Exploring School Principals' Perspectives on Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

Ontario school principals' professional development currently includes leadership training that encompasses emotional intelligence. This study sought to augment the limited research in the Canadian educational context on school leaders' understanding of emotional intelligence and its relevancy to their work. The study utilized semi-structured interviews with 6 Ontario school principals representing disparate school contexts based on socioeconomic levels, urban and rural settings, and degree of ethnic diversity. Additionally, the 4 male and 2 female participants are elementary and secondary school principals in different public school boards and represent a diverse range of age and experience. The study utilized a grounded theory approach to data analysis and identified by 5 main themes: Self-Awareness, Relationship, Support, Pressure, and Emotional Filtering and Compartmentalization. Recommendations are made to further explore the emotional support systems available to school leaders in Ontario schools.

Acknowledgements

This thesis represents a journey of discovery, challenging assumptions, experiencing frustrations, and many hours of hard work. I firmly believe that the most meaningful journeys in life are never completed in solitude and as such, there are several key people I need to thank. Foremost, I wish to acknowledge my mentor during this journey—my thesis supervisor Nancy Fenton. Time after time I reached the edge of my patience, motivation, and ability, and Nancy was able to encourage me and guide me in the right direction. I would also like to thank my wonderful wife Kathleen, whose support and patience during this process was extraordinary. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my thesis committee who pushed me to accomplish better research than I would have thought possible.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

This study explores how educational administrators perceive and experience emotional intelligence in their role as leaders within a context of EI. To date, there have been no Canadian studies that explore emotional intelligence in school leadership from a qualitative perspective. This study represents an attempt to convey the perspective of individual Ontario Public school principals on the topic of emotional intelligence. Their perspectives have given insight into both the role of emotional intelligence in the work they do as well the greater context of the emotional world of school leaders.

Background of the Problem

While completing my practicum as part of my teacher education, I experienced firsthand the power a principal has to shape the culture of a school. This lesson was learned as I watched two very different principals lead their schools. The first principal chastised students over the morning announcements, barked orders in the hall and had managed to alienate her entire staff. On the announcements, the second principal encouraged the students to be the best they could be, celebrated student success and had clearly developed a strong rapport with staff. This led me to reflect upon, what determines whether or not a leader can lead effectively?

This question led me to explore Daniel Goldman's work on emotional intelligence and leadership. In my work as a corporate leadership training facilitator, emotional intelligence was one of the tools that we used to train leaders. In the corporate training world, a leadership training tool is deemed valid if it tool is received positively by the client. However, as an academic, I quickly realized that there is a great deal of uncertainty in the field of emotional intelligence and leadership. Despite this uncertainty,

the province of Ontario uses emotional intelligence as part of the professional development of principals without substantial research into its effectiveness.

Most school administrators reach their position with comparable experience and qualifications. Administrators enter the principalship with similar teaching experience and a principal qualification course. Given the similar backgrounds of principals, there is currently great interest in understanding what factors distinguish the administrators who are able to lead their school to higher academic performance from those who cannot. Over the past decade, research suggests that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of leadership ability in various contexts (Bohrer, 2007; Kerr, et al., Gavin, Heaton, & Boyle, 2006; Leban & Zulauf 2004; Rosete & Ciarrochi 2005; Tang, 2007; Williams, 2007).

According to Anderson (2004) principals are "the single most powerful force for improving school effectiveness and achieving excellence in education" (p. 84). Research exploring the influence of principals on student achievement supports this statement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1997; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In a time of increased global competition, the ability for a country to provide a quality education is vital for the prosperity of the country (Freedman, 2001). This increased focus on public accountability has led to a shift in the responsibility of principals from primarily administrative to the role as instructional facilitator (Freedman, 2004). As such, principals are expected to assist teachers in becoming more effective instructors and are held accountable for student achievement. The increased emphasis on principals' accountability to student achievement has

coincided with an increased frequency of leadership-based training initiatives for school leaders (Anderson, 2004).

Emotional intelligence is presently included as part of leadership development programs for Ontario principals, despite the lack of research on emotional intelligence and leadership in an education context. One exceptional study (Stone, Parker, & Wood, 2005) examined the correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness of Ontario school principals. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I). Leadership effectiveness was determined through superintendent evaluations of the principals and teacher evaluations of their principal. Stone et al. found a strong correlation between emotional intelligence assessed by the EQ-I and superintendent and teacher leadership evaluations. This study was funded by the Ontario Principals' Council, the professional association representing school administrators in Ontario. Stone et al. made recommendations for the widespread use of the EQ-I instrument and emotional intelligence-based training to be implemented province wide. While there is some evidence that there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership performance in schools (Bardach, 2008; Cook, 2008; Stone et al., 2005; Williams, 2007), there is little understanding about how emotional intelligence enhances leadership practice. There is even less research that utilizes qualitative research methodologies to explore school administrators' perspectives and experiences of emotional intelligence in the school context. This study aims to address a gap by communicating the perspective of the principal of what emotional intelligence is and how EI applies to their work as school leaders.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores how educational administrators perceive and experience emotional intelligence in their role as leaders within a context of EI. This investigation focuses on understanding how principals perceive emotional intelligence and what role emotional intelligence plays in the work that they do as educational leaders. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do principals view emotional intelligence in the context of their role as leaders in education? By exploring the latter research question, this study will attempt address the gap by conveying the voice and perspectives of school leaders on the topic of emotional intelligence.

Rationale

While the research into emotional intelligence has expanded greatly in the past 10 years, there is relatively little research on emotional intelligence in educational contexts. This study sheds light on two gaps that currently exist in the literature. Firstly, there have been very few studies that explore the role that emotional intelligence plays in the work of Canadian school principals. Secondly, this study explores the issues surrounding emotions and leadership qualitatively from the perspective of the leaders themselves. Past research in Canada has been primarily quantitative in nature, seeking to describe the correlation between emotional intelligence and various measures of leadership effectiveness (Stone et al, 2005). To my knowledge, there have been no qualitative explorations of emotional intelligence from the perspectives of school leaders.

Researcher Position

Given the qualitative nature of the study, it is important to consider the assumptions, experiences, and preconceptions that influenced the researcher's perspective.

The perspective of the researcher can influence the theoretical framework of the study, the collection of the qualitative data, and the interpretation of the results. Before beginning, I possessed many presuppositions about emotional intelligence and principals based on my past experiences. Some of these presuppositions were confirmed, some were challenged, and some of my results required me to develop new paradigms for understanding the topic I studied. My overall presupposition was that the ability of school leaders to effectively manage their internal and external emotional environment can have a significant impact on the culture and performance of a school.

As a researcher, my perspective was greatly influenced by three relevant experiences. First, I began my academic career studying biology through a Bachelor of Science program. The quantitative based approach of my undergraduate program is usually the first lens I utilize when exploring a research problem. However, through this experience engaging in qualitative research, I have gained an appreciation of the methodology and the richness and complexity of a phenomenon that can be uncovered. Through my study of emotional intelligence and school leadership, I began to realize that the relationship between the two may be more complex than only determining the degree of correlation.

Second, I worked for several years as a facilitator and developer of experiential training programs. I worked with teams and individuals within organizations to deliver training programs that address such topics as leadership, emotional intelligence, communication, and team development. The notion of developing leaders is something that I feel very passionate about and my perspectives have been shaped by my work in this area. Understanding the difficulties that leaders face, I am eager to find new resources and training programs that could benefit leaders. I find the approach to

leadership varies greatly between academic researchers and the facilitators of leadership training programs. The majority of leadership training that I have been involved with has been short term in scope with a limited number of sessions, follow-up, and tracking. Organizations are often looking for quick fixes to leadership and team-based problems and these solutions are often very profitable for the providers. As a result, leadership-related models, assessments, and tools in the world of leadership development are evaluated based on their perceived usefulness by clients and the perceived results of clients, as opposed to being evaluated based on the academic validity of the constructs on which they are based.

Finally, I bring to this research study several years of experience working in public schools as a teacher. My viewpoint and understanding of school leaders is not theoretical, but rather based on my interactions with real people in real situations. I have observed principals who react to students and staff harshly, exhibit difficulty building relationships with staff, and sometimes overreact due to stress they are feeling at the time. Conversely, I have observed principals who easily build positive relationships with staff and students, and who establish the trust of teachers and empower others to be leaders in the school. I have noticed a major difference between principals who demonstrate what I would define as emotional intelligence and those who do not. Principals I have worked with who are aware of the impact they are having on others' emotions have a more collaborative relationship than those who are not aware of their impact. These experiences shaped my perspective on the topic I studied and, as a result, I expected emotional intelligence to play an important role in the work of a school principal.

Organization of the Document

Chapter One has presented the background and rationale of the research problem. School board sponsored professional development activities regularly focus on providing principals with the tools to help them better lead their staff in reaching their school improvement goals. As such, emotional intelligence has been used in public schools as a leadership tool. While there has been some quantitative evidence that emotional intelligence is correlated to higher leadership performance for school administrators, there have been no studies that explored emotional intelligence from the perspective of these administrators.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature that is relevant to the question investigated in this study. The literature is broadly divided between school leadership literature and research on emotion. Specifically, literature focusing on leadership theory, styles, and outcomes in relation to emotional intelligence models, assessment tools, and leadership performance measures are reviewed to provide a broad context to understand the research problem.

Chapter Three describes the rationale for utilizing qualitative methodologies to investigate how school administrators understand emotional intelligence. Participant selection and recruitment are described, discussed, and justified. Ethical considerations are outlined, as well as the approach used to analyze data and develop themes.

Chapter Four presents the research results, categorized in two sections. The first section presents brief descriptions of the participants, while the second section presents the five major themes that emerged from the interviews: Self-Awareness, Relationship, Pressure, Support, and Emotional Filters and Compartmentalization.

Chapter Five summarizes the results of this study and attempts to place them in the context of existing literature on emotions and leadership. Once the context of the current study within existing literature is established, implications for future practice and future research are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This study explores how educational administrators perceive and experience emotional intelligence in their role as leaders within a context of EI. This chapter examines the literature related to emotional intelligence and school leadership that is relevant to this study. The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of the research conducted in the field of emotion and emotional intelligence and place it within the existing framework of educational leadership. I have reviewed the historical development of emotional intelligence and the current theories and models of this construct to clarify the meaning of emotional intelligence. Literature investigating the predictive power of emotional intelligence in leadership has been included to give a context for the current interest in emotional intelligence as a tool for school leadership. I have reviewed relevant research linking emotions and school leadership to place emotional intelligence in the broader context of literature exploring emotions. Finally I have provided an overview of the accountability move in public education to give the reader a better understanding of the current political culture that school leaders find themselves in.

Emotional Intelligence

The roots of Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be traced back to Darwin's work in the 19th century on emotional expression in animals (Darwin, 1872). He observed that the effective use of emotion would increase the likelihood of survival for an individual of any given species:

The movements of expression in the face and body … are in themselves of much importance for our welfare. They serve as the first means of communication between the mother and her infant; she smiles approval, and thus encourages her child on the right path, or frowns disapproval. We readily perceive sympathy in others by their expression; our sufferings are thus mitigated and our pleasures increased; and mutual good feeling is thus strengthened. (Darwin, 1965, p. 364)

Psychologist Edward Thorndike used the term social intelligence to describe the skill of understanding and managing other people, to act wisely in human relations (Thorndike, 1920b). In the 1940s, David Wechsler, creator of the widely used standard intelligence test, recognized the importance of social factors on intelligent behaviour and the need for a model of intelligence that incorporated this factor (Wechsler, 1939). He termed these factors non-intellective abilities.

