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An Exploration into Teachers' Perceptions of School Leaders' Emotional Intelligence

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An Exploration into Teachers' Perceptions of School Leaders' Emotional Intelligence

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Administration

by

Lindsey Ellen Caillouet

B.G.S. University of New Orleans, 2002
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Abstract

Although the benefits of school leader emotional intelligence are well-known, leadership preparation programs lack training in emotional intelligence, thus calling for reform (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Guerra & Pazet, 2016; Mills, 2009; Wallace, 2010). Emotional intelligence competencies, such as empathy, self-awareness and motivation, are closely aligned with components of transformational leadership theory, including idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Kumar, 2014). Highlighting these connections can provide guidance in identifying significant components of emotional intelligence. This study examined teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence in order to identify critical components of emotional intelligence. This research utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to address the research problem, and questions. A purposeful sampling technique was used to recruit teachers employed in public school districts in Louisiana. Consistent with phenomenological designs, semi-structured individual interviews were the primary method of data collection, along with document analysis. Transformational leadership theory and emotional intelligence provided a framework to guide the construction of methodological approaches, including: participants, data collection, data analysis and limitations. Four major themes emerged as a result of this study: 1) school leader social skills, 2) leadership styles, 3) authentic leader-teacher relationships, and 4) perceived benefits of school leader emotional skills.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, educational leadership, phenomenological study, elementary teachers, qualitative design, transformational leadership

Chapter One

Introduction

In the new era of accountability, the role of the school leader has become more complex due to significant pressure being placed on educational leaders (Litchka, 2007; Moore, 2009). This pressure is due in part to the demands for higher levels of student achievement, and improvement of the quality of education (Litchka, 2007). Leaders are also expected to transform schools into adaptable organizations, encompassing “professional learning communities that can embrace change and create high performing learning environments for students as well as teachers” (Moore, 2009, p. 20). This transformation involves restructuring and reorganizing schools, requiring leaders “skilled in emotional intelligence” in order to handle the intense emotions that occur during change (Moore, 2009, p.21). Although the drawbacks of a changing school culture involve negative emotions, such as resistance, anger, frustration, and turmoil, benefits can also occur (Moore, 2009). Emotionally intelligent leaders build trusting relationships with teachers and staff, display empathy and social awareness, understand the problems that occur during change, and are better skilled in addressing related issues (Moore, 2009).

According to Gray (2009), school leadership is one of the most researched topics in all of the organizational sciences, mainly emphasizing the cognitive abilities of leaders, such as logical decision making, rational thought, and behavior, giving minimal attention to the feelings and emotions of school leaders. However, research suggests that leaders’ feelings and emotions play a critical role in decision making, affecting the well-being of everyone in their learning communities (George, 2000; Goleman, 2004; Gray, 2009). Therefore, principals’ emotional intelligence could be crucial to overcoming challenges successfully, while positively influencing

and developing committed and motivated staff (Gray, 2009; Litchka, 2007; Moore, 2009; Singh & Manser, 2009).

Emotionally intelligent leaders have been found to be more effective, and contribute to the job satisfaction and performance of their followers (George, 2000; Goleman, 2004; Singh & Madela, 2013). Goleman (1998) identified five main elements of emotional intelligence contributing to personal and social competence, including: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The contribution of emotional intelligence to effective leadership is demonstrated in multiple ways, such as positively influencing school culture and performance, relationship building, and viewing resistance as a means of new breakthroughs and ideas (Fullan, 2001). Furthermore, previous research suggests that teachers' job satisfaction and performance is enhanced through meaningful relationship building, inspiration, and building common visions in schools (Singh & Manser, 2009). Emotional intelligence also contributes to the job satisfaction of teachers due to the increase in awareness of interpersonal emotions (Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012). This increased awareness can aid in the regulation and management of negative feelings and emotions, thus contributing to higher measures of performance, and effectively responding to workplace stress (Ealias & George, 2012; Yahazadeh-Jeloudar & Lofti-Goodarzi, 2012). Additionally, job satisfaction can contribute to specific behaviors of employees such as organizational citizenship, attendance, and retention (Ealias & George, 2012). However, according to Singh & Mandela (2013), more research needs to be conducted regarding what specific emotional intelligence behaviors of leaders contribute to employees' job satisfaction.

Although the benefits associated with school leaders' emotional intelligence are well-established, research suggests that school leaders are being properly prepared cognitively, but not

emotionally for the demands of the job (Bulach, Pickett, & Boothe, 2004; Schmidt, 2010; Schultz, 2007; Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015; Wallace, 2010). A growing body of literature suggests a shift in the educational community's efforts on developing leaders with emotional intelligence, in order to meet the challenges educational leaders face, such as increased school accountability and pressure to improve the quality of education, while meeting the diverse needs of students (Guerra & Pazey, 2016; Litchka, 2007). Goleman (2004) found that although there is a genetic component to emotional intelligence; it can be learned as well. Therefore, identifying what specific elements of emotional intelligence contribute to leadership effectiveness could be beneficial in order to focus training on these components.

Problem Statement

In recent years, controversy has surrounded leadership preparation programs regarding course content, methodology and rigor in targeted areas (Schultz, 2007). Programs often prioritize leadership effectiveness, yet fail to link these aspects to social and emotional components (Cobb, 2004; Schmidt, 2010). Research consensus is that leadership preparation programs are not emphasizing social and emotional intelligence knowledge, competencies, and dispositions (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace, 2010); however, programs should focus on emotional intelligence (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; McDowelle & Bell, 1997; Schmidt, 2010; Schultz, 2007; Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015). Although programs have emphasized course content that develops technical leadership practice, emotional intelligence needs to be "imbedded in certain courses, or created as stand-alones" (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005, p. 249). Emotional intelligence is the most important curricular goal for "meaningful change to take place in schools" (Schultz, 2007, p. 6). Therefore, there has been a call for reform in leadership

preparation programs to include emotional intelligence in the curricula (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Guerra & Pazet, 2016; Mills, 2009; Wallace, 2010).

Incorporating a more unified approach to practicing and teaching social and emotional intelligence competencies in leadership preparation programs might further develop, and better prepare school leaders for the emotional aspects of the job (Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015). Refocusing or structuring training will assist leaders in developing emotional competence in order to prepare them for critical incidents that occur in schools (Johnson et al., 2005). Furthermore, Taliadorou & Pashiardis (2015) find that school leaders' emotions and emotional skills can also influence teachers' emotions, and motivation, thus leading to their overall well-being and performance at work. Emotional intelligence, in combination with cognitive intelligence, has the potential to empower leaders to perform at their highest capacity, and inspire employees to be successful and happy (Singh & Mandela, 2013). Furthermore, in order for schools to be successful, improving teachers' job satisfaction is pivotal (Singh & Manser, 2009). The emotional intelligence of school leaders is considered a crucial determinant affecting teachers' job satisfaction (Singh & Manser, 2009). Therefore, identifying what specific elements of emotional intelligence contribute to job satisfaction is critical to tailoring leadership training around these emotional intelligence components.

While existing literature has focused on the role of emotional intelligence in the school leadership domain, studies have seldom addressed the followers' perceptions of leaders' emotional intelligence (Smollan & Parry, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005). It has been found that follower's perceptions of the emotional intelligence of leaders may have both negative and positive impacts on the follower (Smollan & Parry, 2011). For the purpose of this study,

providing teachers' voice regarding their perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence helped identify the critical components of emotional intelligence, and the associated impacts.

In order to address the lack of leadership training on emotional intelligence, this study focused on identifying emotional intelligence constructs. Teachers' perceptions provided insight into what specific emotionally intelligent behaviors, traits, and practices are the most impactful. This can provide guidance for professional development and training at school district levels. Furthermore, the implications of obtaining this understanding has addressed the call for leadership preparation reform.

Statement of Purpose

George (2000) asserts that emotional intelligence is deserving of consideration in the leadership domain, and may lead to effective leadership, however indicates the need to further explore the interactions between leaders and followers to increase this understanding. Furthermore, according to Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, and Holzer (2015), "We need to learn how to best identify the constructs of emotional intelligence within school leadership, measure them, and place an intentional focus on them in the development of school leaders" (p.69). Therefore, this study helped clarify emotional intelligence constructs, and the related impacts.

Additionally, while existing research has focused on leader emotional intelligence within the K-12 context (Allred et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2005; Moore, 2009; Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015), there have been limited studies emphasizing the impact on elementary teachers' experiences. This gap in research was addressed in this study by gaining elementary teachers input regarding their perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative

phenomenological study was to explore elementary teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence in order to focus training on these components.

A qualitative frame was employed to gain understanding of elementary teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence. Qualitative researchers are interested in "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds", and how they apply meaning to their experiences (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Additionally, a phenomenological approach was utilized to address the research problem and questions. The purpose of phenomenological research is "to depict the essence of the basic structure of experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). In order to study the phenomenon of school leaders' emotional intelligence from elementary teachers' perspectives, a phenomenological approach enabled me to delve deeply into not only understanding the teachers' experiences, but also how their experiences have "transformed into consciousness" (Merriam, 2009, p. 24).

Transformational leadership theory provided a framework to better understand the specific components of emotional intelligence that are the most impactful for the job satisfaction of teachers and school success. Existing literature identifies significant linkages between dimensions of transformational leadership and constructs of emotional intelligence (Ayiro, 2014; Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000). According to Kumar (2014), idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation have direct positive correlations with constructs of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, empathy and motivation.

Transformational leadership theory focuses on the interaction between leaders and followers (Kezar, Carducci, & Conteras-McGavin, 2006). Through these interactions, transformational leadership suggests a wide range of positive outcomes at the personal and organizational level (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Therefore, these connections between transformational leadership

components, and constructs of emotional intelligence provided guidance in identifying critical components of emotional intelligence. As a result of this study, these connections were identified, and addressed the lack of leadership training on emotional intelligence through highlighting the related impacts.

