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IPLI AR Narrative

I was hired for my first administrative position as Principal of Southwestern High School on July 1, 2020. Through COVID and my first four years as a Principal, I recall many instances of taking my work home mentally, including the stressors of the day and situations I cannot deal with at home. This was not healthy for myself nor the loved ones around me. These instances sometimes compounded over the years and led to burnout and feeling like I was just going through the motions instead of being excited to be an educator, positively interacting with students and staff, and being the visible leader of the building.

As I embarked on this action research project, I focused on ways that I could address the situation above for my benefit and regain the passion I have for education as a leader of people and a role model to youth. For this action research project, I analyzed how being purposeful with my organizational and planning tasks in the morning each day leads to a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. I also look at factors that occur during the day that derail my routine and how they affect my perception of accomplishment at the end of the day.

At the beginning of the research, I wondered if being purposeful on the front end of the day, in which I adequately prepare myself for the priorities of the day, would affect my productivity and positively influence my sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

There are several factors that contribute to my daily tasks and priorities. The first is a morning checklist, which includes doing building checks to make sure it is adequately prepared to take on staff and students for the day. I would then create a daily priority list that would prioritize tasks that I needed to complete by the end of the day. As with every day as a school administrator, there are daily activities that are outside of the normal routine that must be dealt with and cause negative stress. I wanted to make sure to take into account these stressors and to see if they were impacting my sense of accomplishment at the end of each day. At the end of each day, I took formal note of my perception of accomplishment for the day. If I did not perceive a sense of accomplishment, I would jot down notes and reflect on things that occurred during the day that led to that perception.

To collect data, I simply used "yes" or "no" for whether I completed the morning routine checklist, created a priority list for the day, completed the priority list for the day, and whether I perceived a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. This data would allow me to draw correlations between the planning tasks and the perception of accomplishment each day. I also qualitatively recorded the day of the week as well as notes of things that occurred during the work day that I perceived as negative stressors.

The first data that I analyzed was whether there is a correlation between the day of the week and the sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday do not show any correlation and are not useful data points. On every Wednesday observed, I felt a sense of accomplishment, showing that there may be more information to gather about what was occurring on Wednesdays that would lead to that day.

The second data piece collected analyzed the correlation between sense of accomplishment and the days in which I complete the morning checklist. There was a 50/50 split in the data on days that I completed the checklist, and on days where I didn't complete the checklist, I only perceived a sense of accomplishment on 66% of those days. There is no evidence that shows a strong correlation between these two data points.

The third set of data I analyzed is the correlation between the creation and execution of the priority list and the perception of accomplishment. On days where I created the priority list but did not complete it, I only felt accomplished 37.5% of the time. On days where I created and completed the priority list, I felt accomplished 84.6% of the time. On days where I did not create nor complete the priority list, I only felt accomplished 20% of the time. There seems to be a strong correlation between these two data points.

The next piece of data that is analyzed is the correlation between completing all three of the previous tasks and sense of accomplishment. The data shows that on the day where all three of the tasks were completed, I perceived a sense of accomplishment 90.9% percent of the time.

The final set of data used for analysis was the correlation between sense of accomplishment and negative stressors observed each day. The data shows that on days where negative stressors were observed, I perceived a sense of accomplishment 75% of the time. On days where no negative stressors were observed, I perceived a sense of accomplishment 92.3% of the time.

When analyzing the results of data collection, I took away the following discoveries. Wednesdays show few negative stressors, but also the only day of the week where my task completion was at its height. Otherwise, there is no correlation between the day of the week and perceived sense of accomplishment. There is no correlation between the morning checklist and accomplishment at the end of the day. There is a strong correlation between the completion of the priority task list and accomplishment at the end of the day. There is a strong negative correlation between the presence of perceived negative stressors and the sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. My perception around negative stress revolves around negative interactions with staff members and staff management.