In 1983, Howard Gardner's introduction of multiple intelligences challenged the traditional view of intelligence on the basis that it neglects several domains of abilities that contribute to overall cognitive performance. Gardner defined intelligence as "the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural setting" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Using a framework of existing research on intelligence, Gardner (1983) used the following eight criteria to determine what clusters of behaviours or traits could be defined as an intelligence:

1. Potential isolation by brain damage

2. The existence of idiots savants, prodigies, and other exceptional individuals

3. An identifiable core operation or set of operations

4. A distinctive development history, along with a definable set of "end-state" performances

5. An evolutionary history and evolutionary plausibility

6. Support from experimental psychological tasks

7. Support from psychometric findings

8. Susceptibility to encoding in a symbol system.

Using these criteria, Gardner (1983) described an initial seven intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematic, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, visual-spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. These latter two intelligences, termed personal intelligences, could be seen as a precursor for emotional intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence describes the capacity to understand the motivations, intentions, and desires of other people and intrapersonal intelligence describes the capacity to understand one's emotions, fears, and motivations. The skills that make up Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence map closely to what researchers (e.g., Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) later defined as Interpersonal and Intrapersonal domains of emotional intelligence.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) catalyzed modern interest in emotional intelligence. They defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p. 189). Daniel Goleman brought this concept to the masses with his best-selling 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence*. Since the mid 1990s, the literature has grown exponentially in both academic and popular writing.

Can EI Be Defined as an Intelligence?

A prevalent criticism of emotional intelligence is that is does not fit the definition of an intelligence in the traditional sense (Locke 2005). Locke (2005) defined intelligence as the ability to form and grasp concepts. According to Locke, emotional intelligence has become a replacement for the concept of rationality. He distinguishes traditional intelligence as an ability to grasp concepts from rationality, which deals with the application of concepts in different situations. Locke argues that emotional intelligence does not require the ability to form and grasp concepts. He notes that perceiving emotional cues from oneself and others does not require any complex understanding of emotions, but is merely a matter of directing attention to these cues.

Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000) described three sets of criteria for a set of competencies to be defined as intelligence. First, it should be capable of being demonstrated as a set of abilities as opposed to a personality trait (Carroll, 1993; Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Scarr, 1975). Assessment of an intelligence should be performance based as opposed to self-assessed. Second, the abilities defined by the intelligence should be related in a logical way and also relate to pre-existing intelligences while showing some variance (Carroll, 1993; Neisser, 1976). Third, the abilities of the intelligence should develop with age and experience (Wilson & Brown, 1997).

To investigate whether the ability based model of EI can be demonstrated as a set of abilities, Mayer et al. (2000) devised a set of 12 performance-based tasks designed to test emotion-based abilities. Their results showed that individuals' performance on a given task was significantly correlated to their performance on the other tasks. Mayer et

al. (2000) concluded that their results demonstrated a related set of abilities, which could be represented by an overall emotional intelligence factor.

Mayer et al. (2000) and Roberts, Zeidner, and Matthews (2001) found a moderate correlation between the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and the Stanford-Binet's Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test. The Stanford-Binet's IQ test is a standard measure of traditional intelligence. The results of both Mayer et al. (2000) and Roberts et al. found that the skills-set assessed by the MSCEITT is moderately related to traditional intelligence. Mayer et al. (2000) concluded that emotional intelligence as assessed by the MSCEIT is related to IQ with enough variance to be a unique construct. Roberts et al. however concluded similar results for the validity of the MSCEIT and the related model of emotional intelligence.

Mayer et al. (2000) examined whether the abilities assessed by the MSCEIT develop with age and experience in a similar fashion in which traditional intelligence develops. MSCEIT scores of 505 adult and 229 adolescent participants were compared, and the adult participants were found to score significantly higher than adolescent participants. Mayer et al. (2000) concluded that this was evidence that emotional intelligence as assessed by the MSCEIT develops with age and experience like traditional intelligence.

Towards a Definition of EI

Perhaps the most pervasive criticism of emotional intelligence stems from the absence of a commonly accepted definition. Locke (2005) concludes that emotional intelligence is too loosely and broadly defined to be a valid construct. While there are many researchers in the field using varying definitions of the construct, they can be

generally organized based on where they are positioned within personality and intelligence research (Petrides & Furnham, 1999).

While intelligence itself does not have a standardized definition, it generally refers to abilities in the realm of cognition that are used to solve problems in various contexts (Lyusin, 2006). Personality is also a somewhat fluid concept, but generally refers to a set of characteristics possessed by a person that influence their cognitions and behaviors (Ryckman, 2008). In essence, personality refers to who you are, whereas intelligence refers to your cognitive capabilities.

Based on their usage of personality and intelligence, the models of emotional intelligence can be organized into three categories: ability-based, mixed, and trait-based models. Ability-based models focus exclusively on cognitive abilities, mixed models include both cognitive ability and personality, and trait-based models include personality traits exclusively. Below is a summary of each model.

The ability-based model of emotional intelligence was the first model to use the term emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In this model, emotional intelligence is defined as "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). This model is presented as a four-branch hierarchal model that identifies the perception of emotion as the base, and the regulation of emotion as the top level (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The middle two levels describe the integration of emotions into cognitive processing as a whole. The four-levels model includes:

1. Perception, appraisal, and expression of emotion
2. Emotional facilitation of thinking

3. Understanding and analyzing emotional information, employing emotional knowledge

4. Regulation of emotions.

The ability-based model is argued by Salovey & Mayer (1990) to exist within the standard definition of intelligence. Using Thorndike's work as a context, Salovey and Mayer (1990) view emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence. They propose that individuals vary in their ability to process emotional information and thus relate that information to other cognitive processing. These individual differences are normally distributed, like other standard models of intelligence. Individuals with a greater ability to process emotions display more adaptive behaviours. Ability-based emotional intelligence differs from mixed models and trait models because it only includes cognitive abilities that relate to the processing of emotional information. Both mixed models and trait models include elements of personality and thus may not appropriately be called intelligence in the traditional sense (Lyusin, 2006).

Criticisms of Salovey and Mayer's model of emotional intelligence primarily focus on a discrepancy with what the measurement tools assess and what they are intended to assess (Brody, 2004: Locke, 2005; Roberts et al., 2001). Brody (2004) argues that while assessments measuring ability-based emotional intelligence are intended to test one's ability to perceive emotions, in practice they only assess a general knowledge of emotions. In other words, the measurement tools associated with the ability-based models of emotional intelligence measure whether one has the knowledge to act emotionally intelligent, but not whether one has the ability to do so. Another recent criticism of the ability-based model of emotional intelligence disputes the claims that this

construct is separate from existing constructs of personality and general intelligence (Schulte, Ree, & Carretta, 2004). The MSCEIT assessment of ability-based emotional intelligence is found to be significantly correlated with general intelligence and the agreeable personality trait (Schulte et al., 2004). This finding disputes Salovey and Mayer's claim that their model addresses a concept unique from general intelligence and personality traits.

Roberts et al. (2001) challenged the validity of the scoring methodology used for the MSCEIT. A consensus-based system is used to evaluate the MSCEIT scores of individuals. This means that how an individual scores on the MSCEIT is dependent on how close her or his answers match the answers chosen by general population. High emotional intelligence is based on a minimal level of divergence with the most common answers given by a large, randomized sample population. Roberts et al. criticized this approach as creating a measure of conformity and argue that the general population does not necessary have the knowledge to handle situations in the most emotionally intelligent way possible. This approach assumes that the most popular response to an emotion-based problem would be the most emotionally intelligent one.

The mixed models of EI describe emotional intelligence as a combination of personality traits and cognitive abilities traits. Some of the competencies described in these models are categorized in the realm traditionally associated with personality research. The most popular and widely researched mixed models are those proposed by Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997).

Goleman (1995) initially insisted that his model placed emotional intelligence at the intersection of emotional processing and cognition, although this has been disputed

(Sternberg, 2001). Goleman defined EI as: "Abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations, to control impulses and delay gratification, to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think, empathize and to hope" (p. 34).

Goleman's (1995) original model of EI consists of 25 skills, abilities, and competencies categorized into four distinct domains:

1. Self-awareness—the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.

2. Self-management—involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.

3. Social awareness—the ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks.

4. Relationship management—the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2001) updated model of EI includes a much wider range of behaviours and personality traits.

The mixed models of EI also have been criticized as being too loosely defined and because they overlap significantly with standard personality traits. For example, the Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On, 2004) correlates 0.80 with low trait anxiety and general psychopathology (Bar-On, 1997; Newsome, Day, & Catano, 2000). The overall correlation between EQI and the Five-Factor model of personal is significant (Dawda & Hart, 2000; Matthews et al., 2002). Stenberg (2001) has criticized Goleman's model,

arguing "it differs little from personality and appears to be a general lumping together of characteristics of a good person" (p. 188).

The mixed models of EI cannot be described as an operationalized set of abilities and thus do not meet Mayer and Salovey's (1993) first criteria for intelligence. There is also doubt as to whether the competencies identified in Goleman's model are related in a logical way, which represents the second criteria for an intelligence (Eysenck, 2000; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). It is not clear how Goleman's emotional competencies such as trustworthiness and commitment are related and how they represent a cohesive construct (Eysenck, 2000). Eysenck (2000) accused Goleman of gathering a set of unrelated traits that describe as a "good person" and classifying them as emotional intelligence.

Trait EI is defined as a constellation of emotion-related self-perceived abilities and dispositions related to the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). In other words, trait EI uses self-assessment to create profiles of an individual's emotional disposition, similar to personality profiles within the realm of personality psychology. The trait-based model of EI was developed by Petrides and Furnham (2001) in response to criticism of the validity of a mixed model of EI. Their rationale was that if personality and intelligence are independent domains (Zeidner, 1995), then they cannot be combined in a meaningful way (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Trait-based emotional intelligence is somewhat of a misnomer, as Petrides and Furnham do not believe that it can be defined as an intelligence. This is why Petrides and Furnham use the term emotional self-efficacy instead of emotional intelligence.

Assessment of Emotional Intelligence

Many assessment tools have been created to measure emotional intelligence, yet with varying degrees of validity (Roberts et al., 2001). Most assessment tools align themselves to some degree to one of the three models of emotional intelligence described above. The most comprehensive assessment of the ability-based model of emotional intelligence is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence test or MSCEIT (Mayer et al., 2001). Similar to traditional intelligence measures, the MSCEIT is a performance test scored by the number of correct answers. Correct answers are determined by one of two methods: expert scoring or consensus scoring. Expert scoring involves the comparison of an individual's answers pre-determined by a select group of psychologists who specialize in the area of emotion. Consensus scoring is based on the answers of a sample population selected to reflect what the average person believes to be the emotionally intelligent response. There is no significant difference between results scored using these two different methods (Mayer et al., 2000).

The Bar-On EQ-I is the most widely used self-report measure of EI and is based on a mixed-model understanding of emotional intelligence (Stone et al., 2005). The tool consists of a 125- item Likert scale inventory (Bar-On, 1997). The tool asks participants to read and rank statements (e.g., 1 = very seldom true of me; 5 = very often true of me). The Bar-On EQ-I has an internal consistency ranging from 0.69 to 0.86 and test–retest reliabilities ranging from 0.75 to 0.85 (Bar-On, 1997).

Predictive Value of Emotional Intelligence

While the validity of the emotional intelligence may be an important point of discussion in the academic community, it is the potential of EI to predict the success of

individuals in various areas of performance that is of special interest in the realm of business and educational practice. This interest is reflected by Cooper & Sawaf (1997) who argue that "If the driving force of intelligence in twentieth century business has been IQ, then . . . in the dawning twenty-first century it will be EQ" (p. xxvii). It has been claimed that EI could account for 36% of the deviations in job performance, far greater than the amount of deviations attributed to IQ (Dulewicz & Higgs, 1998).

Positive correlations between EI and job performance have been reported in a diverse range of sectors such as retail (Cage, Daus, & Saul, 2004), policing (Glomb, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Rotundo, 2004), and clerical workers (Lopes et al., 2004). Petrides and Furham (2003) found a strong correlation between emotional intelligence as assessed by a trait-based assessment tool and self-report levels of happiness. From the results of this study, the authors hypothesize that happiness could be a factor in the correlation between EI and job performance, as previous research has established a link between happiness and job performance. Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) performed a meta-analysis of 69 studies and concluded that there was positive correlation between EI and performance ($p = 0.23$).

