

Principal Support to Teachers of Twice-exceptional Students: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT This qualitative study explores how school principals support teachers of Twice-exceptional Students, focusing on leadership strategies and collaborative efforts. The research aims to uncover principals' experiences and self-identified strengths in fostering inclusive practices. Adopting an inductive approach, the study utilizes thematic analysis to extract insights from interviews with eight principals in Hail (a city in Saudi Arabia). The sample of eight principals from competitive schools catering to gifted students with special needs, was recruited using purposive sampling technique. Two main themes, "Principals' Experiences in Collaboration" and "Self-identified Strengths," emerged from the data. The findings contribute a unique perspectives on the role of principals in supporting teachers of Twice-exceptional Students, offering practical implications for principals engaged in inclusive education.

INTRODUCTION

How school principals use their leadership skills to involve teachers in important conversations about inclusion, specifically when it comes to twice-exceptional students, is not well understood (Sabatino and Wiebe 2022). Twice-exceptional students, also known as "gifted students with learning disabilities," possess exceptional

intellectual abilities alongside one or more disabilities. The term "twice-exceptional" was coined to describe students who have a disability and also have characteristics and traits associated with giftedness (Baldwin et al. 2015). These students may exhibit a wide range of characteristics, such as unusual imagination, poor reading and writing skills, lack of organizational and study skills, and low self-esteem. However,

the lack of understanding of the criteria of twice-exceptionality often interferes with parents and teachers recognizing the problems of twice-exceptionality (Aqilah et al. 2019). Legislation and policy supporting gifted and special education have a history of excluding twice-exceptional students, highlighting the need to expand their visibility and support (Foley-Nicpon and Teriba 2022). It is vital to understand and recognize the unique needs of twice-exceptional learners to provide tailored interventions that address their strengths and potentials (Aqilah et al. 2019). Inclusive education for twice-exceptional-students refers to the practice of providing educational opportunities that meet the needs of students who are both gifted and have a disability. According to a review of implications for special and inclusive education, these students can be taught effectively in inclusive education settings as long as they are able to access a continuum of special education interventions, collaborate with parents and specialists, and focus on developing strengths as much as remediating difficulties (Gierczyk and Hornby 2021). These students face a unique set of challenges in educational settings, and recommended strategies for accommodating them include providing favorable learning environments, supportive school contexts, and various accommodations such as curriculum differentiation (O'Sullivan et al. 2017). The journey toward a shared vision for twice-exceptional learners involves exploring their characteristics, needs, educational strategies, mental health supports, and collaboration approaches (Baldwin et al. 2015). Recent literature has focused on teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the education of twice-exceptional students, as well as the implications for their education (Gierczyk and Hornby 2021). Studies have also shown that strong leadership by school administrators is correlated with inclusive strategies that promote efficiency among the teaching staff and have the capability of foreseeing better outcomes for students (Versland and Erickson 2017; Klingner 2022). Educators often provide targeted interventions to meet the unique needs of twice-exceptional students (Trail 2022). This suggests that teachers working with twice-exceptional students exert extra effort compared to those instructing in standard classrooms, navigating the unique challenges

and potentials of these students. Supporting these teachers becomes the responsibility of school principals. However, for a long time, scholars have attempted to study the inclusive strategies used by school principals in various countries to address the needs of minority students with disabilities (Mun et al. 2021; Castellano and Chandler 2022). Such studies completely ignored that teachers of these students also need support.

The literature suggests ways in which principals and educators can enhance the support system for Twice-Exceptional Students, especially those from minority groups who are both gifted and have disabilities (Bannister-Tyrrell et al. 2018; Hébert 2022). Despite the inherent challenges of catering to the diverse needs of these students, the literature serves as a valuable guide. Researchers have extensively explored the inclusive practices of school principals aimed at addressing the needs of minority students with disabilities. However, a gap exists in understanding how these principals leverage their leadership skills to foster crucial dialogues about inclusivity and racism, particularly concerning twice-exceptional students. Studies have indicated a correlation between exemplary leadership by school principals and successful inclusive practices, ultimately improving teachers' effectiveness and leading to better outcomes for students (Versland and Erickson 2017; Klingner 2022; Walrod 2022).

