

**EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WHO
HAVE IMPLEMENTED THE LEADER IN ME PROGRAM
IN A LARGE URBAN DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WHO HAVE IMPLEMENTED THE LEADER IN ME PROGRAM IN A LARGE URBAN DISTRICT

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The origins of the American educational system have always included a character education component. Teaching students moral values and the ability to know right from wrong is a component of the educational mission of our society. Character education evolved over the centuries, yet the core values of implementing right from wrong and the necessity of building moral values into our nations fabric has not changed. As we continue to move into the 21st century, technology and social issues have evolved, and character education programs and curriculum must adapt and evolve to our modern times in order to meet the needs of all students, as well as our society as a whole. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district. Through interviews with 12 principals, the researcher gathered information about their experiences with the TLIM program, including why and how the principals implemented the program, how they measured its success, what they have learned, how they have adapted the TLIM

program for their own school environments and cultures, what they would change, and what advice they would give to other school leaders. The findings from this study suggest that all 12 participants agreed that TLIM program had a positive impact on the culture and communities of their schools and that although the program is costly, many participants were eligible for TLIM grant funding. Additionally, the results revealed that the participants acknowledged the all-inclusive nature of TLIM program and were able to measure the success of TLIM through multiple evaluation systems. Participants saw a decrease in disciplinary referrals as well as student suspension rates. Additionally, the findings revealed that participants found implementing TLIM in their schools had little to no push back from the school community. Participants acknowledged that they had autonomy in celebrating success of TLIM in their schools as well as autonomy in the orientation and implementation process of incorporating TLIM in their schools. The insights gained from this study will inform and assist other schools leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

As they continue to move into the 21st century, American students are faced with complex social and emotional issues, including poverty, violence, bullying, and unstable home lives. In this context, students often need extra support and character skills to achieve academic success. However, with the increased focus on academic accountability and the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law December 10, 2015, educational policy has shifted back to states and individual school districts providing greater accountability at the local level (Klein, 2016).

According to Klein (2016), states can now transition from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) where a heavy emphasis was placed on national standards to move under the framework of ESSA which provides states greater autonomy. Under the guidelines of ESSA, states must submit accountability plans to the federal education department, select goals, and implement accountability systems at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Additionally, states must have specific accountability measures for schools that have the “bottom 5% of performers, high schools with a 67% or less graduation rate as well as struggling sub groups” (Klein, 2016, p.1). Although ESSA gives states greater control of their educational policy, educators have been pressed to increase academic achievement, often at the expense of social and emotional curricula that offer a holistic lens on student development.

According to Lickona (2001) In order to help students succeed, school leaders see the need to incorporate character education programs into their students' daily learning opportunities. Lickona (2001) defined character education as

...the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue in its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. It does so intentionally through every phase of school life, from the teacher's example to the handling of rules and discipline to the content of the curriculum to the conduct of sports. (p. 3)

Character education equips students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. As Bohanon, Goodman, and McIntosh (1996) stated, "In sum, providing behavior supports may be effective in improving academic outcomes, and providing academic supports is related to improved social behavior functioning" (para 4). Failure to holistically equip students with the social and emotional skills necessary to be effective students threatens both student achievement and personal growth (Bohanon et al., 1996). The long-range effects could negatively impact society as a whole.

The Leader in Me (TLIM) is a character development program that is embedded into all aspects of a school's climate and student academics in order to promote leadership skills (Covey, 2008). The program aligns academic success with social and emotional development. By applying concepts from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, teachers and students "internalize timeless leadership principles that nurture the skills needed for success in the 21st century" (TLIM, 2012). By learning character and integrity through the *7 Habits* (Covey, 2008), students gain the insight needed to make positive healthy choices throughout life.

Students demonstrate the need for social and emotional skill development in K-12 classrooms in schools across America. Authentic learning can only take place when students are equipped with the skills to feel emotionally confident and aware of their own feelings, as well as the feelings of those around them. As (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg, 2004) state, negative issues affiliated with disenfranchised students such as behavior issues, lack of academic achievement, and isolation limit the success of any student within any school community. The need to address the social-emotional challenges that interfere with students' connecting to and performance in school is critical. Addressing student's social and emotional needs decreases issues such as discipline, disaffection, lack of commitment, alienation, and dropping out.

The general problem is that students need certain social and emotional skills to be successful in an educational setting, but the current focus on academic achievement and accountability leaves leaders little room for holistic attention to students so that they can develop these skills. (Elias 2009). According to Elias (2009), "there is a missing piece in American educational policy. We have not sufficiently recognized the inextricable connection of academic learning with student's social-emotional and character development (SECD)" (Elias, p. 831). TLIM is a character education program that takes a holistic approach to students' social and emotional needs. Various school districts across the country have implemented TLIM (Covey, 2008). Although previous research has concluded that the success of a character education program depends on the details of its implementation (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006), the details of how principals have implemented The Leader in Me program in elementary schools in a large urban district have not been studied. This research addresses gap in the literature. The setting for this

study is elementary schools in New York City that have implemented the TLIM program. Research that describes how some school leaders have implemented the TLIM program will be helpful to other school leaders who want to implement character education programs in their schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in the New York City school district. There has been little research on the impact of TLIM program in large urban districts. The researcher sought to fill the gap with this study. This study provides insight into how elementary school principals in large urban areas effectively implemented TLIM within their schools. Through interviews with 12 principals, the researcher gathered information about their experiences with implementing the program, including why and how the principals have implemented the program; how they are measuring success; what they have learned; how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures; what they would change; and what advice they would offer to other school leaders; The insights gained from this study will inform and assist other school leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate how have principals implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district.

The following research questions were explored:

1. Why did the principals choose the TLIM program?

2. How are the principals measuring success of the TLIM program?
3. What challenges have the principals faced while implementing the TLIM program?
4. How have the principals adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures?

Conceptual Framework/Assumptions

The researcher's theory used for the study was based on the principals around Stephen Covey's *The 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE* (1989). Covey studied multiple religions and philosophies from around the world and found 7 habits that were aligned throughout all belief systems and philosophies he studied. Covey (1989) believed that Effective leaders demonstrate effective habits in their professional as well as personal life. Covey (1989). According to Covey, leaders who include his 7 habits into their businesses and organizations will increase their effectiveness as leaders creating a more effective organization. Covey's 7 habits are:

- 1-be proactive
- 2-begin with the end in mind
- 3-put first things first
- 4-think win-win
- 5-seek first to understand then to be understood
- 6-synergize
- 7-sharpen the saw (Covey, 1989).

When a leader is able to embed all 7 habits into his or her life they will achieve effectiveness within their spiritual life, health and professional leadership capabilities. (Covey, 1989).

The LEADER IN ME PROGRAM (2008) is based on Covey's 7 habits however is geared primarily towards k-8 educational systems and educational leaders. The Leader in Me program is focused on leadership, promoting leadership within the students, staff, administrations and larger school community as a whole. The researcher used the lens of *The Leader in Me* as the theoretical framework.

The researcher used a qualitative phenomenological approach while conducting interviews of the participants involved in the study. The concept behind this phenomenological methodology allowed the researcher to present each participant's experiences. Creswell (2014) defines phenomenological research as "a qualitative strategy in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants in a study" (p. 245). In this study the phenomenological approach was achieved by coding the participants' interview responses to find answers to the four research questions explored in this study. This approach allowed the participants to describe their perspectives about the various experiences elementary school principals faced while implementing The Leader in Me program in throughout the New York City school district.

The researcher assumes that the participant's responses during the interview process were individualized based on the context of each principal's experience with TLIM in their school. Each principal participating, had varied experiences in implementing and/or maintaining the TLIM program within their school.

Significance of the Study

This study provides insight about how principals in elementary schools in a large urban district have implemented the TLIM program. There is a gap in the literature with respect to how principals have implemented the TLIM program in elementary schools in a large urban district. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic by adding examples of how to implement the TLIM program in elementary schools as well as principals' insights on the factors that school leaders should consider while implementing such programs.

This study will be important to school leaders who wish to implement the TLIM program, as well as to the TLIM corporation itself so that it can build the knowledge base for TLIM program, as well as to policy makers in the education field who are evaluating whether and how to support character education programs. The conclusions, and recommendations insights gained from this study will inform and assist other school leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs. This study is important to the field because character education is essential to students' social and emotional development and their academic success. School leaders can use insights from this study to implement the program and improve academic success as well students' social and emotional wellbeing at the elementary school level. Additionally, the researcher also assumes that the outcome of this study will facilitate a discussion of policy reforms regarding character education for educational systems leaders across the spectrum from national and state policymakers, district superintendents, principals, parent and guardian advocates with a targeted approach towards elementary school principals in large urban districts.

Definition of Terms

The researcher will be using the following terms throughout the study.

Academic achievement: “Refers to the level of schooling you have successfully completed and the ability to attain success in your studies.” (YourDictionary, 2017)

Character education: Character education is "the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue in its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions" (Lickona, 2001, p. 3).

Emotional intelligence: “Is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others.” (Psychology Today, 2017)

Lighthouse school: Lighthouse schools are schools that have implemented the following nine components of the TLIM program successfully for a minimum of 3 years. 1-Light house team 2-Leadership environment 3-Integrated instruction and curriculum 4-Staff collaboration 5-Student leadership 6-Parent involvement 7-Goal tracking 8-Measurable results 9-Leadership events. (Beaumont Elementary School, Waterford, Michigan, (2017)

The Leader in Me (TLIM). The TLIM program is an innovative “school wide model that emphasizes a culture of student empowerment and helps unleash each child’s full potential” (TLIM, 2013a, para. 1). Applying concepts from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, teachers and students internalize timeless leadership principles that nurture the skills needed for success in the 21st century (TLIM, 2012).

Delimitations

The scope of the study included 12 principals at elementary schools in one large urban district. The researcher did not study principals in middle schools or high schools. The researcher did not study other administrators, teachers, or students. The researcher chose to study only elementary school principals within the New York City school district because the researcher wanted the perspective of a large urban district.

Additionally, TLIM program has only been introduced into the New York City school district within the last few years and available data was more accessible from elementary schools. The researcher wanted the specific perspective of elementary school principals in a large urban district. The researcher wanted principals who had experiences implanting TLIM. Middle and high schools were not included in this study because there was limited data available for middle schools and no data for high schools. The researcher made this choice in light of current research, the purpose of this study, and the need to illuminate how principals have implemented character education programs in that setting.

Limitations

Some of the limitations the researcher encountered during the study were time and limited number of participants. Currently, there are a limited number of elementary schools in New York City who are using the TLIM program. According to the LIM website (<https://archive.theleaderinmeonline.org/classroom-connect>) there are over 78 schools in NYC utilizing TLIM program. The researcher invited 23 elementary school principals to participate in the study. Having been able to confirm 12 participants, the researcher was able to conduct 10 interviews face to face. Due to time constraints the

researcher was able to conduct two by phone. The use of 12 participants was limited. But otherwise there were no unforeseen constraints that occurred other than negotiating a mutual time to conduct interviews.

Summary/Organization of Study

The first chapter presents an introduction of the study including the background and need for elementary school principals in large urban districts to incorporate character education programs into their schools. The second chapter is the literature review organized in multiple categories. The literature review is presented in three sections. The first section is character education; the second section addresses leadership in implementing change; and the third section focuses on The Leader in Me Program. The third chapter presents the research methodology which describes the design of the study, data collected, instruments used as well as data analysis procedures. The fourth chapter presents the data analysis organized by themes. The fifth chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

With the creation and implementation of the EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) accountability has shifted from the Federal level back to individual states. This shift in policy legislation has allowed states to have greater control over their individual school districts, thus increasing local accountability efforts. The general problem is that students need certain social and emotional skills to be successful in an educational setting, but the current focus has targeted academic achievement and accountability leaving school leaders little room for holistic attention to students so that they can develop these skills. According to Elias “there is a missing piece in American educational policy. We have not sufficiently recognized the inextricable connection of academic learning with student’s social emotional and character development (SECD)” (Elias, 2009, p.831). Learning character education skills will equip students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally creating a better citizenry for all of society. As Thomas and Hayes state “Character education is not a ‘quick fix.’ It provides long-term solutions that address moral, ethical and academic issues of growing concern to our society and key to the safety of our schools” (Haynes & Thomas, 2007, p.155). Additionally, tragic events such as the Columbine school shooting made policy makers at the state level re-assess safety plans, responses to violence, and bullying within their states, districts and individual schools. In July of 2000, New York State signed in law the Safe Schools Against Violence In Education Act (project SAVE) which included incorporating character education programs in schools as a response to violence and bullying. (<http://www.nyscfss.org/project-save>). Furthermore, New York State signed

into legislation in September 2010, the DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT (DASA). DASA further mandated that all schools within New York State are required to implement character education programs as measures against harassment, discrimination, and bullying. (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>). Thus, school leaders not only see a growing need to incorporate character education programs into their schools but are now mandated by the New York State education department to do so through SAVE and DASA legislation. The Leader in Me (TLIM) program is a character education program that takes a holistic approach to students' social and emotional needs. TLIM is embedded into all aspects of a school's climate and student academics, which aligns academic success with social and emotional development (Covey, 2008). The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how principals have selected, implemented and assessed the impact of TLIM program in elementary schools in a large urban school district.

The literature review begins with a discussion of the history and legislation related to character education; a review of the literature on leadership in the implementation of initiatives, including how school leaders have implemented this school program; and the literature on the TLIM program and its effectiveness.

The rationale for elementary school principals to select TLIM is to create a positive learning environment within their schools and employ a "holistic" approach to each student's social and emotional growth. Each school within the New York City Department of Education is evaluated using the school quality review rubric. (See appendix F) The quality review rubric has 10 indicators within three categories: instructional core, school culture and systems for improvement. Each of the three categories has 2-5 sub categories. Although TLIM can be applied to all components of

the quality review rubric, the main focus where student leadership skills and character education can be applied would be school culture subcategory indicator 1.4 **positive learning environment** which states schools must “Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults.” (New York City Department of Education 2017)

According to the New York City Department Of Education’s Quality Review Rubric Indicator 1.4 schools must demonstrate the following attributes in order to receive a “well developed” for indicator 1.4. The following three attributes are:

- a) The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action and results in a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward the school’s goals; the school meaningfully involves student voice in decision-making to initiate, guide, and lead school improvement efforts
- b) Structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult who helps to personalize attendance supports and coordinate social-emotional learning, child/youth development, and guidance/advisement supports that impact students’ academic and personal behaviors
- c) The school community strategically aligns professional development, family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports, resulting in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors (New York City Department of Education, 2017).

TLIM contains all of the above elements and could serve to support a well-developed for indicator 1.4.(table 7) If a school is able to demonstrate “well developed” in quality review rubric 1.4 then the school’s overall rating will increase. So a principal’s rationale of having the TLIM program implemented in their schools and is implemented with fidelity and the school will be able to demonstrate “well developed” rating in quality review component 1.4

Character Education

Character education is the process of teaching students positive behavior traits that will enable them to be successful in life and make good decisions regarding academics, relationships, eating habits and overall physical and mental health (Haynes & Thomas, 2007). Lickona (1997) includes the word virtues in his definition. Lickona (1997) had defined character education as:

The deliberate effort to cultivate virtue in its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. It does so intentionally through every phase of school life, from the teacher’s example to the handling of rules and discipline to the content of the curriculum to the conduct of sports, (p. 3).

According to Schwartz, Alexandra, Beatty, and Dachnowicz (2006), character education is often the umbrella term that describes concerted efforts to teach a number of qualities, such as civic virtues, respect and responsibility, social and emotional learning, empathy and caring, tolerance for diversity, and service to the community. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) defined character education as “any school-based K-12 initiatives either intended to promote the development of some aspect of student character or for which some aspect of student character was measured as a relevant outcome variable” (p. 3).

Overall, character education can be seen as teaching students the ability to be responsible members of a productive society.