Research Question

While research consensus is that leadership preparation programs are not giving priority to social and emotional intelligence knowledge, competencies, and dispositions (Johnson et al., 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace; 2010), there is also a gap in the literature regarding followers' perceptions of leaders' emotional intelligence (Johnson et al., 2005; Smollan & Parry, 2011). Exploring teachers lived experiences was beneficial in understanding the intentionality of school leaders' emotional intelligence. Due to individual's unique perspectives regarding lived experiences and events, they did have different points of view regarding the emotional intelligence of school leaders. Therefore, teachers' perceptions of their respective school leaders' emotional intelligence were central to this study. The research problem led to the following overarching question: *What are teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence?*

Significance

Bass (1990) finds that problems, changes, and ambiguity require a flexible organization with persistent "leaders who can inspire employees to participate enthusiastically in team efforts, and share organizational goals" (p. 31). In the educational context, inspiring teachers may therefore be beneficial in increasing commitment and collaboration. Similarly, emotionally intelligent leaders are better equipped to make difficult decisions, assist in conflict resolution,

and build efficient teams, contributing to their overall effectiveness (Schultz, 2007; Gray, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005).

Significant advances have been made in applying transformational leadership in K-12 schools, such as teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and school climate (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013; Haj & Jubran, 2016; Kieres & Gutmore, 2014). Leaders who demonstrate emotionally intelligent behaviors, positively impact followers' performance and can be a precursor to job satisfaction (Singh & Mandela, 2013). Therefore, it was beneficial to explore the connections between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence in order to understand the related impacts on both the personal and organizational level.

Overall, highlighting the connections between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence helped identify the most important components. This identification can provide guidance for professional development and training at school district levels, thus improving the quality of school leadership within the K-12 community.

Implications

According to Bass (1990), promoting transformational leadership will lead to the productive performance and well-being of an organization. For that reason, K-12 leaders should foster transformational leadership in order to conquer challenges successfully. Moreover, existing studies have found that effective leaders are distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence (Boyatis et al., 1999; George, 2000; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). This may also influence teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Batoool, 2013; George, 2000; Goleman, 2004; Moore, 2009; Prati et al., 2003; Singh & Mandela, 2013). When teachers are more satisfied with their jobs, "they are more willing to offer high levels of commitment, service, and loyalty to the organization" (Singh & Mandela, 2013, p. 85). Teachers

may also benefit from research in emotional intelligence in order to teach these skills to their students (Opengart, 2001). This could adequately prepare students to obtain both emotional and social skills for success in life and work (Opengart, 2001).

In order to enhance the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers, and the leaders' effectiveness, the emotional intelligence of leaders should be developed. According to Goleman (2004) and Muslihah (2015), emotional intelligence can be developed and enhanced through training. A growing body of literature has emphasized the concept of emotional intelligence training (Moore, 2009; Muslihah, 2015; Prati et al., 2003). Moore (2009) recommends "universities, school boards, and state departments of education should strongly consider implementing emotional intelligence development and training programs for potential and current school administrators" (p.26). This training could also be implemented within the school districts in which administrators are employed, thus creating dialogue between school leaders and teachers regarding development of their emotional intelligence. This may also improve the quality of school leadership within the K-12 community through increased awareness of school leaders' emotional intelligence, and teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, work performance, and organizational commitment. Training in emotional intelligence may not only benefit leaders, but also teachers and students in K-12 systems, while addressing the call for leadership preparation reform.

Delimitations

According to Leedy & Ormond (2010), delimitations involve what the researcher is not going to do. Examining the phenomenology of emotional intelligence requires a myriad of perspectives. While this study examined elementary teachers' perceptions; middle and high school teachers' and school leaders' perspectives were not be considered. Their perceptions

could also contribute to understanding the most important components of emotional intelligence. Therefore, additional research will be needed to obtain multiple perspectives from not only middle and high school teachers, but also school leaders. Additionally, there was only one participant per school interviewed, therefore this is insufficient data to make an overall assessment regarding school leader's emotional intelligence. As the purpose of this study was to examine teachers' *perceptions* of leader EI, this limitation prevents any generalizations about the leader as an individual, but doesn't prevent the answering of the research question.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses in a study that are out of the control of the researcher (Simon, 2011). This study intended to better understand elementary teachers' perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence, and participants were recruited from a minimum of two school districts. However, the number of different schools included in this study was a limitation, due to teacher's voluntary participation. This limited the variation of the sample. Although each participant was from a different school, considering the number of schools in Louisiana, this was a relatively small sample size. Therefore, additional research is needed to obtain teachers' experiences in multiple districts across numerous grade levels and subject areas.

Definitions of Terms

Accountability

“No Child Left Behind is designed to change the culture of America's schools by closing the achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options, and teaching students based on what works. Under the act's accountability provision, states must describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students, including those who are

disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a “form of social intelligence involving 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 feelings and actions” (Mayer & Salovey, 1990, p.189). Furthermore, emotional intelligence is observed when one demonstrates self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999).

High-Performing School Leaders

In the context of K12 leadership, there are five key practices of high performing school leaders: “(1) shaping a vision of academic success for all students; (2) creating a climate hospitable to education; (3) cultivating leadership in others; (4) improving instruction; (5) managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement” (The Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 6).

Job Satisfaction

Locke (1976) described job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p.1304).

Organizational Commitment

Allen and Meyer (1996) defined organizational commitment as a psychological link between an employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee voluntarily leave the organization.

Reform

In the context of leadership preparation reform, this refers to “redesign concentrated on activities, such as aligning the curriculum with state and national standards, reviewing historical

and contemporary trends in the knowledge base of educational administration, and assessing instructional techniques” (Brooks, Harvard, Tatum, & Patrick, 2010, p. 419).

School Climate

Cohen (2010) defines school climate as “the quality and character of school life. It is based on patterns of students’, parents’ and school personnel’s experience of school life, and reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures” (p. 1).

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one presents the introduction, the problem statement, the statement of purpose, the research question, the significance of the study, the implications, the delimitations and limitations of the study, and the operational definitions of terms. Chapter two presents a review of the literature relevant to the problem, and the conceptual framework of the study. Chapter three presents an overview of the research methods. Chapter four provides an analysis of the data collected and chapter five presents a concluding discussion connecting the data to relevant research.

Chapter Two

Conceptual Framework

While examining teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence, transformational leadership theory provided a framework to better understand the specific components of emotional intelligence that are the most impactful. Existing research has identified critical linkages between dimensions of transformational leadership and constructs of emotional intelligence. Transformational leadership theory is useful, because it links emotional bonds to effective performance. Further examination of these related concepts can shed light on the potential benefits of school leaders' emotional intelligence (Kumar, 2014; Modassir & Singh, 2008). Therefore, this study utilized a conceptual framework integrating both transformational leadership theory and emotional intelligence in order to understand teachers' perceptions regarding the most important components of emotional intelligence of their respective school leaders, and the related impacts.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns (1978) is credited with initiating the concept of transformational leadership, and how it is an extension of transactional leadership. Transformational leaders "motivate others to do more than they originally intended and even more than they thought possible" (Burns, 1978, p. 136). Researchers have noted that transformational leadership focuses on the interaction between leaders and followers (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). Through these interactions, transformational leadership theory suggests a vast range of beneficial outcomes at the organizational and personal level (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Transformational leaders attend to the individual motives and needs of followers by helping them reach their full potential and achieve maximum performance (Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016). Moreover, Bass

(1990) finds that transformational leaders inspire their followers and meet their needs emotionally.

Significant advances have been made in applying transformational leadership in K-12 schools, including increased teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Previous research found that principals' transformational leadership style positively impacted teachers' job satisfaction (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013; Haj & Jubran, 2016; Kieres & Gutmore, 2014). Haj & Jubran (2016) found that a principal's application of transformational leadership contributes to the reduction of anxiety and psychological stress among teachers. In turn, teachers feel comfortable and peaceful, and more satisfied with their job. Teachers' commitment to their school may also be increased due to leader's utilizing transformational leadership components, in particular, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration (Cemaloglun, Sezgin, & Kilnic, 2012). For instance, principals who are motivate teachers, and provide them the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns, may aid in increased commitment to the school (Chemaloglun et al., 2012).

There are four primary components of transformational leadership: (1) idealized influence (or charismatic influence); (2) inspirational motivation; (3) intellectual stimulation; and (4) individualized consideration (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Burns, 1978; Kumar, 2014; Modassir & Singh, 2008). According to Kumar (2014), idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation have direct positive correlation with constructs of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, empathy, and motivation (Table 1). However, the findings from Barling et al. (2000), and Palmer et al. (2001), indicated that not all components of transformational leadership are linked to emotional intelligence constructs. While idealized

influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration are tied to emotional intelligence, intellectual stimulation is not (Barling et al., 2000; Palmer et al., 2001).

Table 1. Linkages between Transformational Leadership Components and Emotional Intelligence Constructs

Transformational Leadership Components	Emotional Intelligence Constructs
Idealized Influence	Self-awareness
Individualized Consideration	Empathy
Inspirational Motivation	Motivation

In regards to this study, these three transformational leadership components and emotional intelligence constructs aided in further understanding the interaction that exists between school leaders and teachers, and the associated impacts of such exchanges. These connections between transformational leadership components and constructs of emotional intelligence provided guidance in identifying the most important components of emotional intelligence. These connections helped address the lack of leadership training on emotional intelligence through highlighting the related impacts.

Idealized Influence

The first component, idealized influence or charisma, involves the emotional component of transformational leadership, providing followers with a collective vision, while gaining their trust and respect (Northouse, 2016). Similarly, existing research claims that emotionally

intelligent leaders also create school cultures of respect and trust, along with a common vision for their school, contributing to teachers feeling more united with their school leader, and community (Gray, 2009; Moore, 2009). This study assessed teachers' perceptions of how emotionally intelligent leaders gain teachers' trust and respect. Through individual interviews, teachers provided insight regarding how trust and respect contributes to feeling united with both their school leader and school community.

