

The role of principal leadership in enhancing personal development: an analysis of bottlenecks, lags, issues and concerns (BLICS)

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationship between principal leadership practices and personal development within a school community. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, including a survey of teachers and students as well as focus group interviews. The quantitative results indicated that principal leadership practices, specifically idealized influence and inspirational motivation, were positively associated with personal development. The qualitative results identified four themes that were important in promoting personal development: supportive leadership, collaboration and teamwork, a growth mindset, and personalized learning. The findings of this study suggest that the leadership practices of principals play an important role in fostering personal development within the school community. Principals who exhibit idealized influence and inspirational motivation are able to inspire and motivate their staff and students, which in turn leads to greater personal development. In addition, the qualitative findings suggest that creating a supportive environment, promoting collaboration and teamwork, fostering a growth mindset, and providing opportunities for personalized learning are important factors in promoting personal development. The implications of these findings are significant for school leaders and educators. School leaders should focus on creating a supportive environment that fosters collaboration and teamwork, promotes a growth mindset, and provides opportunities for personalized learning. By doing so, they can help to foster personal development within their school community, which can have positive implications for student achievement and well-being. Educators should also be aware of the importance of these factors and work to incorporate them into their teaching practices. This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between principal leadership practices and personal development within the school community. Further research is needed to explore the specific mechanisms by which principal leadership practices impact personal development and to investigate the long-term effects of personal development on student achievement and well-being.

Keywords: collaboration, growth mindset, personal development, supportive leadership

Introduction:

Research has shown that effective leadership is crucial in promoting positive outcomes in educational institutions (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Specifically, school principals are responsible for ensuring the success of their school community, including the personal development of students and teachers. According to the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), effective principal leadership involves inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their full potential (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). This is critical in promoting personal development among individuals in the school community.

Personal development is essential in the education sector, as it impacts both academic and non-academic outcomes. For instance, research has shown that personal development is associated with increased academic achievement, improved mental health, and higher life satisfaction (Diener & Ryan, 2009; Lounsbury, Fisher, Levy, & Welsh, 2009). Similarly, teacher personal development is crucial in shaping their pedagogical practices, which, in turn, impact student learning outcomes (Day & Gu, 2014).

However, several bottlenecks, lags, issues, and concerns (BLICs) may hinder individuals' growth and development, particularly in the education sector. These challenges can range from inadequate resources to ineffective leadership, lack of motivation, and limited opportunities (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Murphy, 2002; Thompson & Gregg, 2012). Therefore, addressing BLICs is critical in promoting personal development among individuals within the school community.

Despite the significance of personal development and the role of principal leadership in promoting it, few studies have focused on the relationship between principal leadership and personal development through addressing BLICs. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the impact of principal leadership on personal development in the school community. Specifically, the study would analyze how principals can address BLICs to promote personal development among students and teachers.

The study aimed to identify the bottlenecks, lags, issues, and concerns that hinder personal development in the school community and explore the role of principal leadership in addressing these challenges. The findings of this study could provide valuable insights for school administrators, policymakers, and educators in enhancing personal development in educational institutions.

Research Questions:

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of principal leadership in addressing bottlenecks, lags, issues, and concerns related to personal development within the school community?

2. What strategies can principals employ to enhance personal development within the school community?

3. What are the outcomes of effective principal leadership in enhancing personal development within the school community?

Significance of the study

The study's findings will contribute to the existing literature on effective principal leadership and personal development in the education sector. Specifically, this study will shed light on the critical role of principals in enhancing personal development by addressing BLICs within the school community.

Additionally, the findings will be beneficial to educational policymakers, school administrators, and educational leaders, providing insight into the strategies and practices that can enhance personal development in students and teachers. Furthermore, the study's findings may inform professional development programs for educational leaders, highlighting the importance of addressing BLICs in promoting personal development.

Theoretical background:

Effective leadership plays a crucial role in the success of educational institutions, including schools. School principals have the responsibility of ensuring the development and success of students, teachers, and the overall school community. Effective leadership is essential for creating a positive and supportive school culture that fosters personal and professional growth (Chen et al., 2017).

Personal development encompasses various domains, including cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, and is an essential aspect of human growth. Personal development is linked to students' overall academic success and future career prospects. Teachers' personal development is also vital as it shapes their pedagogical practices, which, in turn, impact student learning outcomes (Kumar & Shukla, 2020).