Lickona (2001) argued that good schools can provide character education to their students and, regardless of nation or religion, human beings have natural laws of right and wrong and good character. As Lickona states “I pointed out what many theologians and moral philosophers have long held: that there is a natural moral law inscribed on the fleshy tablets of the human heart” (p.1). Lickona defined good character as the practical wisdom to act on right and wrong and to treat others as one likes to be treated. As Lickona (2001) stated, “Fortitude enables us to do what is right in the face of difficulty” (p. 3). Lickona (1996) proposed eleven principles for effective character education programs:

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis for good character.
2. “Character” must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling and behavior.
3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.
4. The school must be a caring community.
5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.
6. Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.
7. Character education should strive to develop students’ intrinsic motivation.

8. The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.
9. Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.
10. The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.
11. Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staffs' functioning as character educators, and the extent to which student's manifest good character. (Lickona, p.98).

Table 1

Crosswalk

Lickona's 11 Principles	The Leader in Me – Seven Habits	NYC School Quality Review Indicators
1,2	1	1.4,1.1,3.4,5.1
6,9,11	2	1.2,1.3,2.2,3.1,5.1
3	3	1.4,2.2
4,6,7	4	1.4,3.4
5	5	1.4
3,10,11	6	1.3,3.4,4.1,4.2
8	7	1.4

According to Lickona (1996), if schools are incorporating all 11 components of his character assessment criteria, then the character education program will be successful in meeting student needs. As Lickona (1996) states “There is wisdom, to be sure, in letting a thousand flowers bloom but some broad principles can help us minimize the weeds”. (p. 99). Based on Lickona's 11 principles schools can implement character

education programs in their school and apply all 11 principals regardless of gender, race, and religion.

History of character education. Character education has been an integral part of education throughout the history of mankind (Farris, 1999). Every society has incorporated character education into its educational philosophies (Farris, 1999). For example, during the time of Confucius (551-479 B.C.), moral education was incorporated into education to influence “one’s character by directing emotions in a positive manner and by providing inner harmony” (Farris, 1999, p. 130). Character education in the United States began in 1642 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony with the first English colonizers who came over on the Mayflower (Vardin, 2003). According to Vardin, the founding fathers of America believed that good character was needed by its citizens in order to preserve a democracy.” (p. 32)

Character education continued to be embedded within America’s educational system as America continued to develop and expand. According to Watz (2011):

There have been a number of individuals who were extremely influential in the development of education in America. Several of these individuals, including Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), Horace Mann (1796-1859), and William McGuffey (1800-1873), substantially contributed to, not only the educational landscape, but also to the development of character within education. Franklin, Mann, and McGuffey were all involved in the legislation and foundation of public education in early America and each of them also had strong ties, and significant positions, within post-Secondary institutions (p.37).

Franklin (1749) stated that the youth in America should be taught the difference between right and wrong and the ability to discover the “truth: and convince adversaries through the use “logic and reasoning” (p.22-23). Additionally, Franklin indicated that the “great aim and end of learning” for educating youth should be focused around “merit” to foster and grow our youths’ ability to be serve those around them as productive family members, and countryman.

According to Jeynes (2007):

Horace Mann was a strong advocate of the primacy of moral education.

Although his writings of the 1830s did impact the education world, his “Twelfth Annual Report,” in 1849, had the greatest impact. In this report, Mann argued for the merits of moral education. He averred that moral education, even more than the education of the mind, was the key for changing society. (p.147)

According to Hazlett (2011), The McGuffey Readers were the primary series of texts used throughout the American education system. “During the 1800’s between 1836 and 1890, McGuffeys sold over one hundred million copies” (Hazlett, 2011, p.2) and included aspects of character education such as how students should behave with the inclusion of guidelines presented through the Christian religion. The series of McGuffey readers led Hazlett to conclude that character education was a part of McGuffey’s curriculum. As Hazlett states:

“Stories were Calvinist leaning, reflecting personal independence, character, honesty, and decency. Strong moral conclusions were presented, usually by contrasting positive and negative actions of children and

resultant consequences. Biblical verses and doctrine frequently appeared separately and within selections.” (p.2)

Watz (2011) implies that the iconic founders of character education, Franklin, Mann, and McGuffey were responsible for creating the framework for multiple programs based on character education. According to Watz (2011), “organizations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Boy Scouts of America (BSA)” (Watz, p.44) would influence the definition and implementation of character education during the 20th century.

From 1642 until the 1960’s, religious leaders and clergy made the policy decisions as to how character education would be implemented in the American education system. Character education was almost eliminated from mainstream American education when, in 1963, the Supreme Court prohibited school prayer (Vardin, 2003).

Kyle (2011) agreed with Vardin (2003) that a shift away from character education took place in the 1960’s, and “that character education was no longer an emphasis in schools due to the new philosophy of values education that focused on decision-making, process, and thinking skills” (p.24). Kyle (2011) also noted that, during the 1980’s, education policy makers realized that they needed to deal with the social problems that students were facing. Communities started to create character education programs to combat the negative consequences of poverty, broken families, and drug addiction that affected students not only academically but socially and emotionally as well (Kyle, 2011). As social problems worsened and an increase in moral problems rose throughout American society since the 1960’s, character education made its way back into the American education system, with educators and teachers being seen as those responsible

for instilling positive character traits for students (Lickona, 2001). As America saw an increase in violence in schools most notably the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999 states began mandating character education within their school districts. As Swartz (2006) pointed out, “By 2002, however, roughly three-fourths of the states were actively encouraging their versions of character education: 14 states mandated some form of it, another 14 encouraged it through legislation, and another 10 supported it in other ways” (p. 27). Once again, schools became the place to teach character.

Character education is needed in schools today; with all the distractions of modern day society, children are spending less time at home and have far fewer opportunities to speak with their parents and guardians (Haynes & Thomas, 2007). According to Haynes and Thomas (2007):

In order to create our schools as the caring and respectful communities we know they can be, we must look deeper. We must be intentional, proactive and comprehensive in our work to encourage the development of good character in young people (p.156).

Given the distractions and circumstances that students face in modern society, such as technology, isolation, poverty, broken homes, and other negative consequences life can bring, it has become more apparent that schools should implement character education programs in order to instill respectful values and create a productive citizenry (Haynes & Thomas, 2007).

Benefits of Character Education

There are many benefits to incorporating character education programs into the American educational system. For a society to have a productive work force and a citizenry with the emotional skills to make positive decisions for individuals, families, and communities, students must be prepared to make proper ethical decisions (Haynes & Thomas, 2007). Embedding character education into the education system is one way of ensuring a healthy and productive society (Haynes & Thomas, 2007).

Furthermore, (Haynes & Thomas, 2007) imply that research has indicated that schools that have included character education as part of their curriculum and school culture have seen increases in positive behavior and interactions between students and staff, an increase in family involvement, and decreases in discipline referrals, violence, and disrespect. Character education and positive behavioral intervention supports (PBIS) are also critical to students making academic gains. According to the PBIS website, “PBIS is based on principles of applied behavior analysis and the prevention approach and values of positive behavior support” (p.1). Many aspects of character education programs, such as TLIM include PBIS strategies such as building leadership skills within each student. Additionally, under the TLIM model students are assigned leadership roles throughout the classroom and school, thus providing PBIS within the character education model. As Bohanon, Goodman, and McIntosh (1996) stated, “In sum, providing behavior supports may be effective in improving academic outcomes, and providing academic supports is related to improved social behavior functioning” (para 4).

Haynes and Thomas (2007) found the following:

A 2000 evaluation of South Carolina's four-year character education initiative, which is a pilot program funded by the U.S. Department of education, reports dramatic improvements among both students and adults. In surveys of South Carolina administrators, the study found that 91 percent reported improvement in student attitudes. 89 percent reported improvement in student behavior, 60 percent reported improvement in academic performance, and more than 65 percent reported improvement in teacher staff attitudes since implementing character education (p. 164).

Another character education program that has seen positive results is The Child Development Project (CDP). According to promisingpractices.net The Child Development Project "is a comprehensive, elementary school-based intervention program. CDP incorporates class meetings, learning activities for partners and small groups, and open-ended discussions on literature to enhance students' social, ethical, and intellectual development. CDP is based on the belief that prevention efforts are most likely to be effective when they occur early in a child's development, before antisocial behavioral patterns have a chance to become firmly established." According to Haynes & Thomas, "In three separate studies spanning almost 20 years the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, Calif., has documented numerous positive outcomes for students who have attended elementary schools implementing its Child Development Project." (Haynes & Thomas p. 164) "These studies consistently found that in schools where the program was widely implemented, students showed significant benefits in a number of areas, including attitudes toward school and learning, feelings about the self, social and ethical

attitudes and values, and behavior, relative to students in closely matched comparison schools.”(Collaborative Classroom, 2017)

Berkowitz and Bier (2005) conducted a report *What works in Character Education (WWCE)*. The purpose of the report “represents an effort to uncover and synthesize existing scientific research on the effects of K-12 character education” (p. ii). The report initially identified 109 research studies “concerning character education outcomes and evaluated each study for the scientific rigor of its research design.” (p.3). After analyzing the initial 109 studies, Berkowitz and Bier identified specific programs they found rigorous enough to be evaluated in their study. According to Berkowitz and Bier “there were 78 studies that we considered scientifically acceptable” (p.9). From the effective set, Berkowitz and Bier “narrowed it down to 33 programs that were deemed effective, based on the 69 studies of those programs” (p, 3).

Berkowitz and Bier (2005) aimed to answer the following four questions during their study:

- 1-Which programs can we conclude actually work, based on existing sound research?
- 2-What elements of practice do effective programs tend to share?
- 3-What do schools generally do that is effective in promoting character development?
- 4-What are the effects of specific character education practices? (p.3-4)

Berkowitz and Bier (2005) concluded that effective character education programs incorporated aspects of the following:

- 1-Professional development-** all programs labeled effective during the study included professional development throughout the implementation process and ongoing throughout the duration of the program in all 33 schools.
- 2-Peer interaction-** Strategies for peer interaction were evident in all 33 schools deemed effective and this usually occurred “at the classroom or small group level” (p. 19)
- 3-Direct teaching-** Among the 33 programs identified “direct instruction about character” (p.19)
- 4-Skill training-** such as social emotional skills, conflict resolution was identified as contributing effective factors.
- 5-Make the agenda explicit-** of the identified 33 effective programs identified during the study more than half “make it explicit that character is the focus or make focus on morality, values, virtues, or ethics explicit” (p.19).
- 6-Family and/or community involvement-** another common strategy was the direct involvement of the larger school community as a whole as well as direct parent/guardian involvement in implementing and supporting the character education program at their schools.
- 7- Providing models and mentors-** components of effective programs also included positive role models both at the peer level as well as adult mentors to support character education.

8- Integration into the academic curriculum- almost half of the effective programs identified provided character education instruction in language arts and social studies curricula. As Berkowitz and Bier state “we have also seen that character education promotes academic learning and achievement” (p.20).

9- Multi strategy approach- Nearly all of the 33 effective programs identified had various differentiated approaches to incorporate character education rather than relying on a singular method.

Brannon (2008) conducted a survey of all Early Childhood Generalist National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) across the state of Illinois. According to Brannon, the survey was designed to gain preliminary data regarding teachers’ character education practices. Despite various obstacles and challenges to implementing character education in their classrooms, such as lack of materials, supplies, and support, teachers who participated in Brannon’s study agreed that “the two most popular strategies for teaching students about character are modeling and taking advantage of teachable moments” (p. 63). In addition, surveyed teachers stated that parent involvement was critical to the success of character education programs, as was making the time to implement a program with parental involvement.

Skaggs and Bodenhorn (2006) measured character education programs in 5 school districts in a northeastern state over a four-year period using student, teacher, and administrative surveys. The researchers concluded that schools that were fully committed to allocating resources towards character education programs saw a positive result in student achievement and lower suspension rates than those schools “with less well-implemented programs” (p. 83). Of the 5 districts in the study, the researchers determined

that District 4 achieved the greatest results because District 4 molded its character education program to “fit within the culture of their communities” (p. 113). The authors implied that, in order to see a positive correlation between student achievement and the implementation of a character education program, schools needed to mold their programs specifically to the individual needs of their school community.

Snyder, Vuchinich, Acock, Washburn, and Flay (2011) studied 20 schools that had implemented the Positive Action character education program in the state of Hawaii over the course of one year. Using archival report card data “on achievement and disciplinary outcomes” (p. 12), the researchers found beneficial effects on student achievement. According to the authors, schools that implemented the Positive Action character education program saw improvements in the social and emotional learning of their students as well as overall school climate. The authors concluded that applying a whole school approach to character education resulted in a greater positive school climate for the entire school community.

Parker, Nelson, and Burns (2010)

examined the relationship between variables that affect classroom behavior and observed behavior in schools with and without a theoretically based character education program. Observational data from 12 elementary schools compared controlled and treatment conditions on classroom disruption, and examined the influences of class size and percentage of students receiving a free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) (p. 817).

Parker et al. (2010) concluded that those schools that had implemented the character education program, “Smart Character Choices,” saw a greater reduction in classroom disruptions than those schools that did not offer a character education program.

Davidson and Lickona (2007) offered another example of the positive effects character education can have at the high school level. They argued that character education can be defined in 2 parts: performance character and moral character.

Davidson and Lickona conducted a study to answer the question, “Why is intentional character education relatively rare in high schools, at the very developmental stage where the need is arguably the greatest?” (p. 2). During their study, they created a “database on high school reform and character development” (p. 2) and also “visited 24 award winning high schools” (p. 2). Based on their findings, they created 100 promising practices for building eight strengths of character that enable students to lead ethical and fulfilling lives. Davidson and Lickona also created a new two-part definition of character education. The first is:

“master orientation,” which consists of qualities, such as diligence, perseverance, a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, ingenuity, and self-discipline, that are needed to realize one’s potential for excellence in any performance environment, whether academics, extracurricular activities, the work place, and life generally. The second part of character education is moral character, defined as “relational orientation.” It consists of those qualities - such as integrity, justice, caring, respect, and cooperation - needed for successful interpersonal relationships and ethical conduct (p. 3).

Davidson and Lickona's two part definition of character education "Master Orientation" and "relational orientation" are integrated into the concepts of all seven habits of TLIM program.

According to Davidson and Lickona (2007), once schools have incorporated character education at the performance and moral level, school safety will increase, bullying will decrease, and a growth of social and emotional skills will occur. They noted that teaching students both performance and moral character education is critical to the success of all high school students.

Character Counts (2011) provided another example of the positive effects of character education. Orrs elementary school located in Griffin-Spalding County, GA, was "recently selected as a 2010 National School of Character by the Character Education Partnership (CEP)" (p. 37). According to a principal who was in this study:

Everyone is involved and the success of our programs can be seen in our achieving adequate yearly progress goals for the past eight years.

Adopting an intensive character education Program has resulted in a dramatic decrease in student behavior problems and discipline referral. (p. 37)

In summary, a vast majority of schools that have adopted character education programs have seen an increase in academic achievement as well improved overall school climate from students and staff and a decrease in student behavior issues.

Drawbacks of Character Education

One drawback to character education is that there may not be enough adequately trained staff to administer the program. There is very little professional development to support character education, as Haynes and Thomas (2007) state:

Since very few educators and administrators receive training on how to incorporate character education into their classrooms and schools during their initial preparation at teacher colleges and universities, providing funding for staff development is a critical role for states and districts (p.162).

As Thomas and Haynes (2007) point out, in order for character education to be embedded into all facets of school life, character education needs to be part of teacher certification programs, as well as adopted in district and school curricula. This would give teachers the tools and time they need to teach effective character education in order to meet the needs of all students.