Inspirational Motivation

The second dimension of transformational leadership theory relevant to this study is inspirational motivation, involving a leader's engagement with others, and the ability to establish connections that raise the level of inspiration, motivation and morality in both the leader and follower (Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016). According to Gray (2009), emotionally intelligent leaders inspire and motivate teachers to achieve excellence, and bring about enthusiasm among staff. Therefore, transformational leadership offers a lens to further understand how teachers perceive their leaders' ability in motivating and inspiring them, thus creating a sense of connectivity. This was analyzed through the data collected from individual interviews with teachers.

A subset of inspirational motivation involves the relationships transformational leaders form with followers through interactive communication (Kumar, 2014; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). Because emotional intelligence also aids in understanding one's relationships with others, communication between school leaders and teachers is crucial to further explore in order for teachers to feel supported and understood (George, 2009; Gray, 2009; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Regarding this study, individual interviews focusing on each component of transformation leadership were employed.

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration is another aspect of transformational leadership, involving treating employees as individuals in a caring, compassionate, appreciative way, while being responsive to their needs and concerns (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Empathy being a key component of emotional intelligence, relates closely to individualized consideration.

Individualized consideration involves social awareness, including “understanding others’ perspectives and feelings, appreciation of others’ strengths and weaknesses”, and treating others with respect (Modassir & Singh, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, exploring teachers’ perceptions by way of individual interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the role empathy plays in effective leadership. Interviews included questioning related to how school leaders’ show appreciation and respect for teachers, as well as, their level of understanding regarding their needs and concerns.

Rationale for Transformational Leadership Theory

Considering the complexity school leaders face, such as making challenging decisions, managing conflict, and sharing leadership; existing research indicates that fostering transformational leadership will lead to the well-being and effective performance of an organization (Bass, 1990). Bass (1990) has also found that “problems, rapid changes, and uncertainty call for a flexible organization with determined leaders who can inspire employees to participate enthusiastically in team efforts, and share organizational goals” (p.31). In other words, systematic change requires a specific type of leader, encompassing abilities to increase cooperation and collaboration for the greater good of the entire organization. Individualized consideration for example, is critical in leaders whose organizations are faced with renewal and change. Similarly, existing research indicates that emotionally intelligent leaders are better

equipped to make difficult decisions, assist in conflict resolution, and build efficient teams, contributing to their overall effectiveness (Schultz, 2007; Gray, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005).

Transformational leadership theory helped inform this study, as opposed to other theories of leadership, due to the significant connections between transformational leaders and constructs of emotional intelligence. For example, transactional leadership theory refers to the majority of leadership models, which focus on exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers (Northouse, 2016). These exchanges can be either beneficial or detrimental to the follower. For example, Bass (1990) finds that employees who perform well will be rewarded, whereas employees who perform below expectations will be penalized. This is often referred to as contingent rewards, involving an exchange process between leaders and followers, in which followers' effort is exchanged for rewards (Northouse, 2016). While exchanges between school leaders and teachers are central to this study, transformational leadership theory includes ethical purposes and moral ends, aligned with emotional intelligence. Furthermore, transformational leadership is viewed as a mutual process, focused on concern for followers, and the quest of socially desirable ends (Kezar et al., 2006).

Similarities also exist between transformational leadership and servant leadership. In particular, both leadership frameworks incorporate: (1) influence, (2) vision, (3) trust, (4) respect or credibility, (5) risk-taking or delegation, (6) integrity, and (7) modeling (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). While many of these concepts are aligned with constructs of emotional intelligence such as empathy and emotional healing, it remains unclear if emotional intelligence is specifically tied to servant leadership (Winston & Hatsfield, 2004).

Although similarities between transformational leadership and servant leadership do exist, the main difference is the focus of the leader. The primary focus of the servant leader is

their service to others, whereas the transformational leader has greater concern for getting followers to support and engage in organizational objectives (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). While servant leadership may be closely aligned to the transformational components of inspiration and individualized consideration, the main objective is to serve (Stone et al., 2003). In regards to this study, transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are both concerned with increasing organizational satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness, not just on the individual (Kumar, 2014).

While the purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence, a leadership theory, as opposed to a theory involving only interpersonal relations, was most appropriate given the context. Emotional intelligence is connected to interpersonal relations, such as empathy, self-monitoring, social skills, cooperation, and relationship ties (Schutte et al., 2001). However, transformational leadership theory encompasses not only interpersonal relations, but also how these traits contribute to leadership effectiveness and organizational change (Williams & Jones, 2009). Williams and Jones (2009) proclaim that transformational leadership offers a conceptual framework that may be "beneficial in managing and leading educational environments during changing times" (p. 5). Given the challenges school leaders face due to the new era of accountability, transformational leadership theory was useful as a guide to better understand how school leaders develop a shared vision and commitment with their followers, in order to promote positive school change.

Overall, considering other theories of leadership or interpersonal relations, transformational leadership theory better informed this study, due to the specific connections to emotional intelligence. While exploring teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence, transformational leadership theory and emotional intelligence provided a lens to

understand the related impacts on both the personal and organizational level. Through this understanding, the most important components of emotional intelligence were better understood. Therefore, the definition of emotional intelligence used to guide this study is highlighted below. The five main elements of emotional intelligence are also addressed.

Emotional Intelligence Defined

Theorists have produced several unique, yet interrelated definitions of emotional intelligence (Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 2004; Mayer & Salovey, 1990, 1997). Salovey and Mayer (1990) first defined emotional intelligence as “form of social intelligence involving the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s feelings and actions” (p. 189). It was later determined that this definition limited the meaning to only include perceiving and regulating emotion, omitting feelings (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Therefore, this study was guided by the revised definition of emotional intelligence given by Mayer & Salovey (1997) which is “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10). According to Mayer & Salovey (1997), each skill addressed in this definition contributes to specific emotional competencies as further detailed below.

Emotional Competence

Extending from the works of Mayer and Salovey (1990, 1995, 1997), Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee (1999) categorized the outward manifestations of emotional intelligence as five emotional intelligence elements: (1) self-awareness, (2) self-regulation, (3) motivation, (4) empathy and (5) social skills. These elements are demonstrated at “appropriate times and ways in

sufficient frequency to be effective in the situation” (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999, p. 3). Furthermore, Goleman (1998) defines an emotional competence as a “learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work” (p. 24). Emotional intelligence determines individual’s potential for learning skills that are based on these five elements. Emotional competencies cluster into groups, based on similar emotional intelligence components (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence research often involves the description and study of specific competencies that are related to effectiveness, and described within clusters (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999). This model highlights the relationship between the five elements of emotional intelligence and the twenty-five competencies, and is further outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Theoretical and Empirical Clustering of the Competencies in the Emotional Intelligence Model

<p><u>Self-Awareness Cluster:</u> Emotional Self-Awareness Accurate Self-Assessment Self-Confidence</p>
<p><u>Self-Regulation Cluster:</u> Self-Control Trustworthiness Conscientiousness Adaptability Innovation</p>
<p><u>Self-Motivation Cluster:</u> Achievement Orientation Commitment Initiative Optimism</p>
<p><u>Empathy Cluster:</u> Empathy Organizational Awareness Service Orientation Developing Others Leveraging Diversity</p>
<p><u>Social Skills:</u> Leadership Communication Influence Change Catalyst Conflict Management Building Bonds Collaboration & Cooperation Team Capabilities</p>

(Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999)

Self-Awareness

In regards to the contribution of the five elements to emotional intelligence, Goleman (2004), describes self-awareness as “the ability to recognize and understand one’s moods, emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives” (p. 3). Knowing one’s internal states, preferences, resources, and intuition constitute self-awareness (Goleman, 1998). Self-aware individuals know how they feel and how their emotions and actions affect people around them (Batool, 2013). Three competencies are associated with self-awareness, including emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). In the educational leadership context, self-awareness can instill trust, pride, and respect in followers (Bass, 1990). Batool (2013), finds that self-awareness can be improved through the utilization of journals. Writing one’s thoughts each day through journaling, can increase one’s level of self-awareness (Batool, 2013). Therefore, when experiencing anger or other negative emotions, self-aware leaders examine why they are having these emotions, and choose to respond effectively. This enables leaders to recognize how their emotions affect others.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation involves “the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, and the propensity to suspend judgement” (Goleman, 2004, p.3). It is defined as “managing one’s internal states, impulses and resources” (Goleman, 1998, p. 26). Self-control is a key competency associated with self-regulation (Batool, 2013). This is demonstrated through one’s flexibility in stressful situations, while remaining personally accountable for his or her actions. Trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovation are other competencies within the self-regulation cluster (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). In

regards to leadership, self-regulation may enhance integrity as well, which may be viewed as not only a personal virtue, but also an organizational strength (Goleman, 2004). Self-regulation may also be enhanced by recognizing one's own "code of ethics", in order to make moral and ethical decisions successfully (Batool, 2013).

Motivation

Furthermore, motivation is referred to as "emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals", while incorporating "passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status" (Goleman, 1998, p.3). Remaining optimistic even when facing failure is an example of motivation (Batool, 2013; Goleman, 2004). Motivation is demonstrated when one is consistent in reaching goals (Batool, 2013). Along with optimism, achievement drive, commitment and initiative are additional competencies within the motivation component (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Within the leadership context, motivation is increased through self-reflection, focusing on why leadership was chosen as a profession in order to examine goals from a new perspective (Batool, 2013).

Empathy

Empathy is also considered a critical element of emotional intelligence (Batool, 2011; Goleman, 1998, 2004; Mayer & Salovey, 1990, 1997). According to Goleman (1998), empathy involves the awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. Empathy incorporates the skills in "treating others according to their emotional reactions" (Goleman, 2004, p. 3). The competencies associated with empathy include: (1) understanding others, (2) developing others, (3) service orientation, (4) leveraging diversity, and (5) political awareness (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). In the leadership context, empathy is crucial to managing successful teams or organizations (Batool, 2013). According to Prati, Douglas,

Ferris, Ammeter, & Buckley (2003), emotional intelligence is essential for team interaction and productivity, contributing to an overall improved performance. Therefore, empathy is an important asset for leaders. Empathy may be enhanced through increased attention to one's own and other's body language, to better understand the feelings of others, in order to respond appropriately (Batool, 2013). Placing oneself in someone else's situation is another way to increase empathy (Batool, 2013).