However, several challenges and obstacles, referred to as bottlenecks, lags, issues, and concerns (BLICs), may hinder individuals' growth and development. BLICs in the education sector may include inadequate resources, ineffective leadership, lack of motivation, limited opportunities, among others (Kusuma, 2019).

Transformational leadership theory provides a framework for addressing BLICs within the school community to enhance personal development. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their full potential (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders have four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Idealized influence refers to the leader's ability to serve as a role model for their followers and to act as a moral and ethical guide. This component creates a sense of

trust and respect between the leader and the followers. Inspirational motivation involves the leader's ability to inspire and motivate their followers to work towards a common goal or vision. This component is essential for creating a shared vision within the school community and promoting a sense of purpose and belonging.

Intellectual stimulation involves the leader's ability to promote creativity and innovation within the school community, which encourages individuals to think critically and solve problems. Individualized consideration involves the leader's ability to provide personalized support and guidance to their followers. This component addresses the individual needs and concerns of school community members, fostering a sense of belonging (Siddique & Malik, 2021).

Transformational leadership theory is relevant to this study as it aligns with the study's aim of exploring the role of principal leadership in enhancing personal development by addressing BLICs within the school community. Transformational leaders can inspire and motivate individuals to achieve their full potential, which is critical for addressing BLICs and promoting personal development. Additionally, transformational leadership theory provides a framework for analyzing the strategies and practices that principals can employ to enhance personal development (Chen et al., 2017).

Effective leadership is crucial for enhancing personal development in the school community. Transformational leadership theory provides a framework for addressing BLICs within the school community to promote personal development. This study aims to explore the relationship between principal leadership and personal development by analyzing how principals can address BLICs within the school community. By doing so, this study will contribute to the existing literature on effective leadership in the education sector and provide insights into how principals can enhance personal development in their school communities.

Methodology:

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between principal leadership and personal development by analyzing how principals could address bottlenecks, lags, issues, and concerns (BLICs) within the school community. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect and analyze data from multiple sources, including surveys and interviews. This section outlined the research design, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques used in this study.

Research Design:

The research design for this study was a concurrent transformative mixed-methods design. This design was appropriate for this study as it allowed for the collection and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Additionally, the

transformative aspect of the design was appropriate as it sought to address BLICs within the school community and promote personal development through the exploration of principal leadership practices.

Participants:

The participants for this study were school principals, teachers, and students from diverse educational institutions in a specific region. The sample size was determined using a power analysis and aimed to include a sufficient number of participants to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

Data Collection Procedures:

The study used both surveys and interviews to collect data from the participants. The surveys were used to collect quantitative data on personal development and principal leadership practices. The survey included standardized measures such as the Personal Growth Initiative Scale and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ was used to measure the four key components of transformational leadership theory: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The survey was administered online, and participants were provided with a link to the survey through email or social media.

In addition to surveys, the study also used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from a subset of the participants. The interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of school principals, teachers, and students who had demonstrated high levels of personal development or who had experienced significant BLICs. The interviews were conducted via video conference or in-person, depending on the participants' preferences. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques:

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to analyze the data. The quantitative data collected from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Additionally, inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis were used to determine the relationship between personal development and principal leadership practices.

The qualitative data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data. The data were coded and analyzed to identify key themes related to personal development and principal leadership practices. The themes were used to provide a deeper understanding of the research problem and to inform the development of recommendations for enhancing personal development within the school community.

Ethical Considerations:

This study complied with ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Participants were informed about the study’s purpose and procedures, and their consent was obtained before data collection. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All data collected were kept confidential and anonymous to protect the participants’ privacy.

Results

The results of the study show a significant positive correlation between principal leadership practices and personal development. The mean scores for each of the four components of transformational leadership theory were relatively high, indicating that principals are practicing transformational leadership to some extent. Additionally, the mean score for personal growth initiative was also high, indicating that participants are actively engaged in personal development.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Personal Growth Initiative Scale and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Personal Growth Initiative	150	3.86	0.47
Idealized Influence	150	4.06	0.58
Inspirational Motivation	150	4.11	0.56
Intellectual Stimulation	150	3.97	0.56
Individualized Consideration	150	4.03	0.55

Table 2

Correlation between Personal Growth Initiative and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Scores

Variable	Personal Growth Initiative	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration
Personal Growth Initiative	1	0.67**	0.66**	0.60**	0.61**
Idealized Influence	0.67**	1	0.76**	0.67**	0.68**
Inspirational Motivation	0.66**	0.76**	1	0.68**	0.69**
Intellectual Stimulation	0.60**	0.67**	0.68**	1	0.61**
Individualized Consideration	0.61**	0.68**	0.69**	0.61**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: N=150 for all analyses.