Another drawback is the fact that character education programs are predominantly found in elementary and middle school grades. Graft (2012) in her Counselors Education Master's Theses delved into the aspect of character education programs being implemented in the elementary level far more than the high school level. According to Lockwood (1997), "about 80% of current programs do focus on elementary schools," One of the participants interviewed by Lockwood responded "Perhaps 15% are junior high or middle school programs; less than 5% are junior high or middle school programs; less than 5% are in high schools (Lockwood, 1997, p.27). When Lockwood inquired about why more character education programs are implemented at the elementary level, she learned that elementary teachers focused much more on the socialization of young

children than their high school counterparts. In high school, teachers were more likely to concentrate on specific subjects than on character education.

School Leadership

Leadership is an important concept for this study because, in order to meet the educational needs of students, and to train and equip a future work force with the necessary social, emotional, and academic needs for the 21st century, strong leaders must be ready and able to lead the nation's schools. This section of the literature review will focus on leadership as it relates to our educational system.

Leadership is a complex subject. According to Cuban (1998), "there are more than 350 definitions of leadership but no clear and unequivocal understanding as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders" (p. 190). John Scully, CEO of Apple from said:

As I see it, leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has to do more with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day-to-day implementation...One can't lead unless he can leverage more than his own capabilities... You have to be capable of inspiring other people to do things without sitting on top of them with a checklist-which is management, not leadership (as cited by Bennis 2009, p. 132).

The National College for School Leadership issued a report School concepts and leadership (2003) http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5119/14/dok217-eng-School_Leadership_Concepts_and_Evidence_Redacted.pdf offered four different versions of school leadership, such as one's ability to influence, values, vision, and

management, as well as eight different typologies of leadership and how they are applied to the education profession. This report defines school leadership, moral leadership, participative leadership, and managerial leadership, frames of leadership, leadership and school context, implications for leadership.

Winston and Patterson (2006) conducted a study to take into account the multiple definitions of leadership. They found “over 90 variables that may comprise the whole of leadership” (p. 1). According to Winston and Patterson, an integrative definition of leadership is:

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more followers(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the followers(s) to the organization’s mission and objectives causing the followers(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives (Winston & Patterson, 2006 p. 7)

Although Winston and Patterson offered 90 characteristics of leadership, they failed to conclude with a current definition of leadership, and implied that leadership as we know it, and characteristics of leadership, constantly evolve and therefore definitions of leadership will always evolve.

A different approach for understanding leadership is looking at it through the lens of school leaders. School leadership can be defined in many ways. Dess and Picken (2009), reported in their findings that leaders perform multiple roles not just the previous notions of supervising from behind a desk with strict notions and rigid regulations but rather the modern school leadership must be defined as fluid where leaders must be able

to modify and adapt to the conditions and resources around them. Dess and Picken (2009) stated that the role of leaders has evolved, and:

Instead of viewing themselves as resource controllers and power brokers, leaders must truly envision themselves as flexible resources willing to assume numerous (perhaps unaccustomed) roles - coaches, information providers, teachers, decision makers, facilitators, supporters, or listeners-depending on their employees' needs. (p. 22)

As society has moved into the information age, it is critical for leaders to communicate clearly and proficiently within all level of their organizations. Effective leaders must include employees at all levels within their organizations in order to maximize effectiveness (Dess, 2009). Like Winston and Patterson (2006), Dess & Picken (2000) addressed the many changing roles that leaders face as they move forward into the 21st century, such as creating a sense of urgency and a strategic vision. According to Dress and Picken (2009) empowering employees at all levels, accumulating and sharing knowledge, getting everyone involved also aligns to Schein's (2010) definition of leaders as founders of organizational culture.

The issues of leadership become more complex when we take into account the various concepts of school leadership. Bush and Glover (2003) described four different orientations to school leadership: leadership and influence, leadership and values, leadership and vision, leadership and management. In addition, Bush and Glover speculated that there are eight broad theories of leadership, based on models adopted by Leithwood et al. (1999). Leithwood et al. offered eight specific theories of school leadership: instructional leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership,

participative leadership, managerial leadership, postmodern leadership, interpersonal leadership, and contingent leadership. Bush and Glover (2003) concluded that, in order for educational leaders to meet the demands of the 21st century, it is important to take on a participative or team approach. According to Bush and Glover, this gives staff members the opportunity to contribute to the policy making or vision, as opposed to being forced to accept one view from the leader. This approach is also aligned Schein's (2010) definition of leadership, which incorporates joint learning.

Although Bush and Glover (2003) offered four distinct definitions of leadership and eight different theories of educational leadership, they failed to incorporate a systematic approach to a case by case scenario. A participative approach incorporates the decision-making process as a team approach, yet if there is no professional development or prior learning, a team can flounder and fail. Providing any team with growth and opportunities to contribute to the organization and promote leadership will ensure success, which aligns with Kotter's (1996) 7th step, empowering employees for broad based action.

Leader as an agent of change. Fullan (2002) suggested that principals are the real cause and creators of change within schools. As Fullan suggests, calling principals instructional leaders is “too narrow” a job description; to meet the educational demands of the 21st century, principals must “carry the weight” of reforms needed to accomplish improvement in our educational system (p.17). Fullan asserted that effective principals, as leaders of change, must demonstrate the following five characteristics:

Cultural change principals display palpable energy, enthusiasm, and hope. In addition, five essential components characterize leaders in the knowledge society;

moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. (p.17).

Fullan implied that great principals come from great teachers. Therefore, if a principal wants to leave a legacy for change and have an impact as a change agent, part of the process is creating the conditions for teachers to flourish and build the necessary relationships for leadership development to occur. Fullan argued that “we now must focus our sights on principals as leaders in a culture of change. School improvement depends on principals who can foster the conditions necessary for sustained education reform in a complex, rapidly, changing society” (p. 20). Fullan highlighted that the role of principal must change and that a principal’s emotional intelligence and ability to create and foster long lasting relations is key to changing the educational system.

Scharmer’s (2007) change leadership method is called “Theory U.” The Theory U method is where a leader looks within them self to initiate and create effective change. Educational leaders as faced with a multitude of issues on a daily basis, from changes in staff, gaps in student achievement and a constant change in educational policy initiatives. This makes it hard for any educational building leader or systems leader to be proactive when they lose focus and are diverting their energies to being reactive. According to Scharmer (2007) a leader’s self-awareness occurs in three stages. Initially, a leader must observe and acquire information and or data. The second stage is where the leader must reflect, and see what parts of the system are working and not working, and allocate, and then begin to act on, and take steps towards relocating resources to where they need to be. At the school building level, this is where the building leader would ensure that student’s needs are being met and to allocate resources accordingly in order to increase student

achievement. The third stage in this process is where the new “U” occurs. In order to create change the leader acts and implements a new program or initiative based on the new knowledge and/or information obtained through steps one and two (observing and reflecting). Within a school system this is where a building leader would create an after school math program, or higher an additional English teacher based on student performance data. This is where the five components of Theory U bring about change effectively.

Scharmer (2007) implies there are five motions a leader may go through when utilizing the “U” process. The five motions are co-initiating, co-sensing, co-presencing, co-creating and co-evolving. According to Scharmer (2007) the first movement down the “U” is “co-initiating.” This is where the leader breaks away from previous expectations, observes without judgement what is taken place within the system and or organization as well as listening to others. Scharmer’s first motion of co-initiating aligns to Covey’s 5th habit of “seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

The second movement down the U, “co-sensing”, where the leader must look within and see his or her place and role within the system and see how their purpose fits into the larger system listen extensively and consistently observe where the greatest areas of growth and challenges are with a spirit wide open. The third movement “co-presencing” is where the leader is at the bottom of the “U” itself. It is there, where the leader “goes to the place of individual and collective stillness, open up to the deeper source of knowing, and *connect to the future that wants to emerge through you*” (p.18). The fourth movement “co-creating” is when the leader begins to emerge on the other side of the “U” and a new plan of action emerges “in order to *explore the future by*

doing”(p.18) Lastly, the fifth and final movement “co-evolving” is reaching the top of the other side of the “U” process. In the fifth stage, the leader sees and acts based on taking the whole system into account. As Scharmer (2007) It is then that the leader can “co-develop a larger innovation ecosystem and hold the space that connects people across boundaries through *seeing and acting from the whole*” (p.19). Scharmer’s 5th stage of “co-evolving” aligns to Covey’s 6th habit “synergize.” Scharmer (2007) indicates that in order for effective change to take place the leader must look within and develop personal change in order for a holistic systematic approach for change to occur.

The Leader in Me Program

The Leader in Me (TLIM) character education program grew out of Stephen Covey’s (1989) *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey (2008), designed TLIM for students after a principal at A.B. Combs Elementary School in North Carolina attended trainings on the *7 Habits* and wanted a program tailored to fit the needs of her elementary students (Covey, 2008). Once TLIM was designed and implemented, the principals at Combs Elementary School saw an increase in student achievement as well as a decrease in disciplinary referrals. According to The Leader In Me program, there are currently 3225 schools involved in TLIM process.

The TLIM program is designed to instill character education values by following and implementing the *7 Habits* in all aspects of school culture and life, including parents and guardians, classroom instruction, and student leadership. The focus on “student led” leadership activities allows students to demonstrate the *7 Habits* and leadership skills. The *7 Habits* are: (1) be proactive; (2) begin with the end in mind; (3) put first things

first; (4) think win-win; (5) seek first to understand then to be understood; (6) synergize; and (7) sharpen the saw. (Covey, 2008)

Once a school decides to implement the TLIM program, staff participates in a three-day professional development session. A few months later a staff member from TLIM conducts a follow up visit. The school's "Lighthouse team" ensures consistent follow-through on the program. The Lighthouse team is a group of staff members responsible for overseeing the implementation and management of TLIM. There is no rigid curriculum. Teachers and administrators are expected to embed the 7 habits into daily lesson plans and all school wide activities from bulletin boards to classroom leadership roles. Lighthouse schools (appendix F) are those that meet a benchmark based on a rubric developed by the Franklin Covey/Leader in Me company. Lighthouse schools are schools that have implemented the following nine components of the TLIM program successfully for a minimum of 3 years. 1-light house team 2-Leadership environment 3-Integrated instruction and curriculum 4-staff collaboration 5-student leadership 6-parent involvement 7-goal tracking 8-measurable results 9-leadership events. (The Leader In Me, 2017)

Seven Habits

The following is a brief description of each of the seven habits included within TLIM.

Habit 1-be proactive. According to the 7 habits, (Covey, 1989) the first habit is be proactive. Being proactive means taking responsibility for your own actions by forecasting your future and taking the initiative to control your actions as oppose to being reactive or expecting someone else to change your circumstances. Michael Maccoby (1994) referred to Covey's 7 habits and implied that if a person wants to take

responsibility for their own life and actions they must “take responsibility for one’s fate” (p.56).

Habit 2-begin with the end in mind. Beginning with the end in mind is based on the concept that you begin a task, whether it is a homework assignment, running a marathon, saving for a new car etc., with the desired outcome in mind. According to Covey, 1989) “To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you’re going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction” (p.105). Covey noted when someone “begins with the end in mind” (p.104) it will allow one to be more successful in accomplishing their goals and/or dreams. As Covey states (2008) states “the mental creation precedes the physical creation” (p. 216).

Habit 3-put first things first. Habit 3, putting first things first means to prioritize your commitments and actions throughout the course of your day and life (Covey, 1989). One’s physical and mental health should come first, as well as eating properly and sleeping well. Additionally, valuing relationships as oppose to materials gains. At the student level, this means doing your homework and studying before playing video games or perhaps playing with friends. Another way of demonstrating habit three would be by breaking down a large project or creating s study schedule as oppose to cramming the night before a big test.

Habit 4- Think Win-Win. Habit four, think “win-win,” represents that concept that everyone can succeed or find a positive outcome in any given situation. Working toward a “win-win” in an organization means being aligned to common goal or vision represents in order to see the company win as a whole. (Covey, 1989) This is also broken

down to the student level when students can create a win-win by sharing activities, complete common project tasks, games as opposed to fighting in the school yard or cheating on an exam.

Habit 5- seek first to understand before being understood. Habit 5, seek first to understand before being understood, is based on the concept of listening before speaking. Instead of raising one's voice and escalating an argument one should listen empathetically and understand the other person's perspective. In LIM schools, students will have less opportunity for conflict when they are willing to work together and respect each other's opinions both during classroom instruction and activities and outside of the classroom on the playground and or in the lunchroom etc.

Habit 6-Synergize. Habit 6, "synergize." is based on the concept of working together and creating a positive outcome as opposed to focusing on one's one self-interest. According to Covey (2008) synergy takes place when students are able to use diversity to problem solve and overcome tasks and obstacles. As Covey states "I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different than me. I work well in groups" (p.22). This concept of building on each other's strengths and creating a common understanding is the bedrock of habit six (Covey, 1989).

Habit 7-sharpen the saw. Habit seven, "sharpen the saw," is the concept of regenerating one's mental and physical spirit. In other words, one needs to rest and recharge. In the school setting, habit 7 teaches staff and students alike the importance of balance in life, by taking care of one's physical and mental wellbeing. For students

specifically, this means increased analytical skills, learning about good health and hygiene, and emotional stability (Covey, 2008).

TLIM Outcomes

Hatch (2011) described how students, staff, administrators, parents and guardians experienced positive outcomes as a result of implementing TLIM in their schools. Hatch summarizes the methodology for providing school wide transformation through implementing TLIM program in a three-step process. Step one involves Franklin Covey consultants “training the entire school staff in basic leadership principals” (p.1) This training also incorporates “*The 7 habits of Highly Effective People*”(p.1). The second step involves staff and students incorporating the 7 habits into all aspects of the school building, classroom instruction, student leadership roles and woven into the fabric of the day to day operations of the school day. Step three is where “students take the principals home and into the community”. (p.1) According to Hatch (2011), the most noticeable change experienced by TLIM schools is the reduction of discipline referrals. Hatch listed several examples of schools whose discipline referrals and suspensions were reduced drastically once TLIM was implemented. As Hatch pointed out “At English Estates Elementary in Fern Park, discipline referrals dropped from 225 to 74 in just over a year after implementing *The Leader in Me*” (p. 6).

Hatch (2011) also noted that multiple elementary schools that implemented TLIM saw academic achievement gains. In addition, Hatch described parent and guardian surveys where overwhelming positive results were seen. One of several examples Hatch mentioned was, “In Alberta, Canada, Joseph Welsh Elementary reports that parent satisfaction with what children are being taught leaped from 67% to 98% during the first

year of implementation” (p. 9). Hatch concluded that parents, guardians, students, teachers, administrators, and community leaders all agreed that they saw positive results through the implementation of the TLIM program, such as a reduction in disciplinary issues, an increase in academic gains, and overall improved school culture.

Humphries, Cobia, and Ennis (2015) studied 9 different K-5 schools in the southeastern portion of the United States who met Title 1 eligibility and had been implementing TLIM for at least two years. They conducted an on-line teacher survey and measured discipline at the nine schools involved in the study. Although they did not find a significant decrease in discipline referrals through the survey, they did find that school climate and student satisfaction increased.

Laureanzo, Gail, and Daniels (2012) examined two elementary schools, one on the west coast and one on the east coast, which implemented a TLIM program. Using a focus group design, the authors found that when a school leader implemented TLIM and gave students, teachers, and parent’s opportunities for leadership, an entire school culture can turn around into a positive learning environment for all.

According to a report issued by the Cicero Institute (2016) *Principal Perspectives on Whole School Improvement Programs and The Leader in Me* just focusing on academics is not enough for sustainable school improvement. Rather, a whole school model focusing on school environment and culture will lead to an increase in student outcomes. The authors conducted a survey of 669 K-12 principals to gain their perspective on the use of the TLIM program. The authors found that principals promoted a positive school environment by including professional learning communities (PLC’s) and response to intervention (RTI) as intervention measures, as opposed to relying solely

on student discipline measures. Taking into consideration the social and emotional needs of students through implementing character education through TLIM program, the researchers concluded that principals who used the TLIM program viewed it as a success with respect to overall academic achievement and improving school culture.