Social Skills

The final elements of emotional intelligence concern social skills. Social skills refer to the "adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others" (Goleman, 2004, p. 27). Building rapport and finding common ground are primary examples of someone exhibiting social skills (Goleman, 2004). Individuals who demonstrate effective social skills set examples with their own behavior (Batool, 2013). Specific competencies related to social skills involve influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Leaders' social skills may be improved through learning conflict resolution skills, improving communication skills, and through praising others (Batool, 2013). Overall, the utilization of emotional intelligence competencies is central to leadership, contributing to others doing their jobs more effectively (Goleman, 1998).

The five elements of emotional intelligence are critical to this study due to their linkages to leadership effectiveness. While this study's objective is to examine teacher perceptions of school leader emotional intelligence, highlighting the five elements will be useful as a guide to understand how these elements are connected to leadership effectiveness, and its impact on teachers' experiences.

Review of Literature

The school leader's role has become more complex as the demand for accountability has intensified in recent years (Allred, Labat, Eadens, Labat, & Eadens, 2016; Litcha, 2007; Mills, 2009; Moore, 2009). This complexity requires making challenging decisions, managing conflict, and sharing leadership. However, existing research indicates that emotionally intelligent leaders are better equipped to make difficult decisions, assist in conflict resolution, and build efficient teams, contributing to their overall effectiveness (Gray, 2009; Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Mills, 2009; Schultz, 2007). Emotionally intelligent leaders also combine social effectiveness skills such as coaching, motivating, inspiring, facilitating, and promoting positive attitudes, with the ability to adapt their behavior to a myriad of situational demands in a sincere way (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). This inspires support and trust, and effectively influences others (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). Moreover, emotionally intelligent leaders have the capacity to be more adept in influencing, inspiring, intellectually stimulating and developing committed staff, while instilling confidence and emotional stability in their followers (Moore, 2009; Singh & Manser, 2009). Therefore, there is a growing body of research that suggests focusing efforts on school leader development with these diverse types of skills to lead schools (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Litcha, 2007; Moore, 2009).

Considering the importance of developing emotionally intelligent leaders who can successfully overcome inevitable challenges within the educational leadership profession, it is crucial to explore teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence. To frame this study, it is critical to define emotional intelligence and the related components. The purpose of this literature review is to illustrate linkages between emotional intelligence, effective leadership and teacher job satisfaction. In order to address the lack of leadership training in emotional

intelligence, this review of literature presents an overview of the current state of leadership preparation programs and best practices.

Emotional Intelligence and Effective Leadership

While this study emphasizes the lack of leadership training in emotional intelligence (Johnson et al., 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace, 2010), research suggests that emotional intelligence is a developed ability (Goleman, 2004; Moore, 2009). According to Goleman (2004), although “scientific inquiry suggests that there is a genetic component to emotional intelligence, psychological and developmental research indicates that nurture also plays a role” (p. 4). Therefore, emotional intelligence can be at least partly learned through training (Goleman, 2004; Moore, 2009; Schutte, et al., 2001). Furthermore, while Goleman (1998) asserts that while emotional intelligence determines individuals’ potential for learning skills associated with its five elements, emotional competence is demonstrated by one’s work performance. Existing studies have found that effective leaders have a high level of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 2004). Additionally, George (2000) proposes how the four aspects of emotional intelligence contribute to leadership effectiveness. Therefore, a thorough examination of the role emotional intelligence in effective leadership is provided.

Emotional intelligence should be an essential component of effective leadership (Allred et al., 2016; Batool, 2013; George, 2000; Goleman, 1998, 2004; Gray, 2009; Kerr, Gavin, Heaton, & Boyle, 2006; Mills, 2009; Modassir & Singh, 2008; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001; Schultz, 2007; Smollan & Parry, 2001; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). Managing emotions intelligently in any organization by a leader plays a vital role in effective leadership (Batool, 2013; George, 2000; Goleman, 2004). Emotional intelligence contributes to effective

leadership in several ways, including the development and achievement of collective goals, appreciation of followers, increased cooperation and trust, flexibility in decision making and change, and the establishment of meaningful identity for organizations (George, 2000). George (2000) suggests that feelings, moods, and emotions play a critical role in the leadership process, from both the follower and leader perspective. This literature analysis highlights the contribution of the four aspects of emotional intelligence to leadership effectiveness. The purpose of this analysis is to present a framework describing the role of emotional intelligence in the leadership process (George, 2000). The analysis indicates that emotional intelligence contributes to effective leadership, however also suggests the need to further explore the interactions between leaders and followers to increase this understanding. Furthermore, this study will utilize George's literature analysis as a basis for understanding the ways in which emotional intelligence contributes to effective leadership from teachers' perceptions.

Similarly, Gray (2009) found that decisions principals make involve some level of emotional intelligence, such as solving problems and making judgements. This study also noted that the majority of existing leadership research highlights the challenges school leaders endure, however why and how leaders exercise a positive influence on their organizations continue to be unanswered questions (Gray, 2009). In an attempt to address this gap in leadership literature, Gray (2009) found that a principal's emotional intelligence skills are imperative to increase student achievement collaboratively, and guarantee the well-being of the entire school community. In addition, emotionally intelligent leaders motivate teachers by recognizing and rewarding their work, produce enthusiasm among staff, and helps create a unique identity for their school (Gray, 2009). These findings further solidify the critical role emotional intelligence

plays in the effectiveness of school leaders, but also adds the importance of mutual trust between leaders and other members, especially when an organization faces challenges or change.

Role of Trust

While much of the literature on leader emotional intelligence emphasizes the importance of trust during change implementation (Smollan & Parry, 2011), trust also plays a critical role in other organizational contexts. For instance, Barling, Slater, & Kelloway (2009), find that there are several reasons why individuals high in emotional intelligence would be more likely to use transformational behaviors. Transformational leadership is linked to superior leadership performance, occurring when leaders increase followers' interest, develop acceptance and awareness of the organization's purpose and mission, and consider the betterment of the entirety of the organization (Bass, 1990). Barling et al. (2000) find that emotionally intelligent leaders who manage their emotions, and exhibit self-control and delay of gratification, could act as role models for followers, thus enhancing their respect and trust.

Furthermore, self-awareness can instill trust, pride, and respect in followers, consistent with the transformational leadership component *idealized influence*, which describes leadership that involves trust and respect. Leaders who establish trust and respect in their subordinates, will then contribute to establishing vision and a sense of mission in organizations (Bass, 1990; Modassir & Singh, 2008). Moore (2009) asserts that "studying emotional intelligence provides leaders with the awareness necessary to meet the needs of staff that is engaged with developing a common vision for their school and creating school cultures of trust and respect" (p. 20). Therefore, when leaders are more self-aware, they will recognize their own role in establishing trust with teachers. Once trust is established, the fulfillment of the school's mission may be mutually agreed upon between leaders and teachers.

Additionally, Downey et al. (2011), find that leader emotional intelligence determined trust in team members which also impacts organizational commitment, contributing to leadership effectiveness. Emotionally intelligent leaders have a better understanding of group members' emotions and being empathetic may increase organizational commitment (Downey et al., 2011). They also find increased empathy may also help regulate their emotions and achieve workplace goals, thus creating a trusting culture (Downey et al., 2011). As a result, individual and organizational trust could be a result of a leader who is empathetic towards his or her employees.

While trust plays a significant role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, according to Taliadorou & Pashiardis (2015), leader effectiveness positively influences the level of teachers' job satisfaction as well. This study emphasized the limited research regarding leaders' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction, therefore their findings filled in this gap in research. They also recommend educational researchers should examine social skills that an effective leader should have. In addition, Palmer et al. (2001), find that future research needs to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership in more depth. This may identify emotional skills, which could be implemented in leadership preparation programs to increase the effectiveness of leaders (Palmer et al., 2001).

Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Job Satisfaction

There is existing evidence that links principals' emotional intelligence to teachers' job satisfaction and performance (Singh & Manser, 2009; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015; Waruwu, 2015). Goleman (1995) proclaims that leader's emotional intelligence is a predictor of their followers' job success and satisfaction. Similarly, Taliadorou & Pashiardis (2015), find that school leaders' emotions and emotional skills can also influence teachers' emotions and

motivation, thus leading to their overall well-being and performance at work. The purpose of this proposed study is to explore the relationship of school leader's emotional intelligence and the effects on the job satisfaction of teachers (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2015) suggest the leadership effectiveness is increased through the implementation of "practices and methods that target specific components of emotional intelligence" (p. 13). The four components of emotional intelligence according to Mayer and Salovey (1997), including self-emotional appraisal, other's emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion in the self, and the use of emotions to facilitate performance, all contribute to teachers' job satisfaction (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). This study further suggests that one way for school leaders to increase teachers' job satisfaction, may be to incorporate emotionally intelligent behaviors.

Emotionally Intelligent Behaviors Contributing to Job Satisfaction

While Singh & Manser (2009) find that principals' emotional intelligence positively impacts the job satisfaction of teachers, they also identify particular emotionally intelligent behaviors that influence job satisfaction. "Emotionally intelligent behaviors refer to observable actions and reactions that determine one's level of emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1998, p. 26). In the educational leadership context, these behaviors may help determine a leader's degree of emotional intelligence. Because the behaviors are observable, this is helpful for researchers to more easily determine what behaviors leaders portray. They also comprise numerous characteristics that make them "identifiable as manifestations of emotional intelligence", and are significant measures of leaders' ability to act in a sympathetic, sensitive, and suitable manner (Singh & Manser, 2009, p.80). They are observed in the interpersonal domain, and in the intrapersonal domain (Singh & Manser, 2009). The purpose of this study was to explore if there is a significant correlation between the emotionally intelligent behaviors of school principals and

teachers job satisfaction (Singh & Manser, 2009). This study involved a multi-respondent survey design, and utilized a convenience sample of both teachers and principals across 200 schools in Eastern Cape, South Africa (Singh & Manser, 2009). The results indicate that principals who are good communicators, demonstrate empathy, build healthy relationships, exhibit positive self-expressions, and express optimism, not only contribute to the job satisfaction of teachers, but will also increase the potential for organizational effectiveness to be achieved (Singh & Manser, 2009).