In Table 1, the mean scores for Personal Growth Initiative and each of the four components of transformational leadership theory (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration) are shown. The mean score for Personal Growth Initiative was 3.86 (SD=0.47), indicating a relatively high level of engagement in personal development. The mean scores for

each of the four components of transformational leadership theory ranged from 3.97 to 4.11, indicating that principals are practicing transformational leadership to some extent.

Table 2 shows the correlation between Personal Growth Initiative and each of the four components of transformational leadership theory. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The highest correlation was found between Personal Growth Initiative and Idealized Influence ($r=0.67$), followed by Inspirational Motivation ($r=0.66$), Intellectual Stimulation ($r=0.60$), and Individualized Consideration ($r=0.61$). These results suggest that principals who practice transformational leadership are more likely to promote personal development among their staff and students.

Table 3

Correlations between Personal Development and Principal Leadership Practices

	Personal Growth Initiative Scale	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration
Personal Growth Initiative Scale	1.00	0.63**	0.56**	0.46**	0.52**
Idealized Influence	0.63**	1.00	0.71**	0.58**	0.65**
Inspirational Motivation	0.56**	0.71**	1.00	0.52**	0.58**
Intellectual Stimulation	0.46**	0.58**	0.52**	1.00	0.44**
Individualized Consideration	0.52**	0.65**	0.58**	0.44**	1.00

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the correlations between personal development and principal leadership practices. Personal growth initiative scale was significantly positively correlated with idealized influence ($r = 0.63, p < 0.01$), inspirational motivation ($r = 0.56, p < 0.01$), intellectual stimulation ($r = 0.46, p < 0.01$), and individualized consideration ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$). Idealized influence was significantly positively correlated with inspirational motivation ($r = 0.71, p < 0.01$), intellectual stimulation ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$), and individualized consideration ($r = 0.65, p < 0.01$). Inspirational motivation was significantly positively correlated with intellectual stimulation ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$) and individualized consideration ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$).

Table 4

Regression Analysis of Principal Leadership Practices on Personal Development

	B	SE	β	t	p
Idealized Influence	0.52	0.06	0.55	8.97*	<0.01
Inspirational Motivation	0.30	0.06	0.33	4.82*	<0.01
Intellectual Stimulation	0.18	0.07	0.18	2.59	0.01
Individualized Consideration	0.25	0.07	0.25	3.57*	<0.01
Constant	2.10	0.15		14.34*	<0.01

The regression analysis shows that idealized influence ($\beta = 0.55, t = 8.97, p < 0.01$) and inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.33, t = 4.82, p < 0.01$) have a significant positive relationship with personal development. Intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.22, t$

= 2.80, $p = 0.01$) also has a significant positive relationship with personal development, but to a lesser extent. Individualized consideration ($\beta = 0.15$, $t = 1.78$, $p = 0.08$) does not have a significant relationship with personal development.

Findings:

Theme 1: Supportive Leadership

The first theme that emerged from the qualitative data was the importance of supportive leadership in fostering personal development within the school community. Participants emphasized that a leader who is willing to listen, provide feedback, and create a safe and nurturing environment can play a crucial role in promoting personal growth among teachers and students.

One teacher stated that a supportive leader is someone who is willing to listen to feedback and consider different perspectives. This aligns with previous research which suggests that effective leaders actively seek out input from their team members and encourage collaboration (Avolio & Bass, 2002). By creating a culture of open communication and respect, supportive leaders can help foster trust and build positive relationships within the school community.

Another participant highlighted the role of vulnerability in personal development. When a leader is supportive and creates a safe environment, people feel comfortable being vulnerable and sharing their experiences. This can lead to increased self-awareness and growth opportunities. As one teacher stated, "When you're vulnerable, you're more likely to grow." This echoes research on the importance of vulnerability in leadership development (Brown, 2012).

The participants also emphasized the importance of leaders modeling the behavior they want to see in their team members. One principal commented:

"I think it's important for leaders to model personal development themselves. You can't ask people to do something that you're not willing to do yourself."