The review of literature in this section in this chapter pointed out the school leader as the agent of change. Once a principal decides to implement TLIM program in their school they have been able to transform their school culture through embedding all stakeholders of the school community by having leadership roles, such as a staff lighthouse team, student lighthouse team. Furthermore a reduction in disciplinary issues occurs as all habits become ingrained in student actions and conversations such as habit 5 “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” Lastly principals typically see an increase academic gains as TLIM program becomes integrated into daily lessons and classroom expectations.

Summary

In Chapter two, the review of literature demonstrated research about character education programs and leadership. This review demonstrated that character education programs are successful for increasing parent/guardian involvement, and also that their success depends on implementation decisions made by the school leader. The researcher discussed the TLIM program, in particular, and reviewed studies that showed that schools that have implemented TLIM have experienced a positive school culture, an increase in student achievement, and a reduction in student disciplinary referrals. Because TLIM offers such promising results to schools, it is worth exploring how exactly school leaders have implemented the program and what lessons can be learned from their experiences.

The insights gained could be helpful to other school leaders who are trying to implement the program.

Chapter 3 describes the research methods for the study. Twelve elementary school principals were interviewed regarding their experiences of implementing TLIM in a large urban district in the Northeastern portion of the United States.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district.

The primary research question for this study is: How have principals implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district? In addition, the following research questions will be explored:

1. Why did the principals choose the TLIM program?
2. How are the principals measuring success of the TLIM program?
3. What challenges have the principals faced while implementing the TLIM program?
4. How have the principles adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures?

Research Design

A qualitative interview design is appropriate, given the exploratory goals of this study. Qualitative research is useful when the researcher wants to understand a particular phenomenon in its social context as Creswell (2014) states “This up-close information gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research (p.185). This means that the researcher gathers evidence from people who are likely to have particular insights on the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher is attempting to understand social behavior in a specific context, such as a natural setting, as well as when the researcher is the key instrument for data collection

and analysis. The research questions focused on learning from school principals about their experiences in their own schools, in their own words, and this question is best answered using qualitative research.

Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants (Creswell, 2014). According to Alemu (2016), qualitative research can be defined as “a type of research that utilizes qualitative evidence such as words from interviews, artifacts, and observations, with the purpose of understanding, exploring, explaining, and describing phenomenon” (p. 131). Qualitative evidence will be gathered from the principals through interviews with them, to understand, explore, explain, and describe the strategies these principals used to implement the TLIM program in their large, urban, elementary schools.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

Population. Participants were identified through speaking with the Leader in Me coach and training consultant assigned to the New York City area, who works directly with all schools in NYC that have implemented the Leader in Me program. The consultant was able to help identify eight elementary school principals in the NYC area who have implemented the Leader in Me program. Potential research participants were contacted via e-mail, and telephone.

According to Vogt and Johnson (2011), population is defined as “a group of persons (or institutions, events, or of the subjects of study) that one wants to describe or about which one wants to generalize” (p. 293). Given the purpose of this study, the population of interest is elementary school principals in a large urban school district who have implemented the TLIM program.

Sample and Sampling Method

A sample is “a group of subjects, or cases selected from a larger group in the hope that studying the smaller group (the sample) will reveal important information about the larger group (population)” (Vogt & Johnson, 2011, p. 347). The sample for this study was 12 elementary school principals in a large urban school district who have implemented the TLIM program.

The researcher used purposeful sampling. According to Creswell (2014), in qualitative research, the researcher must:

Identify the purposefully selected sites or individuals for the proposed study. The idea behind the qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual materials) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. (p. 189)

Using purposeful sampling, the researcher selected participants (principals) who are likely to provide information relevant to the study. The researcher used the following inclusion criteria: Subjects (a) must be principals of elementary schools in a large urban district, and (b) must have implemented the Leader in Me program in their schools within the last five years.

The participants were identified for this study by speaking with a representative of the TLIM company and obtaining contact information for elementary school principals in large urban school districts who have implemented the program. These principals were contacted and invited them to volunteer for this study. Twelve participants in the study were included in the study in order to gain insight on a broad array of experiences. Because the researcher used a qualitative design, the researcher is not selecting

participants for statistical power, but rather, for their ability to provide thick, rich descriptions of their experiences.

Instrumentation

The interview questions were developed by looking at previous research on this topic and then adapting and creating interview questions based on the research purpose and questions. The researcher developed open-ended questions around the key areas where there was an intention to explore the experiences of the principals. The researcher also had the questions reviewed by an expert panel of TLIM participants. The panel included an elementary school principal, lighthouse team leader as well as a consultant from TLIM program.

The interview protocol included six open-ended questions, to encourage the principals to share their own thoughts and experiences, and then followed up with probes on the answers the principals gave. Creswell (2014) noted that researchers can collect data in various ways in a study, such as interviews and obtaining documents. The interview protocol is the most appropriate. According to Vogt et al. (2012), the interview protocol can be defined as “A list of questions and instructions for how to ask them that interviewers use to guide their work. The questions and the instructions can range from very general to highly specific” (p. 343).

Data Collection

Once the researcher received IRB approval a regional representative from the TLIM company was contacted, who could help identify target elementary school principals who met the research criteria for the study. The researcher identified participants by speaking with the Leader in Me coach and training consultant assigned to

the New York City area, who works directly with all schools in NYC that have implemented the Leader in Me program. The consultant identified eight elementary school principals in the NYC area have implemented the Leader in Me program. The researcher contacted twenty-three potential research participants via e-mail, telephone as well as personal communication.

The researcher was able to obtain six participants from the list of eight potential interviewees provided by TLIM consultant. The next step the researcher choose was also to utilize the TLIM website itself and locate elementary school principals who met the research criteria and email and telephone them asking to participate. The researcher was able to obtain four participants via email and two participants from TLIM website. The researcher was able to obtain 12 participants through the recruitment process. Once a participant verbally agreed to partake in the study they were given a letter of informed consent. The researcher conducted ten interviews on site in each principal's elementary school and two interviews via telephone. The interviews did not last longer than 60 minutes. Before beginning the interviews, the interview process was explained to the principals, answered any questions they had, and obtained the necessary signed consent form. The interviews were recorded with a recording device. The researcher also made notes during the interviews of any follow up questions and insights.

During this research, all human subjects research considerations including confidentiality, informed consent, participant opt-out provisions, and safeguarding were employed. According to Vogt et al. (2012), confidentiality is defined as "a means of protecting the privacy of research participants by concealing their identities and shielding links to the data pertaining to them" (p. 338). The researcher assigned pseudonyms to the

participants, their schools, and their districts I kept all data collected in a locked file cabinet location in my home. The researcher will have the key to the file cabinet. Finally, after a period of 3 years, the researcher will dispose of all data collected for this research by shredding the notes and destroying the recording.

Data Analysis

The researcher had a set of twelve interviews that were transcribed. After each interview was transcribed, the researcher reviewed and listen to them with the audiotape. The researcher listened to the tape of each interview multiple times. In addition, the researcher took notes and listened to each interview in order to see what themes emerged. After the researcher reviewed them, they were sent back to the interview participants for member checking. None of the interview participants responded with any concerns or lack of clarity regarding the interview transcripts. Then the researcher used the qualitative data analysis program Nvivo to assist and analyze the data helping to organize and code the data looking for emerging themes and patterns.

According to Alemu (2016):

Qualitative researchers need to thoroughly document the process of organizing and presenting data. Qualitative data is collected through interview, observation, and document review and artifacts collection. These raw data have to be organized, coded, and categorized into themes. In the case of interviews, the audio/video data need to be transcribed before doing all these steps. (p. 62)

The researcher used a qualitative descriptive approach to data analysis and listened to the tape of each interview multiple times. The researcher took notes as he listened in order to capture themes that emerged. The researcher then transcribed the data

from each interview via Nvivo, a qualitative computer software data analysis program. The researcher used the qualitative data analysis program to assist the researcher in organizing and coding the data. This allowed the researcher to analyze content and code the data for themes that emerged from all 12 interviews.

Researcher Bias

Vogt et al. (2012) defined bias as “error in collecting or analyzing data that systematically over- or underestimates what the researcher is interested in studying” (p. 336). Because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, the researcher must be aware of, and take steps to reduce, researcher bias (Vogt et al., 2012). The researcher is aware that he has several possible sources of bias. The researcher was an administrator at a school in a large urban district where The Leader In Me program is being implemented.

Bias Reduction Strategies

In order to ensure bias reduction, the researcher reflected on his own background and how it might influence how the researcher conducted the interviews and interpreted the findings. This is called reflexivity (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the researcher pilot-tested the interview questions to ensure that they were appropriate for the research questions, that they did not suggest desired answers, and to check pacing of questions and overall time expectations of participants. The researcher was also mindful of his verbal and body language during the interviews, so as not to give any signals that would influence the principals’ answers. The researcher provided transparency through data and analytical means.

Validity

According to Alemu (2016) “Scientific research needs to be both reliable and valid. An instrument or a test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure.” (p.55) Vogt and Johnson (2011) defined validity as “the quality, accuracy, intersubjective agreement/approval, or truth value of or about some “object” of discussion (e.g., a measurement instrument, a research design, an inference, a claim, a conclusion)” (p. 415). The researcher maintained validity and reliability by following the written interview protocol (Creswell, 2014). The researcher asked the same questions of every participant in every interview. The researcher tape recorded the interviews and transcribed them for analysis (Creswell, p.195). The researcher provided the opportunity to the participants to complete member checking of all conducted interviews. Thick description is included when the researcher reports the findings.

The researcher gathered qualitative evidence from the principals through interviews with them, which enabled the researcher to understand, explore, explain, and describe the strategies these principals used to implement the TLIM program in their large, urban, elementary schools. Interview questions were reviewed by an expert panel of two people. The first person was a principal of an urban school who has implemented the TLIM program. The second person as the second expert is a teacher leader who oversees the TLIM program in a large urban school. Through interviews with 12 principals, the researcher gathered information about their experiences with implementing the TLIM program, including why and how the principals have implemented the program, how they are measuring success, what they have learned, how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures, what they would change, and

what advice they would give to other school leaders. The insights gained from this study will inform and assist other school leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs.

Reliability

According to Alemu (2016) “A research instrument should give consistent results if repeated in the same manner in similar context.” The researcher was able to ensure reliability by using the interview protocol with each participant as each participant answered the same questions throughout the interview process.

Summary

Chapter three included an introduction to the design and purpose of the study as well as the sample and sampling procedures. Chapter three also described the instrumentation, data collection method, and analysis of data. The researcher contacted all participants via e-mail and telephone. Interviews were scheduled during mutually agreed upon times and confidentiality agreements were signed. Authorization was requested to use the data collected and the opportunity for the participant to review the transcript for accuracy was provided. The participants were also able to discharge from the qualitative study at any time. The findings of the study are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district. Through interviews with 12 principals, the researcher gathered information about their experiences with implementing the TLIM program, including why and how the principals have implemented the program, how they measure the success of the program, and how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures. The insights gained from this study can inform and assist other school leaders in implementing TLIM and similar character education programs.

The overarching research question for this study was: How have principals implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district? Four specific research questions that guided this research are as follows:

- (1) Why did the principals choose the TLIM program?
- (2) How are the principals measuring the success of the TLIM program?
- (3) What challenges have the principals faced while implementing the TLIM program?
- (4) How have the principles adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures?

This chapter presents the findings of the research by addressing the four specific research questions separately. Findings for each research question are organized using themes that

emerged from the interviews. This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section provides a description of the participants and their years of experience with TLIM program. The second section addresses the findings for each of the four specific research questions. The third section is a summary of the data analysis.

Description of Participants

All participants were principals from large, urban elementary schools in the New York City area. Participants were recruited via communication through the TLIM program. Specifically, the TLIM program provided the researcher with a list of principals who were currently implementing the TLIM program. The researcher initially contacted 24 participants. From the initial 24 principals, a total of 12 elementary school principals agreed to participate in the current study. All participants were eager to participate, did not hesitate to answer any of the interview questions, and were open to discussing their experiences implementing the TLIM program in their schools. Participants were assured that their participation would be confidential and all signed the Letter of Informed Consent. All 12 participants agreed to be audio recorded during the course of the interview.

Table 2

Enrollment by Ethnicity (NYS School Report)

School	American Indian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	White	Multiracial
				Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander		
1	2%	23%	61%	0%	13%	1%
2	1%	23%	74%	0%	2%	NA
3	0%	1%	92%	5%	1%	NA
4	0%	2%	13%	6%	77%	2%
5	1%	10%	56%	30%	2%	0%
6	1%	0%	77%	21%	1%	NA
7	0%	2%	93%	5%	1%	0%
8	0%	1%	92%	7%	0%	0%
9	1%	89%	7%	1%	1%	0%
10	NA	14%	82%	2%	1%	1%
11	NA	6%	72%	6%	15%	1%
12	2%	17%	68%	11%	2%	0%

Table 3

Enrollment by other groups and suspension rates (NYS School Report)

School	Enrollment	ELLs	SWDs	FRL	Suspensions (2015-16)
1	254	8%	37%	72%	0%
2	648	26%	20%	97%	0%
3	391	35%	16%	94%	0%
4	695	4%	25%	30%	0%
5	1628	31%	16%	56%	0%
6	2022	41%	18%	58%	0%
7	1761	48%	21%	90%	0%
8	2000	58%	24%	72%	0%
9	274	NA	14%	45%	3%
10	375	17%	26%	79%	0%
11	147	29%	16%	89%	0%
12	1210	25%	24%	90%	0%

Data was collected using the interview process described in Chapter Three. Interviews lasted from 9:02 to 27:24 minutes, with an average interview time of 20:74 minutes. Ten out of the 12 interviews occurred in the participants' school office, while two of the interviews took place via telephone due to scheduling and logistical conflicts. To ensure confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used when creating the transcripts. Table 1 presents the date, interview method, and years of experience with TLIM for each participant.

Table 4

Interview Method and Duration of Interview for each Participant

Participant	Date of Interview	Interview Method	Years Implementing TLIM Program
P1	2/16/17	In-person	4
P2	2/17/17	In-person	5
P3	3/1/17	Telephone	5
P4	3/2/17	In-person	3
P5	3/2/17	In-person	3
P6	3/9/17	In-person	2
P7	3/9/17	In-person	2
P8	3/9/17	In-person	1
P9	3/21/17	Telephone	3
P10	3/28/17	In-person	4
P11	4/3/17	In-person	3
P12	4/6/17	In-person	2

As can be seen from Table 1, the majority of principals had been implementing the TLIM program for 2-3 years ($n = 7$); a few had been implementing the program for 4-5 years ($n = 4$); while only one had been implementing the program for a single year.

Presentation of the Data

To address the overarching research question and four specific research questions, six primary interview questions were asked (see Appendix E). Using a transcription service, the researcher had the interviews transcribed. The interview data were coded and relevant themes were identified for each of the four research questions. A total of 9 themes were identified, with 11 underlying patterns. The presentation of the results is

organized by the four research questions. The themes relevant to each research question are supported by quotations from individual participants.

Research Question One

Research question one was: Why did the principals choose the TLIM character education program? Interview questions 1, 1a, 1b, and 1c were primarily used to address research question one (see Appendix E). However, participants' responses to other interview questions also addressed this research question. Therefore, responses to other interview questions that addressed research question one were also incorporated during analysis. A total of three themes relevant to research question one were discovered.

Theme One: Comparison of Other Character Education Programs

Theme Two: All Inclusive (students, teachers, parents, staff).

Theme Three: TLIM program cost is high.

Table 5 presents the total number of participants that discussed each of the three themes.