It is clear that my perception of accomplishment is driven by planning and task-orientation. I found that the number of tasks that I had on my list each day was much more substantial at the beginning of the data collection process than it was the last two weeks. I clearly was not setting achievable goals for myself daily. I will plan to continue creating priority lists daily, but also making sure that I continue to adapt those so I am not setting myself up for failure.

Negative interactions with staff members derail my sense of accomplishment 75% of the time. Most of these interactions come out of left field and probably could have been headed off prior to it becoming a negative interaction. As the data collection process evolved, I started being more visible with specific teachers by interacting positively in the morning, being more interactive with specific teachers to uncover issues before they become a larger issue that would then become a negative stressor that may derail my sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Perceiving Sense of Accomplishment

John Tindall
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Background

Through COVID and my first four years as a Principal, I recall many instances of taking my work home mentally, including the stressors of the day and situations I cannot deal with at home.

These instances sometimes compiled and led to burnout and feeling like I was just going through the motions instead of being excited to be an educator, positively interacting with students and staff, and being the visible leader of the building.

Purpose and Wondering

For this action research project, I analyzed how being purposeful with my organizational and planning tasks in the morning each day leads to a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. I also look at factors that occur during the day that derail my routine and how they affect my perception of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Wondering

I wonder if being purposeful on the front end of the day, in which I adequately prepare myself for the priorities of the day, would affect my productivity and positively influence my sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Key Actions used for Evidence

1. Morning Checklist: This includes building checks to make sure the building is ready to receive staff and students.
2. Daily to-do list: Prioritize things do I need to complete today.
3. Activities during the day outside of normal routine that caused negative stress.
4. Taking formal note of perception of accomplishment at the end of each day.
5. If I did not feel accomplished on a particular day, what factors occurred during the day to make me feel that way.

Data Collection

I collected the following data using simple "yes" or "no" responses:

- Did I complete my morning routine checklist?
- Did I make a list of priority items for the day?
- Did I complete the list of priority items for the day?
- Did I feel accomplished at the end of the work day?

I recorded the day of the week for each day of the research.

I made notes of things that occurred during the day that I felt were distressors.