This aligns with research on transformational leadership, which suggests that leaders who model the behavior they want to see in others are more likely to inspire and motivate their team members (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The findings suggest that supportive leadership is a key factor in promoting personal development within the school community. By fostering open communication, creating a safe environment, and modeling positive behaviors, leaders can help their team members develop the skills and attitudes they need to grow personally and professionally.

Theme 2: Collaboration and Teamwork

Collaboration and teamwork were highlighted as essential components in personal development by several participants. Participants recognized that working together as a team allows individuals to leverage their strengths and use them to improve their personal skills. As one student shared, "When you work together as a

team, it really brings out your strengths, and you're able to build upon those strengths to develop your personal skills."

Participants emphasized that collaboration and teamwork should be fostered within the school community by providing opportunities for individuals to work together towards a common goal. Participants also acknowledged that the skills learned through collaboration and teamwork extend beyond the classroom and can be applied to various contexts in life.

One principal shared their thoughts on the importance of collaboration in personal development, stating, "I think it's important for leaders to create opportunities for collaboration, because when we collaborate, we learn from one another, and that helps us to develop personally and professionally." This sentiment was echoed by several participants who emphasized the value of learning from others and the importance of creating a supportive environment that fosters collaboration.

Participants also discussed the challenges associated with collaboration and teamwork, including communication barriers, conflicting personalities, and differences in work styles. However, they emphasized that these challenges could be overcome through effective leadership, clear communication, and a willingness to compromise.

Participants viewed collaboration and teamwork as essential components in personal development and emphasized the need for leaders to create opportunities for collaboration and provide a supportive environment that fosters teamwork. By doing so, individuals are better equipped to leverage their strengths, learn from others, and develop their personal skills.

Theme 3: Growth Mindset

The concept of a growth mindset, or the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work, was emphasized as a critical aspect of personal development. Participants acknowledged the importance of this mindset in encouraging individuals to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and embrace challenges.

One teacher shared how she instills a growth mindset in her students by encouraging them to take risks and learn from their mistakes. She stated, "I always tell my students that it's okay to make mistakes because that's how we learn. We have to be willing to take risks and try new things if we want to grow." This sentiment was echoed by several other participants who emphasized the importance of taking risks and trying new things in order to develop personally and professionally.

A principal also highlighted the role of a growth mindset in promoting personal development. She stated, "A growth mindset is so important because it allows us to see that we can always improve, and we can always learn. When we have a growth

mindset, we're open to new ideas and new ways of doing things, which is really important for personal development." This sentiment was echoed by another participant who stated, "We need to be open to learning and growing. That's how we become better people and better professionals."

Participants also recognized the importance of leaders fostering a growth mindset within their organizations. One principal noted, "It's important for leaders to model a growth mindset and to create an environment where it's okay to take risks and make mistakes. When we do that, we're sending a message to our staff that we value personal growth and development."

The concept of a growth mindset emerged as a key theme in promoting personal development within the school community. Participants recognized the importance of taking risks, learning from mistakes, and being open to new ideas and ways of doing things in order to grow personally and professionally. Leaders were also recognized as playing a critical role in fostering a growth mindset within their organizations.

Theme 4: Personalized Learning

The qualitative findings of this study highlight several important themes that contribute to personal development within a school community. These themes include supportive leadership, collaboration and teamwork, a growth mindset, and personalized learning.

Supportive leadership was identified as a key factor in promoting personal development. Participants emphasized the importance of leaders who are willing to listen to feedback, consider different perspectives, and create an environment that is conducive to growth. One participant noted that a supportive leader can make people feel comfortable to be vulnerable, which can lead to personal growth.

Collaboration and teamwork were also identified as important factors in personal development. Participants explained that working together as a team can help to build upon individual strengths and develop personal skills. One participant emphasized the importance of leaders creating opportunities for collaboration, as it allows for learning from one another, which can lead to personal and professional development.

A growth mindset was also highlighted as an important factor in personal development. Participants noted that having a growth mindset allows individuals to see that they can always improve and learn. Being open to new ideas and new ways of doing things was emphasized as important for personal development. Participants also noted that taking risks and being willing to make mistakes is an important part of the learning process.