Table 5

Number of Participants Discussing Each Theme for Research Question One

Themes	Number of Participants
Comparison of Other Character Education Programs	8
All Inclusive	7
Cost	6

Theme one: Comparison of other character education programs. The first theme that emerged from analyzing the data was *Comparison of Other Character Education Programs*. When participants discussed why they chose TLIM, many of the

participants compared TLIM to other programs. Eight of the 12 participants discussed other programs. Some of the other programs included but were not limited to, Habits of the Mind, Brain Education, 4 R's Program, Restorative Justice, Character Counts, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). For example, when comparing TLIM to other programs, P1 compared TLIM to the habits of the mind program they were already implementing. However, once learning about TLIM program, P1 was eager to incorporate TLIM at her school. As P1 states: "I was introduced to the Leader in Me Program at a principal's meeting 4 years ago, and I'm like wow! This is the same ideals but it's more visible." Additionally P8 tried a lot of character education programs around "good morals, and building values." Similar to P1, P8 heard about TLIM from fellow colleagues and attended a TLIM company presentation at a principals meeting. Regarding the presentation and P8's decision on choosing TLIM when compared to other programs, P8 stated that the presentation, "was by The Leader Me but it happened to have been at a principals meeting, and it had a lot of backing from other principals that are colleagues of mine."

Likewise, P2 compared TLIM to other programs such as brain education, a program that focuses on individual student learning, but according to P2, did not have a comprehensive whole school approach. According to P2, TLIM program was the "glue" that would pull the school community together, and compared TLIM to having a music scale that can harmonize his school community. As P2 stated:

The Leader in Me served as that foundation, that scale, if you know about music and the theory of the chords, that helps us harmonize and put it all together... The Leader in Me, fits like a glove and aligns perfectly with the vision.

When comparing TLIM to other programs, P9 and P10 felt TLIM would complement existing programs they had within their school buildings. For example, when looking at other character education programs P9 stated “We also adopted the International Baccalaureate learner profile, because that is based on character traits that we thought are important for our scholars when they graduate 21st century learners.” P9 further added that “we found that the 7 habits and the IB learner profile are complementary.”

According to P10, when comparing TLIM to other programs, P10 believed it was a great fit for her school because TLIM program would enhance what was already taking place at her school. As P10 stated: “at the time, we’re a multicultural school. We were a social magnet school, multicultural through social studies and the arts.” P10 further noted that “this was kind of hand-in-hand with what we were doing already”.

When P11 was comparing programs, she considered restorative justice and character counts as possible programs. In addition, P7 pointed out that, “We were already implementing Habits of the Mind but that's just a way of thinking. There's nothing visual about that.” P7 further discussed that because the school was already implementing the Habits of the Mind program, they chose the Leader in Me program because it “went along with the Habits of the Mind program.” This was similar to P8 and P9’s comparisons of enhancing existing programs. Additionally, P7 was attracted to the TLIM program, as compared to other programs, due to the ability of TLIM to facilitate building leadership in the school. P7 stated that,

The Leader in Me kind of was coming into its being in the district level, so we looked at that, and it made more sense, it fit more with what we were trying to do which is build leadership in the school. So that's how that came about.

When comparing TLIM to other programs, P12 was looking for a program that would have a whole school approach as well. As P12 stated:

We looked at Caring Kids or Caring Communities. We looked at one more, but it was a couple of years ago and I can't recall the name. It was all focused on students. It wasn't focused on whole building transformation...And it had a staff component and a parent component with it as well.

In contrast, four of the participants did not look at other character education programs. The participants reported that they did not look at other programs for various reasons. For example, P4 began working during the 2015-2016 school year when TLIM was already in its third year at her school. P5 stated that she did not look at other programs because TLIM "had all the parts we needed for character education, for leadership. It even has bullying in there. It has everything in it that we need." P6 did not look at any other programs because according to P6 TLIM:

Had a solid reputation. It did allow for stakeholders to be involved, and I knew it was something that would more easily be infused into a teacher's school day than other standalone curriculums that require a lot from teachers outside of what they normally do.

Additionally, P3 did not look at any other additional programs;

I didn't specifically look at other programs. We didn't analyze other programs. What I knew was out there was something that I knew wasn't fit for us. I felt that those programs that I was aware of, without even looking to deeply into them, they were very superficial. And that's not what I was looking for.

To summarize, many of the principals chose TLIM after comparing it to other character education programs. Some principals spoke of how they chose TLIM because it met specific goals or needs that they had and others choose TLIM based on its reputation and its all-inclusive approach to incorporating the entire school community.

Theme two: All inclusive. The second theme that emerged when assessing the first research question was the *All Inclusive* theme. The *All Inclusive* theme refers to a feature of TLIM. The program not only focuses on the students, but also incorporates teachers, parents, and the staff. This theme seemed to emerge throughout the interviews. However, this section focuses solely on how this theme relates to research question one. When asked why they chose to implement TLIM, seven participants indicated that they were impressed with how TLIM incorporates staff and parents, not just students. For example, P10 stated, "I thought it was great. It was not only for the students, it was for the teachers, it was for the parents. I thought it was for the whole community." P12 commented, "TLIM had a lot of professional development for the staff in improving their personal lives. So it was a good match for that and TLIM had a staff component and parent component with it as well." P7 also touched on this theme, indicating that it was important to involve everyone in the building in an effort to build a culture of leadership:

I was having issues with the staff primarily and I realized by the end of my second year that we really needed to focus in on the teachers building up their relationship capacity. So that's why we chose The Leader in Me program.

P6 mentioned the importance of involving all stakeholders. She noted that TLIM:

Has a solid reputation. It did allow for all stakeholders to be involved, and I knew it was something that would more easily be infused into a teacher's school day than other standalone curriculums that require a lot from teachers outside of what they normally do.

To summarize the findings regarding theme two, many principals chose TLIM because the program involved other stakeholders in the school community, such as staff and parents, and not just students.

Theme three: Cost of program. The third theme that emerged in regards to why the principals chose the Leader in Me Program, was the *Cost of the Program*. This theme has both positive and negative aspects. Six of the twelve participants discussed how costly the program was. For example, P2 stated that, "initially, I had no idea how expensive that was. I couldn't believe, all the money that was required." Both P6 and P12 mentioned that TLIM is currently a non-contracted New York City Department of Education vendor, thus making a purchase for the program difficult as they are not able to fund the program through specific budget allocations. P12 talked about the cost of the whole program, noting that the New York City Department of education's budget computer system would not allow her make additional large purchases and expressed

frustrations with the fact that TLIM program was not a contracted NYC DOE vendor.

P12 continued:

I still owe them \$37,000. So I had to go through this whole hoop process to get that approved. And then I said, “We can’t do anything else until next year with them.” So officially, we’re still a Leader in Me school, so that’s a major challenge. They need to become a contracted vendor.

In contrast, five participants stated that they were able to receive a grant to implement the program. P4 pointed out that:

A grant was written to get the funding to help the program. So every year, we have to be resubmitted so that we can have all the materials and the coaching days and everything to support the program. So having that grant, we were able to involve all of the stakeholders in the implementation of the program.

Additionally, P10 was initially able to begin the TLIM through a grant opportunity. As P10 noted, “it was actually a grant given to our school.” P10 believed that having a TLIM grant would build into what her school was doing already. As P10 commented further:

I saw the seven habits, it was interesting. It didn’t hurt. It could only enhance what we were building on, which was leadership. And the price was right, so I took it. I spoke to the cabinet, they agreed to it...I thought it was great. It was for not only the students, it was for the teachers, it was for the parents. I thought it was for the whole community.

To summarize theme three, although participants found TLIM to be costly, many principals still choose this program because they were able to receive grants for funding. It is important to note that even with the participants mentioning cost as an issue or that the cost was high, all participants were still able to implement the TLIM program.

To summarize the findings for the first research question, many of the principals indicated that they compared the TLIM program to other similar programs, but still chose TLIM, because it met their specific needs or goals. They also chose TLIM because it was All Inclusive, meaning it involved not just the students, but also the administrators, staff, and parents. The participants also discussed program cost. Although some noted the cost was substantial, all participants still chose the TLIM. For some principals, they could do this because there were opportunities for grants. Others expressed a need for TLIM to be a contracted vendor, so that it would be easier for them to use the program. Based on the findings, the decision to choose the TLIM seemed to stem from the program offering an all-inclusive approach that met specific needs, which other programs did not incorporate.

Research Question Two

Research question two was: How are principals measuring success of the TLIM program?

Interview questions 3, 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d, were used to address this research question (see Appendix E). However, some participants' responses to other interview questions also addressed this research question. Regarding research question two, two themes emerged:

Theme One: Evaluation to Measure Success

Theme Two: Decrease in Student Suspension Rates

Table 6

Number of Participants Discussing Each Theme for Research Question Two

Themes	Number of Participants
Evaluation to Measure Success	12
Decrease in Student Suspension Rates	6

Theme one: Evaluation to Measure Success. The first theme that emerged in regards to how the principals measured success in the Leader in Me Program was *Evaluation to Measure Success*. All 12 participants discussed aspects of using evaluation to measure success. More specifically, four patterns developed within this theme. The four patterns were: *Adult Evaluation*, *Student Evaluation*, *Concrete Evaluation*, and *External Evaluation*. Each of the four patterns are discussed in detail below.

Pattern 1.1: Student evaluation. Student evaluation refers to the assessment and evaluation of the students. From the data, six out of 12 participants discussed aspects of student evaluation. These six participants referred to the importance of measuring success from student evidence and how students were demonstrating knowledge of and implementing aspects of TLIM program into their academic and social life, while the principals implemented TLIM in their schools. P1 stated that:

The way we measure success is listening to the students speaking to each other. When you ask them, "Are you being proactive, are you being a leader, are you thinking win, win?," and there's no blank looks on their face. They actually know what you're talking about.

Regarding student evidence, P3 also commented on paying attention to how students spoke to each other during recess and throughout the school day:

If I hear the kids in the playground and they've settled something, thinking win-win, which is Habit 4, I'm like, "Yes. It's becoming part of who they are." I think it's just like a day-to-day feeling of taking that kind of measure, even among ourselves as a staff.

Principals also found evidence of student success through students' writing and the leadership notebooks. As P3 mentioned, "The leadership notebook allows for each student to track his or her own personal celebrations. So that happens all the time." P10 referred to "binders" as a source of evidence. "Binders" is another name for leadership notebooks. Leadership notebooks are books in which each student is responsible for documenting their growth throughout the year, demonstrating how they are infusing each of the 7 habits into their academics. P10 noted that evidence of student success included students being able to set goals and evaluate themselves through the leadership notebooks. As P10 stated, "In reference to The Leader in Me, the students have The Leader in Me binders where the students themselves set their goals with a time frame."

According to P4, another aspect of measuring student success in TLIM is the analysis of disciplinary data through the NYC DOE online occurrence reporting system (OORS). According to P4, the OORS report data helps the administrators identify students who need additional attention:

We're constantly looking at the data from our OORS reports and then going deeper, looking at those specific students and then speaking with those teachers

and going into how the habits [seven habits of TLIM] and the work that they're doing with the children.

One component of P12's approach to measuring student success in the TLIM program is to examine how students are using TLIM and Seven Habits language in their daily conversations, both socially and academically. According to P12, success is measured by;

Starting to use the language. And we tied it into our reorganization, where we give out star tickets for completing homework packets, being a leader in school, and the kids are just starting to embrace the different parts of it, beginning with the end in mind, putting first things first, seek first to understand now...so we have seen the language coming to fruition in the school.

P5 offered another example of student success in the TLIM program: public recognition. P5 implemented whole building "shout outs for those students who have been successful at demonstrating aspects of TLIM throughout the week." P5 continued by stating, "we have shout outs that we give on Fridays. The teachers write it on the shout out board and then we say it on Fridays."

All elementary school principals, who have implemented TLIM in their schools, evaluated student success as one measure of program success. Principals looked for evidence of student success in the language the students used. They noted whether students were adopting and using the language of TLIM in their day-to-day interactions. Additionally, some principals such as P4, P12, P7, and P9 measured student success of TLIM through hard data such as the OORS reports.

Pattern 1.2: Concrete evaluation. Concrete evaluation refers to a measurable quantitative way to measure data. From the data, 5 out of 12 participants discussed aspects of concrete evaluation.

The Lighthouse Rubric is an evaluation system created by TLIM Company, which allows principals, Lighthouse team members, and TLIM to measure the program at each TLIM school. Principals can use The Lighthouse Rubric (Appendix F) as hard data to measure the success of TLIM program at each school. According to TLIM criteria, if a school effectively demonstrates all nine TLIM components outlined in the Lighthouse Rubric consecutively for three years that school can reach “Lighthouse status.” (The Leader in Me, 2017).

Many of the participants referred to the Lighthouse Rubric as a means to measure TLIM success concretely within their school buildings. For example, according to P3:

[W]e do use the Lighthouse Rubric, which is relatively new. The first system that was given to us was extremely cumbersome. It had 126 items on it. It was huge. And they have just come out with a new system, just, I believe, last spring and we immediately took that on, which we didn't have to because they said we really were under the old system. But I liked that system much better, because it looks at everything under three large domains and then everything filters through there. So part of our work this year has been really looking at that rubric, creating what are called action teams. Everybody on staff joins a team and then they're responsible for parts of the rubric. So that keeps us moving along.

After implementing TLIM over the past five years, P4 was in the process of applying for Lighthouse status for her school. P4 used the lighthouse rubric as a measure to “ensure the effectiveness of the program” within her school in order to reach lighthouse status.

In addition to using the TLIM Lighthouse Rubric as a concrete evaluation system, many principals used scoreboards, as well as staff and student surveys, to measure the impact TLIM was having on their school communities. P5 indicated that:

We have a scoreboard, which has our important goals on it, and the scoreboard we see how far we're going. And also, each classroom has their own goals and they see how far they're going, because it goes up and down on the scoreboard.

P6 emphasized that she relied on various reports for concrete data on success. In addition to the NYC department of education’s yearly survey, P6 used data from an in house self-administered survey to measure concrete results. P6 said that:

“In October I issued my own anonymous learning environment survey which had similar questions to the one that gets issued every March by the New York City Department of Education, and there was a problem with trust in the building so I was trying to attack that.”

Although P7 prefers the visible “feel of the building” such as seeing student work posted in the hallway, he used surveys as one component for measuring student and staff success with TLIM in their school. As P7 pointed out that,

“Surveys, those types of measurements, are things that we do in the building that we kind of measure the success”.

In summary, Pattern 1.2, “concrete evaluations,” indicates that 5 out of the 12 participants included concrete data as part of their overall measure of success for TLIM within their schools. They obtained concrete data through school surveys, state exam scores, and self-implemented surveys.

Pattern 1.3: Adult evaluation. Adult evaluation refers to the assessment and evaluation of the staff and administrators. The participants in this study made it clear that the TLIM program allows opportunities for staff members to take leadership positions and evaluate themselves on their work related to implementing, maintaining, and growing the school as a TLIM community. From the data, three out of 12 participants discussed aspects of evaluation from the adults/staff perspective. P1’s point of view was measuring the success of TLIM from the perspective that adult action regarding disciplinary referrals went down. P1 noted that there were “no superintendent suspensions in the last three years.” On the other hand, P3 measured the success of TLIM through staff relationships. P3 pointed out the importance of successful and healthy relationships among the staff themselves, as well as with students. In essence, this is reflective of TLIM program’s Habit 5, which is “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” P3 continued by asking, “How are we handling ourselves with each other? Or how are we dealing with the kids? Or how are we dealing with the parents? Are we really listening?” P4 mentioned the importance of staff implementing the TLIM within their work as well. Additionally, as a way of assessing, P4 looks to see that students and teachers are using the language of the 7 habits.

Pattern 1.4: External evaluation. External evaluation refers to an outsider’s point of view and evaluation of each school by a person who was not an employee or member

of the school community (e.g., parent, teacher, or administrator). In the context of this study, external evaluation is defined as TLIM consultants and/coaches who help train staff and administrators on implementing and growing the program within the school. As part of being a TLIM school, TLIM consultants evaluate the school using a Lighthouse Rubric.

