team, Principal Gathering Input from Staff by Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust and Open Communication, and Use of the 11 Principles. The themes under research question three included Staff Contributions to the Creation of the School's Mission, Vision, Plans, Values, and Common Language and/or Common Expectations, and Staff Contributions in the Reflection Process Based on the 11 Principles Framework.

Conclusions

Although the organizational change process evolved differently in each of the eight National Schools of Character, and the change process did not follow a consistent linear pattern. Principals identified common practices in the change process that align with the organizational change theory of Kotter (2012) and Armenakis and Harris (2009). The approach these principals took to leading a National School of Character would also be described as a shared leadership model. In a shared leadership model specific characteristics exist among team members including a collaborative leadership process, participative decision making, and quality relationships among leaders and members of the organization (Choi, Kim, & Wang, 2017). Principal's valued teacher voice in the change process as identified by their willingness to engage staff in this change process which aligns to the research of Quaglia (2014) and Liethwood (2004).

Even though each principal's character education journey was unique, several themes occurred repeatedly. One theme relating to momentum building and changing mindsets was unexpected. This theme was unexpected because the researcher did not intentionally ask any questions related to this phenomenon. Other themes were similar to findings in previous studies,

but occurred in three of the research questions and deserve special attention. Those themes include Principal Providing Opportunities for Teacher Voice in a Culture of Trust, Principals Engaging Their Leadership Teams, and Principals Using the 11 Principles Framework in the change process.

Building momentum and changing mindsets. The researcher did not intend to ask any questions about building momentum or changing mindsets, although the existing organizational change theory literature would suggest teacher involvement in the change process will increase the likelihood of successful change (Armenaksis & Harris, 2009; Leitwood et al., 2004). Unique to the change process specific to character education, principals shared consistent practices that lead to building momentum and changing mindsets. Principals used terms like "lighting a fire," "snowballed," "buy-in," "momentum building," and "sparked" to describe this phenomenon. Engaging staff in the character education change process was crucial. Principals shared how their staff contributed to the character education change process in a number of ways. These contributions occurred in the first year of the change process.

Creating a mission, vision, goals, common values, and common language and/or common expectations. Seven out of eight respondents talked about their staff contributing to the creation of their school's mission; vision; goals; values; and common language and/or common expectations in the CE organizational change process through team time, PLC time, faculty meetings, committees, and/or surveys.

Use of data to demonstrate growth/progress. Seven out of eight respondents described the role of data in identifying a need for character education and/or as a means to demonstrate growth. One respondent looked at academic and behavioral data with staff as a way to motivate staff and give teachers a sense of efficacy and described a snowball effect when staff began to

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see success. Another principal looked at discipline referral and academic data and described the impact on the school culture and climate and the importance of getting a coalition of teachers on board. One principal gave testimony to how one of the staff's best teachers and biggest "naysayers" was "brought over" once she saw the positive results in her classroom and the reduction of discipline referrals. Other principals focused on changing mindsets by looking at student data and through professional development with an emphasis on research and best practices.

Although the code, Staff Contributing to the Identification and/or Creation of Short Term Wins did not meet the threshold as a theme, it is important to note how principals, along with their staff used data to identify and/or create short term wins. This code was used when respondents talked about how their staff was responsible for identifying short term wins in the character education organizational change process. Principals shared how staff were actively involved in the feedback process. Staff looked at their survey data, suspension rates, and/or discipline data to set goals for improvement and identify short term wins.

Professional development, model school visits, and attending national character education conference. Respondents described getting teacher "buy-in" by providing professional development and giving teachers a voice in the change process unique to their building. Four principals saw excitement build after sending staff members to the National Character Education Conference. Respondents also worked with other model schools for their effective implementation of character education leading to their own growth.

Principals provide opportunities for teacher voice in a culture of trust. Seven out of eight respondents in this study described how staff members had a voice in the CE organizational change process through the use of team time, PLC time, faculty meetings, committees, and/or surveys. Several respondents described how they wanted to make sure all faculty members had a

voice on where they were going with character education. Another respondent stated his staff always had a voice in the change process. Two respondents described how they utilized their leadership team or committee to generate ideas or to "bounce" ideas back and forth with the staff.

It was evident the principals in this study valued teacher voice and had established a culture of trust by the opportunities for teacher voice to be shared and heard. A culture of trust and open communication was evident in seven of the eight schools. Respondents described having a safe environment or open-door policy where staff were welcome to be open and honest. A culture of trust and open communication was also demonstrated based on the large number of teachers engaged in the change process. One respondent stated one fourth of her staff voluntarily serves on their character education committee. Another principal invites staff to participate in a character education planning day each summer reporting that nearly all staff voluntarily participate.