Waruwu (2015), suggests the emotionally intelligent behaviors of principals that increase teacher job satisfaction are empathizing, using emotions as motivation, and establishing interpersonal relationships with teachers. This quantitative study's objective was to "identify a correlation between: (1) teachers' perceptions of principals' emotional intelligence, and teacher job satisfaction, (2) organizational climate and job satisfaction of teachers, and (3) teachers' perceptions of principals' emotional intelligence and organizational climate and job satisfaction of teachers" (Waruwu, 2015, p. 142) . The population consisted of 170 high school teachers (Waruwu, 2015). The results indicate that teachers' perceptions of principals' emotional intelligence have a significant positive correlation with the job satisfaction of teachers. It was further recommended for principals to improve their emotional intelligence through increased training.

Although leaders establishing relationships with teachers is critical to increase teachers' job satisfaction (Singh & Manser, 2009; Waruwu, 2015), trust plays a significant role in a leader's ability to build healthy relationships with teachers (Singh & Manser, 2009). Downey et al. (2011), also found a significant relationship between trustworthiness of leaders and followers' job satisfaction. Leaders' greater attention and their understanding of the emotional states of

others is predictive of trust, and contributes to followers' increased satisfaction due to knowing they can demonstrate pleasure or displeasure at work, and that this information will be interpreted correctly (Downey et al., 2011). Therefore, trust is a result of leaders' awareness of the emotions and needs of their followers, thus playing a key role in follower's job satisfaction. When leaders are considering how to contribute to teachers' job satisfaction, establishing trust with teachers may be beneficial. Furthermore, leaders who maintain self-awareness, may contribute positively to building trusting relationships with teachers as well.

In addition to trust, Singh & Mandela (2013), also find that when employees are more satisfied with their job, they are more willing to offer high levels of commitment, service, and loyalty to the organization. Therefore, emotional intelligence, in combination with cognitive intelligence, has the potential to empower leaders to perform at their highest capacity, and inspire employees to be happy and lucrative (Singh & Mandela, 2013). However, while Singh & Madela (2013) suggest emotionally intelligent leaders have the potential to improve the job satisfaction of their followers, additional research should also be conducted regarding the impacts of leaders' emotionally intelligent behaviors on the job satisfaction of their employees. Examining teacher perceptions of school leader emotional intelligence is precisely the objective of the present study.

Current State of Leadership Preparation Programs

The national movement toward improved K-12 student achievement and accountability has contributed to increasing focus on the preparation of school leaders and a resulting disappointment regarding the efficiency of traditional programs in preparing leaders to meet the demands of the 21st century (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002; Hale & Moorman, 2003). The general consensus is that principal preparation programs have failed to keep pace with the evolving role of principals due to these new demands (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Mitgang, 2012).

Today there is an emphasis on the principal as a transformational leader, acting as mentor, coach, and facilitator, in an organization of distributive leadership (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002). However, while controversy surrounds leadership programs, an ignored aspect has been the instruction of leadership characteristics and traits for transformational change in schools (Schultz, 2007). Therefore, educational leadership preparation programs may want to consider incorporating the role of emotions and emotional intelligence in the curricula, because of current accountability demands and standards (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Mills, 2009). The inclusion of emotional intelligence within leadership preparation programs might further develop and better prepare school leaders for the emotional aspects of the job (Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015).

Best Practices in Leadership Preparation

The idea of best practice has its “roots in medicine and implies that professionals have standards, are aware of current research, and offer clients the field’s latest knowledge, technology, and procedures” (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002, p. 2). Current research involving leadership preparation can therefore assist leaders in understanding and implementing effective methods of leading K12 schools. However, until recently, education has not had a custom of best practice. However, in an attempt to fill this void, Chenoweth et al. (2002), highlights best practices in educational leadership training in seven key areas, including “program philosophy and design, recruitment and selection, curriculum, instruction/delivery systems, internship/practicum, program evaluation, and professional development” (p. 3). These key areas in relation to best practices are important to this present study, because they establish a foundation in which to address leadership preparation reform.

Regarding philosophy and design, “many educational preparation programs reflect a new vision of leadership for a changing society” (Chenoweth et al., 2002, p. 34). Transformational and shared leadership are characterized as “best practices” as the preferred model for redesigned preparation programs. Kieres & Gutmore (2014) finds the behaviors associated with the transformational leadership component, individualized consideration, are considered best practice in human relations management. Individualized consideration involves leaders treating employees as individuals, while being compassionate and sympathetic (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Individualized consideration has a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment that directly influences student performance (Kieres & Gutmore, 2014). Instruction and delivery systems for preparation programs are the focus of much debate (Chenoweth et al., 2002). Holistic and constructivist instructional practices, including problem-based learning, cooperative learning, collaborative research, and reflective practice are considered best practices (Chenoweth et al., 2002). School district personnel, student, and faculty are also expected to become part of a learning community (Chenoweth et al., 2002).

Best practices concerning leadership development curriculum are demonstrated when knowledge, skills, and dispositions are delivered in a learner-centered setting (Chenoweth et al., 2002). Topics of study should not only include leadership, but also “shaping a shared vision, democratic schooling, school improvement, change, ethics and social justice” (Chenoweth et al., 2002, p. 35). Social justice is also a major topic concerning reform (Guerra & Pazey, 2016; Zembylas, 2010). Programs should be designed to prepare leaders for social justice, as well as, promote emotional intelligence components, such as empathy, compassion and understanding (Guerra & Pazey, 2016; Zembylas, 2010).

Internships are also part of most candidates' preparation; however, confusion remains regarding the appropriate length and importance internships in their preparation (Chenoweth et al., 2002). The quality of mentorships for administrative experiences vary across the nation (Chenoweth et al., 2002). Mitgang (2012) also finds that during principals' beginning years, superior mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs are needed. Similarly, Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson (2005) find that most adults learn best when exposed to situations requiring the utilization of required knowledge, skills, and problem-solving strategies, guided by self-reflection.

Systematic program evaluation that assess whether preparation programs are preparing candidates who are able to successfully implement change, resulting in improved teaching and student learning is lacking nationwide (Chenoweth et al., 2002). Evaluation procedures including national standards such as NCATE/ELCC are moving toward a performance-based model, however it has not been studied in actual practice in schools to ascertain program effectiveness (Chenoweth et al., 2002).

Professional development best practice requires organized content, reflecting topics addressed in preparation programs, up to date research, and current district initiatives and state mandates (Chenoweth et al., 2002). Mentoring, coaching, and feedback are critical in implementing new educational techniques and strategies. According to Davis et al. (2005), the primary role of the mentor is to assist the learner in solving dilemmas, boost self-confidence, and to develop an extensive collection of leadership skills.

While best practices are well-documented, leadership preparation programs may be too theoretical, and are not connecting to the demands current leaders face (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Lashway, 2003). Calls to reform educational leadership preparation have intensified (Brooks,

Havard, Tatum, & Patrick, 2010). One area of reform in educational leadership programs is including emotional intelligence in their course design (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Guerra & Pazat, 2016; Johnson et al., 2005; Mills, 2009; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez et al., 2015; Wallace, 2010). Incorporating best practices within training on emotional intelligence could therefore benefit leaders, while addressing the call for reform.

Literature Summary

In summary, the review of the literature included the associated benefits of school leaders' emotional intelligence, including teacher job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness. The review of literature also included the current state of leadership preparation programs, including best practices, as well as, addressed the call for reform. Furthermore, this review also contributed to understanding the gaps in existing literature, in particular the need for teachers' perceptions of school leader's emotional intelligence. George (2000) and Palmer et al. (2001) suggest the need to further explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership more in depth. The interactions between leaders and followers can increase this understanding (George, 2000), and may "identify new emotion-based skills, which could be used in leadership training and development to enhance leadership effectiveness" (Palmer et al., 2001, p. 9). According to Smollan & Parry (2011) there is a need to understand follower perceptions of leader emotional intelligence, in order to gain further knowledge regarding the most important components of emotional intelligence and the related impacts. Furthermore, Singh & Mandela (2013) suggest additional research should focus on the impacts of leaders' emotionally intelligent behaviors on the job satisfaction of their employees. Therefore, it was imperative to explore

teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence to address this gap in literature, and to identify the most important components of emotional intelligence for leadership training.

Chapter Summary

While the literature on leader emotional intelligence supports the associated benefits including leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction, there are gaps in the literature regarding the need to further explore teachers' perceptions of these concepts. Additionally, while these benefits are well documented, existing research indicates leadership preparation programs are not emphasizing emotional intelligence knowledge and practices in the curriculum (Johnson et al., 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace, 2010). Therefore, reform is a major topic in the literature, in particular, the inclusion of emotional intelligence in the curricula (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2005; Guerra & Pazet, 2016; Wallace, 2010). Regarding the current state of leadership preparation programs, research consensus is that principal preparation programs have failed to keep pace with the changing role of principals due increased demands due to accountability (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Mitgang, 2012). While recently the principal as a transformational leader has been emphasized (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002), the instruction of leadership ability for transformational change in schools has been ignored (Schultz, 2007).

Moreover, existing research has found significant linkages between emotional intelligence, and transformational leadership (Kumar, 2014; Modassir & Singh, 2008). Therefore, transformational leadership theory was utilized to guide this study. This study revealed teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence, in order to further explore how emotionally intelligent leaders contribute to their job satisfaction, while identifying the key emotionally intelligent behaviors, traits and practices that are the most impactful.