However, the correlation between EI and job performance is not conclusive (Janovics & Christiansen, 2002; O'Connor & Little, 2003; Slaski, 2001; Wilson & Brown, 2007; Zeidner, 1995). In fact, several studies examining the predictive validity of EI in organizational studies show no correlation. Janovics and Christiansen (2001) found the Trait Meta-Mood Scale did not correlate with job performance of university employed undergrads as reported by their supervisors. Slaski (2001) studied the link between management and emotional intelligence with 224 middle and senior managers

from a UK supermarket chain. Data were gathered on EI using the EQ-I assessment tool and line managers performance was assessed based on frequency of specific behaviours. Whereas the total EQ-I score was moderately related to morale (r = .55), distress (r = −.57), general mental health (r = −.50), and quality of work satisfaction (r = .41), it was only very modestly related to managerial performance (r = .22). Zeidner et al. (2004) concluded that EI is a weak predictor of job performance, but may still be useful as a predictor of job satisfaction (Slaski & Cartwright, 2002).

There are two considerations to keep in mind when reviewing the mixed results of studies linking EI with job performance. Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) argued that since EI is a set of abilities, it is only predictive of performance in jobs that logically require the use of these abilities. It is possible that some studies that found weak correlations between EI and job performance examined job roles that did not require these abilities. The second consideration is that emotional intelligence may only be a determining factor of performance in sample groups with an above-average IQ (Cartwright & Pappas, 2008). Dulewicz and Higgs (1998) found EI to be responsible for 36% of performance variance whereas IQ accounted for 27%. There may be a base level of IQ required for basic performance in a given task, but IQ being equal, the high performers are determined by their EI. If this is the case, emotional intelligence should be viewed as an intervening factor in performance.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

The field of leadership research appears to have the most popular appeal for emotional intelligence (Cartwright & Pappas, 2008). Daniel Goleman (2002) makes the case that emotional intelligence can be used to predict leadership ability. His theory

assumes a link between emotional intelligence and leadership. However researchers like Locke (2005) claim that the correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership has been highly sensationalized in popular literature. Much of the available literature studying the correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is mixed. There are many examples where emotional intelligence has been correlated with leadership abilities (e.g., Kerr et al., 2006; Leban & Zulauf 2004; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). Yet, it is important to note that other studies showed significant correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership performance (e.g., Law, Wong, Huang, & Li, 2007; Wilson & Brown, 2007). While the majority of literature reports a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, further research is needed.

Why would there be a link between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness? There have been many explanations put forth to explain the latter question. One explanation states that an emotionally intelligent leader is likely to utilize a transformational approach to leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). The positive effects of a transformational leadership approach have previously been established: to increase commitment (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000), to enhance employee satisfaction (Hater & Bass, 1988), to raise trust (Barling et al., 2000; Pillai, Scandura, & Williams, 1999), and to increase job performance (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Several researchers found a quantitative correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership (Barling et al., 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002). In particular, Barling et al. (2000) found managers who scored high on a self-report EI score were significantly correlated with subordinate scoring of three aspects

transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration). Gardner and Stough (2002) support Barling et al.'s results, reporting that managers with high emotional intelligence were most likely to employ a transformational approach to management as opposed to a transactional or laissez-faire style. The competencies of understanding emotions in others and emotional self-management were most strongly correlated with transformational leadership (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

Levenson and Gottman (1983) described an intriguing phenomenon he termed emotional mirroring. He observed that during both negative and positive interactions, couples experienced the same physiological responses and the same self-reported emotions. Goleman (2002) argues that because of emotional mirroring, every individual in a work team adds her or his flavour to the emotional soup. However, it is the leader who adds "the strongest seasoning" (Goleman, 2002, p. 8). Pescosolido (2002) explained that it is the leaders' emotions that have more weight simply because they talk more, are listened to more closely, and are referred to more than any other group members. The leaders who are able to effectively manage their own emotions and recognize emotions in others are best equipped to create a positive and motivating climate for their employees (Pescosolido, 2002).

Emotional intelligence should not be viewed as a leadership style (George, 2000). If leadership is viewed from a situational approach, emotional intelligence allows leaders to gather the necessary information they need to inform their leadership behaviour in any given situation. Emotionally intelligent leaders are able to choose the leadership style that will create the most resonance with their followers (Goleman, 2002).

Emotions in School Leadership

The relevance of emotion to the work of the teacher has been well documented in studies of teacher motivation, professionalism, stress management, and role identification (Hargreaves, 1997; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Nias, 1989; Noddings, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1991). The emotional experiences and perspectives of school administrators, however, has not been explored to the same degree (Beatty, 2000). Only a handful of recent studies have explored the emotional elements of leadership in schools (Beatty, 2000; Crawford, 2007).

Educational leadership has been described as emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003). Blackmore (1996) studied emotional labour and found during times where funding is tight, administrators need greater recognition and appreciation for the emotional investment that often accompanies the navigation of these challenges. Principals have described the act of "letting go" of control of their schools to other educational stakeholders as an emotionally difficult exercise (Blase & Blase, 1997). These principals experienced emotional benefits from "letting go" but during the adjustment period experienced fear and anxiety.

Principals are usually the initiators of change at the school level of administration (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Leading change has been well documented as an emotionally complex leadership behavior (Beatty, 1999; Goleman, 2002; Hargreaves, 1997; Leithwood et al., 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Yet, principals are asked to implement change that is dictated by the local school board or provincial ministry of education (Williams, 2001). Williams (2001) found that school principal does not agree

with the policy change they are asked to initiate, it creates an emotionally stressful situation.

Using a review of recent literature in the area of both leadership and emotion, Crawford (2007) found that principals experience tension between expressing emotions in response to their daily work and being viewed as professional by others. Crawford further explained tension exists because the process of socialization that teachers and principals experience shapes how they sound, look, and interact with others. The collective culture of the school reinforces the understanding that professionalism for educational leaders includes rational behaviour and careful emotional control. Crawford concluded that understanding professionalism as not expressing emotions is both inaccurate and not desirable.

Emotional Intelligence and School Leaders

While literature exploring the link between EI and leadership is vast, the majority of this research has been conducted in corporate settings. A few studies focused on emotional intelligence in the context of school leaders (Bardach, 2008). Stone et al.'s (2005) study identified key emotional competencies that determined leadership effectiveness in school administrators. In the latter study, 464 principals and vice-principals completed the Bar-On EQ-I assessment. The participants were also asked to include three subordinates and one superior to complete a questionnaire for assessing their leadership effectiveness. The results showed a weak correlation between the subordinate and superior leadership scores; therefore a composite score was created by combining the two sources of data, which was used to divide the participants in two groups: above average leadership and below average leadership. Stone et al. found that

women scored significantly higher on the emotional intelligence scores then men. The results also showed that the above-average leadership group scored higher on both intrapersonal subscales (emotional self-awareness and self-actualization) and interpersonal subscales (empathy and relationship).

In another study, Bardach (2008) explored the relationship between emotional competencies and the leadership performance of 50 middle school principals in the State of Maryland. The MSCEIT tool was used to assess emotional intelligence. The leadership performance of the principals was assessed based on the academic performance scores of the school they led. This performance score is referred to as AYP (adequate yearly process) and is an educational benchmark used in the State of Maryland based on student math, reading, and attendance levels. The average MSCEIT score of the participants was 98, which was very close to the general population average of 100. These results showed that a school's likelihood of reaching AYP increased by 0.6% for every 1 point over average that the principals score on the MSCEIT. Bardach's study results showed that the subscale of perceiving emotions was most significantly correlated with AYP success.

A recent PhD dissertation examined emotional intelligence in school administrators from the State of Montana (Cook, 2008). All 214 members of the school administrators association of Montana were invited to participate in the study, and 143 participated. Each participant completed a 28-question emotional intelligence measure called the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003). The principal's leadership effectiveness was assessed using the Educational Leadership Improvement Tool, a self-report measure with nine categories. The study results showed

a significant correlation between the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal scores and the Educational Leadership Improvement Tool scores. In other words, the leaders who demonstrated higher emotional intelligence also self-reported better leadership performance.

Williams (2007) explored the factors that differentiated outstanding and typical urban principals in the mid-western United States. Williams used peer and supervisor nominations to identify a group of 12 outstanding principals and selected eight principals who received no nominations as the typical group. Each participant was interviewed using Behavioural Event Incident (BEI) methodology and their responses were coded according to a model of emotional and social competencies. The results showed that the outstanding group of principals consistently demonstrated five emotional competencies (self-confidence, self-control, conscientiousness, achievement orientation, and initiative) and four of the social intelligence competencies (organizational awareness, leadership, conflict management, and teamwork/collaboration) than the "typical" group.

Leadership and the Accountability Movement in Public Education

The move towards accountability in public education means more pressure on student achievement, teacher performance, and ultimately on school administrators to deliver these outcomes (Freedman, 2001). Effective principals have the ability to empower teachers towards increased student achievement and ongoing improvement (Lezotte, 2002). It has been argued that a principal's leadership ability accounts for about 20% of the variation in school performance (Leithwood et al., 2004).

If a school administrator's leadership ability accounts for 20% of a school's academic performance, giving principals effective tools to increase their leadership

ability could dramatically impact the achievement of a school. Evidence has shown that emotional intelligence is an effective tool in the leadership repertoire of school administrators (Bardach, 2008; Cook, 2008; Stone et al., 2005). However, more research is required to further explore how principals experience and understand emotional intelligence in informing their leadership practices.

Evidence shows the pressure that school administrators face can negatively impact their emotional well-being (Allison, 1997; Carruth, 1997; Welmers, 2006; Williams, 2001). A survey of 643 public school principals found that stress is a major concern for public school administrators in British Columbia (Allison, 1997). The findings revealed that principals reported feeling isolation, frustration due to limited resources, and dissatisfaction, with some contemplating leaving their jobs.

Carruth (1997) found approximately 25% of school administrators in California experience high levels of emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was found to be a key determinant of burnout and predictor of career longevity. Incidents of emotional exhaustion were found to be more common in female principals and principals with less administrative experience. The study also found that principals who relied on personal power as opposed to position-based power experience lower levels of stress.

In a more recent study, Welmers (2006) found no significant relationship between principal stress and length of experience. The most commonly reported source of high-level stress was due to the implementation of educational reform programs (Welmers, 2006). Principals reported high levels of stress associated with being held responsible for test scores, being compared to other schools, and complying with state and federal policy changes.

A study commissioned by the Ontario Principals' Council predicted the current shortage of principals and vice-principals (Williams, 2001). This study interviewed strong principal candidates who had chosen not to pursue an administrative career path. The three main factors that dissuaded these individuals from pursuing an administrative career were (a) perceived problems with implementation and management of provincially mandated changes, (b) the lack of resources (financial and personnel), and (c) the time demands of the job. Parent demands, lack of professional regard, and accountability expectations were also common themes in participant responses.

Chapter Summary

Emotional intelligence is one of the more recent constructs created to help answer the question of what helps individuals to succeed in society. Some research has shown that emotional intelligence is correlated with job performance in diverse contexts, including managerial and leadership performance (Cage et al., 2004; Dulewicz & Higgs, 1998; Glomb et al., 2004; Lopes et al., 2004; Petrides & Furham, 2003; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Yet, this correlation is far from conclusive and as a result emotional intelligence has been heavily criticized. Emotional intelligence does not meet the criteria of an intelligence; it is too broadly or loosely defined and the measurement tools have questionable validity.

In contrast to the research into emotional intelligence, the emotional element of leadership has been researched for more than 20 years. The emotional experiences and perspectives of the school principals, however, have not been explored. Existing studies have explored stress, exhaustion, and feelings of isolation experienced by school leaders.

There has been preliminary research that established a link between the emotional health and emotional intelligence of school leaders and performance outcomes of the school (Bardach, 2008; Cook, 2008; Stone et al., 2005). However, scant research has been conducted on school administrators, specifically principals' views about emotional intelligence. This research attempts to fill this gap by going directly to school principals, in order to understand their experiences and perspectives of emotional intelligences.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This study explores how educational administrators perceive and experience emotional intelligence in their role as leaders within a context of EI. To understand the subtlety and intricacy involved in the emotional elements of leadership, a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was deemed most appropriate because of the social– psychological nature of the phenomenon being studied. I utilized grounded theory methodology for the purpose of generating interpretive theories on a small scale. This chapter discusses the research design, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations employed in the study.