Principals engage character education leadership teams. Seven out of eight principals formed and engaged their character education leadership team from the beginning of the change process. One key characteristic identified by principals regarding the composition of staff members on their character education leadership team was "passionate." Three principals were intentional about inviting and including a wide variety of staff members to participate on their character education leadership team from "naysayers" to "believers."

The role of the character education leadership teams or committees in the character education change process included establishing behavioral expectations, creating a mission or vision for character education, establishing character education goals based on the 11 Principles, and/or providing professional development to staff.

Similar to the research of Bangs and Frost (2012), principals in this study played a critical role in creating a culture and the capacity for shared leadership. Principals providing opportunities for teacher voice and teacher leadership in a culture of trust helped build momentum in the character education change process. Specifically, principals engaged their leadership team and staff in identifying common language, common expectations, their mission and/or vision, and their character education goals. Other practices were identified that helped build momentum and change mindsets including professional development, model school visits, attending the national character education conference, and the use of data to demonstrate growth.

Principals use the 11 principles framework. The theme, Use of the 11 Principles was identified within each of the three research questions. At various stages in the character education change process seven out of eight principals used the 11 Principles Framework to guide their work. Seven out of eight respondents talked about the use of the 11 Principles Framework or Quality Standards Assessment (QSA) to identify strengths, areas for improvement, goal setting, growth, and alignment and/or direction. In the character education change process, four principals used the 11 Principles at the beginning of their character education journey while three principals used the 11 Principles later in their character education journey.

One principal in particular was intentional about not "throwing" character out to the entire staff right away because "it's a little meaty to digest right away." Another principal said the 11 Principles and QSA did not guide their work originally, but stated "we wish we had." Four principals utilized their character education leadership team to identify strengths, areas of weakness, and establish goals. One principal introduced the 11 Principles to teach staff about character education.

Implications

Although many principals see the value and need for a character education initiative, they are often unsure of how to implement one (Berkowitz, 2008). Principals must understand the leadership behaviors, beliefs, roles, and practices necessary to successfully implement character education (Francom, 2013). Low success rates of change efforts often are attributed to resistance to change by employees (Cummings & Worley, 2005; Ford et al., 2008). Resistance to change can be created and compounded by the actions and inactions of change agents (Ford et al., 2008) who do not understand the phases of the change process (Curtis & Stoller, 1996; Kotter, 2007). This study serves as a change guide for principals considering the implementation of character education by identifying key practices in the character education change process.

Implications for principals. This study provides principals with successful leadership practices for engaging staff in the character educational change process. First, it is important to note the organizational change process evolved differently in each of the eight schools and the change process did not follow a consistent linear pattern. However, common practices were identified in the change process among the National Schools of Character. Principals considering this change process could benefit from the following implications.

Create a culture of open communication and trust. In order for principals to create a culture of open communication and trust, they must demonstrate vulnerability by being open to constructive criticism and feedback from staff. Principals can create a culture of open communication and trust by providing opportunities for teacher voice and teacher leadership to happen within their organization.

Create opportunities to engage staff through teacher voice and teacher leadership. Principals should create structures within their school to provide opportunities for teacher voice

and teacher leadership. In a middle school model, principals can take advantage of their team time and/or faculty meetings to gather feedback, share ideas, or provide professional development. In addition to using team time, principals could benefit from using surveys to collect school climate data and provide opportunities for teacher feedback in the change process.

Know the key elements of the change process. Principals can increase the likelihood of a successful implementation of character education by knowing and implementing key elements of the change process. Specifically, principals would benefit from knowing the role of the change recipients (staff members) in the change process. Principals should engage their staff in the change process by providing opportunities to collectively identify a vision/goals, identify and remove obstacles, identify short term wins, and analyze data to measure growth and evaluate success.

Provide professional development. Principals can build momentum and change mindsets through character education professional development. This aligns to the research of DeRoche (2000) as he described one role of the principal as a "resource provider" knowing where and how to obtain resources to support character education including teacher training, curriculum, and best practices. Principals can provide professional development in a variety of ways which include sending leadership teams to the National Character Education Conference, working with model schools, reflecting on the 11 Principles Framework, and sharing character education practices during faculty meetings and team time.