To effectively address the challenges faced by twice-exceptional students evaluating and improving the inclusivity and antidiscrimination practices implemented by school principals is crucial (Klingner 2022). The literature offers various strategies to enhance the situation for Twice-Exceptional Students emphasizing the roles of teachers and school principals (Ronksley-Pavia et al. 2018; Elhoweris et al. 2021). It explores how principals support classroom teachers engaging them in critical discussions on instruction including issues of racism and the needs of Twice-Exceptional Students (Mayes and Moore 2016; Jarvis 2022).

Research indicates that effective collaboration among administrators positively influences teachers' job satisfaction when instructing Twice-Exceptional Students. Studies have demonstrated that efficient collaboration leads to

increased job satisfaction (Aldridge and Fraser 2016; Dou et al. 2017; Trail 2022). Principals who lead by example and foster a collaborative atmosphere in their schools positively impact teacher satisfaction (Dou et al. 2017). Additionally schools that provide administrative support and promote teamwork among staff are more likely to retain teachers (Conley and You 2009; Trail 2022). Furthermore school administrators play a crucial role in supporting specialized programs and promoting inclusive strategies for all teachers not just those directly involved in such programs (Reis et al. 2014).

Researchers also identified providing teachers with proper training in identifying and supporting twice-exceptional students (Bianco and Leech 2010). This training should be incorporated into both pre-service teacher programs and in-service professional development (Foley-Nicpon and Lin 2022). Researchers like Renzulli and Gelbar (2019) have identified effective strategies for enhancing classroom instruction including the implementation of professional learning communities and embedded professional development led by school administrators fostering collaborative efforts. Furthermore to efficiently support twice-exceptional students collaboration is essential among all stakeholders including principals', teachers parents and other relevant individuals such as the students themselves (Ritchotte and Zaghawan 2019; Trail 2022).

The objective of this research is to investigate how school administrators describe their involvement in collaborative efforts to assist general education teachers with twice-exceptional students. Through the analysis of their descriptions the researchers aim to uncover the principals' understanding of collaboration. Previous studies have shown that such collaborative initiatives can result in increased job satisfaction and professional development for teachers (Conley and You 2009). It is widely recognized that school principals play a vital role in designing and developing collaborative environments within their schools (Steyn and Vanyoro 2023). Furthermore when principals cultivate long-term partnerships between teachers and external organizations such as universities and intermediate units enduring collaborative environments can be created (Bianco and Leech 2010; Klingner 2022).

This research aims to examine the perceptions and experiences of school principals identified as supporting twice-exceptional students. By centering their stories and perspectives this study seeks to give a voice to the principals. Understanding their experiences can offer insights into potential areas of improvement to assist school administrators', educators and other professionals in developing more effective strategies and approaches that go beyond the traditional focus on academic achievement. As the topic of professional development within the educational community has become increasingly relevant this study hopes to contribute to the conversation by highlighting the experiences of the principals in question. Furthermore, this research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by providing a more comprehensive view of the principal's experiences and perceptions rather than focusing on a specific aspect.

Objectives

The research aim to answer two important questions. The first questions is, "How do principals describe their experiences in working with collaborative groups that support general education teachers instructing Twice-exceptional students?" The second question is, "What strengths do principals perceive they have in supporting general education teachers instructing Twice-exceptional students?"

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method employed in this study aims to deeply explore the perceptions and experiences of school principals who support twice-exceptional students. Qualitative research excels at delving into the subjective experiences and interpretations of individuals, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and motivations. This is crucial for capturing the complexity of supporting twice-exceptional students, who often have unique educational needs. Adopting an inductive approach the study emphasizes the centrality of themes emerging from the data to address research questions, steering clear of predetermined themes by the researchers (Creswell et al. 2007; Ryder et al. 2019). To gather data, an open-

ended technique was applied, because it captures rich perspectives, while theme development reveals patterns and insights into shared experiences (Braun and Clarke 2022, 2023). This method aligns seamlessly with the inductive process, maintaining consistency with the comprehensive nature of the research inquiry. This inductive approach prioritizes themes arising from data, ensuring findings are driven by participants' voices. Further details about participants, setting, and the methods of data analysis and collection will be elaborated in the following sections.