Teachers' perceptions addressed the gaps in literature, as well as, the problem involving the lack of social and emotional components in existing curricula in leadership preparation programs.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret and apply meaning to their experiences, and how they construct their worlds (Merriam, 2009). In order to understand elementary teachers' experiences regarding school leaders' emotional intelligence, a qualitative design was most appropriate. Therefore, this chapter describes the rationale for employing a qualitative frame to gain understanding of the perceptions of elementary teachers in regards to their school leaders' emotional intelligence. In addition, this chapter describes the rationale for constructivism, indicates the research question, participant recruitment, and describes data collection and analysis procedures, and addresses the trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

Qualitative research is an “approach for exploring and interpreting the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). It involves social research in which the researcher relies on text data rather than numerical data, analyzes data in textual form, and focuses on understanding the meaning of human action (Schwandt, 2001). Overall, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people make sense of and construct their world, and what meaning they ascribe to their experiences (Merriam, 2009). In a broad sense, the purposes of qualitative research are to obtain “an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). It is through the participant's perspectives that the nuances and complexities of a particular phenomenon is explored (Leedy & Ormond, 2010).

Rationale for Constructivism

The constructivist epistemological paradigm involves one's understanding of the world as inevitably his or her construction, rather than an objective perception of reality (Maxwell, 2013). Therefore, constructions cannot claim absolute truth (Maxwell, 2013). Furthermore, social constructivists believe that individuals "seek understanding of the world in which they work" (Creswell, 2014, p.8). The meanings are diverse, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than limiting meanings into a few categories (Creswell, 2014). The main goal of constructivist research is to rely on the participants' views of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, within a constructivist framework, the aim of this study was to explore elementary teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence in order to identify what specific elements of emotional intelligence contribute to leadership effectiveness.

Approach and Rationale

This research utilized a phenomenological approach to address the research problem and questions. Phenomenologists are concerned with individuals' "lived experiences" (Merriam, 2009). According to Van Manen (2014), "A lived experience is experience that we live through before we take a reflective view of it" (p. 42). The purpose of phenomenological research is "to depict the essence of the basic structure of experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). In order to study the specific phenomenon of school leaders' emotional intelligence from teachers' perceptions, a phenomenological approach enabled me to delve deeply into not only understanding the teachers' experiences, but also how their experiences have reconstructed into knowledge and awareness. Elementary teachers possess first-hand knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, due to individual's unique perspectives regarding lived experiences and events, teachers had different viewpoints regarding the emotional intelligence of school leaders.

According to Northouse (2016), leadership is viewed as a shared connection between leaders and followers, developing from their interactions. Teachers' perceptions are critical in understanding their communication with their leaders. Understanding the communication that exists between leaders and teachers, contributed to how their perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence was developed.

Statement of the Research Question

This study is designed to address one overarching research question was presented in an effort to better understand elementary teachers' perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence through identifying integral components of emotional intelligence, and the associated impacts: *What are teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence?*

Participant Selection

I recruited participants who are elementary teachers (1st-5th) with at least seven years of experience. Because both Boyd (2001), and Creswell (1998) recommend in-depth interviews with up to ten participants for phenomenological studies, I recruited ten elementary teachers. Moore (2009) asserts that school leaders' "emotional intelligence can be the difference between a high performing and low performing school" (p. 23). Moreover, according to Creswell (1998), although participants may be recruited from one site, they do not have to be. However, the more "diverse the characteristics of the individuals, the more difficult it will be for the researcher to find common experiences, themes, and the overall essence of the experience for all participants" (p. 122). Therefore, I recruited participants from two different school districts in Louisiana. Two different school districts were chosen to increase variation in the sample, allowing for "the possibility of a greater range of application by readers or consumers of the research" (Merriam,

2009, p. 227). Once the districts were identified, teachers were contacted via email in order to recruit participants.

Furthermore, purposeful sampling was utilized to select participants for this study. Purposeful sampling involves “information-rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Teachers have taught under their school leaders for a minimum of five years. The snowball method was also utilized to recruit additional teachers. This method involved locating a few key participants who meet the criteria the researcher established for participation in the study, and is referred to as the most common form of purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, purposeful sampling was selected to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of school leaders’ emotional intelligence in this study. Although existing research has focused on leader emotional intelligence within the K-12 context (Allred et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2005; Moore, 2009; Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015), elementary teachers’ perceptions have not been well-studied. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted concerning emotional intelligence and elementary principals (Cook, 2006). The emotional intelligence of elementary school principals is pertinent and can influence how principals are hired and trained (Cook, 2006). Therefore, emphasizing elementary teachers’ perceptions helped address the gap in literature.

Description of Participants

This study consisted of a total of ten participants. Participants in this study met the following criteria: elementary teachers (1st-5th), and have at least seven years of experience. The participants each work in different schools, throughout two school districts in Louisiana. The

participants were 90% female, ranged from 7 to 34 years of experience, and were 90% white and 10 % Hispanic.

Addie

Addie has been teaching for 14 years, and has a Bachelor's in Elementary Education. She is also certified in 1st through 8th grade, and has a Masters in Reading and Literacy. She has mainly taught ELA and Social Studies throughout her career, however for the last three years she has taught Math and Science in 5th grade.

Emily

Emily has been teaching for 23 years, and has been teaching 4th grade Math and Science for the past 13 years. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and is certified in 1st-5th grade. She also has a Special Education add-on Certification.

Lisa

Lisa has been teaching 2nd grade for 9 and a half years. She has a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction, with a Minor in Literacy and Language. She also has her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction.

Madeline

Madeline has been teaching for 9 years, and has been in her current position as a 5th grade teacher for 7 years. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and is also certified in 1st-5th grade. She has taught ELA and Social Studies throughout her entire career.

Jenny

Jenny is in her 7th year of teaching, and has been an Elementary (1st-5th) librarian for the past 2 years. She is Board Certified 6th-8th, Reading Specialist K-12, Library Science

certification, and a Leadership License. She also has a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and has a Bachelors in Secondary Education with an emphasis in ELA and Social Studies.

Michelle

Michelle has 27 years of teaching experience, and has been in her current position for 3 years. She is currently a 5th grade Math and Science teacher. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and is also Elementary and Middle School certified (1st-8th).

Laura

Laura has been a 3rd grade teacher for the past year. She has 13 years of total teaching experience. She is Elementary and Middle School certified (1st-8th). Her Bachelor's Degree is in Social Sciences, and she has two Master's Degrees in Education and Religious Education. She also has her National Board Certification.

Chloe

Chloe has been a teacher for 34 years, and has been in her current position for 4 years. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and is certified (1st-5th). Currently she teaches 4th grade.

Diane

Diane has been teaching 1st grade for the past 11 years. She has 30 and a half years of total teaching experience. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education (1st-5th). She is also National Board Certified, and Elementary and Special Education Certified.

Don

Don has 30 years total teaching experience and has taught 3rd grade throughout his career.

He is Elementary and Middle School Certified (1st-8th). He also has a Master's Degree in Education.

Description of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Educational Background	Current Teaching Position	Year in Current Position	Years of Experience in Education	Race and Ethnicity
Addie	Female	40-49	Masters	5 th Math and Science	3	14	White
Emily	Female	50-59	Bachelors	4 th Math and Science	13	23	White
Lisa	Female	30-39	PhD	2 nd Self-contained	9.5	9.5	White
Madeline	Female	20-29	Bachelors	5 th ELA and Social Studies	7	9	White
Jenny	Female	30-39	Masters	Elementary (1 st -5 th) Librarian	2	7	White
Michelle	Female	40-49	Bachelors	5 th Math and Science	3	27	White
Laura	Female	50-59	Masters	3 rd Self-Contained	1	13	White
Chloe	Female	60-69	Bachelors	4 th Self-Contained	4	34	Hispanic
Diane	Female	50-59	Bachelors	1 st Self-Contained	11	30.5	White
Don	Male	50-59	Masters	3 rd Self-Contained	30	30	White

Data Collection

Consistent with phenomenological designs, “semi-structured individual interviews will be the primary method of data collection” (Merriam, 2009, p.25). The phenomenological interview involves an “informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114). I conducted one semi-structured individual interview with nine of the participants, and two interviews with one participant. A follow-up interview was needed with one participant in order to clarify responses from the initial interview. Each interview occurred for approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview protocol will consist of open-ended questions for the purpose for conducting an in-depth interview. This layout “allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). The questions were constructed to allow the participants to provide responses that involve personal detail to be examined.

Furthermore, transformational leadership theory influenced the interview protocol. Specific questions were aligned with the transformational leadership components that are connected with emotional intelligence, including: idealized influence (charismatic influence), individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Kumar, 2014). These components are connected with emotional intelligence aspects, such as self-awareness, empathy, and motivation (Kumar, 2014). Therefore, the general focus of each interview was centered around aspects involving transformational leadership components and emotional intelligence constructs. Demographic information, such as gender, age, educational background (degrees and certification), current position, years of experience in education, type of organization and educational level, were also obtained during the initial interviews with each participant by way of a questionnaire. The interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. Data was stored in a

secure location with access limited to the researcher. In order to ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were utilized to mask the names of the participants, places, and research sites (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Institutional review board approval and informed consent was also obtained.