Research Design

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study in order to explore in depth how school leaders use emotional intelligence in the work they do. A grounded theory methodology was utilized to provide systematic guidelines for analyzing qualitative data for the purpose of generating a small scale interpretive theory (Charmaz, 2006). In this approach, the data provide the foundation from which new ideas can be constructed in future research.

The phenomenon being investigated is social psychological in nature, of which a grounded theory approach can provide a rich understanding of a process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It provides an explanation that works in practice and is sensitive to individuals; it thus accurately represents the complexity of human interactions (Creswell, 2002). The emotional worlds of school administrators are shaped by numerous individual perspectives, diverse cultural factors, and complex interactions between organizational structures, which suit a grounded theory approach.

Participant Selection

A purposeful, convenience sampling was used in which, according to Creswell (2005), "the researcher intentionally selects people or sites who can best help us understand our phenomenon" (p. 203). Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to identify participants who are information rich and have experience with the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 1990). The purposeful sampling strategy with maximal variation helps to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented (Creswell, 2005).

This study sample comprised 6 Ontario English speaking public school principals who were selected based on the following selection criteria: variation of school contexts based on socioeconomic levels, urban or rural settings, and degree of ethnic diversity. Four male and 2 female principals were chosen from elementary and secondary schools from different public school boards representing a diverse range of age and experience. The sample was deemed sufficient because participants represented a diverse range of experiences.

Six potential participants were recruited to participate in the study through initial email contact by the researcher and advisor. These 6 potential participants were contacted through personal contacts of the researcher and advisor. A follow-up introductory letter was sent to all potential participants. Selection of the final sample was based on the criteria previously discussed and consent. Each of the 6 potential participants initially contacted consented to their participation in the study. Once consent was obtained, interviews were scheduled with participants to occur at mutually convenient times and locations.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were determined to be the most effective means to explore the perspectives of school leaders on emotional intelligence. This approach involved broad, open questions designed to help facilitate the participant's contemplation of daily administrative realities and individual experiences. According to Creswell (2005), semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions allow participants to communicate their experiences without being shaped by past perspectives of the research topic. The methodological choices of this study were selected to enable the voice of the school administrator to be heard clearly and unfiltered.

The framework for developing interview questions was drawn from research on both emotional intelligence and personal experience. The four domains of the Bar-On (1997) model of emotional intelligences (interpersonal, intrapersonal, general mood, stress management and adaptability) were used as a starting point for developing the questions and were seen to provide participants an opportunity to discuss various aspects of emotional intelligence relevant to the work they do. The Bar-On model was chosen because of its use in Ontario schools as part of principal training program based on Stone et al.'s (2005) recommendation.

Personal experience facilitating leadership training and working with leaders in school contexts was also used to guide the development of other questions. An understanding of the leadership context enabled the design of questions to touch on issues of particular importance to school leaders giving them an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns, and experiences from their own perspectives.

The interview questions were piloted before any data were collected. The pilot interview was conducted with 1 secondary school principal known to the researcher (i.e., a convenience sample) and the rationale for conducting the pilot interview was to: (a) test the research questions to identify any misunderstood words, phrases or questions that may create barriers to participants (Creswell, 2005); (b) practice interview techniques; and (c) receive an initial understanding of participant experience to better identify additional probing questions (Creswell, 2005).

The basic structure of the interview and questions remained unchanged after the pilot interview; however, the phrasings of the several questions were altered slightly based on feedback from the pilot principal. The new phrasing of questions was easier to understand and acted as less of a barrier for understanding participant perspectives. The pilot interview gave me an initial understanding of principal perspectives. The preliminary data also helped the interviewer to identify questions that required probing and open up the discussion, clarify buzz words, and allow participants alternative ways to reflect upon the emotional aspects of the work they do.

Data collection in this study was accomplished through semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions (Creswell, 2005). The open-ended questions provided flexibility for participants to respond to and elaborate on the questions without any constraints. Probing questions and statements were used to encourage participants to explain in more detail and provide additional information (Merrian, 2002). This approach also allowed for the emergence of ideas and concepts that participants deemed important that may have been otherwise invisible to the researcher (Oakes, 2005).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was completed with the intent of uncovering an interpretative theory of principals' perspective on emotional intelligence. Interpretative theories "illuminate patterns and connections rather than linear reasoning" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 126). This type of theory assumes multiple realities and emphasizes practices and actions and seeks to understand emotional intelligence from the perspectives of several school principals in the context of their leadership practice. A theoretical understanding of emotional intelligences emphasizes understanding rather than explaining or predicting (Charmaz, 2006). This study explored "how" in the sense that it sought to understand how school administrators understand emotional intelligence in the context of the work they do. Employing a constructivist approach meant being as close to the inside of the experience as possible in order to "theorize the interpretative work of participants" but to also acknowledge the interpretative result (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130).

Understanding emotional intelligence meant exploring the implicit meanings that constituted categories in order to visualize how they fit together. It also meant being alert to the tacit meanings and conditions embedded within the narratives to understand how these meanings linked to their actions. Thus, the fundamental contribution of grounded theory methods resided in providing a "guide to interpretative theoretical practice not in providing a blueprint for theoretical products" (Charmaz, 2006, p.129).

Coding and analysis occurred simultaneously to help "gain a new perspective on our material" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515). A grounded theory approach to coding referred to as open coding was used to develop ideas inductively (Creswell, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The first phase in the coding process was to name each

line of the interview transcripts. Line-by-line coding was used to gain a detailed and nuanced understanding of participant perspectives. This coding stage allows the researcher to identify both the explicit and implicit ideas of the participant (Charmaz, 2006).

In vivo coding was used to create codes that described what was going on in each line of the interview in the words of the participants (Creswell, 2002). In vivo codes allow the researcher to "preserve participants' meaning of their views and actions in the coding itself" (Charmaz, 2006, p.126). This was especially important to ensure the voice of the school principal was accurately communicated through this study. Through the analysis of in vivo codes, common words and phrases could be unpacked to uncover larger ideas. In a few cases, the in vivo code was an "innovative term that captured meanings or experience" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55).

Focused coding was the second phase of the coding where the most significant and frequent codes uncovered in the first phase of coding are used to sort through the data for the purpose of determining which of these codes categorize the data most cohesively (Charmaz, 2006). The initial ideas that arose during the line-by-line coding were used to direct attention and begin to select the most common ideas (Glaser, 1978). This process began with examining codes for overlap and frequency. Atlas.ti (a qualitative software program) was used at this stage of the analysis to assist in visualizing and interpreting the relationships between codes. In particular, the family manager function of Atlas.ti enabled related codes and memos to be grouped into families. Using the family manager function, codes that described similar experiences, situations, or emotions were grouped together. The network tool of Atlas.ti allows codes and families of codes to be visually

represented as boxes that can be connected by lines to other codes and families, similar to a concept map.

The relationships between these codes and families of codes can be described by the types of lines that connect them. The network tool of Atlas.ti was used to provide a visual representation of related codes. This allowed the researcher to examine codes for overlap between participants for the purpose of constructing themes from related codes. In some cases the initial in vivo codes were used to name the themes that emerged. Similar text segments were compared between participants in the process of discovering themes (Strauss, 1987). This was not a linear process, as the text segments from one interview would yield insights into the text segments of another. These types of comparisons helped to stimulate different ways of thinking about a code and led to some initial understandings of the relationships between themes.

The final step in coding was to describe the relationships between themes and subthemes. Axial coding was used to describe these relationships. This axial coding allows for the building of "a dense texture of relationships around the axis of category" (Strauss, 1987, p. 64). At this stage, the network view of Atlas.ti, which helps visualize relationships between the codes, was used to create concept maps to explore the relationships between the themes. Relationships between the themes were described using categories like "an example of," "in support of," and "the cause of." This graphical representation not only provided an excellent overview of the data but also allowed the researcher to receive a rudimentary understanding of the processes that linked the themes and subthemes.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited the experiences of 6 Ontario public school administrators. To explore these perspectives in a meaningful and rich way, it was important to select a diverse sample that included both new administrators and experienced administrators in order to better understand the role their experiences played in shaping different perspectives. While diversity in experience, age, location, and gender were key considerations in participant selection, the diversity represented in this investigation is limited because of the small sample size.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed the ethical guidelines established by the Research Ethics Board at Brock University as well as the moral and ethical requirements established by the research department at the school board selected for this study. Below is a summary of steps that were taken to ensure all relevant ethical considerations were taken into account in the design of this study.

Upmost care was taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants, the schools, and the school boards that the participants are employed within. Each participant was given a pseudonym which was used to label transcribed interview. A list linking the pseudonym to the participant name and school was kept only until data collection was complete. Names of participants and schools did not appear in the written and oral dissemination of the research study. In the reporting of the findings, participants were described in general terms (years of service, male or female, urban/rural context). These general descriptions were scrutinized to ensure participants could not be identified.

Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were informed both verbally and in writing about their right to terminate their participation in the study. They were likewise informed that they could decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. They were also informed verbally and in writing that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

Chapter Summary

A grounded theory methodology was used to provide guidelines for analyzing qualitative data. This approach was used for the purpose of generating a small-scale interpretive theory. A purposeful sampling strategy was used to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented (Creswell, 2005). The purposeful sample was comprised of 6 Ontario public school principals who were selected based on: variation of school contexts based on socioeconomic levels, urban or rural settings, and degree of ethnic diversity. Four male and 2 female principals were chosen from elementary and secondary schools from different public school boards representing a diverse range of age and experience. Data collection was accomplished through one-on-one in-depth interviews. The interview was semi-structured and designed to explore the perspectives of the participants with regards to emotional intelligence in their role as school leaders. The interview included general questions related to leadership approach, understanding of emotional intelligence, and emotional elements of the work they do, as well as specific questions relating to the domains of the Bar EQ-I emotional intelligence measurement tool. Data were analyzed using the principles of grounded theory in three stages: line-by-line coding, focused coding, and axial coding. This allowed for the development of initial codes, which were used to sift through the data for the purpose of creating refined

codes and code families. Themes and subthemes were developed through the examination of the relationships between codes and code families. This study followed the ethical guidelines established by the Research Ethics Board at Brock University as well as the moral and ethical requirements established by the research department at the school board selected for this study. Steps were taken to ensure all relevant ethical considerations were taken into account in the design of this study. Care and attention were given to ensuring the anonymity of the participants, the schools, and the school boards.   Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were informed both verbally and in writing about their right to terminate their participation in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the study's findings. This study explored how educational administrators perceive and experience emotional intelligence in their role as leaders. As noted in the previous chapter, semi-structured interview questions were used to gain rich insights from the participant's experiences. Five main themes emerged from and were guided by the following research question: How do principals view emotional intelligence in the context of their role as leaders in education?

The results in this chapter are presented in two sections. I begin the first section by introducing each participant (using pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity) to provide a frame of reference for understanding their experiences as administrators and to provide a contextual glimpse into their school environments. The school administrators are referred to as Sam, Jenn, Jack, Brad, Shirley, and Jerry. The second section summarizes the details of each of the themes: self-awareness, relationship, support, pressure, and emotional filters and compartmentalization.

Description of Participants

Six school administrators were interviewed. Below is a brief description of each participant to provide a context of the school administrators' experiences.

Sam had worked as an administrator for 4.5 years and was at his current school for 2.5 years. He'd spent 7 years teaching at various elementary schools before becoming an elementary principal. He was in his 40s at the time of the interview. Sam described the student population of his current school as ethnically diverse and representing a broad socioeconomic base. The school is located in a suburban area.

Jenn was in her sixth year as a high school administrator at the same school she had begun her administrative career. She was in her 40s at the time of the interview and had spent 10 years teaching in nine different schools prior to becoming an administrator. Jenn described the demographics of her current school as mostly middle class with a large transient population of students whose parents live in Canada temporarily for business purposes. The school is located in a suburban area.