Participants and Setting

In this research, a purposeful sampling technique was employed to select individuals offering insight into the subject of school principals. The sample population consisted exclusively of school principals. Participants were chosen from ten schools in Hail, Saudi Arabia, providing a congregated setting for students who are both gifted and have special education needs. Admissions to these competitive schools require students to undergo a standardized intelligence test, such as the WISC-V by Wechsler (Wechsler 2014), administered by a licensed psychologist. To meet inclusion criteria, students must score notably, with a full-scale intelligence quotient of 120 or higher. These specialized charter schools cater to gifted students from early years to year 12, designed to address the emotional, intellectual, and social requirements of both gifted and special education students.

Despite contacting all ten school principals, only eight agreed to participate in the study. While no quantitative data were collected on their socioeconomic status, participants were asked about their and their spouse's employment status and occupations during the interviews for sake of building rapport. The participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary, with the freedom to discontinue participation at any time. They were assured that their answers would remain private. The participants, with an average age of 35 and a range of 30 to 47, had an average of 7 years of teaching experience, ranging from 4 to 26 years. Majority of participants held a Bachelor's degree, and 2 held a Master's degree.

Data Collection

The principal investigator conducted personal interviews, utilizing face-to-face interactions with each participant. The study adopted the interview protocol of research by Alsamari et al. (2023) to ensure the questions fit the context of principals' characteristics and how they provide support to teachers of twice-exceptional students. Participants were asked a total of eight questions. These interviews were conducted in private rooms within the schools, lasting approximately 30-46 minutes. The initial focus of the interviews was on gathering demographic details about the school, teachers, and programs for twice-exceptional students. Subsequently, the researchers delved deeper into the experiences and perspectives related to twice-exceptional students. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, the researchers employed eight open-ended questions adopted with the study's central theme in mind (Creswell et al. 2007). The interview process aimed to create an environment where participants could freely express their experiences and perspectives on supporting general education teachers dealing with twice-exceptional students. The researchers initiated discussions by asking about the participants' definition of "Twice-Exceptional Students," facilitating conversations about the concept and allowing participants to share their personal experiences. To explore the strengths that principals believed they possessed in supporting general education teachers dealing with twice-exceptional students, specific questions were formulated. Additionally, as a primary focus of the study, questions were included to investigate the connection between giftedness and parenting experience. Throughout the interviews, the researchers maintained a subtle approach, seeking additional information only when necessary for clarification or to expand the conversation. Supplementary prompts were used to summarize responses, confirm understanding, and encourage elaboration with specific examples. Following the interviews, participants were given the opportunity to share any additional thoughts or information they felt had not been previously addressed. For instance, the researchers may have paraphrased participants' responses, saying, "From what I under-

stand, you are saying...” and allowing participants to clarify or confirm their statements.

Data Analysis

The researchers employed the thematic analysis method introduced by Braun and Clarke (2022) to review the accumulated interview data. Despite its inherent flexibility, this approach is commonly used in qualitative research to maintain the accuracy and credibility of outcomes (Nowell et al. 2017). This flexibility proves beneficial for this specific study and the interview procedure, allowing the researchers to process the raw data thoughtfully and in detail.

Following the methodology outlined by Braun and Clarke (Braun and Clarke 2006), the researchers followed six steps: (1) becoming acquainted with the data, (2) producing initial codes, (3) identifying themes, (4) examining themes and underlying subthemes, (5) defining and titling themes, and (6) generating the report. The researchers transcribed all interviews verbatim using audio recordings. During the coding process, words or phrases representing a concept were highlighted in each text copy, and notes were made in the side column. The researchers preserved the wording almost identical to the raw data’s phrasing, ensuring fidelity. For example, if a principal’s statement was “I am supporting general education teachers,” the corresponding code in the side column would state “instruct Twice-Exceptional Students.” There were 43-88 codes in each transcription, and these were recorded in a spreadsheet during the initial coding process. Subsequently, the researchers analyzed the related data of these codes. Following this, the researchers held a meeting where they generated themes by analyzing and verifying the meaning of the codes. The research questions guided this code analysis, and irrelevant codes were highlighted in a specific color. The remaining codes relevant to the research questions were thoroughly analyzed to generate themes. In cases of disagreement among researchers regarding codes, the raw data was revisited. The analysis continued until the researchers reached a consensus on codes and themes. The experience of the principal in extending support to classroom teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students was considered throughout the process of generating themes.