Use data. Principals should use data to help provide a rationale for character education and for measuring growth or short term wins. Principals can use academic data, school climate survey data, behavioral referral data, mental health data, and attendance data as a way to potentially justify a need for character education, and/or measure growth. The use and sharing of

data can help build a sense of urgency, help in determining goals, and potentially build momentum.

Use the 11 Principles Framework. Principals would benefit from using the 11 Principles Framework throughout the change process. One thing all National Schools of Character have in common is their ability to demonstrate effective character education practices aligned to the 11 Principles Framework. When used in the beginning of the change process, the 11 Principles Framework serves as a reflective tool and guide. Principals can use the Quality Standards Assessment to identify current strengths and areas for improvement leading to the development of goals and the implementation of best practices.

Implications for future research. This study adds a small number of voices to the collective conversation about the role of the principal and the role of the change recipient in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. Many more voices are needed to provide a full picture of this change process. A larger team could explore different school levels (elementary or high school level).

Understanding the change process from the perspective of the principal is important (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). Understanding the change process from the perspective of the change recipient is also important (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Liethwood et al., 2004; Ford et al., 2008). Additional qualitative research should explore the experiences of staff members who went through the character education change process and how they described their role in the change process. With high turnover of principals and staff members, additional qualitative research should explore how schools or principals sustain character education.

Concluding Comments

National Schools of Character have been recognized for their implementation of effective character education practices (Character.org, 2019). Character education has been demonstrated to be associated with academic achievement, conflict-resolution skills, responsibility, respect, self-control, and social skills (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Furthermore, effective character education has been demonstrated to reduce absenteeism, discipline referrals, suspensions, and school anxiety. With the knowledge gained through this study, unique to the character education change process, principals will increase the likelihood of the successful implementation of character education by engaging their staff in this change process. As one principal shared, "We paid very little money for the results that we got. It was really about just investing time and energy into a process." Ultimately character education makes a positive impact in our schools and within our community by producing positive, responsible, and hardworking citizens at very low financial cost.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions & Origin of Questions

Objective	Question	Origin of Question
To understand the success indicators for character education.	From where you were prior to character education to where you are today, what is different about your school as a result of character education?	Opening question and opportunity for principals to "brag" about their school. Connections to literature review on "benefits of character education"
To understand respondents' working definition of character education and the importance and impact of character education.	How do you define character education and why is it important for your staff, students and community to engage in character education?	Added after field test for the purpose of understanding respondents' working definition of character education and their reason for why they engaged in character education
To understand how the change process evolved in National Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal.	Describe the change process your school went through in the implementation of character. (Broad Question)	Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Curtis & Stoller, 1996; Hallinger, 2003
To understand how principals engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education from the perspective of the principal.	Describe how you engaged your staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education? (Broad Question)	Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Curtis & Stoller, 1996; Ford et al, 2008; Kappelman et al., 1993; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Lewin, 1947; Lines, 2007; Marks, 2007; Pietersen, 2002; Reichers et al, 1997
	Describe how you provided opportunities for teacher voice or teacher leadership in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?	Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2004; Lewin, 1947; Quaglia, 2014
	Describe how you captured "teacher voice" in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education.	Added to show how principals captured or documented "teacher voice"

Appendix B: Invitation Phone Script

My name is Mark Chapin, and I am a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am also a middle school principal whose school was recognized by Character.org as a National School of Character in 2016. You are invited to participate in a study about the change strategies you used in becoming a National School of Character and the role of your staff in this process.

You were selected as a possible participant because under your leadership as a building principal your school has been recognized as a National School of Character in the past two years. You are uniquely positioned to provide valuable information about the change strategies you used in this process and how you engaged your staff in this process.

If you decide to participate, we will schedule an interview at your convenience via phone, Skype, or Google Hangout. The interview should take an hour or less and will be recorded for transcription purposes. I will send you a copy of the transcription and will contact you after the interview to ensure that I am representing your ideas accurately in the study.

Confidentiality is highly valued with your participation in this study. All participant names and identifiable information will be deleted from transcripts. Participants will be identifiable only by a number. Transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer to which only I have access. No one will be identifiable in any written reports or publications.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with Bethel University, and your information will be destroyed. There are no risks for participating in this study, nor will there be any compensation for participation.

If you are willing to participate, I will send you an informed consent letter to sign, and we will schedule a time and place for our interview. Thank you for your consideration!