Jack was in his 11th year as a high school principal and seventh year at the same school. He had spent 4 years as a classroom teacher prior to starting administrative positions and was in his 60s at the time of the interview. Jack described the students at the school as coming from middle to upper class homes, with about 70% White and the remaining 30% coming from Middle Eastern and Asian countries. The school is located in a suburban area.

Brad had been a high school principal for 12 years and was at his current school for 6 years. He was in his late 50s at the time of the interview. He had taught for 10.5 years prior to starting in administration and had been a vice principal for an additional 10 years. Brad described the students at his school representing a very broad mix of socioeconomic and academic levels, with very little ethnic diversity. The school services a mix of suburban and rural students.

Shirley was finishing her fourth month as principal at her current school and had been a principal at two other schools over the past 10 years. Before that, she spent 3 years as a principal and worked for 20 years as a classroom teacher. She works at a rural school that she describes as unicultural.

Jerry was 4 months into his first year as a principal. Before moving into his current position, he had taught for 6 years and acted as a vice-principal for 1.5 years. Jerry's school services a low socioeconomic urban area. Jerry describes his school as having a majority of White students and a large First Nations population.

Results

Data analysis of the semi-structured interviews uncovered five themes emerging from the perspectives of the participants: Self-awareness, Relationship, Support, Pressure, and Emotional Filtering and Compartmentalization. These five themes are discussed in detail below along with a general summary of how principals view emotional intelligence.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness was a relevant aspect that principals considered to be emotional intelligence and included the ability to monitor one's own emotional state and manage one's emotions. All participants acknowledged an element of self-awareness in their understanding of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness (or what 1 participant referred to as "intrapersonal skills") involved the recognition of one's own emotions, understanding the impact on one's emotional state, and knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses. One participant articulated emotional intelligence as "self-awareness and the need to be able to identify what the emotional state is on other members of your staff." Participants used self-awareness to assess whether they were in the emotional mental states for any given situation and to influence their own mental state if they were not in the right emotional state. Participants also view self-awareness as integral to the reflection

process. Participants noted that they used self-reflection to understand how their actions were received by others in order to alter them for future interactions.

Jack used self-awareness to inform the timing of his interactions with staff. He explained: "If I'm struggling with something and I know that I'll be abrupt, I tend to close my door." Jack went on to explain:

I don't have many ups and downs. When I do, I have the ability or at least the smarts to take a time out. My time out can be as easy as walking to the north campus, getting a little bit of physical activity. I've never had a crisis so important that it couldn't wait 3-4 minutes while I collect my thoughts and sort it out.

Jerry illustrated the importance of self-awareness in the role of a principal, with the following story:

For the most part, I think I'm pretty steady. There are times when I think I'm pretty upfront about them. You know, I woke up kind of grumpy, but again, being self-reflective, I can drive home thinking that because I was bitchy, you know I was pretty hard on that kid, or I responded to that teacher. So, I have an EA who's very direct and the wording she uses is often accusatory and I don't think it's intended to be. So teachers finish report cards and principals need to read them. So I'm staying up late, trying to get through them and not getting a lot of sleep and not feeling well physically. So I'm having a conversation with an EA about a change in her schedule, about a change that's going to be temporary, and we have this conversation and then she comes to me three more times that day about it. She doesn't get the sense that it's going to be temporary. Well, in a

day that I am feeling well, I can probably handle that situation well, but this one,

my response was a lot more, we've talked about it three times, done. Which is

not normally my style. So [emotions] absolutely effects.

Reflecting on their day, while driving home was a common strategy that all participants

talked about. They attributed this time of reflection helped them to think about and

recognize when they have dealt with a situation in a way they had not intended to.

Brad, a long-service secondary school administrator with a public school board,

spoke about the importance of recognizing his own emotional state: "You can't always

concentrate on others' well-being, situation, or states because you also need to develop a

pretty finely tuned ability to sense your own [state]."

Self-reflection was seen as a mental tool that all participants used to foster self-

awareness and promote growth as a leader. For example, Sam explained: "I don't think

you can grow as a leader unless we have some reflection piece. Jack also explained what

self-reflection looked like for him:

You need to be able [to self-reflect], and I usually do it late in an evening or on

the way home, which makes you a dangerous driver on the highway. But you

tend to go back over the day and say what did I do well, what didn't I do well,

what did I miss, who should I have consulted with, or said don't worry about it.

Jerry linked the act of self-reflection to his ability to connect with others. He said, "If

you can't take the time to reflect on the success and failures with your interactions with

people, students, teachers, or parents, I can't see you creating that space for people."

Self-reflection helped foster self-awareness, but also improved interactions with others in

the school. Sam also perceived a link between self-awareness and the interpersonal element of emotional intelligence. He notes:

> For me, if you don't have that sort of intrapersonal or interpersonal, it becomes difficult to build relationships. If you don't have some EI skills, you can't build relationships, which can make it very different to move forward in any educational settings.

Some participants referred to emotional intelligence as synonymous with self-awareness, while for others it was part of what they understood as emotional intelligence. Some principals used self-awareness to assess whether they are in an emotional state that is appropriate for a particular administrative situation that they are facing. Self-awareness is also used by principals to change their emotional state in order to be better prepared for conversations with staff or students. According to all participants, self-awareness is vital for reflection to take place. Reflection is a tool used by these school leaders to help them think about what worked well, what didn't, and what needed changing.

Relationship

Relationship was an element of emotional intelligence that principals used frequently in their work which includes recognizing and responding to the emotional states of others for the purpose of building relationships. All participants referenced the concept of interpersonal skills when discussing their perspectives on emotional intelligence. They viewed interpersonal skills as the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to the emotions of others, and in building relationships. All participants believed that the relational dimension of the services that schools provided meant that it

is especially important for educational leaders to possess strong interpersonal skills. School leaders attempt to build strong relationships not only as a part of their leadership practice but also to model these skills to the wider school community.

Shirley, a long-service administrator new in her current school, explained that her approach to leadership includes getting to know her staff personally and professionally:

When I came in, I met with all my teachers. I asked them certain things like home address, emergency contact—because I did have a teacher collapse one day on me—who their families are, tell me about your kids, when's your birthday. At the start of the year, I bought everyone a birthday card and a Tim Hortons gift certificate. When it's your birthday, I come into your classroom and sing happy birthday to you. I used to do cakes, but now everyone's on a diet. What's their teaching history? What are their personal interests? What do they like to do in their spare time? What are their professional interests, so that if I see a conference on that, I can let them know. What is their teaching passion, what do you love about teaching? Things they bring to the staff team, guitar club. What would you like to learn about as a teacher?

Shirley's approach to leadership also depended on her ability to recognize and respond to her staff's emotions. She said, "I'm really good at reading people's expressions, and how they feel when I say something to them. So I will think about it [a situation] and may come back and say, 'I noticed that you were upset.'"

Principals discussed using facial expressions to determine the emotions of others and to help them understand the impact of their actions. This did not always influence the way principals approached situations. Shirley explained that:

Sometimes I don't care [that she has upset a staff member]. 'Cause sometimes, if they've hurt a kid or another person, they need to know that. I had an EA that was doing way too much for a kid. She was in a grade 8 class and she was trying to keep all the notes for him. She was doing way too much. He needs to be in a life-skills program. So when we met, she said she had to be back for the last 20 minutes of the day because she had to go back to class and finish up the notes. I said, uhm, what? I would argue that if you are going back to the classroom to finish the notes, that you shouldn't be. Whatever he's not finishing at the end of the day, is left, because you're not in grade 8—he is. And I saw her face. She felt like she was being slapped on the wrist because she was doing something wrong. But the EA doesn't make the program; the EA is directed by the teacher. So it's not her fault. So I had to talk to the teacher and say, it's not good, we need to revise the IEP. So you need to read people.

Several participants emphasized that understanding and reading the emotional climate of their staff was crucial for managing change during times of stress. Jerry explained:

It's trying to understand what kind of reactions people give, and the time of year; we've just gone through the hardest week, except maybe the last week in June and that is because students are about to go into 2 weeks of chaos, and we are their safety net. Their behaviours are up because they are anxious. At the same time, we've got teachers who are tired, and their doing their family thing. So you've got kids who are anxious and teachers that are tired and you've got disaster

waiting to happen. Understanding the emotional baseline of your staff is key in those hot spot times.

Jenn also assessed the school's emotional climate to determine when administrative changes should be undertaken. When asked to explain how emotions impacted her interactions with staff, Jenn explained:

It's about timing, when do you deliver bad news. You can deliver good news any time anyway. I'm very careful to know that principals' timeline is not the same as the teacher, which is not the same as the students. … Emotions are very much depending on the cycle of how schools go. Where there's energy, when is there a good time, publically when to introduce something new and privately when it is time to put pressure on people to improve or holding them accountable. It very much plays a huge piece. And having an understanding of their private life, and how relating to others.

Jenn noted that recognizing the emotions of staff members can help decide "when it is time to put pressure on people to improve or holding them accountable for others." The type of approach she takes with her staff members may depend on their emotional state at the time.

Brad linked the skill of recognizing the emotional states in others to the overall success of a school administrator. He explained:

If you fail to take into account people's emotional states as well as you're own, you're not going to be very successful as a leadership in an educational setting. Particularly because we are in a profession that places high value on understanding and compassion and helping, those sorts of things, so it's an

important aspect. I think people need to remember there are always those aspects. You can't always concentrate on others' well-being, situation, or state because you also need to develop a pretty finely tuned ability to sense your own. Because there are days that you might be better off putting off some decisions because of your emotional state. So there are two aspects, self-awareness and the need for you to be able to identify where the emotional state is on other members of your staff.

Recognizing and responding to the emotional states of others is important in an educational setting because educators are expected to teach and model compassion. Brad believes those values should be demonstrated by educational leaders. Beyond modeling these skills, Brad believes that understanding the emotional states of others and using this information as part of the decision making process is a key leadership competency.

All participants spoke of both the interpersonal and self-awareness aspects of emotional intelligence, however a few participants placed greater emphasis on the interpersonal skills in their role as school administrator. Overall, the most salient aspect of emotional intelligence was relationship building. When asked to elaborate on the meaning of emotional intelligence in this regard, Shirley explained, "Emotional intelligence is all about understanding people." Similarly, Jenn explained emotional intelligence in the following way:

To me it means reading people well, knowing where you can push, balancing pressure points, and giving the support that you need to. For me it's taking a look at the bulk of the students and staff and parents and saying who can you push to

be as good as they can be. On the other side of things, for those who are flat, how
to contain them or improve them.

Jenn made no reference to self-awareness when discussing her perspective on
emotional intelligence. For three principals interviewed for this study, interpersonal
skills were more relevant to how they understand emotional intelligence in the context of
their job. When giving examples of what participants understood to be examples of
emotional intelligence in the work they do, many principals spoke primarily of how they
use emotional intelligence to build relationships and did not speak of a self-awareness
side to it.

According to this research, school leaders view the interpersonal skills used to
build relationships as an example emotional intelligence in the work they do. These
skills build relationships by helping principals empathize with their staff's situations and
emotional state. The understanding of staff emotional states can inform how they interact
with staff in a given situation.

Support

Support was a common theme that arose through discussion of the emotional
elements of what principals do. Principals viewed support as an integral part of their
work. Participants' idea of support was context specific and had a variety of meanings.
This theme will be elaborated on within the following subthemes: (a) supporting others,
(b) support as a one-way street, and (c) principal-to-principal support. Participants spoke
of their role in supporting others in various ways—securing resources for teachers,
encouraging staff ideas, listening to staff problems, and brainstorming to help solve
problems. They also spoke of support as a one-way street, which highlighted the lack of

support that administrators felt from parents, teachers, and school board administration.

For example, lack of support included refusal to adopt new changes to teaching practice,

not responding positively to new leadership initiatives, and putting up barriers to student

success. However, participants spoke positively about the support they received from

other principals. This type of support consisted of sharing best practices, offering ideas

for challenging situations, and being able to confide in someone who understood the

same context and challenges. Participants did not feel this type of support happened

nearly enough because of time and geographical constraints.