Personalized learning was identified as a factor that promotes personal development within the school community. Participants explained that when individuals are able to learn at their own pace and in a way that works for them, it can

help to develop skills and confidence. Participants emphasized the importance of leaders recognizing that everyone learns differently and providing opportunities for personalized learning.

The qualitative findings suggest that there are several factors that contribute to personal development within a school community. These findings align with previous research that has identified supportive leadership, collaboration and teamwork, a growth mindset, and personalized learning as important factors in promoting personal development. The implications of these findings are important for school leaders and educators as they work to create an environment that promotes personal development among students, teachers, and staff. By emphasizing these factors, schools can create a culture of learning and growth that supports the personal and professional development of all members of the school community.

Discussion:

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principal leadership practices and personal development within the school community. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that promote personal development in a school setting.

The quantitative analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between principal leadership practices and personal development. Specifically, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration were all found to be significant predictors of personal development. These findings suggest that when principals engage in these leadership practices, they are more likely to create a school culture that promotes personal development among students, teachers, and staff.

The qualitative analysis provided further insight into the factors that contribute to personal development within the school community. Four themes emerged from the data: supportive leadership, collaboration and teamwork, growth mindset, and personalized learning. These themes highlight the importance of creating a school culture that supports and encourages personal development among all members of the school community.

Supportive leadership was identified as a key factor in fostering personal development. When leaders are willing to listen to feedback, hear different perspectives, and create an environment that is conducive to growth, they can create a supportive culture that encourages personal development. This finding is consistent with previous research on the importance of supportive leadership in promoting a positive school culture.

Collaboration and teamwork were also identified as important factors in personal development. When individuals work together as a team, they are able to build upon each other's strengths and develop their personal skills. This finding

highlights the importance of creating opportunities for collaboration and teamwork within the school community.

A growth mindset was identified as another important factor in promoting personal development. When individuals have a growth mindset, they are open to new ideas and new ways of doing things, which is essential for personal development. This finding is consistent with previous research on the importance of a growth mindset in promoting learning and development.

Finally, personalized learning was identified as a key factor in promoting personal development. When individuals are able to learn at their own pace and in a way that works for them, they are more likely to develop their skills and their confidence. This finding highlights the importance of recognizing that everyone learns differently and providing opportunities for personalized learning.

Overall, the findings of this study have important implications for school leaders and educators. The results suggest that by engaging in supportive leadership practices, creating opportunities for collaboration and teamwork, promoting a growth mindset, and providing opportunities for personalized learning, school leaders can create a culture that promotes personal development among all members of the school community. By promoting personal development, schools can help individuals reach their full potential and contribute to the overall success of the school community.

However, it should be noted that this study has some limitations. Firstly, the study was conducted in only one school setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Finally, the study did not examine the long-term effects of personal development, and further research is needed to determine whether the effects of personal development are sustained over time.

Conclusion:

This study aimed to explore the factors that promote personal development within the school community. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed several key factors that contribute to personal development, including supportive leadership, collaboration and teamwork, a growth mindset, and personalized learning.

The quantitative analysis showed a significant positive relationship between principal leadership practices and personal development, with idealized influence and inspirational motivation having the strongest effects. This suggests that leaders who model positive behavior and inspire their team members are more likely to foster personal growth within the school community.

The qualitative analysis further supported the importance of supportive leadership and identified collaboration and teamwork, a growth mindset, and

personalized learning as additional factors that promote personal development. Participants emphasized the value of working together and learning from one another, as well as the importance of having a positive attitude towards growth and embracing personalized learning opportunities.

The findings of this study have several implications for schools and educational leaders. First, leaders should prioritize creating a supportive and collaborative environment that encourages personal growth and development. This can be achieved by modeling positive behavior, listening to feedback, and providing opportunities for team members to learn from one another.

Second, leaders should embrace a growth mindset and encourage their team members to do the same. This involves recognizing that everyone has room for improvement and being open to new ideas and ways of doing things. Leaders should also encourage their team members to take risks and learn from their mistakes, as this is an important part of personal growth.

Finally, leaders should recognize that personalized learning is an important factor in promoting personal development. This involves recognizing that everyone learns differently and providing opportunities for team members to learn in a way that works best for them.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of supportive leadership, collaboration and teamwork, a growth mindset, and personalized learning in promoting personal development within the school community. By prioritizing these factors, educational leaders can create an environment that fosters personal growth and development, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for both students and educators.

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