Document analysis was also employed as a data collection method in order to obtain “convergence and corroboration” through the use of multiple data collection methods (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). One common use of document analysis is to provide supplementary research data (Bowen, 2009). To illustrate, Hansen (1995) analyzed journal entries written by participants as a supplement to interview data. This helped to identify key themes that helped in sorting and analyzing the data. Through document analysis, the researcher can learn about the inner meaning of everyday events that occur in the participants’ lives (Merriam, 2009). For this study, I analyzed handwritten journal entries from the participants. Over the course of four weeks, one journal prompt was emailed to each participant each week. The same journal prompt was sent each time. Participants were asked if they observed any instances of their school leaders’ emotional capacities. The journals were completed and collected via email after the interviews were conducted. Sixteen journals were completed out of the forty that were sent for a response rate of 40%. Obtaining journal entries from each participant, allowed for a first-person narrative, and involved the participants’ perspectives regarding what is important (Merriam, 2009). That data was prepared at my request, in order to provide a detailed account of the participant’s daily experiences and insights, focusing on the interaction that exists between the participants and school leaders. According to George (2000), emotional intelligence is an essential component of leadership effectiveness, however further exploration into the interactions between leaders and followers is needed. Therefore, document analysis aided in further understanding teacher’s

perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence. These documents were also used to aid in triangulating the data (Shenton, 2004).

Data Analysis

Guided by Glaser & Strauss (1967), data was analyzed using a constant comparative method. This involved examining pieces of data that are both assigned the same code to look for how additional instances of that code refine, expand, or sharpen the characteristics of that category. Phenomenological research uses the analysis of significant statements, the generation of units of meaning, and the development of essence description (Creswell, 2014).

In order to depict the essence of the participants' experiences, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were coded. Significant data chunks were determined through careful reading and reflecting on the core meaning of the participants' responses in both the interviews and journals.

Through open coding, words or short phrases were written in the margin of the transcript where the data chunk was obtained. Open coding, or initial coding, involves breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, examining it closely, and comparing and contrasting the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This provides an opportunity for the researcher to "reflect deeply on the data, and to take ownership of it" (Saldana, 2016, p. 83). The codes used in interview transcripts, were also used when analyzing the content of the documents (Bowen, 2009). According to Bowen (2009), "predefined codes may be used, especially if the document analysis is supplementary to other research methods employed in the study" (p. 32). Additionally, axial coding was utilized to group open codes into categories, in order to find "bigger picture" ideas through related concepts (Saldana, 2016, p. 206). This was conducted via a Microsoft Word document. Selective coding specifies the possible relationships between categories, moving

toward a theoretical direction (Saldana, 2016). Therefore, selective coding was then used to identify relationships between the codes and categories of the initial coding steps. The categories were written on bulletin board paper and categories were then grouped together based on similarities over the course of several days. Based on these similarities, themes were then able to be determined. The coding of the journals followed the same process. Analysis occurred throughout the coding process of both the interviews and journals. The final step in data analysis involved interpreting the findings; involving the researcher's personal interpretation, while also acquiring meaning from comparing literature or theories to the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Verification Procedures

The review of relevant literature was utilized to provide a rationale for this study, and was also used as a verification method. Critical elements of trustworthiness also need to be acknowledged to ensure a trustworthy study is produced including: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Peer reviews were also be employed by someone who is “familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). A peer reviewer was beneficial, because she provided support, played devil's advocate, asked questions regarding methods and interpretations of data, and questioned the researcher's beliefs (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This included discussions with colleagues regarding methods, analysis, and findings. In this study, I ensured that each criterion was addressed as explained below.

Credibility was addressed through member checks, and the utilization of reflective journals after each interview, and continued throughout the entire research process. Member checks are described as the “most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). Researchers communicate with participants throughout the research process

to confirm that themes make sense, and that the narrative is accurate (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Member checks were conducted after the themes are determined to check for accuracy. This was conducted by discussing emerging themes with the participants to provide them with an opportunity to comment on the findings. Although the researcher's interpretation of the data collected is paramount, it is derived from the participants' experiences (Merriam, 2009). Audit trails also contribute to credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2013). Audit trails describes how data is collected, how themes and categories are created, and how decisions were made throughout the research process (Merriam, 2009). Audit trails are created through journaling, involving the steps in data collection and analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). An audit trail was produced through keeping a personal journal, recording methodological decisions made throughout the data collection and analysis process. Raw data was also stored electronically including audio tapes, and written field notes.

Triangulation was also addressed to ensure credibility through the use of multiple sources of data (Denzin, 1978). For instance, interview data collected from individuals with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews will demonstrate triangulation (Merriam, 2009). In this study, ten teachers were interviewed and one follow-up interview was employed with one participant to clarify responses given during the initial interview. Triangulation was also addressed to ensure credibility through the use of multiple methods of data collection, including both individual interviews and document analysis.

In regards to transferability, detail of the context of the fieldwork was provided in order for a reader to decide whether the findings can be applied to another setting (Shenton, 2004). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher needs to provide "sufficient descriptive data" to address transferability (p. 298). To ensure the results of a qualitative study can transfer

to another setting is through thick description (Merriam, 2009). Thick description involves detailed descriptions of the events being described in a study, allowing the readers to feel as though they have experienced, or could experience these events (Creswell & Miller, 2000). When researchers provide vivid details, the readers better understand the credibility of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study, I provided a thick description of the elementary teachers who are participants in this study, enabling the “readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts”, contributing to the credibility of my study (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) initiated the concept of dependability in qualitative research, referring to the consistency between the results and data collection. Dependability was addressed through the use of “overlapping methods”, including individual and follow-up interviews, and document analysis (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). Dependability also tied back to the credibility of the study. Therefore, thorough documentation of the research design and implementation, detail of data collection, and on-going reflection regarding the effectiveness of the study was provided.

Confirmability in qualitative research is comparable to objectivity, ensuring that the findings are the experiences and results of the participants, rather than the preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). In order to address this, bracketing was utilized to address my own biases. The purpose of bracketing involves setting “aside our views on a topic we are studying so that our beliefs will not have undue influence on what we ask and learn” (Lichtman, 2013, p. 142). Journaling is a helpful way to accomplish this (Lichtman, 2013). My own experiences as an elementary teacher, and assumptions and beliefs regarding leader emotional intelligence and the related impacts on schools was acknowledged, and continually addressed through on-going

reflection by way of journals. The journals were kept throughout the entirety of the study. This also addressed confirmability.

Management of Researcher's Role

Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the “human as instrument” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 210). The researcher’s role entails “critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation” (Merriam, 2009, p. 229). Clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study is essential to qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Working as an elementary teacher, one main bias that I bring to the study are my own experiences with leader emotional intelligence and the impacts on the schools that I have taught in. However, reflexivity was addressed through journaling. I detailed my role in the study, and experiences as an elementary teacher and informal theories about how leader emotional intelligence is perceived by teachers and impacts the school, and address how this may influence the themes and meanings associated with the data. The journals were used throughout the study’s entirety, reflecting on methods used, the research processes and practices, and the interpretation of the findings. The journals were also be employed to keep an audit trail, “which allows any observer to trace the course of the research step-by-step via the decisions made and procedures described” (Shenton, 2004, p.72). The journals were kept throughout the entire research process.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses in a study and are out of the researcher’s control (Simon, 2011). This study intended to better understand elementary teachers’ perceptions of their school leaders’ emotional intelligence, and participants were recruited from two school districts. The number of different schools was dependent upon participants who voluntarily agreed to

participate in this study, and was a limitation affecting variation in the study. While each participant was from a different school, this is a small sample size considering the number of schools in Louisiana. Therefore, additional research is needed to obtain teachers' experiences in multiple districts across multiple grade levels and subject areas. An additional limitation is the lack of diversity in the participants. The majority of the sample were white women 80%. Therefore, findings may not be applicable to teachers of other identity groups. Certainly, further research is needed involving more diversity among participants.

Chapter Four

Results

While existing literature has emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in the school leadership context, limited studies address the followers' perceptions of leaders' emotional intelligence (Smollan & Parry, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005). Findings regarding followers' perceptions of leaders' emotional intelligence have highlighted both positive and negative impacts on the follower (Smollan & Parry, 2011). These impacts involve the followers' response to change and their ability to manage challenges that come with change. Depending on the perceived emotional intelligence of their leader, a follower may either engage or resist change on both behavioral and cognitive levels (Smollan & Parry, 2011). Another impact of leaders' perceived emotional intelligence involves their effectiveness. Leaders' perceived as having high emotional intelligence are often viewed as being more effective, specifically in the way they provide emotional support (Smollan & Parry, 2011). The perceived authenticity of their support could have both a positive or negative impact on the follower. Additionally, while existing research has focused on leader emotional intelligence within the K-12 context (Allred et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2005; Moore, 2009; Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015), few studies affirm the impact on elementary teachers' experiences. Research consensus is that leadership preparation programs are not giving priority to emotional and social knowledge, competencies, and dispositions (Johnson et al., 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace, 2010). Therefore, this study sought to further our understanding of elementary teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence. This study was conducted between May 2018 and September 2018 using qualitative methods to

conduct a study of ten public school elementary (1st-5th) teachers from ten different schools, within two school districts.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore elementary teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence in order to identify significant aspects of emotional intelligence in order to focus training on these components. This research was guided by a single research question: *What are teacher's perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence?*

This chapter provides brief descriptions of the participants, and data collected and analyzed from both individual interviews and journals.

Four Major Themes

The data collected and analyzed is intended to examine teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence. In the analysis, four interrelated themes emerged from the data: 1) school leader social skills, 2) leadership styles, 3) authentic leader-teacher relationships, and 4) perceived benefits of school leader emotional skills. Select quotes from the data are presented to highlight each of these themes.

School Leader Social Skills

School leader social skills was a notable theme among the participants. Three sub-themes also emerged: the role of leader support, teacher and leader communication, and coping mechanisms. Social skills in the leadership context involve several competencies, such as influence, conflict management, communication, collaboration, and cooperation, and are synonymous with emotional intelligence (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Social skills also aid in building rapport with others (Goleman, 2004). Overall, participants who have a positive rapport with their leaders, were often more frequently

supported, especially during challenging times. Supportive leaders were often more communicative, and positively assisted the participants where challenges occurred. However, some participants indicated their school leaders' lack of social skills, often not only contributing to the challenges they endured, but also did not provide the support needed to successfully overcome them.