RESULTS

The researchers came up with primary themes relevant to research queries at the end of the data analysis process (see Table 1). The primary themes included the collaboration experience of the principal and Self-identified Strengths. These themes are associated with the principal’s experience in different ways. The first theme is relevant to the principal’s experience in supporting general education teachers of Twice-exceptional students through collaborative groups. The second theme is associated with principals’ perceptions about the strengths they can extend to general education teachers to support them in teaching Twice-exceptional Students. Both the mentioned themes are explained with supporting sections to highlight the experiences of the participants.

First Main Theme: Principals’ Experiences in Collaboration

This main theme had following sub-themes:

Evolution of Collaboration over Time

The very first subtheme identified under the broader category of principal’s experience in collaboration was evolution of collaboration over time. The participants articulated their experiences regarding the support they provided to general education teachers in educating Twice-Exceptional Students. This collaboration evolved over time, contributing to greater consistency in teaching practices. Four participants emphasized the transformation of teaching and support practices, particularly in the context of Twice-Exceptional Students. It is noteworthy that modern teaching practices prioritize collaboration and consultation as integral steps before making significant decisions.

Professional Advantages of Collaboration

The second subtheme identified from the interview responses under the broader category of collaboration was professional advantages of collaboration. Participants recognized the professional advantages afforded to principals through collaboration groups that provided sup-

Table 1: Thematic analysis results

Main theme	Sub-theme	Description	n	%
<i>Principals' Experiences in Collaboration</i>	Evolution of Collaboration over Time	Collaboration with general education teachers in supporting Twice-Exceptional students evolves over time.	4	50
	Professional Advantages of Collaboration	Collaboration groups offer benefits to both principals and teachers.	4	50
	Influence of Background and Expertise	Principals with experience in gifted education excel in collaboration and support.	3	37.50
	Principal Collaboration and Access to Resources	Collaborative leadership involves providing support to teachers through seamless cooperation.	3	37.50
<i>Self-Identified Strengths</i>	Identification and Utilization of Personal Strengths	Collaboration enables the recognition and utilization of individual strengths.	4	50
	Individual Urge to Extend Support to Teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students	Principals feel a strong sense of responsibility to support teachers of Twice-Exceptional students.	4	50
	Need for Professional Development Opportunities	Principals recognize the importance of professional development for both themselves and teachers.	4	100
	Leveraging Professional Development Opportunities and share their knowledge with teachers.	Principals strengthen their experience through professional development	4	100

port to general education teachers tasked with teaching Twice-Exceptional Students. Four participants (P1, P4, P5, and P8) commended the collaborative efforts of the staff, acknowledging the school's ability to effectively educate Twice-Exceptional Students. They also celebrated the resulting improvements observed in students, manifesting as promising outcomes and notable achievements.

Furthermore, three participants asserted that principals with a background and expertise in special or gifted education excel in collaboration with teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students, offering greater support compared to those lacking such experience. Notably, participants P2, P4, and P7 were specifically identified as having a gifted education background, reinforcing the significance of specialized knowledge in fostering effective collaboration within this context.

Influence of Background and Expertise

The third subtheme identified is that principals with experience in gifted education are dedicated to carefully considering each scenario rather than hastily deciding to exclude a child

from the program. Their expertise in Twice-Exceptional Students proves advantageous, as experienced principals actively investigate potential errors in the selection process. Instead of immediately moving or excluding the child from the program, they engage in effective communication with other departments to address and resolve any issues (P3). Participants, specifically P1 and P7, highlighted that teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students gain access to more resources when supported by experienced principals. The collaborative efforts of principals prove particularly beneficial for teachers facing challenges in instructing Twice-Exceptional Students, offering both support and motivation.