Data – Were there specific days of the week I perceived a sense of accomplishment more at the end of the day?
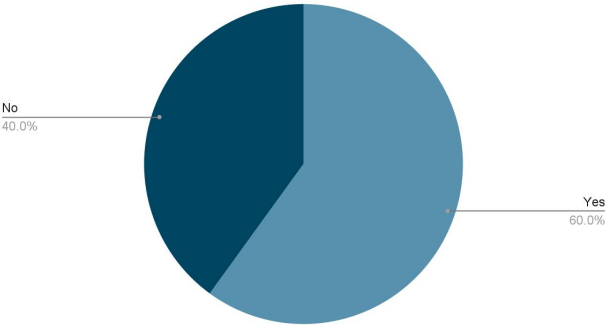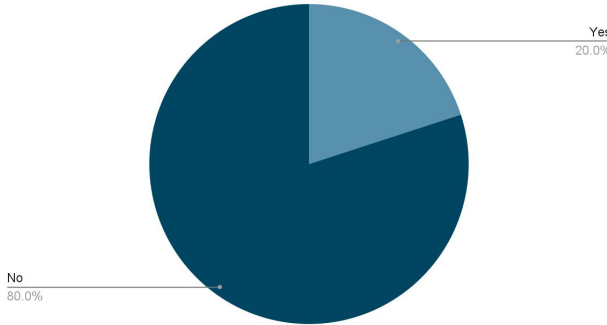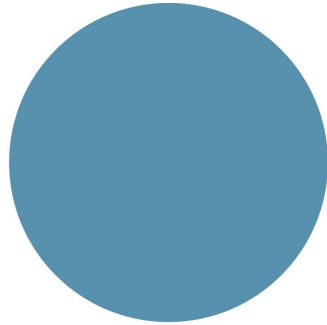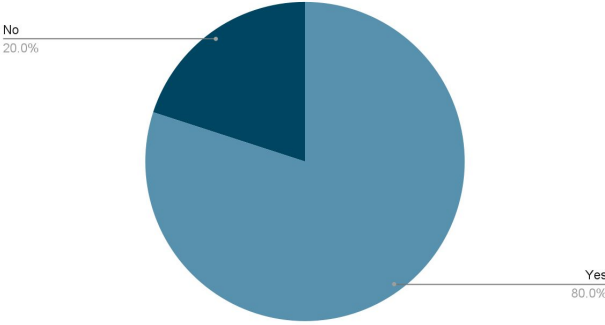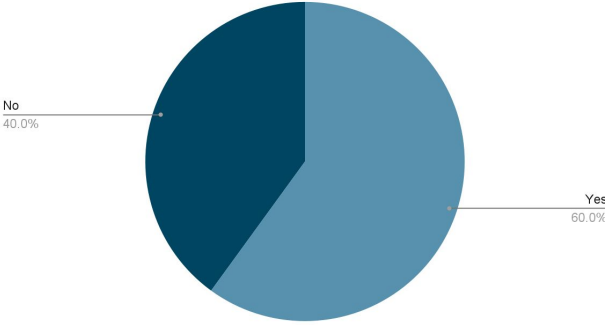
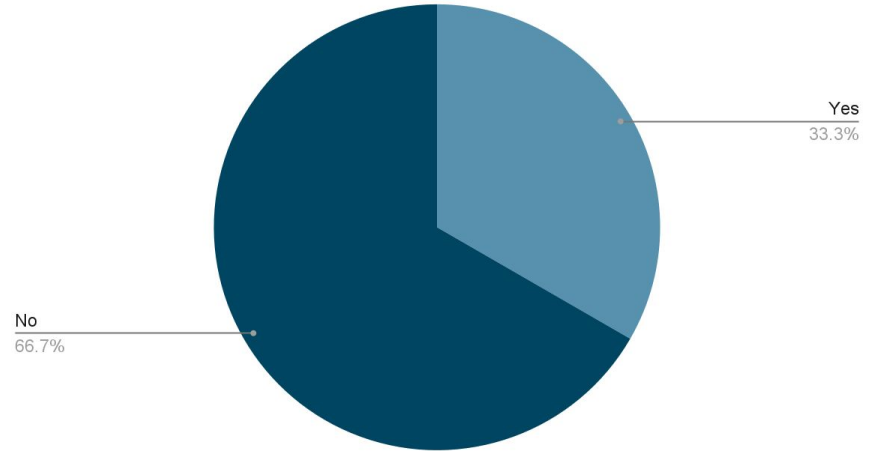# Data- Did I perceive a sense of accomplishment on days I completed the morning checklist?

Days I completed the morning checklist.