Administrators described a close connection between support and emotional

intelligence. For example, Sam noted that support and emotional intelligence were closely

connected as it related to the role of a school administrator because, "the support piece *is*

the EI piece" [emphasis added]. Sam described this support as finding "something that [my

staff] are doing well instead of always going head on." As an example, Sam explains that

he would have a conversation with a staff member where he would say "here are some of

the good things and here are some things that need to be addressed."

Supporting others. One key perspective that emerged was the primary role that

school administrators had in supporting others. Supporting others is how all participants

believed they demonstrated emotional intelligence. The focus on supporting others and

caring for their needs was part of their professional identity. Since the principals

identified themselves so closely with supporting others, it was difficult to separate the

idea of support in any conversation from their role as a principal. Sam articulates this

perspective: "I see myself as the support mechanism, sort of that sounding board, I

provide direction to them and they provide direction to me to help lead staff down the

right path." Supporting others was central to not only the principals' role, but to their entire identity as school administrators.

In his role as a secondary school administrator, Brad similarly emphasized supporting others as a key aspect of leadership. When describing his leadership approach, Brad explained that "My job is really to serve the people who are delivering the services. So really, that's the way I look at it. How can I best support the people that are doing the work in the classroom?"

Shirley, a school administrator with a staff of approximately 30 teachers, also talked about her approach to servant leadership: "Serve others. It's not about you. Doesn't matter what I do. It's all about them and what they do." Supporting staff was a very tangible part of how Shirley approached her work as a school leader.

Yet other participants spoke about the ill effects of focusing primarily on the care and support of others. For example, Jenn talked about the challenges of managing stress and the emotional burden of taking on the responsibility for her entire staff and their families. She said, "There is no energy left for my own self-preservation" and recognized this approach as an unhealthy model for others to follow, but admitted it was the best strategy for sustaining herself at home and at work.

Support as a one-way street. All participants discussed the role that support played in their role as a school administrator and emphasized the importance of creating a supportive work and learning environment for both staff and students. Yet at the same time, most of the participants acknowledged that they received a lack of support from staff. When participants talked about staff supporting their leadership in the school, it became clear that support was often a one way street, with little support coming their way.

Jerry expressed that the most important thing others should know about the emotional world of a school leader is "no one asks about your day." He went on to explain:

> When you are in the classroom, if you have a principal who is really good at that emotional intelligence idea, they'll come in and check up on you. So you move to VP, you're doing that for teachers, but you still have a principal who's doing that for you. Then you move to principal, and in a small school you move to principal without a VP, and no one asks you how you are doing. You're asking everyone else, but there is no one asking you. You're trying to tell people that they're doing a great job, but it is very rare for someone to say that you are doing a good job. You know, or really express thank you for this this and this. Almost anytime that someone comes through the office door, they're coming because they want something. You are always doing the giving—nobody is coming in and saying, "Are you alright, how was your day?"

Jerry ended the interview with an important question for researchers to explore: "How do the people in charge have their emotional needs met?" He describes an imbalance between the support he gives and the support he receives. This support changed as he moved up the administrative ladder, from teacher to vice-principal to principal. He reinforced this point by saying, "Last year I had a principal who would do that type of thing [support him on a personal level]." He makes the distinction that a vice principal has a principal who is responsible for personally supporting them. As a principal, he no longer has someone looking out for him.

Brad also elaborated on why he thought the support between a principal and vice-principal was not a two-way street. He explained: "I have always had wonderful relationships in regards to the vice-principals I have worked with; still—I essentially am their supervisors." Brad believed that the power dynamics between vice-principal and principal played an important role in how support is given and received and did not lead to a reciprocally supporting relationship.

Principal-to-principal support. Four of the 6 principals expressed frustration with the lack of emotional support they personally received from staff and others within their schools, but did comment on the support they received from peers. For example, both Sam and Brad commented on the importance of reflection as an administrator and how discussions with other principals were primary vehicles for enabling reflective thought. Sam explained:

> I think many of the leaders I talk to, my colleagues who are very strong, we continually email and talk about things. They're the ones emailing me saying I tried this, do you have any ideas, or I have a tough staff member, I'm having trouble moving forward. What have you done?

Sam referred to this type of conversation as a regular occurrence and an important avenue for receiving support.

The public school board that Brad works for has a principals' association that among other purposes is intended to provide an environment for peer to peer support. Brad noted that the association "often provides the support and the networking that's required to maintain [administrators] in our roles. So you know, you have to seek your support from other sources [outside of your school]." Brad explained that the support he

receives from other principals "maintains" him and other principals. Support was considered a key ingredient in performing his duties as a school leader. Brad's use of the word "often" was also telling; he went on to explain that sometimes the peer to peer support was not enough. He confessed that, "Sometimes, in the position of the principals, and I don't want to sound whiney, but it's a pretty lonely place." While it is possible for Brad to receive peer support through phone calls, emails, and meetings, the idea of having no peers or ready support system within in the physical building was significant.

All the principals interviewed placed great importance on providing support to their staff. This element of support often went beyond their duty as a school leader and was described as part of their personal and professional identity as principals. However, the emotional support principals provided their staff was not returned to the same degree, which left some principals feeling unsupported, lonely, and isolated. While there is support available through networking with other principals, principals felt they had no peers in their daily workplace.

Pressure

Pressure was a common experience for principals that impacted their emotional worlds, and this pressure came from their subordinates, superiors, and themselves. Participants viewed pressure as an important factor in how they are able to use emotional intelligence in the work they do. All administrators indicated that they dealt with a significant amount of pressure in their role as administrators. Pressure stemmed mainly from four groups: (a) staff, (b) students, (c) parents, and (d) supervisors, but pressure more specifically emerged from interactions between and amongst these four groups. This theme will be further elaborated upon by discussing the following subthemes: (a)

pressure from below, (b) pressure from above, (c) pressure to be "on," and (d) sustainability of pressure.

Pressure from below. All principals spoke about the enormous sense of responsibility in their roles as school administrators. They described not only being responsible for entire staff groups that included teachers, educational assistants, and custodians, but were ultimately responsible for the education of all students at the school. Brad described what he felt when he was handed the keys to his first school. He admitted: "when you walk in the door, you are literally and legally the lord of everything you survey."

Jerry also confirmed the centrality of the role of a principal in a school: "it's [the principal's job] the hub of everything, when teachers are frustrated, they come to the principal. When students are frustrated, they come to the principal. When parents are frustrated, they come to the principal."

Most principals shared how much pressure they felt being solely responsible for their schools. Yet in contrast, Shirley had a different view about her responsibility of running a school and staff being dependent on her; she said: "make them miss you. It shouldn't be, 'oh good, the principal's gone.' It should be, 'oh my god, she's not here today!'"

Pressure from above. Not only were principals responsible for their staff and students, they also felt pressures from above from a variety of areas such as the superintendent, the school board, ministry of education, and ultimately Ontario tax payers. Several principals expressed how seriously they took their responsibilities as school administrators. Several principals described the pressures related to the increased

push for accountability from the school board. Principals explained that they are held accountable for compliance to safety standards, student performance and school spending. When describing his role as a principal, Brad said: "at the end of the day … the buck stops here. So there is considerable pressure."

Sam used a similar expression, "the buck stops here," to describe the responsibility he felt as an administrator. He went on to explain: "there are a lot of eyes looking at you and in the long term the pressures will affect your health, your home life." Jenn believed the policies and realities related to supporting emotional well-being were contradictory. She said: "I think this board is interesting because it focuses on wellness, but I have more teachers then ever who are broken, principals are not well. I think it's because of the pressure that has been passed down." She went on to explain how the pressure was passed down:

> The pressure has been passed down, for example that garbage cans can't be in the halls. Non-educational issues, we used to say, don't worry about it, now they're saying it does matter, it is important. I think there is some real tension between the physical plant and adherence to policy or is it about meeting kid's needs while keeping them safe. I mean, no kid has ever died in a high school from a fire. But all of the sudden the garbage cans have to move because they are going to light them on fire. We're paying so much attention to those things and we really aren't paying attention to kids and not paying attention to teacher health.

Jenn explains that the school board's initiatives are about "accountability, compliance, and adherence and there is no student voice, it's not being recognized." Jenn believes there is "tension" between adherence to policy and meeting kids' needs.

Brad offered additional insight into the tensions between his responsibilities to the school versus his responsibilities to school board policy. He explained:

The greatest stress comes to you when you're in situations where you have responsibility, but not control. Policies, for example; there is one that comes to mind, some of the stuff with the assessment and evaluation, which was very disagreeable to many staff members in many places, and yet to have the responsibility to implement this policy when in your heart you're not really convinced yourself, those types of things. Those times are very stressful.

For Brad, this type of tension was the most difficult dimension to deal with in circumstances when he had no control over a situation.

Pressure to be "on." Most participants talked about the performing aspects of being a school leader, which meant they felt the pressure to be "on" and the idea that they always had to be "on," "up," or "positive" at school. They felt the pressure to be "on" stemmed from both above and below and the sense that someone was always watching, with them in the middle.

Shirley pointed out that "what you do, your emotional well-being, your enthusiasm for learning has to be positive—all the time." She described herself as having no choice; she said she had "to be positive." Shirley elaborated on why she felt she needed to be positive all the time: "when you're a principal, what you say has so much weight. You can crush people with a word." Shirley's comment demonstrates just how much authority she carried at her school and the responsibility that accompanied it. Jenn, a principal in her sixth year at her first school, also explained how emotions played into her role as a principal and the constant pressure to be "up" while at work. She noted:

"I do believe that you better be up when you walk in the door in the morning and you better remain pretty predictable throughout the day."

Sustainability of pressure. Several participants' expressed how the pressure they experienced from both within and beyond their school created significant amount of personal stress. They believed the stress they felt made it difficult to maintain an emotional balance as a school administrator in order to deal with situations appropriately. Sam warns prospective administrators that "if you can't handle the stress and you don't know how to regulate it, stress is there, it's not going away." Jenn summed up the sentiments of many participants' views on stress:

> I think the job of a principal right now is becoming very difficult to do. I think in this age right now, with the ministry and our board, it's very much—accountability, compliance, and adherence and there is no student voice, it's not being recognized. In terms of a principal's job, I think technology has almost made the world 24/7, I think we are really having to dig deep to decide what is possible and doable.

The pressure placed on school leaders makes it difficult for them to maintain a healthy work environment for themselves.

Sam also recognized the difficulty at times to deal with ongoing pressures in his role as a school principal. While talking about the stress that arose from pressures on the job, Sam said:

> If you can't handle the stress in education right now, it will be very hard long term, it will be very hard to sustain and not get off the railways. You can lose some of your core values and beliefs.

Sam considered stress to be a long-term, consistent element of the job as a school principal. He believed he was able to regulate his stress, but knew other principals who were not able to manage it as easily.

Jerry and Jerry described physical activity as an effective stress management tool. Alternatively, Sam noted that he tried to focus on his values and beliefs to assist him in keeping centered on maintaining a balanced perspective during stressful times. At first, Shirley was unsure about the strategies she used to manage her stress, but then realized she often sang as a way to help her manage through difficult situations.

Jerry found that both in his role as a principal and as a teacher, he emotionally "takes home" the most challenging students. To manage, Jerry developed a strategy that balanced the stress by seeking out positive interactions with the "good kids." He went on to explain that this balance enabled him to keep a positive perspective on the job and minimize his level of stress.

Jack, a long-service school administrator, explained: "I never feel much stress." He attributed this perspective to having two key ideas that helped guide him in managing stress: (a) trust staff to take care of any issue that arise, and (b) do not take ownership for it. In his words, Jack believes that issues that arise are "everybody's problem." This notion of not taking ownership for the issues that arose in the school was a very different perspective than was expressed by the other principals. Since the pressure that came from the perceived responsibility of being a principal was a major source of stress for the other participants, perhaps it is not surprising that Jack was the longest-serving principal in the group.