From the data, two out of 12 participants discussed aspects of external evaluation. P3 found that the TLIM coaching experiences were helpful when measuring success due to the outside lens the external coach provided. P3 stated:

Our coach visits certainly provide us with insight from an outside person who's not here all the time. Our coaching days with people in The Leader in Me community, you gauge, you have a sense of where you are when you talk to everyone else in the process.

P6, a principal of a very large school, broke the school community down into separate academies and then used concrete data from each academy to measure the success of TLIM as a whole in the building. As P6 stated:

We have one large school Lighthouse team, which is made up of equal parts of each of my academies - lighthouse teams - so there are three academies, and each academy has a lead for their lighthouse. And then those three leads meet with me and the APs regularly to share information, so we're all on the same page.

To summarize, participants measured the success of TLIM in a variety of ways across schools. Multiple patterns emerged within the theme of Evaluation to measure success. The Evaluation to Measure Success theme contained four patterns: student

evaluation, concrete evaluation, adult evaluation, and external evaluation. Pattern 1.1, student evaluation, was mentioned by six of the 12 participants. Pattern 1.2, concrete evaluation, was mentioned by five out of 12 participants. Three out of the 12 participants mentioned Pattern 1.3, adult evaluation; and two out of 12 participants mentioned pattern 1.4, external evaluation.

Theme two: Decrease in suspension rates.

Pattern 2.1. Reduced disciplinary incidents. Six out of 12 principals discussed their school's suspension rate as a way of measuring success of the TLIM program in their schools. Two out of 12 participants mentioned that since implementing TLIM in their schools they have seen a reduction in disciplinary incidents. For example, P1 stated that "we've had zero superintendent suspensions in three years." Another example of reduced disciplinary incidents comes from P2 who implied that disciplinary incidents at his school have been reduced since implementing TLIM. As P2 stated; "in terms of this year, we only had one suspension for the whole year, and that comes from, maybe 10 that we had last year." P5 provided another example of a reduction in suspensions since implementing TLIM: "We have not suspended anyone this year, and I guess it's calmed down, because last year we have maybe three suspensions. We really don't have issues." P10 provided another example of the reduction of suspensions since becoming a TLIM school. As P10 commented:

We have virtually no suspensions. We've had one or two of what we call cooling-off days, but never really any hard-core suspensions since we've implemented [TLIM]. And in fact, I wrote a letter of support to The Leader in Me program,

also to the New York City Department of Education that they would know the impact it had on our community.

P4 also commented that since implementing TLIM, “[w]e don't generally have major discipline issues that would warrant a suspension. There are occurrences, but not going to the suspension level, maybe single digits, we're talking, for a school year.”

Although P6 mentioned that suspension was not an issue in her school, P6 pointed out that overall discipline issues have dropped dramatically since implementing TLIM. P6 expressed that, “suspensions were not an issue here, but we are down 57% out of our total number of OORS incidents.” Likewise, P12 mentioned that disciplinary issues that warranted suspensions were never a problem at the school; however, overall disciplinary infractions have been reduced drastically since becoming a TLIM school. P12 disclosed that, “what has decreased are the minor incidents, the pushing, the shoving, that kind of stuff, so that’s decreased.”

In summary, the findings for the second research question demonstrate that the participants measured the success of the TLIM program in a variety of ways. Some principals evaluated success by evaluating evidence from students, adults, concrete measures, and external sources. Some principals noted that TLIM reduced major disciplinary infractions, such as suspension, in their schools, and also reduced overall minor disciplinary incidents.

Research Question Three

Research question three asked: What challenges have the principals faced while implementing the TLIM program? A number of principals reported that they faced challenges with implementation and teacher buy-in. See Table 7.

Table 7

Number of Participants Discussing Each Theme for Research Question Three

Themes	Number of Participants
Implementation	10
Teacher Buy-In	6

Theme one: Implementation Each principal was able to implement and tailor TLIM program in their school building to meet the needs of each of their schools. The following patterns emerged regarding TLIM implementation such as pattern 1.1 change in positive school culture, pattern 1.2 previous knowledge of TLIM program as some principals came from LIM schools, pattern 1.3 grant funding provided by TLIM Company, and pattern 1.4 implementing TLIM program through training by each grade level.

Pattern 1.1. Change in positive school culture Change in positive school culture correlates directly to research question three, *what challenges have principals faced while implementing TLIM program?* Many principals chose to implement TLIM program to change the culture of their schools not only for their students but for the staff as well. For example, P6 was a second-year principal whose school had a history of high turnover and low staff morale. Previously, P6 was an assistant principal at a school where TLIM was implemented and witnessed the positive change in school culture that took place with the

program. Once P6 became principal, she knew implementing TLIM would bring about a much-needed boost in positive school culture. As P6 stated, “I came from a school that was embracing The Leader in Me and I saw the benefits on many levels and thought it would be a great fit for this building.” Likewise, P7 indicated that he chose TLIM because he/she “realized there was a culture problem in the building.” Additionally, P7 thought it was important to build relationships with all staff members as well as for students with students, and specifically among teachers. P7 chose TLIM as a way to build up relationship capacity.

Pattern 1.2 Previous experience with a TLIM school Three of the twelve participants had previous experience with TLIM. Two participants had worked at schools where TLIM was implemented and the third principal had extensive experience with TLIM as well as Franklin Covey’s 7 habits. For example, P5 stated that she: “knew about The Leader in Me program from my previous school.” Likewise, P6 stated, “I also came from a school that was embracing The Leader in Me, and I saw the benefits on many levels and thought it would be a great fit for this building.” P9 also used the 7 Habits from working in previous schools and implemented TLIM in a new school. As P9 stated, “I taught to the 7 habits. And then when I founded a school, I discovered that they had The Leader in Me program as a formalized program for a school, so we adopted it immediately”.

Pattern 1.3 TLIM grant funding. The cost of implementing TLIM program is expensive for most NYC elementary school principals. At the time of the study, TLIM program was not a NYC department of education vendor. Principals, who wanted to implement and purchase the program, had to do so out of their individualized school

budgets which cost more as opposed to purchasing a character education program from an authorized NYCDOE vendor. Principals who participated in the study expressed the cost of TLIM as a challenge when obtaining and implementing TLIM within their schools. However, many principals are eligible for grant funding through the Franklin Covey foundation based on need, and student body socio-economic status. Six out of twelve participants mentioned grant funding as a deciding factor as allowing them to implement TLIM in their schools. As P5 stated:

Since I had already known the people who were part of the program and who were part of the grant, they called me and said, “would I be interested that the grant was open again.” I applied for the grant, then I got it.

Likewise, P10 was able to receive a grant to implement TLIM. As P10 indicated to his staff that in:

Early September, I explained to them that there was a grant that the school received. I explained to them more or less what it was all about. I encouraged them also to go do research. And then of course, we had coaching days which you needed to provide them time during the day.

Having secured the grant funding, P10 provided her staff time during the day for professional development to implement TLIM in their school.

Pattern 1.4 Professional development by grade level. Other challenges principals faced, while implementing TLIM program in their schools, were not only cost, but the logistical space to provide professional development for an entire school staff. This became more costly and timely as many large urban elementary schools did not physically have the space needed to train the staff at one time and/day. An additional

challenge for principals was implementing a new program into their buildings with greater fidelity by incorporating one grade at a time, or issuing a habit per grade. In order to address this challenge, three out of twelve principals provided professional development by grade level.

The first example of a principal who implemented TLIM by grade level was P10. P10 stated “I scheduled time for them to meet as a grade, and I also set aside a location so they can stay after school so that the coach can come.” This was important for P10 because it allowed logistical space and a more intimate setting for professional development to occur, especially when done after school hours. Likewise, P2 implemented the program grade by grade due to the size of the building and large student population. P2 expressed: “It is a big building, and I was thinking, “how do we do this that would make sense?” P2 went on to say that he added one of the seven habits to each specific grade level to focus on as a manageable way to implement the program. Another example of implementing TLIM by grade level came from P12. P12 recognized the need to implement the program through piloting it first with one grade during the 2015-2016 school year then going school wide. As P12 commented “we piloted it last year with the fourth grade team, and based on their feedback, we presented it to the entire school.” After the school wide presentation during the 2015-2016 school year, P12 decided to implement TLIM school wide during the 2016-2017 school year. Over the summer, P12 began collaborating with TLIM company and her staff to implement the program school wide for the September 2017-2018 school year. P12 then implemented TLIM program throughout her school by having professional development that included parents and on

Election Day and with a light house team, and the light house team developed a pacing calendar to implement the habits throughout the year.

One outlier that was that P4 had a unique experience unlike the other 11 participants. P4 did not initially initiate the program. P4 had become principal of a school that had already implemented TLIM. P4 pointed out that “the leader in me program had already started. It was in year three, going into year four of the program, so it was already there. So I can’t speak to why it originated.”

Theme two: Teacher buy-in. When planning a new school initiative and providing a staff professional development on a topic, a building administrator is always trying to ensure a majority of staff buy-in of the new initiative presented to them. A program, such as TLIM, or any other program and/or policy a principal is implementing in his/her school will not be effective unless they have a majority of the staff buy-in to implement effectively the new program and/or policy.

While implementing any new program into a school community can be a challenge, the majority of participants in this study had a smooth transition, for the most part. Although some of the interview questions invited discussion of possible challenges of implementing TLIM, many of the participants focused on positive experiences throughout the implementation process. Six of the twelve participants had little push back from staff from the beginning of the implementation process, indicating staff buy-in. The other half of the participants mentioned some minor resistance, but not a single participant experienced major push back or resistance when introducing and/or implementing the program. P9 attributed their success with staff-buy-in to the TLIM coach. P9 stated that, “Yes. We had a wonderful leader in the coach, who did a

phenomenal job in introducing it to our community at large.” Likewise, P10 had virtually no teacher resistance and they were eager to participate in TLIM coaching and training process.

Some of the resistance principals mentioned was due to a “few” staff members who presented some minor resistance to implementing TLIM in their schools. P3 mentioned that:

The biggest challenge was the few staff members who felt that the whole notion of introducing a process to develop leadership wasn't necessary.

Two, they felt like, "What kind of added work are you giving us?" So that came from the staff. That was a very small number of teachers.

P3 later added: “the teachers, there were some-- a little bit of resistance from a few, but it wasn't an overwhelming number. So to me, it was negligible.”

P7 had a similar experience of minor staff push back. He stated that teachers questioned him, asking:

What are we supposed to do with this? How are we supposed to work this in? What does this mean for us? You mean I got to take out more time, this is a new thing I've got to worry about, it's a fad, you'll have it for a while and then it'll go away. So those are [pushback complaints], and I'm talking primarily the teachers.

P5 also faced resistance from some staff members: “So one challenge was the teachers who were saying, "This is just another program. What are we doing? More work." P5 added, “we did have some teachers who were not interested and the other teachers spoke to them, and they did come around.” P12 and P7 also noted that teacher

buy-in was a factor to consider when implementing TLIM. As P12 said: “Not 100%, because you always have your naysayers for everything.” Although some of the principals had minor challenges with teacher buy-in, ultimately they were able to implement TLIM with little resistance and increase staff morale and buy-in with celebrations, such as after school get togethers, and staff shout outs and staff recognition.

In summary, the vast majority of principals expressed positive experiences in receiving teacher/staff buy-in for TLIM. However, the following themes and sub themes did emerge from the data, such as in Pattern 1.1 in which change in positive school culture was mentioned by participants P7 and P6. In Pattern 1.2, the fact that coming from a LIM school helped to better understand the program was mentioned by principals P5, P6, and P9. In Pattern 1.3, grants were mentioned by principals P5 and P10. In Pattern 1.4, principals who implemented through training by grade level was mentioned by participants P2, P10, and P12. Lastly, for theme two “teacher buy” six of the 12 participants had virtually no push back when implementing TLIM in their schools, of those principals who had pushback it was minor resistance such as P3, P7, and P5.

Research Question Four

Research question four asked: How have the principals adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures? A number of principals reported how they adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures. Specifically, they discussed how they celebrated success and provided orientation. See Table 8.

Table 8

Number of Participants Discussing Each Theme for Research Question Four

Themes	Number of Participants
Celebrating Success	6
Orientation	4

Theme one: Celebrating success. Celebrations are an important component of TLIM that directly correlates to research question four: *How have principals adapted TLIM program for their own school environment and cultures?*

Six of the 12 participants discussed aspects of celebrating success. Principals defined and celebrated success in many ways, from the individual student and staff level to larger whole school recognition activities through school wide assemblies and student and staff shout outs. As P10 indicated:

We celebrate here for small and the big things. We have the publishing parties, we have the leadership assemblies, and we have the basketball intramurals. We're always celebrating, whether it's school-wide or at Monday PDs, we celebrate teachers, grandkids, graduation. We're one big family here. We take the good and the bad together and we acknowledge.

Likewise, P3 celebrated success in a variety of ways, from individual compliments to monthly celebrations. As P3 stated:

Monthly, we have leader of the month breakfasts, where those children that have been selected by their classroom teachers are recognized for their leadership; the visible signs of a leadership in the classroom... If the kids get a compliment, there's another compliment. They keep track of it. And all of that is part of that idea of measuring the success of how we're growing forward.

P4 celebrated on a weekly basis through student-to-student accountability and goal-setting, as well as student and staff shout outs. P4 expressed that:

Once a week, there's a dedicated period to The Leader in Me, so that is a time for students to work in that leadership notebook and share with one another. They have accountability partners, they have buddies in various grades. So the celebrations of their success, of them reaching certain goals that they've set, both personal goals and team-wide goals and where we are in achieving them, are definitely celebrated. Any time we have visitors in the building the program is highlighted and children get to speak to the service projects, and again, their personal and school-wide goals that they're working on.

P6, as a building leader of a large school, celebrated within each of the school's academies. As P6 stated:

We've now evolved into doing academy celebrations. This was not something that was typical here, and it was a big division between

teachers and administration. So by trying to bridge that, we're now coming up with monthly staff events, so next week we have a workshop planned after school at Miller's to go have some appetizers, and talk, and socialize. And teachers are planning different luncheons, and we're doing an end of the year tailgating party in the backyard where we're going to have a triathlon. That includes a baby pool, and tricycles, and some running.

In summary, celebrations are a big part of a principal's strategy for adapting TLIM to the culture of his or her school. Six of the 12 participants mentioned that celebrations have become a part of the process of incorporating TLIM into their school.

Theme two: TLIM orientation. Orientation of TLIM program is a big part of the implementation process for any principal bringing TLIM into their schools. How each principal rolls out the implementation process is determined by budget, size of their schools, and cultural needs of each building (ex: one grade at a time). Thus each principal must adapt and tailor the orientation process to meet their individual school needs with the resources they have. As the data has indicated, the orientation process relates directly to research question four: *How have the principal's adapted TLIM program for their own school environment and cultures?* Four participants discussed aspects of an initial orientation. According to the TLIM program, the initial orientation process is known as Vision Day. Vision Day is defined as:

Vision Day* and 7 Habits Signature Training: Teachers, para educators and a small core team of parents take part in 3 days of summer training by Franklin Covey on the 7 Habits of Highly Successful People, and plan

how we can integrate these into our own lives and our school. (The Leader In Me, 2017)

Aspects of orientation seemed to be very similar across schools, such as Opening Day PD and Election Day PD, which are built into the NYC school system calendar for professional development days throughout the academic school year.

For TLIM, P3 indicated that “there was an initial orientation of staff in the spring. There was intensive work with the staff the following fall at the beginning of the school year.” P3 continued by stating they had an initial TLIM orientation, emphasizing, “we definitely had one (TLIM orientation) when we first implemented it, like at PTA meetings and things.” P4 mentioned that:

Initially there was (a TLIM orientation) and everyone had the training. But now, like I had said, anyone coming in, they go for that Vision Day training. We want to make sure that they are comfortable with it and are prepared to implement it.