No
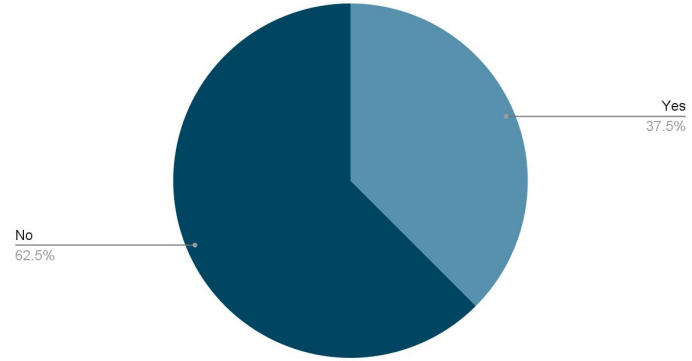50.0%

Yes
50.0%
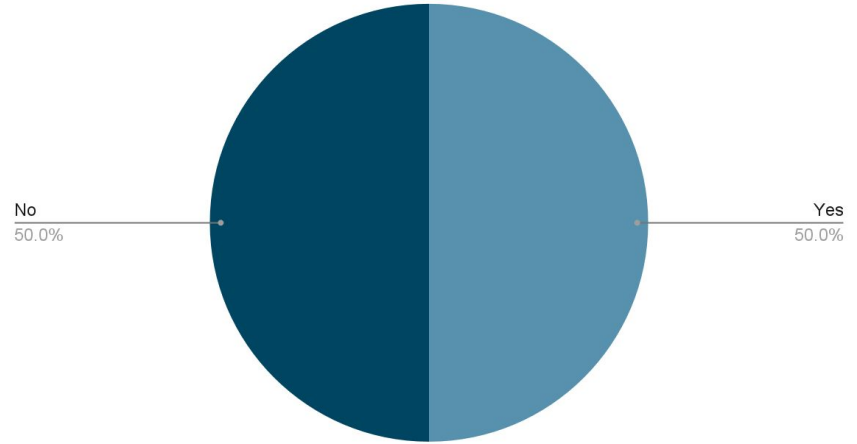
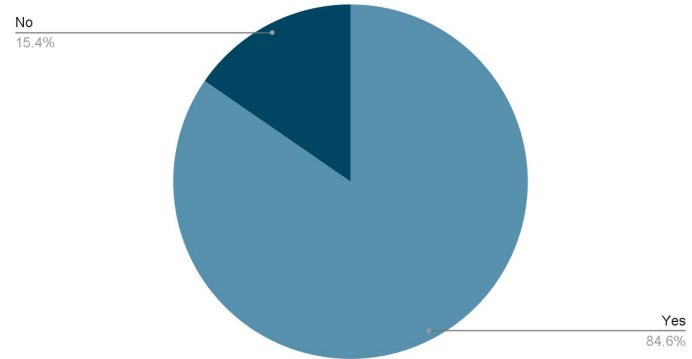Days I didn't complete the morning checklist.

Yes
33.3%

No
66.7%

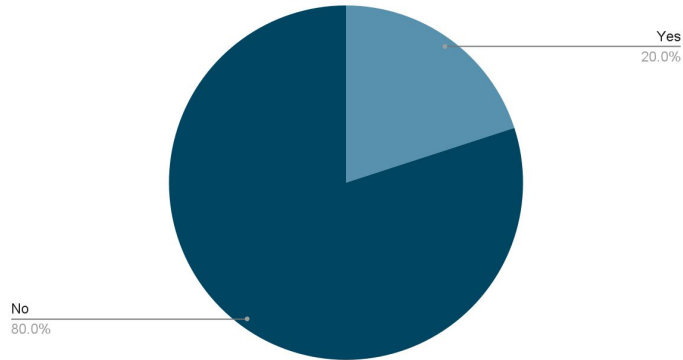# Data- Did I perceive a sense of accomplishment on the days I created a priority list?

Created a priority list, but did not complete it.

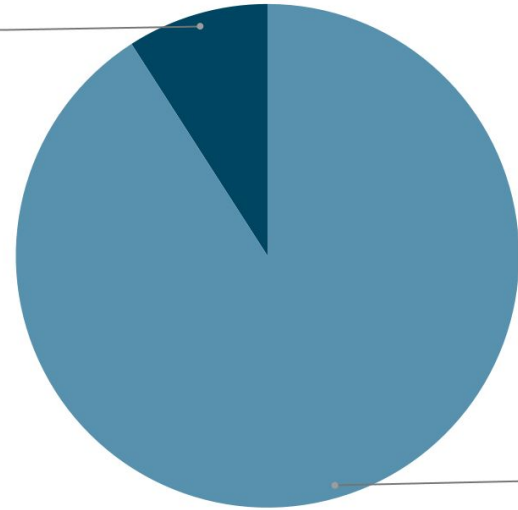Yes
37.5%

No
62.5%

Created and completed the priority list.

No
15.4%

Yes
84.6%

Did not create a priority list for the day.