Emotional Filters and Compartmentalization

Emotional filtering and compartmentalization describe the issues that concerned the appropriateness of emotional expression principals experienced in their work they do and how they choose to approach it. The appropriateness of emotional expression emerged as an issue for all principals when they described the day-to-day performance of their duties. Two approaches emerged related to regulating emotions: (a) emotional filtering and (b) emotional compartmentalization. In this study, emotional filtering meant the deliberate avoidance of expressing unwanted emotions. Participants described using emotional filtering to prevent what they perceived as unwelcome or inappropriate emotions from being observed by others. The second approach that principals described was the creation of emotional barriers or emotional compartmentalization. In this study, emotional compartmentalization refers to the partitioning of emotions to be experienced only in the context they are associated with. The goal is for emotions generated in one context (e.g., home) to not affect one's emotional state while in another context (e.g., work).

Emotional filtering. The appropriateness of emotional expression emerged when participants were asked to explain how their emotions influenced their working environments. The degree to which all participants allowed themselves to emote varied, but it was evident they had reflected upon it extensively. For example, Sam identified that he used two different approaches in managing his own emotions as a leader. The first is to let people in and see some of the emotions that you are experiencing. In other words, Sam explained: "it's good for people to know that you're human and you are going through some of the stresses they are." He said he balanced this approach with a second approach to emotional expression. He explained that "On the other hand … I'm

the filter, there's probably a lot of stuff that is going on behind the scenes that the staff does not know about." Sam saw value in striking a balance between expressing his emotions and filtering his emotions. He believed it was beneficial for staff to relate to what he was going through, but he also believed he did not want to burden them with all of the pressures being passed down from the school board.

Jerry echoed many of Sam's thoughts about the degree of emotional expression that was appropriate to express as an administrator. He argued: "if you're moody and people see you as moody, I think that creates an uncomfortable work environment. But I think if people can recognize that you're human, I think that they need to know." Jerry explained that he purposefully disclosed his emotions to staff so that "the people that you supervise … realize that sometimes it gets to you to, so it's ok if it gets to [them]." He cautions not to go too far with this approach, as "you have to be careful, if you're just feeling a little off, just suck it up. But for those days you're really feeling it, be upfront."

In contrast, Brad recognized that his emotions sometimes "come through," but he did what he could to prevent this from happening. When asked about how his emotional state influenced his work environment, Brad confessed: "oh boy, with me it's not subtle with me. I never play poker because I would lose the shirt off my back. If I have something bothering me, something impacting me, people around me immediately know it." He described emotional disclosure as a "bit of a fault I guess." He said if he expressed emotions in the workplace, it was "despite [his] best efforts" and believed that he needed to be "not guarded, but careful."

Jack views his consistent emotional state as positive and something that enabled his staff to feel comfortable with him. He explained:

I like to think that I am a pretty stable person, pretty even keeled, not much upsets

me. And if it does, I don't show it. So I think most of the staff feels fairly

comfortable talking to me because I don't have too many ups and downs.

Most of the administrators felt that expressing negative emotions in their role as

administrators was appropriate in certain circumstances because it allowed them to show

they were human and could experience a bad day. The rest of the time, administrators

felt it was best only to express positive emotions while interacting with others. As a

result, administrators talked about filtering their emotions.

Emotional compartmentalization. Not only did principals recognize a need for

caution when disclosing emotionally at work, but they also recognized the need to be

aware of how their emotions from work were expressed at home, and vice versa. For

example, Jenn recognizes that when her home life is stressful, her job is more

overwhelming. She explained: "If things at home are rocky and at the same time things

are rocking here, it gets pretty thin and tiring for sure."

To cope with the high stress and pressure, all school administrators talked about

creating emotional boundaries between their work and home life. Jerry admitted that his

job could become overwhelming, but believed he managed it by "putting some

boundaries down." Both Jenn and Brad offered further insight into these emotional

boundaries. Jenn explained that managing emotions as a leader is "about keeping those

[work and home] separate." "Gearing up" and "revving down" was a process that helped

her create a barrier between the two worlds. She noted that the goal of the separation was

to avoid bringing home the emotional pieces. Jenn wants to protect her home life from

the stresses that she deals with in her role as an administrator. However, she is not

always successful. She admits that she spends "lots of late night on the pillow tossing and turning about conversations and people and those pieces."

Brad also talked about the emotional separation he inserted between home and work to ensure that he did not express his emotions in an inappropriate time or place. He explained: "I try to leave things in my vehicle as I come in to the school, and vice versa." Similar to Jenn's process of "gearing up" and "revving down," Brad spoke of leaving the emotions of home in his car when he arrives at school and the emotions of school in the car when he return home.

Most school leaders used a strategy of emotional filtering to prevent the expression of unwanted emotions in the workplace. This is done so they are not seen as "moody" or inconsistent. This is also done to avoid burdening the rest of the staff with the worries that are placed on administrators. School leaders use emotional compartmentalization to prevent the overflow of negative emotions from their work into their personal lives.

Chapter Summary

The school leaders in this study described emotional intelligence as primarily the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to the emotions of others, and to build relationships. All participants believed that the relational dimension of the services that schools provided meant that it is especially important for educational leaders to possess strong interpersonal skills. Participants place great importance on support in the work they do. An important part of their identity as administrators was being a support to their staff. They also spoke of support as a one-way street, which highlighted the lack of support that administrators felt from parents, teachers, and school board administrators.

Pressure was a common experience for principals that greatly impacted their emotional worlds. This pressure was felt primarily from staff, parents, and supervisors and stemmed from the responsibility they felt for the entire school. The appropriateness of emotional expression was a common concern for principals. They dealt with this concern by filtering the emotions that they felt at work and attempting to separate the emotions experienced at home and work.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explores how educational administrators perceive and experience emotional intelligence in their role as leaders within a context of EI. Currently, the literature is scarce on how school administrators perceive that emotional intelligence impacts their role. In this chapter, I provide a summary of the study, a discussion of key findings, and provide implications for practice and further research.

Summary of the Study

This study employed a qualitative research approach to contribute a new interpretation of emotional intelligence in the context of school leadership. Grounded theory methodology was used to provide a framework for analyzing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006). Six high school and elementary school principals were selected purposefully to reflect a diversity of perspectives. Data were collected through 30- to 60-minute semi-structured interviews.

Five major themes emerged from the data: self-awareness, relationships, support, pressure, and emotional filtering and compartmentalization. These themes emerged through the process of continuous comparison between the experiences of the participants. All participants spoke of emotional intelligence as a form of self-awareness, which included recognizing and understanding their own emotions and impact on others. Emotional intelligence was understood as relational, which included the skills of recognizing and responding to the emotions of others and developing relationships with others. Support emerged as a key theme in understanding how emotions are important to the work of a principal. Participants view their professional identity as a "support provider" but they often felt support was a one-way street. The theme of pressure

emerged describing the demands placed on principals. Emotional filtering and compartmentalization were identified as coping tools that principals used in managing stress and dealing with the emotional pressure of their work reality. Support, pressure, and emotional filtering and emotional compartmentalization are discussed in the following section. They will be discussed in the context of existing literature to help better understand the larger phenomenon of emotionality in school leadership.

Discussion of Results

The results of the study revealed that support emerged as a key emotional element of the work of school administrators. In particular, the role of supporting teaching staff was central to their professional identity and was seen as a major demonstration of emotional intelligence. Berger and Luckman (1966) explain that people interacting in specific contexts share information from which they construct social knowledge as a reality, which in turn influences their judgment, behaviour, and attitude. In this study, administrators discussed how the information from interactions between school leaders, teachers, and other colleagues is used to construct their identities as leaders, which then begins to define the day-to-day realities in their role. Over time, interacting with their staff in a supportive way shapes principals' professional identity as a provider of support.

In this study, participants identified support as a defining element of who they are as administrators and people. Support primarily took the form of supporting their teaching staff through actions such as securing resources, encouraging new ideas, and listening to concerns. In a study exploring the perceptions of principal candidates through their administrative training, Browne-Ferrigno (2003) found that potential principals viewed the principal role as that of a facilitator, educator, support provider, and

decision maker. Browne-Ferrigno notes that prior to principal candidates' participation in fieldwork, their understanding of the principal role is "narrow." Similarly, participants in this study viewed their primary role as a support to staff. Yet, contrary to Browne-Ferrigno, participants in this study placed greater emphasis on their role of support to their staff. According to Wallace (2005) the construction of a principal's professional identity is based on interactions with teaching staff. This could indicate that the professional identity of the participants in Browne-Ferrigno's study were not fully developed as they had not begun interacting as a principal with their teaching, which could explain the difference in results.

"Leadership as support" has been identified as an important element of administrative practice (Greenfield 1999). This idea has since taken a back seat to more popular conceptions of leadership such as "leadership as influence" (Leithwood et al., 1999), and other theories such as "leadership as process" (Gardner, 1990) and situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). While there are many subtle differences between these approaches to leadership, there are similarities in focusing on leadership actions. While the types of actions may vary from model to model, there is an implicit understanding that the leader is the "doer" of leadership actions or processes. A focus on leadership actions or processes is limiting as it takes into account the observable external emotional responses of a leader and negates the internal emotional responses of administrators.

Several principals focused primarily on the emotions of others and discussed the external emotional world being consistent with their understanding of emotional intelligence—an action to be taken or a behaviour to be expressed. As a result,

participants with an external view of emotions reported feeling more stress and pressure

than other participants. The popular models of emotional intelligence (Bar-On 1998;

Goleman, 1995) focus on emotional intelligence as a set of skills that are expressed

through action or behaviour. While both of these models of emotional intelligence

include domains that reference the internal emotional world (i.e., intrapersonal skills), the

focus is primarily on an external expression of emotions for a specific purpose (e.g.,

leadership performance). While the recent focus on emotional intelligence in leadership

may appear to put focus on the internal emotional world of leaders, it may have the

unexpected effect of putting focus on external emotional expression.

Most administrators in this study, felt strong pressure to perform well in their

roles, but did not receive support themselves—either from staff members,

superintendents, or peers. According to some participants, a lack of support led to

feelings of isolation. Previous work on "leadership as support" has focused on the

leadership actions of supporting others (Greenfield, 1999). The results from this study

would suggest that "supporting others" is only part of the picture related to "leadership as

support." While principals spent a great deal of time and energy supporting and caring

for others, support is not reciprocal.

Principals' experiences of isolation have been well documented in recent years

(Dussault & Thibodeau, 1997; Friedman, 2002; Howard & Mallory, 2008; Mercer, 1996;

Stephenson & Bauer, 2010). The literature suggests that isolation is a significant factor

in predicting burnout in school leaders (Stephenson & Bauer, 2010). In particular,

isolation plays a mediating role in physical and emotional burnout and can even

compound the stress that is caused by role ambiguity and work overload, which in turn

leads to increased rates of burnout (Howard & Mallory, 2008). The results of this study showed that participants were relieved to discuss their feelings of isolation, which substantiates Howard and Mallory's (2008) claim that principals were thankful for an opportunity to discuss their perceptions of the loneliness of their work and found talking to be therapeutic. According to the participants of the current study, principals require opportunities to discuss the challenges, stress, and isolation they face in their roles as school leaders. The most beneficial and appropriate means for school leaders to receive emotional support was from their peers. Yet, most administrators reported a lack of face-to-face contact with their peers that led to feelings of isolation, which supports increased rates of burnout (Howard & Mallory, 2008).

In this study, school leaders found peer-to-peer interactions to be the most important and useful source of support. This concurs with previous literature that showed school leaders look chiefly to their peers for support, ideas and inspiration, both within and outside school (Earley, Evans, Collarbone, Gold, & Halpin, 2002). Similar to Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) study on peer support among school leaders, principal-led networking opportunities had many beneficial effects such as renewed energy and increased confidence, and positively contributed to school improvement. However, in this study the Principals' Association was seen as a valuable place to obtain peer-to-peer support, but it was not considered enough support and the busyness of their daily commitments prevented time to meet with peers. Stephenson and Bauer (2010) concur that accessing peer-to-peer support was seen to be difficult because of time and geographical constraints. This study substantiates the need to develop peer-to-peer support programs that are flexible to meet individual needs and to prioritize time for such

commitments (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Stephenson & Bauer, 2010).