Likewise, P5 stated:

When we had the orientation, it was a three day training. It was over the summer and the teachers volunteered to come in. So, over the summer 90% of the teachers came in, and the 10% that didn't come in was because they were on vacation. So, they were trained on a weekend in September.

Additionally P6 mentioned having TLIM orientation as the first step on day one of the school year for staff members. P6 commented:

We then did a kick-off in September at our first faculty meeting, on the first day back, then right away I was able to secure dates with The Leader

in Me to come in and do the Seven Habits training. So, before the month of September ended, my teachers were all Seven Habits trained.

In summary, orientation of TLIM program is an important component of implementing the program into the culture of his or her school. 4 of the 12 participants mentioned that TLIM orientation was a part of the process of incorporating TLIM into their school.

Summary

Chapter four presented the findings for the study. Findings were based on interview data from the 12 principals who shared their experiences of implementing TLIM in a large urban setting. Participants discussed why and how they have implemented the TLIM program, how they measured success, and how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures. For research question one, *why did the principals choose TLIM program?* Three themes emerged. The first theme was that principals compared TLIM to other programs, the second theme was the cost of TLIM program, and the third was the all-inclusive approach of TLIM program. The first theme *Comparison of Other Character Education Programs* is where participants discussed why they chose TLIM. Many of the participants compared TLIM to other programs and decided that TLIM program had all the components they were looking to build and incorporate into their schools. The second theme that emerged from research question one was *cost of the program*. Many of the participants expressed how expensive the program was and their ability to incorporate the cost of TLIM into their annual individual school budgets.

For research question two, *How are principals measuring success of TLIM program?* Two themes emerged. The first theme was *evaluation*. Principals based evaluation of TLIM program based on students' academic achievement, adult evaluation of staff participation, as well as external evaluation from TLIM company. The second theme that emerged from research question two was *suspension*. Principals evaluated TLIM in part based on student suspensions and disciplinary incident rates. For research question three *what challenges have the principals faced while implementing the TLIM program?* Two themes emerged. The first theme was *implementation*. Each principal was able to implement and tailor TLIM program in their school building to meet the needs of each of their schools, this included building size, grade level, parent/guardian participation etc. The second theme that emerged from research question three was *teacher buy-in*. A program, such as TLIM, or any other program and/or policy a principal is implementing in his/her school will not be effective unless they have a majority of the staff buy-in to effectively implement the new program and/or policy.

The final research question, question four, *how have the principals adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures?* Two themes emerged from the data. The first theme was *celebrating success* and the second theme was *orientation* of TLIM program. Principals characterized celebrating success in many ways, from the individual student and staff level, to larger whole school recognition activities through school wide assemblies and student and staff shout outs. The second theme of research question two, *orientation*. Orientation of TLIM program is a big part of the implementation process for any principal bringing TLIM into their schools. How each principal rolls out the implementation process is determined by budget, size of their

schools, and cultural needs of each building. The next and final chapter will include the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 includes the summary of findings based on the researcher's analysis of data, conclusions and recommendations for future study in connection with the research questions, as well as an arrangement of relevant themes that emerged from the data analysis.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district. Through interviews with 12 principals, the researcher gathered information about their experiences with the TLIM program, including why and how the principals implemented the program, how they measured its success, what they have learned, how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures, what they would change, and what advice they would give to other school leaders.

The insights gained from this study will inform and assist other schools leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs.

Research Questions

The primary research question for this study was: How have principals implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in elementary schools in a large urban school district? In addition, the following research questions were explored:

1. Why did the principals choose the TLIM program?
2. How are the principals measuring the success of the TLIM program?

3. What challenges have the principals faced while implementing the TLIM program?
4. How have the principles adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures?

Although the TLIM program has been implemented around the world, there is little research in relation to its impact in large urban school districts. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how principals have implemented TLIM program in elementary schools in a large urban school district. The researcher gathered information about the experiences of 12 elementary principals who implemented the TLIM program.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: Why did the principals choose to implement the TLIM character education program? Research question one was designed to identify why participants choose the TLIM program. Overall, the findings showed that participants compared the TLIM program to other similar programs, but the TLIM was still the program of choice. In addition, participants discussed how the TLIM program is all inclusive, meaning it works with more than just students, but also with administrators, staff, and parents. The high cost of TLIM program was also discussed by the participants, nevertheless they still chose the TLIM program, as there were opportunities for grants. The findings indicated that the decision to choose the TLIM stems from the program offering an all-inclusive approach that other programs did not incorporate.

Research questions 1, Theme 1: Comparing TLIM to other programs. The findings indicated that the decision to become a LIM school was based on comparing TLIM to other programs. 8 of the 12 participants expressed interest in TLIM once they

learned about all of the components such as addressing students' academic and social and emotional needs, including parent/guardian involvement and leadership, as well as the potential for staff leadership and participation. Other programs the participants may have had or heard of did not focus on all aspects of the school community whereas TLIM did. When any participant made a comparison to other character education programs TLIM was chosen for their school community. Four of the 12 participants did not look at any other programs for various reasons, 1 participant entered the building with TLIM already in place while others were familiar with the program through presentations, or it was in place in schools where they may have worked and felt confident with TLIM. They believed that they did not have to seek out another program.

Research Question 1. Theme two. The second theme that emerged from research question one was the *cost of program*. Analysis of the data reflected both positive and negative aspects for participants as to the cost of obtaining and maintaining TLIM within their schools. Six of the 12 participants mentioned that cost was a factor when implementing TLIM in their schools. At the time the study took place TLIM was not a DOE contracted vendor and this made the program costly to implement. However five of the participants were able to receive grant funding which covered the cost of implementing TLIM within their schools. With the grant, principals were effectively able to implement TLIM program within their schools.

Research Question 1, Theme three. The third and final theme that emerged from research question one was the *all-inclusive* nature of TLIM. Seven of the 12 participants brought up the fact that TLIM included all aspects of the school community. Students, parents/guardians, teachers, as well as the larger school community as a whole were

incorporated into the daily fabric of the school day thus allowing the involvement of all stakeholders. This was a major factor for principals choosing TLIM, since they viewed it as “all inclusive.”

Research Question 2. How are the principals measuring success of the TLIM program? Research question 2 produced two themes and six patterns. The first theme that emerged was program *Evaluation*. All 12 participants discussed aspects of evaluating TLIM within their schools. Additionally, four patterns emerged from the data and each are discussed below.

Research Question 2, Theme 1. The first theme that emerged was program *Evaluation*. Patterns that emerged from research question one were adult evaluations, student evaluations, concrete evaluations and external evaluations.

Pattern 1.1 Student evaluation. Six out of 12 participants discussed aspects of student evaluation in regarding to the effectiveness of TLIM in their schools. Student evaluation is identified by the students talking on leadership roles within the school as well as their ability to implement all 7 habits.

Pattern 1.2 Concrete evaluation. Based on the findings, five out of twelve participants discussed aspects of concrete evaluation when measuring the effectiveness. This included examples of the TLIM “light house rubric,” scoreboards and surveys as ways to measure the effectiveness of TLIM in their schools. Additionally, student testing data as well as disciplinary data was used as evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of TLIM in their schools.

Pattern 1.3 Adult evaluation. Three out of the 12 participants discussed aspects of adult evaluation of TLIM from adult staff and administration as well as parents, this

includes overall school environment, teachers taking on additional leaderships roles, and additional parent and community members having a say in school decisions.

Pattern 1.4 External evaluation. The results of the data indicated that two of the twelve participants referred to an external evaluator. In the context of this study an external evaluator is defined as TLIM consultants/coaches who help staff and administrators implementing TLIM and growing the program within each principal's school community. External evaluations from TLIM company were a positive component to having TLIM in their schools because they offered guidance and provided constructive feedback to each principal.

Research Question 2. Theme 2. The second theme that emerged from research question two was *suspensions*. Results from the data indicate that seven of the twelve participants discussed analyzing their schools suspension rates as a way of measuring the success of the TLIM in their schools. Two out of the 12 participants have seen a reduction in overall disciplinary incidents, this includes minor infractions that would not necessarily fall under disciplinary consequences where a student may be suspended.

Research Question 3. What challenges did these principals face while implementing the TLIM program? The following themes and patterns emerged from research questions three. The first theme that emerged from research question three was *Implementation*. The second theme was *Teacher Buy-In*. The results from the data indicate that six of the twelve participants implemented TLIM with buy in from staff, students, parents, guardians with ease. The other six participant's discussed minor push back from staff a few staff members but not to the point where the majority of staff and

larger school community was against implementing TLIM. Theme one *implementation*, produced the following four patterns

Research Question 3, Theme 1 Implementation

Pattern 1.1 Change in Positive School Culture Three of the participants felt the need to implement TLIM in their school buildings into order to increase positive school culture within their buildings.

Pattern 1.2 came from a Leader In Me school. Three of the participants cited that they had come from LIM schools either as former teachers, administrators where they saw the TLIM in implemented and felt confident that TLIM would provide all the components they were looking for once becoming school leaders of their own building.

Pattern 1.3 Grants. Two of the participants cited being eligible to obtain a LIM grant was their reason for being able to implement TLIM within their school buildings. Without the grant opportunity they would not have been able to implement the program as it is costly.

Pattern 1.4 Train by Grade Level. Four of the twelve participants cited that they choose to implement TLIM by grade level for various reasons. Space and cost were a primary issues as many of the participants' schools are overcrowded and lack space to hold a staff wide training and would have to pay for additional LIM consultants/coaches to come in to train. So due to space they had to train a few grades at time, while others felt it was better to implement and pilot the program one grade at a time per year.

Research Question 3, Theme 2 Teacher Buy-in. Many of the participating principals focused on positive experiences throughout the implementation process. Six of the twelve participants had little push back from staff from the beginning of the implementation

process, indicating staff buy-in. The other half of the participants mentioned some minor resistance, but not a single participant experienced major push back or resistance when introducing and/or implementing the program.

Research Question 4. How have the principals adapted the TLIM program for their own school environment and cultures? Overall the findings from research question four produced the following two themes celebrating successes and orientation.

Research Question 4, Theme 1 Celebrating success. Six of the twelve participants cited celebrating success as ways in which they are able to adapt TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures, such as student and staff shout outs, assemblies and many other forms of celebrations. Through celebrating success each school is able to incorporate aspects of each of the 7 habits to celebrate as individual students, classes, staff and community accomplishments are recognized.

Research Question 4, Theme 2. Orientation. Four of the 12 participants cited that they were able to adapt TLIM to their own school environments in various ways. Having an initial LIM orientation at their schools, they were able to adopt the orientation process to the specific logistical and cultural needs of their schools. Although principals had autonomy in their orientation process, for most schools the orientation process was similar in that it took place at the beginning of the school year and during assigned professional development days throughout the school year.

Conclusions

Conclusions for research question 1. Why did principals choose to implement The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in large, urban, elementary schools? A

conclusion based upon the findings of research question one was that principals chose to implement TLIM as the best fit and choice for their schools when they compared TLIM to other character education programs such as habits of the mind, brain education, character counts and several other programs. Participants cited that when they compared TLIM to other character education programs there was nothing else that measured up to all aspects of building a positive school community that TLIM program could provide.

A second conclusion based upon the findings of research question one is that cost of the program is a determining factor in that all of the participants choose to implement TLIM as they saw the value in the program and readjusted their individual school budgets in order to afford the cost of implementing TLIM in their schools. The cost of TLIM can be an issue as some participants would not have been able to afford it without having a grant opportunity. Additionally, those who paid for the program within their budget had to tailor their implementation process due to large staff size and overcrowded school buildings as well as not having the logistical space to host whole staff LIM trainings simultaneously.

A third conclusion based upon the findings of research question one is that TLIM was chosen and implemented by all participating principals due to the all-inclusive nature of the program. TLIM embeds leadership practices in all aspects and components of a school community increasing student academic scores, social and emotional needs of students through character building opportunities, reducing disciplinary incidents and

providing additional leadership and policy making decisions of staff, parent/guardian and community members as a whole.

Conclusions for research question two. How are the principals measuring success? A conclusion based upon the findings of research question two is that principals are measuring success through multiple evaluations systems, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively through adult evaluations, student evaluations, concrete evaluations and external evaluations. Each participant has the autonomy to conduct their own evaluations on how to measure and determine the success of being a LIM school. Some participants were looking at building staff leadership within their school and wanted to measure aspects of adults, while others wanted to focus on student culture and academics. In addition to using the “Light house Rubric” provided by the TLIM program, each participant has the autonomy on what they want to measure.

A second conclusion based upon the findings of research question two is that suspensions and disciplinary incidents served as a quantitative way to measure the success of TLIM in regards to behavior issues and whether TLIM has any impact on student behavior and suspension outcomes. Based on the findings participating TLIM, principals have all seen a reduction in suspensions as well as disciplinary incidents.

Conclusions for research question three. What challenges did these principals face while implementing TLIM? A conclusion based upon the findings of research question 3 is that having teacher buy-in is a critical component to successfully implementing TLIM. Participants were able to implement TLIM program by having a supporting staff and school community on board. This was done in several ways by inviting staff leaders and parents/guardians to pre-orientation meetings and trainings and

highlighting the benefits of TLIM and the potential positive impact such a program would bring to their school community. Having staff, parent/guardians and students take on leadership roles at the launch of the implementation process, allowed participants to successfully implement and maintain TLIM program within their schools.

A second conclusion can be made, based upon the findings of research question three, that once TLIM is implemented in a school, we see an increase in all around positive school culture is reported. This is evident in student behavior and over all staff energy throughout the building.

A third conclusion can be made, based upon the findings of research question 3, that implementation of TLIM through training by grade level is an important component to the implementation process due to logistical and financial reasons. Implementing the TLIM by grade allows students to familiarize themselves with the 7 habits of the program, one step/stage at a time. Additionally, for administrators logistically implementing TLIM is challenging in an overcrowded space with limited resources, who physically and financially are unable to host whole staff and grade trainings simultaneously. Implementing the program at each grade level over time, while working with the lighthouse team comprised of staff and parent/guardian leadership, allows for a successful implementation process.

Conclusions for research question 4. How have the principals adopted the TLIM program for their own school environment and cultures?

A second conclusion can be made, based upon the findings of research question four, that principals have adapted TLIM program for their own school environment and cultures through the initial orientation process. Participants cited that they used the initial

first staff day of the academic school year as a professional development day as well as Election Day in November. These days are determined by the NYCDOE as professional development days and as opportunities to provide orientation and training for their staff.

A conclusion can be made, based upon the findings of research question 4, that principals have autonomy in celebrating success of TLIM within each of their individual schools. Principals are able to tailor their celebrations of success to reflect their unique school communities. This is done quantitatively through score boards, state exam scores, attendance, and disciplinary incidents, as well as qualitatively through community day events and students staff shouts outs and other various means to recognize achievements within the school community.

Recommendations for Practice and Policy

Recommendation 1: Although the TLIM program received overwhelming positive feedback, there are still areas for improvement. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the TLIM Company become a NYCDOE vendor. The process would include TLIM company to go through the vendor application process with the NYCDOE with research as to why TLIM program is a great asset to all schools within the NYCDOE. Once fully accredited as a NYCDOE licensed vendor, the transformation would make the process easier for principals to purchase TLIM program, as there were many comments related to the high cost of the TLIM.

Recommendation 2: There was a lot of variation with the implementation of the program. Designing each implementation process to be unique to each school could be helpful. For example, principals mentioned that with the sheer size of their staff and buildings it was logistically impossible to train large numbers of staff with minimal space

at one time. Developing an implementation process that aligns to each school's individual needs based on their budget and space within their buildings is necessary. The researcher recommends that TLIM company create a position that focuses solely on assessing and addressing the needs of each school based on student needs, staff, budget, and logistical size of each school building. Creating such an "ambassador" position will help facilitate a collaborative and constructive transition process so schools can begin TLIM implementation process at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Recommendation 3: Strengthening the relationship between the lighthouse leads and the LIM coaches and consultants would further deepen the stability of the implementation process and help "light the way" for schools to reach lighthouse status. This could be accomplished by providing each new school with a mentor school where TLIM is being implemented successfully and provide each light house team with a mentor from another school's lighthouse team to provide timely and accurate feedback and recommendations regarding program implementation. It is also strategically important for the TLIM consultants to listen to each individual principal's needs in order to modify the program to adapt to the conditions and resources of each school.