Yes
20.0%

No
80.0%

Data- Did I perceive a sense of accomplishment when completing all three tasks (morning checklist, priority list, and completion of the priority tasks?
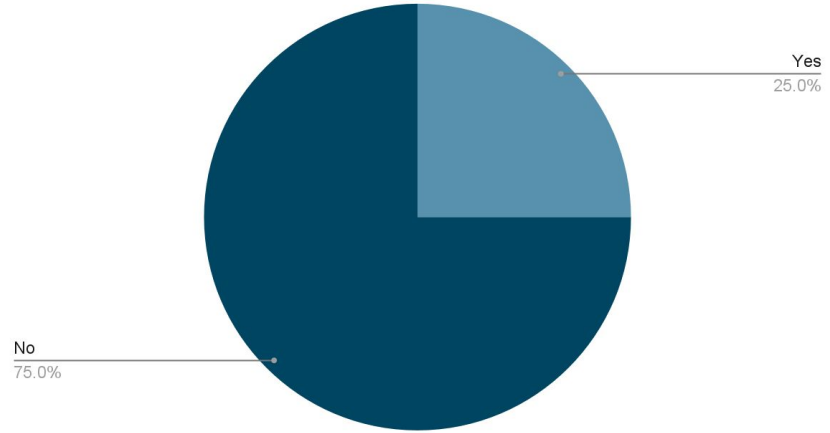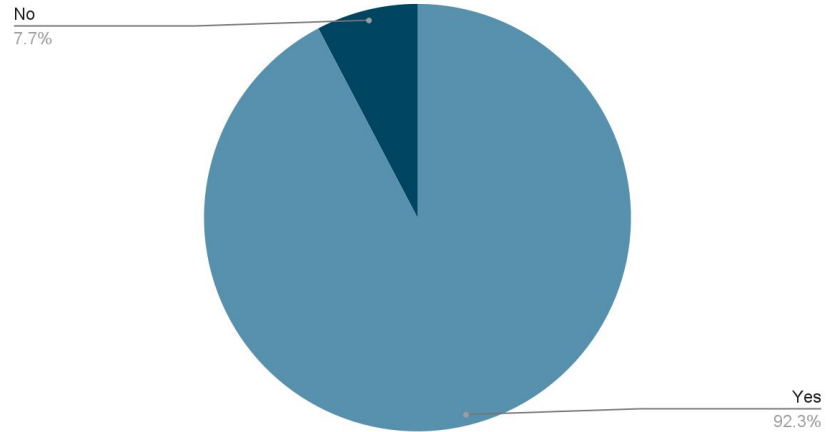
Completed all three tasks

No
9.1%

Yes
90.9%

Data- Did I perceive a sense of accomplishment on days where there were negative stressors observed?

Days where negative stressors were observed.

Yes
25.0%

No
75.0%

Days where no negative stressors were observed.

No
7.7%

Yes
92.3%

Discovery and Analysis

1. Wednesdays show few negative stressors, but also the only day of the week where my task completion was at its height. Otherwise, there is no correlation between the day of the week and perceived sense of accomplishment.
2. There is no correlation between the morning checklist and accomplishment at the end of the day.
3. There is a strong correlation between the completion of the priority task list and accomplishment at the end of the day.
4. There is a strong negative correlation between the presence of perceived negative stressors and the sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.
5. My perception around negative stressor revolves around negative interactions with staff members and staff management.

Where do I go from here?

It is clear that my perception of accomplishment is driven by planning and task-orientation. I found that the number of tasks that I had on my list each day was much more substantial at the beginning of the data collection process than it was the last two weeks. I clearly was not setting achievable goals for myself daily. I will plan to continue creating priority lists daily, but also making sure that I continue to adapt those so I am not setting myself up for failure.

Negative interactions with staff members derail my sense of accomplishment 75% of the time. Most of these interactions come out of left field and probably could have been headed off prior to it becoming a negative interaction. As the data collection process evolved, I started being more visible with specific teachers by interacting positively in the morning, being more interactive with specific teachers to uncover issues before they become a larger issue that would then become a negative stressor that may derail my sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Thank you for your time!

Do you have any questions regarding my research project?

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