Participant P6 explains; "My background and experience of special education teaching allow me to deliver my responsibility as a principal more effectively than other principals lacking experience of gifted education. In our society, most preschool teachers lack experience in gifted or special education and most teachers including me tend to lack experience in the beginning and gain experience over time as they pursue their teaching profession."

In essence, principals with a background in gifted education employ a thoughtful approach,

addressing issues rather than resorting to swift exclusion. This strategic and investigative mindset benefits both the students and the collaborative teaching environment. The collaboration between principals and teachers becomes a catalyst for overcoming challenges and enhancing the educational experience for Twice-Exceptional Students.

Principal Collaboration and Access to Resources

Three participants (P1, P6, and P8) shared a unified perspective on collaborative leadership. They collectively defined it as leadership that provides support to general teachers in schools, aiding them in delivering education to gifted students through seamless cooperation throughout the educational process. This collaborative approach is not merely endorsed but is expected to be evident throughout the teaching of gifted students, manifested in both the actions and words of the teachers. On a separate note, participant P2 takes pride in an exceptional and fruitful commencement. He values the effectiveness of his support extended to teachers. He says “I am of the view that this is one of the effective and natural methods to support inexperienced teachers who face challenges in understanding Twice -Exceptional Student’s needs and to bring development in teaching practices inside school premises. This success may not be accredited to my experience only. Instead, I give the credit for this success to the degree of success which motivated teachers to follow in my footsteps and try novel methods and techniques.” Participant 5 said, “Our collaboration involves working together as a team in decision-making.... Collaboration must not only be verbally endorsed but must be implemented practically through collaborative work and effort. Hence, we collaborate by arranging team meetings for each grade to offer support in imparting quality education to cater to Twice-Exceptional Student’s needs.”

Second Main Theme: Self-Identified Strengths

This main theme had following sub-themes:

Identification and Utilization of Personal Strengths

The initial subtheme within this main theme revolves around the identification and utilization

of personal strengths. Participants (P3, P4, P6, and P8) assert that collaboration enables the recognition of individual strengths, subsequently enhancing the delivery of improved instruction to Twice-Exceptional Students. Our collaborative efforts to enhance the instruction of Twice-Exceptional Students were straightforward, without requiring extensive deliberation, as most team members had initiated steps in this direction. The participant 2 claimed, “I would like to share my personal experience as a principal when one of the teachers told me about Twice-Exceptional Students in his class and asked me if the school would accommodate such students. Our school was already committed to serving the needs of special and gifted students, so I barely took a minute to make the decision and considered this as a step ahead in our efforts aimed at the instruction of Twice-Exceptional students.”

Individual Urge to Extend Support to Teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students

The second subtheme identified emphasized principal’s need to support teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students. It was noted that most participants were compelled to support teachers of gifted and special students under the influence of feelings of responsibility and concern. Four participants (P1, P3, P5, and P7) claimed that they had a strong urge to extend support to classroom teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students and render our contribution to fulfilling the learning needs of such students. This effort and teamwork supported and motivated teachers to undertake the challenging task of serving the needs of Twice-Exceptional Students with the help of others. The collective problem-solving and provision of opportunities to such students relieved the teachers who felt pressurized because of the responsibility on their shoulders. Participants (P2, P6, and P8) expressed that the collaboration is expected to foster the best teaching practices to fulfil the learning needs of Twice-Exceptional Students. The participants contributed by sharing both their theoretical knowledge and practical experiences to support teachers. The participants also emphasized the significance of collaboration in the success of the school. Participant 4 mentioned,

“I served as a classroom teacher for about 10 years. Ironically, I did not receive the due support. Hence, I commit to supporting all teachers since administrator support is essential for a teacher to fulfil the learning needs of Twice-Exceptional Students and ensure their academic development. Although collaboration and support do not affect teachers’ proficiency, it does strengthen their abilities.” The participant 8 said, “It is easy to look back and make decisions based on your past experiences. However, for inexperienced teachers, it is challenging to make decisions during critical times and hence, they rely on teamwork and experienced and reliable people to get the best possible solution to any issue associated with Twice-Exceptional Students. In short, collaboration and teamwork are the solutions to all such problems.”