Recommendations for further study:

In addition to the practical applications, the results of this research have led to ideas for future research. As the methodology of this study was qualitative, it could prove useful to consider a quantitative approach as well. For example, assessing student performance and adult evaluations before and after implementation of the TLIM program could provide additional support for the positive impact this program has on the students, staff, and parents.

Future research could also build on the alignment of the LIM light house rubric with the NYC quality review rubric (Appendix G) as well as the framework for great schools.

Principals can determine the best practices that are measureable through the LIM lighthouse rubric and can explore the extent to which the TLIM rubric aligns to components of the quality review process that may have been assessed as an area of focus or developing in prior quality reviews. By incorporating all nine themes outlined in this study, principals will be able to move their schools in a positive direction as they continue to implement TLIM.

Summary

Character education is critical to the success of our educational institutions. Therefore implementing a character education program within any school community will see positive results. As we continue to change and adapt our education systems, it is critically important that we equip our school leaders with the necessary resources and tools to lead our schools.

Having TLIM program implemented in elementary schools in large urban districts creates a culture of belonging and growth for all stakeholders. School district leaders, buildings leaders, parents/guardians, and educational policy makers who are focusing on large urban districts throughout the United States can benefit from this study. Elementary school principals who chose to implement TLIM in their schools saw a decrease in disciplinary issues, and an increase in social and academic skills of their students, increased staff leadership, as well as greater parent/guardian and community involvement in their schools. The researcher believes TLIM offers opportunities for schools, and will increase social interaction among students and increase academic gains, as well as increasing parent/guardian community engagement especially within large urban

districts. Students, who have the opportunity to have their voices heard and be a leader within their classrooms and within their schools in daily basis, will succeed. One of the most important points learned from this study was that TLIM is “the glue” that puts all components of a school together. This idea was reinforced by P2 when he stated “to be healthy, happy and peaceful. I’m looking for what’s going to glue it together, what’s going to sustain that. And the 7 habits gives you everything towards a healthy life, towards a happy and peaceful life.”

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APPENDIX A
SAGE IRB APPROVAL

December 19, 2016

Andrew Rocco

Doctoral Student, The Sage Colleges

IRB PROPOSAL #530-2016-2017

Reviewer: Francesca Durand, Chair

Dear Researchers:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your expedited application and has approved your project entitled "Experiences of elementary school principals who have implemented the Leader in Me program in a large urban district"

Good luck with your research.

Please refer to your IRB Proposal number whenever corresponding with us whether by mail or in person.

When you have completed collecting your data you will need to submit to the IRB Committee a final report indicating any problems you may have encountered regarding the treatment of human subjects, if the project goes longer than one year.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Francesca Durand, PhD

Chair, IRB

FD/nan

Cc. Dr. Jerome Steele

APPENDIX B



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Research and Policy Support Group January 12, 2017

**52 Chambers Street
Room 310
New York, NY 10007**

Mr Andrew L Rocco
125-17 10th Ave
College Point, NY 11356

Dear Mr Rocco:

I am happy to inform you that the New York City Department of Education Institutional Review Board (NYCDOE IRB) has approved your research proposal, “Experiences of elementary school principals who have implemented the Leader in Me program in a large urban district.” The NYCDOE IRB has assigned your study the file number of 1544. Please make certain that all correspondence regarding this project references this number. The IRB has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants. The approval is for a period of one year:

Approval Date: January 12, 2017
Expiration Date: January 11, 2018

Responsibilities of Principal Investigators: Please find below a list of responsibilities of Principal Investigators who have DOE IRB approval to conduct research in New York City public schools.

- Approval by this office does not guarantee access to any particular school, individual or data. You are responsible for making appropriate contacts and getting the required permissions and consents before initiating the study.
- When requesting permission to conduct research, submit a letter to the school principal summarizing your research design and methodology along with this IRB Approval letter. Each principal agreeing to participate must sign the enclosed Approval to Conduct Research in Schools/Districts form. *A completed and signed form for every school included in your research must be emailed to IRB@schools.nyc.gov.* Principals may also ask you to show them the receipt issued by the NYC Department of Education at the time of your fingerprinting.
- You are responsible for ensuring that all researchers on your team conducting research in NYC public schools are fingerprinted by the NYC Department of Education. Please note: This rule applies to all research in schools conducted with students and/or staff. See the attached fingerprinting materials. For additional information [click here](#). Fingerprinting staff will ask you for your identification and social security number and for your DOE IRB approval letter. You must be fingerprinted during the school year in which the letter is issued. Researchers who join the study team after the inception of the research must also be fingerprinted. Please provide a list of their names and social security numbers to the NYC Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group for tracking their eligibility and security clearance. The cost of fingerprinting is \$135. *A copy of the fingerprinting receipt must be emailed to IRB@schools.nyc.gov.*

- You are responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted in accordance with your research proposal as approved by the DOE IRB and for the actions of all co-investigators and research staff involved with the research.
- You are responsible for informing all participants (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, and students) that their participation is strictly voluntary and that there are no consequences for non-participation or withdrawal at any time during the study.
- Researchers must: use the consent forms approved by the DOE IRB; provide all research subjects with copies of their signed forms; maintain signed forms in a secure place for a period of at least three years after study completion; and destroy the forms in accordance with the data disposal plan approved by the IRB.

Mandatory Reporting to the IRB: The principal investigator must report to the Research and Policy Support Group, within five business days, any serious problem, adverse effect, or outcome that occurs with frequency or degree of severity greater than that anticipated. In addition, the principal investigator must report any event or series of events that prompt the temporary or permanent suspension of a research project involving human subjects or any deviations from the approved protocol.

Amendments/Modifications: All amendments/modification of protocols involving human subjects must have prior IRB approval, except those involving the prevention of immediate harm to a subject, which must be reported within 24 hours to the NYC Department of Education IRB.

Continuation of your research: It is your responsibility to insure that an application for continuing review approval is submitted six weeks before the expiration date noted above. If you do not receive approval before the expiration date, all study activities must stop until you receive a new approval letter.

Research findings: We require a copy of the report of findings from the research. Interim reports may also be requested for multi-year studies. Your report should not include identification of the superintendency, district, any school, student, or staff member. Please send an electronic copy of the final report to: irb@schools.nyc.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Mary Mattis at 212.374.3913.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Mattis, PhD
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Barbara Dworkowitz

APPENDIX C

Introductory Script

My script for describing the study to the participants, and obtaining informed consent before I begin the interviews, is as follows:

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in large, urban, elementary schools. Through interviews with 10-15 principals, I will gather information about their experiences with implementing the TLIM program, including why and how the principals have implemented the program, how they are measuring success, what they have learned, how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures, what they would change, and what advice they would give to other school leaders. The insights gained from this study will inform and assist other schools leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs.

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Dear _____:

You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled: Experiences of elementary school principals who have implemented The Leader in Me program in a large urban district. This research is being conducted by: Andrew Rocco, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership at Sage Graduate School, Albany, New York. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how principals have implemented The Leader in Me (TLIM) program in large, urban, elementary schools. Through interviews with 10-15 principals, I will gather information about their experiences with implementing the TLIM program, including why and how the principals have implemented the program, how they are measuring success, what they have learned, how they have adapted the TLIM program for their own school environments and cultures, what they would change, and what advice they would give to other school leaders. The insights gained from this study will inform and assist other schools leaders in implementing TLIM and other character education programs.

This study will be conducted confidentially. Participants will be interviewed and audio taped for accuracy of transcription. Participants may elect not to answer any questions and may terminate the interview at any time. The names of the participants as well as the schools selected for study will be maintained confidentially. Pseudonyms will be developed for both the participants as well as the schools and used when reporting the results. The participants as well as the selected schools will be known only to the student researcher. All interviews will be transcribed and maintained on a password protected computer. Once the transcribed interviews have been verified for accuracy by the participants, the audio tapes will be maintained until the research has been concluded and then destroyed.

The data collected from this study may prove useful to school superintendents, and principals in large urban districts who are considering implementing a character education program to increase school culture, reduce discipline referrals and increase student achievement in their districts or schools. The benefits of understanding the complexities of increasing student achievement reducing disciplinary referrals and creating a positive school climate through implementing a character education program may prove extremely beneficial to all involved. By participating in the interview process you will help broaden the knowledge of implementing a character education program in large urban districts.

The potential risks involved in this study may be inherent in any process that may have arisen during the course of implementing any character education program that are the subject of this research. Any controversial information that involves the participants could pose a potential risk if made public. However, in order to minimize these potential

risks, the confidentiality of all participants and schools will be maintained with the utmost care.

The interview protocol for this research study will be face to face. If for some reason the participant is uncomfortable with this format, the researcher is open to conducting telephone interviews as well as having the participant answer the interview questions in written format either by mail or email.

If you would prefer that I contact you by telephone for this interview, please indicate with your initials here _____.

Also, please provide a telephone number to contact you.
_____.

In the event that I am harmed by participation in this study, I understand that compensation and/or medical treatment is not available from The Sage Colleges. However, compensation and/or medical costs might be recovered by legal action.

I give permission to the researcher to audio tape my interview for the sole purpose of transcription. Put your initials here to indicate your permission. _____

Participation is voluntary. I understand that I may at any time during the course of this study revoke my consent and withdraw from the study without any penalty.

I have been given an opportunity to read and keep a copy of this agreement and to ask questions concerning the study. Any such questions have been answered to my full and complete satisfaction.

I, _____, having full capacity to consent, do hereby volunteer to participate in this research study

Signed: _____
Research participant Date

This research has received the approval of The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board, which functions to insure the protection of the rights of human subjects. If you, as a participant, have any complaints about this study, please contact:

Dr. Donna Heald, PhD
Associate Provost
The Sage Colleges
65 1st Street
Troy, New York 12180
518-244-2326
healdd@sage.edu

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

Interview questions:

1. Why did you choose to implement the TLIM character education program in your school?

A-What other programs did you look at?

B-Why did you choose the TLIM?

C-How did you involve stakeholders (parents/guardians, teachers, students) in the decision making process?

2. What specific steps did you take to implement TLIM in your school?

A-Was there a sense of urgency in selecting a program?

B-Did you involve parents/guardians, students, teachers or any other stakeholders in the implementation process?

3. How are you measuring the success of the TLIM program in your school?

A-Do you have an evaluation system?

B-Do you have a feedback loop?

C-Are you measuring disruptive behavior?

D- What ways has the school suspension rate been affected?

4. What challenges did you face while implementing the TLIM program?

A-Was there buy in from all stakeholders, parents/guardians, teacher, students?

B-Did you have an orientation of the program?

C-Do you have celebrations to measure success?

5. How have you adapted the TLIM program for your own school environment and culture?

A-Were any of the TLIM 7 habits already incorporated into your school culture/academics?

B-Did you use any data from the NYC department of education's learning environment survey when implementing TLIM program into your school?

C-What did you need to do to make TLIM work in your school?

6. What else would you like to tell me about your experience implementing the TLIM program that we have not mentioned in this interview?

APPENDIX F

The Leader In Me LIGHT HOUSE RUBRIC

The LeaderinMe® Framework

SEE Core Paradigms	Paradigm of Leadership		Paradigm of Potential		Paradigm of Change		Paradigm of Motivation		Paradigm of Education	
	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS	NOT THIS	BUT THIS
	Leadership is for the few.	Everyone can be a leader.	A few people are gifted.	Everyone has genius.	To improve schools, the system needs to change first.	Change starts with me.	Educators control and direct student learning.	Educators empower students to lead their own learning.	Focus solely on academic achievement.	Develop the whole person.
DO Highly Effective Practices	Teach Leadership Principles		Create a Leadership Culture		Align Academic Systems					
	Professional Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Staff Learning New-Staff Learning Principal Learning and Modeling Student Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Lessons Integrated Approaches Modeling Family Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Communication 7 Habits Training for Families Student Teaching at Home 		Leadership Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Environment (See) Common Language (Hear) Emotional Environment (Feel) Shared Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Leadership Roles Student Voice Active Lighthouse Teams Leadership Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schoolwide Events Classroom Events Family & Community Events 		Schoolwide-Goal Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Goals Team Goals Staff Goals Student-Led Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Goals Leadership Notebooks Student-Led Conferences Empowering Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trusting Relationships Student-Led Learning Collaborative Planning and Reflection 					
GET Measurable Results	Leadership		Culture		Academics					

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V

The LeaderinMe® Measurable Results Targeted by *The Leader in Me*

Leadership	Culture	Academics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Behavior* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discipline Referrals -Suspensions Staff Social/Emotional Teaching Readiness Student Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self-Direction -Interpersonal Effectiveness -Group Leadership Family Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student Attendance -Student Absenteeism -Teacher Attendance Supportive School Environment Student Engagement Staff Satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Proficiency* Math Proficiency* Teaching Efficacy Student-Led Achievement

*Measures typically tracked by schools.

Core Paradigms

The Core Paradigms provide the “why” behind *The Leader in Me* process. Paradigms are powerful because our success (in anything) largely depends on our mindset. Our paradigms (SEE) impact our behaviors (DO), which in turn impact the results we achieve (GET). “If you want to make minor, incremental changes and improvements, work on your practices, behaviors, or attitude. But if you want to make significant, quantum improvement, work on your paradigms.” —Stephen R. Covey

Paradigm of Leadership	
NOT THIS Leadership is for the few.	BUT THIS Everyone can be a leader.
Paradigm of Potential	
NOT THIS A few people are gifted.	BUT THIS Everyone has genius.
Paradigm of Change	
NOT THIS To improve schools, the system needs to change first.	BUT THIS Change starts with me.
Paradigm of Motivation	
NOT THIS Educators control and direct student learning.	BUT THIS Educators empower students to lead their own learning.
Paradigm of Education	
NOT THIS Focus solely on academic achievement.	BUT THIS Develop the whole person.

For more information regarding The Leader in Me Lighthouse Rubric, go to “

<http://www.theleaderinme.org/what-is-the-leader-in-me/>

APPENDIX G

NYC DOE QUALITY REVIEW RUBRIC



2016-2017 Quality Review Rubric

The **2016-2017 Quality Review (QR)** Rubric has 10 indicators within three quality categories:

School Quality Indicators

Instructional Core

- 1.1 Curriculum
- 1.2 Pedagogy
- 2.2 Assessment

School Culture

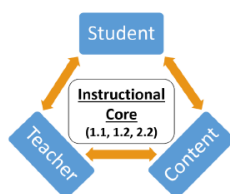
- 1.4 Positive Learning Environment
- 3.4 High Expectations

Systems for Improvement

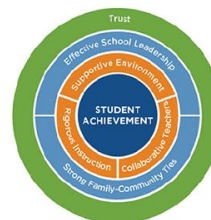
- 1.3 Leveraging Resources
- 3.1 Goals and Action Plans
- 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision
- 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development
- 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems

The 2016-2017 Quality Review will assess all indicators listed above.

The indicators of quality for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are grounded in the theory of action that student learning improves when the relationship between student, teacher, and content – the instructional core – is improved.



As schools strengthen practices outlined in the Quality Review Rubric to support student achievement, the impact of this work will be reflected within the elements of the Framework for Great Schools.



For the complete Rubric, go to: [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8C11A001-7E78-](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8C11A001-7E78-469D-996F-B0C3703CEA81/0/QualityReviewRubric_1617.pdf)

[469D-996F-B0C3703CEA81/0/QualityReviewRubric_1617.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8C11A001-7E78-469D-996F-B0C3703CEA81/0/QualityReviewRubric_1617.pdf)