Appendix B: Origin of Interview Questions

Theme	Objective	Question	Origin of Question
Opening	To understand the success indicators for character education.	From where you were prior to character education to where you are today, what is different about your school as a result of character education?	Opening question and opportunity for principals to "brag" about their school. Connections to literature review on "benefits of character education"
	To understand respondents' working definition of character education and the importance and impact of character education.	How do you define character education and why is it important for your staff, students and community to engage in character education?	Added after field test for the purpose of understanding respondents' working definition of character education and their reason for why they engaged in character education
The change process	To understand how the change process evolved in National Schools of Character from the perspective of the principal.	Describe the change process your school went through in the implementation of character. (Broad Question)	Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Curtis & Stoller, 1996; Hallinger, 2003
Principals engaging staff in the change process specific to the implementation of effective character education.	To understand how principals engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education from the perspective of the principal.	Describe how you engaged your staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education? (Broad Question)	Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Curtis & Stoller, 1996; Ford et al, 2008; Kappelman et al., 1993; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Lewin, 1947; Lines, 2007; Marks, 2007; Pietersen, 2002; Reichers et al, 1997

Theme	Objective	Question	Origin of Question
Principals engaging staff in the change process specific to the implementation of effective character education.	To understand how principals engaged their staff in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education from the perspective of the principal.	Describe how you provided opportunities for teacher voice or teacher leadership in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education?	Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2004; Lewin, 1947; Quaglia, 2014
		Describe how you captured "teacher voice" in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education.	Added to show how principals captured or documented "teacher voice"
Teacher/Staff Voice/Leadership in the Change Process Specific to the Implementation of Character Education	To understand the contributions of the change recipient in the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education from the perspective of the principal.	Describe how your staff contributed to the organizational change process specific to the implementation of character education? (Broad Question)	Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Ford, 2012; Fullan, 2014; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1953; Quaglia, 2014
	To understand the contributions of the change recipient in identifying a need or rationale for character education from the perspective of the principal.	Describe the contributions of your staff in identifying a need or rationale for character education.	Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1953, Pettigew, 1987

Theme	Objective	Question	Origin of Question
	To understand the contributions of the change recipient in the creation of the school's vision or plan for character education from the perspective of the principal.	Describe the contributions of your staff in the creation of your vision or plan for character education.	Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Fullan, 2014; Kotter, 2012; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010;
	To understand the contributions of the change recipient in identifying and/or removing obstacles from the perspective of the principal.	Describe the contributions of your staff in identifying and/or removing any obstacles.	Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1953
	To understand the contributions of the change recipient in determining short term wins from the perspective of the principal.	Describe the contributions of your staff in determining short term wins	Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Fullan, 2014; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1953
Closing		If you could go back in time and have a "do over" what would you have done differently in terms of your implementation of character education?	

Appendix C: Email Script

My name is Mark Chapin, and I am a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am also the principal of a middle school in western Wisconsin. You are invited to participate in a study about the change process and strategies of principals leading National Schools of Character and the role of their staff (the change recipients) in this process.

You were selected as a possible participant because your school has been recognized as a National School of Character under your leadership in the past two years. You are uniquely positioned to provide valuable information about the change process and practices of principals leading National Schools of Character and the role of the change recipients in this process.

If you agree to participate, I will follow-up with a phone call. At that time, we can discuss assurances of confidentiality and the consent process. We will schedule an interview that will take place via a phone call, Google Hangout, or Skype. The interview should take an hour or less.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Chapin

Appendix D: Informed Consent Letter

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMANS

You are invited to participate in a study about middle school principals leading National Schools of Character. I hope to learn about your role and the role of your staff in the change process specific to the implementation of effective character education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a middle school principal who has led a National School of Character in the past two years.

This research is being conducted by Mark Chapin, a middle school principal in River Falls, Wisconsin and doctoral student at Bethel University in Minnesota. The research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. There are no monetary incentives for participation.

If you decide to participate, I will contact you to set up a one-to-one interview over the phone that is expected to last no longer than an hour. I will contact you sometime after the interview to share the interview transcript, discuss emerging themes, and check with you to see if my understanding was correct.

There are no anticipated discomforts other than the possible discomforts that may be associated with being interviewed and recorded for transcription purposes. The estimated total time for the actual interview and subsequent check-in(s) is two hours altogether. All identifiable information will be withheld and there are no risks expected. Possible benefits to participating may be additional time for reflecting on current practice.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified to you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable, and only aggregate data will be presented.

The interview transcript will be stored on a password-protected computer to which only I have access, and interview transcripts will then be used for data analysis purposes.

Your decision to participate will not affect your future relations with Bethel or myself in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please call Mark Chapin (715) 441-2480 or my Bethel Faculty Advisor, Dr. Robert McDowell (cell number). You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

_____

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____
Signature of Investigator