Need for Professional Development Opportunities

Principals (P1, P5, and P7) believe that those who have faced years of challenges are well-positioned to support fellow teachers with their wealth of experience and knowledge, enhancing the quality of instruction for Twice-Exceptional Students. However, it is crucial for principals to avoid exerting undue influence on teachers’ decision-making processes and instead provide assistance within reasonable limits. Teachers, too, are encouraged to actively engage in collaborative teamwork, considering relevant data for informed decision-making. Participants emphasize the need for educators to embrace change and not be hindered by influences from those dominating the decision-making process. All participants recognize the importance of strategically placed professional development opportunities in ensuring the success of Twice-Exceptional Students’ instruction. Additionally, they acknowledge the effectiveness of informal meetings in boosting the success potential of teachers working with Twice-Exceptional Students. Participant 7 articulates this perspective by saying that, “Collaboration and equity foster an environment where ideas are proposed for achieving team focus..... the professional development achieved with time promoted collaboration and teamwork to extend support to general education teachers in imparting education to Twice-Exceptional Students.”

Participants identified a distinct form of self-identified strength through the findings. They strengthened their expertise by leveraging the available professional development opportunities. Moreover, they demonstrated commitment by organizing school meetings to provide teachers of Twice-Exceptional Students with additional professional development opportunities, aiming to address the unique needs of these students effectively. Participant 1 said, “Our academic year starts with professional development. The services are explained to the general education teacher by the special education teachers in the presence of the intermediate unit. We invest our best efforts to offer the best possible educational services to Twice-Exceptional Students.”

DISCUSSION

The themes unearthed in this investigation, specifically “Principals’ Experiences in Collaboration” and “Self-Identified Strengths,” significantly augment our understanding within the broader context of the principal’s role in supporting the education of Twice-Exceptional Students. The dynamic evolution of collaboration over time aligns seamlessly with the ongoing paradigm shift towards inclusive educational practices, a trend underscored by Friend (2020), highlighting its perpetual relevance in meeting the diverse needs of learners. Recent studies affirm that collaboration not only benefits students but also fosters substantial professional growth among educators (Cook et al. 2007). Additionally, the research underscores the instrumental role that educators’ backgrounds and expertise play in effectively addressing the distinctive needs of Twice-Exceptional Students (Maker and Schiever 2010). The synergy of collaborative leadership emerges as a focal point, echoing the sentiments of Harris (2013), who emphasizes its pivotal role in school improvement efforts. Furthermore, the study findings lend tangible substance to the concept of collaborative leadership, emphasizing its practical manifestation in activities such as team meetings, aligning seamlessly with Harris’s (2013) outlined principles of collaborative leadership. This not only enriches our theoretical understanding but also underscores the pragmatic application of collaborative leadership within the

context of supporting Twice-Exceptional Students. In essence, this study builds upon recent research, providing critical insights into how collaborative leadership practices are integral to addressing the multifaceted needs of diverse learners.

For second main theme, “Self-Identified Strengths,” the findings resonate with Hattie’s (2012) research, emphasizing the critical importance of educators recognizing and leveraging their individual strengths. This study, however, extends this concept beyond individual teachers to the collaborative realm of principals, shedding light on the broader impact that acknowledging personal strengths can have within collaborative endeavors. The keen interest demonstrated by principals in supporting teachers aligns seamlessly with Gurr’s (2017) research, underscoring the pivotal role of leadership in cultivating a supportive school culture. Crucially, the findings of present research go beyond perceiving this support as a mere managerial duty, revealing an intrinsic motivation rooted in a genuine concern for addressing the learning needs of Twice-Exceptional Students. This aligns with the ethos of creating a nurturing environment, as suggested by Gurr (2017), where leaders actively contribute to the well-being and growth of their teaching staff. The study highlights the recognition among principals of the need for strategic professional development opportunities, mirroring the insights provided by Inan and Lowther (2010). This aligns with the broader understanding of ongoing professional development as a catalyst for enhancing instructional practices, a sentiment well-documented in educational literature, particularly in the work of Desimone (2009). The study by Moore (2016) also confirmed how principals identify the professional development needs of their teachers, what types of professional development opportunities they put in place, and how satisfied they are with the outcomes. The study was conducted with K-5 and K-8 elementary principals, and it investigated the relationships between these factors, holding constant the socioeconomic and geographic variables. Additionally, a report from the National Association of Elementary School Principals and Learning Policy found that 69 percent of surveyed principals wanted more professional development on equitably serving all learners, highlighting their recognition of the need for strategic professional development oppor-