Participant understanding of accountability and their responsibility as leaders played an important role in determining the degree of stress they experienced. The longest-serving principal interviewed attributed this to the way he dealt with the responsibility for the entire school environment. Contrary to many other participants, he did not feel responsible for all the challenging situations that arouse in his school. He trusted his staffs' abilities to share in taking responsibility for the school. In contrary to their less experienced colleagues, the most experienced principals in this study reported less job-related stress. Less-experienced administrators spoke about feeling overwhelmed by the burden of responsibility and felt isolated and lonely as a result.

Principals who shared the responsibilities of managing their schools reported less stress and isolation. Similarly, distributive leadership has been associated with principals who experienced less isolation and loneliness compared to their peers (Alligood, 2005). Most principals talked about feelings of isolation in their role as school leaders. They discussed how allowing their staff to share the responsibility for the success of the school reduced their feelings of isolation. Kelehear (2004) suggests that responsibility is shared among all staff for the school outcomes. Kelehear also argues principals need trusting relationships with staff and caring, supportive communities to combat stress. Previous research supports the findings of the current study that a distributive leadership approach decreases the emotional burden of responsibility of a school leader (Kelehear, 2004).

Several participants referred to the idea of professional distance. This was understood to be a relational barrier between themselves and their teaching staff that

contributed to feelings of isolation. Being in a position of power over the teachers prevented some participants from developing comfortable, mutually beneficial relationships. A few participants were hesitant to share or express emotions with staff members. Goffinan's (1959) work on self-presentation provides a framework to understand how this isolation develops in school administrators. Goffinan described that the way one presents oneself to others is shaped by an awareness of cultural rules. Wallace's (2005) study on socialization of principals in Ontario found a clear line between principals and teachers. This concurs with the results of this study whereby the cultural rule informs school administrators to keep a professional distance from their staff.

The culture of professional distance offers important insights into the principal–teacher relationship. The cultural rule that exists in schools encourages principals to present themselves separate from the teachers. In this study, participants felt this separation made it uncomfortable for teachers to provide reciprocal emotional support to them.

Many participants identified feeling pressure from both teaching staff (subordinates) and district school board representatives (superiors). Both groups represented different perspectives, priorities, and values and principals were often required to negotiate or mediate between them. The results of this study confirmed the claims that Spillane et al. (2002) reported that school principals are similar to middle level management in corporate worlds whereby they are required to take on the role of intermediaries between teachers and district school boards and their success in part depends on both groups (Spillane et al., 2002).

In this study, participants reported situations where they had no control, but were responsible, which resulted in feelings of stress. Situations where participants felt they had no control are not uncommon in the world of a principal because their work depends predominantly on the work of those above them and below them. Participants spoke about the stress associated with having little or no control over board- or province-wide initiatives, yet were responsible for communicating and implementing such changes with staff members. Principals also felt stress associated with having no control over their staff and students, but were ultimately responsible for their performance.

Spillane et al. (2002) argues that gaining and maintaining legitimacy with subordinates and superiors is vital to the success of administrators. Participants noted that the increased emphasis on accountability meant legitimacy with the district school board and teaching staff was increasingly difficult to navigate, which supports the claims that school leaders feel like they are "being pulled in two directions" (Spillane et al., 2002). These results provide additional insight into the factors that may create professional distance between principals and their staff. Participants reported that introducing unpopular policy and being accountable for teacher performance felt like being sandwiched between staff and administration and having to choose between them. Many participants described the internal pressure to be 'on' all the time and the mounting expectations, which supports Protheroe's (2001) findings that the daunting list of expectations that principal's internalize can lead to pressure. Current principal shortages have been attributed to unrealistic expectations. Protheroe (2001) refers to the internalization of this pressure as "superman" syndrome. This supports the findings of the current study that principals feel pressured to be "on" all the time.

Allison's (1997) study of 643 school principals in British Columbia showing that good relationships with staff, students, and parents was the most common strategy for alleviating stressful situations. Working harder was a common coping strategy reported by principals who experience larger amounts of stress (Alison, 1996). Participants in the current study also described coping strategies for managing the day-to-day stresses of their role. The most common strategies were identified as engaging in physical activity, seeking out positive interactions with students, and sharing with other principals. Although participants in this study employed good relationships with staff, these did not preclude feelings of isolation and professional distance. Participants noted that increased responsibility and accountability equated to increased time to perform their duties, which was unrealistic. Most of the effective stress management techniques required time, which seemed to be in short supply for most principals.

Previous literature describes the emotional energy needed to maintain this separation and consequences of doing so (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) detailed the process of emotion regulation and described the effort required to manage emotions. Energy is exerted in two types of behaviour: surface acting (to manage visible expression) and deep acting (to manage inner feelings). The purpose of these behaviours is to create the appropriate facial and bodily display. Grandey (2000) extended this concept by proposing that emotion regulation processes function as the link between job demands and health and well-being. Managing emotional responses at work is draining to employees. Many participants described separating the emotional experiences of work from the emotional experiences of home, in order to work more effectively in both situations. This required an active management of emotions to ensure

that emotions from work are not expressed at home and vice versa. The regular "gearing up" and "reving up" described by participants in this study to compartmentalize emotions required energy. According to Hochschild's work, the act of emotionally compartmentalizing between home and work would be emotionally draining.

The pressure placed on school principals by others and themselves and the increased responsibilities and time associated with expectations make balance between work and personal lives difficult. Participants discussed the lack of emotional support from subordinates and superiors and discussed how challenging it was to find opportunities to seek support from peers. As a result, this lack of support contributed to factors such as professional distance, which led to feelings of isolations that were compounded by the increasing pressures from external school board staff and internal staff members. Not surprisingly, participants in this study had difficulty finding balance and the coping strategies they used increased their burden impacting their emotional well-being and quality of life. Neither work nor home were considered appropriate spaces to process the emotional demands of their work and they did not have opportunities to process these emotions with peers. This paints an alarming picture for school principals who don't have a place to emotionally process the work they do.

Implications for Theory

This study provides a rich perspective of the emotional issues and needs experienced by school leaders. Participants felt some elements of their work corresponded with a traditional understanding of emotional intelligence; however, previous work on emotional intelligence does not adequately describe the emotional experiences of school leaders. In this study, the more important story was about the

emotional drain that school leaders experienced in supporting others, without having the opportunity of refueling themselves, a situation that was not sustainable.

The results of this study suggest the need for current emotional intelligence tools to be further refined in order to better reflect the emotional experiences and perspectives of school principals. It is important to note that the sample size was small and provides only a preliminary understanding about school leaders' perspectives of emotional intelligences. While principals agreed the general domains were relevant to what they did in their roles as principals on a daily basis, how the skill sets were defined and applied were different. This research speaks to the need for a model that takes into account not only the emotional based skills possess by educational leaders, but also the capacity to apply these skills in an educational context.

Implications for Future Research

In this study, school administrators were comfortable supporting the needs of their staff, yet were not always comfortable sharing or expressing emotional aspects of their own lives with staff members. The insufficient level of emotional support that school principals receive is especially problematic because of the toll that the stress and pressure associated with their role takes on them. Previous research has indicated that there is a professional distance between principals and their teaching staff is a cultural rule in Canadian schools (Carruth, 1997). Further research could help determine if the hesitation of principals to express themselves emotionally with staff members is part of the culture that has developed in Ontario schools. Once this is better understood, actions could be taken to change the culture so that principals have the space to emotionally express themselves in appropriate ways.

Tuckey and Hayward (2011) proposed that emotional resources (e.g., supportive colleagues) act as a buffer to the emotional demands that lead to chronic stress. They defined emotional demands as events that required emotional effort or energy to manage the expression of emotions. It is argued that professionals who work in environments with a high frequency of emotional demands can develop traumatic stress symptoms (Tuckey & Hayward, 2011). Tuckey and Hayward found camaraderie to be the most effective way to buffer the negative effects of constant emotional demands. Camaraderie was described as the degree to which professionals can express themselves to peers without negative consequences. When emotional demands are not relieved by adequate emotional resources, chronic exhaustion, burnout, and depersonalization can result. Previous research in Canadian schools has shown that principals also suffer from burnout, chronic exhaustion, and depersonalization from the work they do (Howard & Mallory, 2008; Stephenson & Bauer, 2010). Future research can explore whether Tuckey and Hayward's findings apply in the context of Canadian school leaders. If the emotional resources available to Canadian school leaders can act as a buffer to the emotional demands of their work, this could have important implications for practice. Understanding what emotional resources are most effective at buffering the emotional demands of school leaders would be crucial to addressing the issues of burnout plaguing Canadian principals.

Implications for Practice

The participants in this study found it challenging to find work–life balance because of the pressure they felt and the lack of support that they experienced. This is an important finding for school boards to evaluate in light of high burnout rates in principals

and the shortages in principal candidates. These results show a need to re-examine both the expectations of principals and the support systems they require to perform them.

To date, there are no Canadian studies that explore in-depth the social supports that school principals require. In the British school system, Hobson et al. (2009) found that comprehensive induction programs exist to help support new headteachers (principals), yet the results revealed that the support provided by those directly responsible for the head teachers was unsatisfactory for two reasons: (a) senior administrators (similar to superintendents) were out of touch with what was happening in their schools, and (b) the support programs were not tailored enough to meet the individual needs of participants. As was discussed by participants in the current study, superintendents were not considered as a source of support.

Increasingly school boards are becoming more aware of issues surrounding isolation in the work of the principals and have instituted mentorship programs to provide support to administrators (Henry, 2010). Mentorship programs have been proven to help prepare principal candidates for leadership and reduce feelings of isolation and stress (Henry, 2010), yet mentorship programs are typically offered to new principals for a limited period of time. These programs do not take into account the stress and lack of support felt by older, more experienced principals. In this study, all principals expressed the need for more peer-to-peer support, not just the less experienced principals. Providing an opportunity for all principals to benefit from peer-to-peer support is something that needs to be considered by Ontario school boards. This opportunity should be flexible and not added as another requirement of their jobs.

As previously mentioned, there may be a disconnect between the support that school boards believe they are providing for principals and the support they experience and would like to experience. Given the extreme time demands placed on a principal, programs intended to provide support to principals through training or networking could be adding another entry on their overwhelming to-do list. Instead of another program designed to enhance their leadership skills, principals may need an opportunity where a colleague can ask how they are doing.

Final Words

The expectations placed on school leaders have increasingly become more and more unrealistic. These leaders are expected to be a teacher of teachers, an ambassador to the community, an activist of educational reform, a director of health and safety, and a chief financial officer. While balancing all these different roles, principals are expected to maintain a friendly and emotionally stable demeanour. Not surprisingly, these unrealistic expectations lead to job related stress, isolation, and difficulty finding work–life balance.

Emotional intelligence based training is used to help principals improve their leadership skills. In theory, emotionally intelligent leaders may have better relationships with staff, manage their stress more easily, and respond more effectively to the emotional problems they are faced with every day. The demands placed on principals may still be too much for any leader to meet, even an emotionally intelligent one.

Previous research in other emotionally strenuous work environments have hypothesized that the emotional resources available to workers act as a buffer to mitigate the effects of a highly demanding emotional environment. The buffering effect of

emotional resources considered in light of these results lead to some interesting questions: Do the chronic emotional demands experienced in the work of school leaders reduce their ability to express their emotional intelligence? Does a lack of emotional resources reduce the ability of school leaders to act in an emotionally intelligent way?

Regardless of the results of future resources, it is clear that the emotional demands placed on school leaders and the resources (or lack thereof) that are available create a situation that is not sustainable. Given the importance of the many roles principals play in schools, supporting these leaders should be an utmost priority.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your approach to leadership in your school?

2. How do emotions play into your leadership practice?

3. Tell me what the term emotional intelligence means to you.

4. Do you think emotional intelligence is something that can be learned or taught?

5. What kind of role does introspection play in your leadership role? Example?

6. How to emotions influence the way you interact with your staff? Example?

7. Tell me how your emotional state influences your working environment. Example?

8. What does being adaptable as a leader look like for you? (Example?)

9. What kind of role does stress management play in your leadership role? Example?

10. What is the most important thing you think administrators, researchers, and policy makers should know about the place of emotional intelligence in the work of school principals?