tunities (Levin et al. 2020). Importantly, present findings emphasize that such opportunities extend beyond individual teacher benefits, playing a pivotal role in the overall success of inclusive educational practices. In essence, the study augments recent research by intertwining the recognition and utilization of individual strengths with collaborative efforts, showcasing the integral role of supportive leadership in fostering a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning, especially within the unique context of Twice-Exceptional Students.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explain how school principals utilize their leadership skills to foster conversations about inclusion, specifically concerning Twice-Exceptional Students. The study emphasizes the lack of understanding in this area despite the recognized impact of strong leadership on inclusive strategies. Scholars have long studied inclusive practices for minority students with disabilities, but the intricate needs of Twice-Exceptional Students remain a nuanced challenge. The literature provides a guiding force, offering suggestions for leaders and educators. The research methodically explores the experiences and perceptions of school principals engaged in collaborative efforts to support general education teachers dealing with Twice-Exceptional Students.

The thematic analysis revealed two main themes: “Principals’ Experiences in Collaboration” and “Self-Identified Strengths.” The evolution of collaboration over time highlighted the transformative impact on teaching practices, echoing the broader educational shift towards inclusivity. The professional advantages of collaboration underscored the positive outcomes observed in students when principals support general education teachers effectively. The influence of background and expertise emphasized the unique contributions of principals with a special or gifted education background in fostering collaboration and addressing challenges. The theme of “Self-Identified Strengths” focuses on the identification and utilization of personal strengths through collaboration. It reflected the genuine urge of principals to support teachers, highlighting the intrinsic motivation driven by a concern for the learning needs of Twice-Exceptional Students. The recognition of the need for strategic professional development

opportunities underscores the significance of ongoing learning in enhancing instructional practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge base by providing nuanced insights into how principals' experiences in collaboration and self-identified strengths align with and extend previous research on inclusive education and leadership. The identified subthemes offer practical implications for us as educational leaders, contributing to our ongoing discourse on effective strategies for supporting the education of Twice-Exceptional Students within the broader framework of inclusive education. We encourage the integration of these insights into our leadership practices, emphasizing their potential to contribute meaningfully to our ongoing discourse on optimal strategies for supporting the diverse needs of Twice-Exceptional Students.

Furthermore, future researchers are recommended to see how different leadership styles or ways of communicating affect how effective principals are in helping teachers of Twice-Exceptional-Students. Future studies could be more extensive, using quantitative or a mix method research to confirm the effectiveness of the school principals. We could also test different ways of collecting information, like observing teachers or looking at documents, to get a fuller picture. Studies could examine the feasibility and effectiveness of using technology or online tools to support teachers of twice-exceptional students, potentially addressing limitations in resources or access to traditional support structures.

LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS

The research team, comprised of educators (one of whom was a clinical psychologist, and both of them had experience working with a special student population), contributes diverse expertise to enrich the study on Twice-Exceptional Students. This collective knowledge ensures a thorough and nuanced understanding of this unique population, with the researchers' personal connection facilitating insightful exploration and identification with their experiences. However the researcher's personal connection

with population under investigation introduces a potential bias, mitigated through reflexive journaling but still acknowledged. The small research team, though experienced, may limit diverse perspectives. Findings' generalizability may be restricted due to the specific context and population, urging caution in broader applications. Acknowledging the subjectivity of reflexive journaling, variations in interpreting personal experiences are recognized. While relying solely on thematic analysis, exploring additional validation methods could offer a more comprehensive understanding of qualitative data.

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