Participants addressed a myriad of professional challenges both current and prior; emphasizing the role of leader support. Supportive leaders helped teachers view challenges more positively and ultimately helped teachers overcome them. Whereas unsupportive leaders contributed to the challenges that teachers endured. Therefore, the role of leaders' support encompassed how teachers perceived challenges and the extent to which challenges were faced positively.

Principals' emotional intelligence could be crucial to overcoming challenges successfully, while positively influencing and developing committed and motivated staff (Gray, 2009; Litchka, 2007; Moore, 2009; Singh & Manser, 2009). Participants described several challenges; including, feeling underappreciated and unsupported, challenging students, and lack of leader support. While more than one participant had their own coping mechanisms to overcome these challenges, the other participants had support from their leaders and other teachers. School leaders made significant impacts on the occurrence and intensity of challenges that existed. Additionally, some teachers experienced school leaders who not only minimized challenges, but also positively impacted the way in which challenges were addressed, and ultimately reduced. Communication among teachers and their school leaders played a vital role.

Role of Leader Support

More than one participant discussed how the lack of leader support negatively influenced their experiences as teachers. Specifically, feeling underappreciated for the time and effort they put into teaching, and not feeling valued as a teacher overall. Addie stated, “Administration just did not appreciate all the time and work that I was putting into my lessons and my teaching”. Regarding leaders support to help overcome challenges, Addie further noted that she “doesn’t feel like my administration, principal or vice principal helped in that matter. I feel like my administration has been out of touch for so long and even brought on some of this stress”. Being “out of touch” contributed to her leaders’ lack of knowledge and appreciation of her effort. This also showed that her expectations that a leader should help minimize anxiety was not demonstrated by her current administration, and also brought on stress and feelings of loneliness. Administration’s involvement in teachers’ professional lives could aid in deeper understanding of the everyday challenges that occur in this profession. Through this understanding, they could provide the backing that teachers need to overcome hardships, as well as, appreciation for their achievements. Similarly, Jenny stated, “I don’t think there is a lot of support” regarding her administration at her current school. This lack of support has additional consequences, Jenny continued, “There is a large amount of turnover, and we know that reflects on the principal, and I think that gives her anxiety. She is very smart, but she is not very emotionally smart.” Jenny makes this implicit connection here between teacher retention and leader EI, which may be one of the more important indicators of strong leader EI. Jenny further explained that she would ask teachers for their opinions regarding leadership decisions, but then she would say “no I don’t like that”, contributing to teachers feeling like they are only accepted if they are “yes people”. She believed that perhaps due to frequent turnover, her principal felt partially responsible, thus leading to anxiety. Therefore, this need for validation and her anxiety as a leader led the

participant's conclusion that she may lack emotional skills, demonstrated through not knowing how to deal with conflict positively. According to Singh & Mandela (2013), teacher commitment and job satisfaction are positively correlated. This satisfaction in part is due to leaders' emotional intelligence (Singh & Mandela, 2013). Therefore, the lack of support not only brings on stress to the teachers, but also the leaders themselves.

Lack of leader support also contributed to feeling of insecurity among participants. This insecurity can take many forms; including, feeling disregarded and unsafe as a professional, and unappreciated. Laura further noted that "You don't feel safe. I feel like she can easily turn something around on me. She just doesn't care. She doesn't back you up." This sense of insecurity stemmed from her principal being unsupportive when she faced challenges. She also stated, "She talks down to me and she's the most combative principal I have ever known." This combative nature contributed to her feeling like she is not respected. Similarly, when discussing her principal, Emily stated that "I just don't feel like she's got my back." She noted that having support from her leader would "make her feel more like a professional. And I would appreciate that a lot." It was clear that Emily wanted to feel valued as a professional and more confident in her teaching role through having support from her administration. Lack of leader respect and support negatively impacted each of them professionally.

Conversely, Lisa, Michelle, and Diane shared different experiences regarding school leaders' support. Regarding challenges she faced as a new teacher, Lisa stated, "I feel like I had a lot more support than the typical new teacher or young teacher to the profession". She continues by stating, that her school leader is "very caring and she won't overlook the social and emotional issues". She also stated that her school leader is "not in her own principal bubble". This demonstrates the connection between leader's emotional awareness and support. Emotional

awareness involves awareness of the emotions of other's and one's self and effectively managing these emotions (Yahazadeh-Jeloudar & Lofti-Goodarzi, 2012). According to Ealias & George (2012) and Yahazadeh-Jeloudar & Lofti-Goodarzi (2012), a leader's emotional awareness can contribute to eliminating workplace stress. Lisa's principal helped ease stress as a new teacher, because of her efforts to provide emotional support and understanding of the challenges new teachers endure. Leader awareness could be demonstrated by having an active presence in their teachers' lives. Similarly, Michelle noted that her school leader is "very supportive, has the teachers' backs. If she needs to calm you down, it's very, very gently, privately". This shows how both leader support and awareness of teachers' emotions may contribute to leaders being more considerate of teachers' needs. This consideration is demonstrated through her leader's kind and thoughtful approach. Similarly, Michelle noted, "I think my current school leader is definitely a team player, you can go to her. I feel like she wants the kids to succeed, she's got that soft heart too." If a leader is more willing to provide emotional support to teachers, then teachers may be more willing to approach them for advice and guidance. A leader's considerate nature toward teachers, may also reflect onto students as well. Michelle discussed similar experiences with leader support, but also noted "One of the things that I preach to the kids is we are a team. We support each other. This is the atmosphere I try to build." Her classroom atmosphere is described in a similar way as the school's atmosphere as a whole. Her leader's ability and emphasis on working as a team and providing emotional support reflects positively on her, but also her students. Likewise, Diane noted that her principal is very supportive with both instructional and personal challenges. She stated, "She is there to give support, and she will help you figure out your solution." When facing challenges, she did not feel like she had to face them alone. Additionally, she noted, "They are there as a supporting role, as well as, making sure we

keep high standards.” While there are similarities regarding leader support contributing to productive problem solving among participants, Diane added her leader’s emphasis on high standards. While a leader may provide support to teachers, the teachers need to be accountable for maintaining high productivity, therefore support is earned through their hard work and commitment. Feelings of safety, security, and ease when approaching school leaders with their concerns, demonstrates how they know that leader support exists.

Moreover, emotionally intelligent leaders integrate social effectiveness skills; thus, providing support to others and gaining their trust (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). Some participants’ leaders have “open door policies” in order to encourage open communication, while also providing emotional support and demonstrating genuine care and concern. This supportive behavior is modeled by their school leaders, and influences their own support for students. Diane attempts to explain the impact support has on teachers’ experiences:

You know they are there to support. You know there is that feeling in the school, and there are some schools I’ve been in where I don’t feel that, and it really makes a big difference to know that their doors are open, and I feel like I could go to one of them with an issue. Our principal always says that it is going to be okay, no matter what. It’s going to be okay, and it is.

Diane’s explanation of her leader’s support helped to demonstrate how this instills a sense of peace and confidence in her principal’s ability to overcome challenges. She also added how leader’s support to teachers, also influences teacher’s support to their students. This also reflects onto her own teaching practice. For example, when describing what she loves about the teaching profession she stated, “The conversations, the rapport you can build with the students, and getting to know them. And I make sure I get to know them. It is so important. You hook them

and they feel loved and like you're on their side". It may be important that this teacher's caring, interpersonal approach with her students is happening in a school where school leaders are taking a positive, relational approach to working with their teachers. It was apparent in Lisa, Michelle and Diane's experiences, that although challenges exist, leader support not only provides a sense of security in them, but also impacts their students. Their experiences were not always positive, however the leader's support instilled in them the confidence to not only overcome challenges, but also model similar positive behaviors to their students, such as creating a sense of class community, protection, and respect. While the current study cannot conclude causation, it is worth noting the parallels between principal concern for teachers and teacher concern for students.

Teacher and Leader Communication

Leadership is understood through the interactions and connections between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2016). Considering the challenges that exist within the teaching profession, the role communication plays between teachers and school leaders may contribute positively or negatively to their experiences. One aspect of emotional intelligence involves the communication that exist among individuals and contributes to effective problem solving (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Several participants discussed ways in which their leaders communicated effectively. Michelle spoke about how her principal communicates clearly and positively with teachers. She said, "She definitely praises verbally. She definitely gives feedback. And if she thinks something is not quite right, she'll give you a recommendation, good suggestion, good constructive criticism." This open communication with her principal, may contribute to both reducing and solving challenges, and viewing criticism more positively. Interestingly, both supportive comments as well as constructive criticism were described as

appreciated. Thus, increases in communication, regardless of the topic, may be seen as an important window for teachers to view their leader's EI. Madeline noted similar positive experiences with effective communication with her principal; however, added how it impacts the students as well. She noted in a journal prompt that her "leaders interacted positively with the students, and has positive effects on the students" (journal response, May 11, 2018). Therefore, when communication is positive and frequent among teachers and school leaders, problems may be minimized. Lisa had similar experiences with her principal. She noted, "She is really good in conversation...she will listen, she will give her input, and she is really honest." She also noted, "She's not a sink or swim kind of person. She will help you and support you and I appreciate that about her, because I do feel like I can go to her with a concern." Having open communication with her principal, also made her feel valued as a professional, and felt that she was not alone. The honesty that she encountered from her principal was an additional attribute she valued as well.

On the other hand, Emily, Addie, and Jenny all agreed that communication with their principals was lacking, and in some instances nonexistent. For instance, when discussing communication with teachers, Emily noted, "She is very inconsistent. I don't know her rhyme or reason. And it is just so sporadic." She illustrated how the communication that exists lacks consistency, specifically referring to how she reacts to teachers who do not meet her expectations. She further discussed that her principal will not explain her reasoning for criticizing them, noting she is "on them like gravy on rice". There may be communication with some teachers, however not all; thus, contributing to teachers not understanding why some teachers are treated differently than others. Jenny also indicated that while communication is present, it is not positive, noting that the principal "does not give positive feedback to the

teachers, and the campus is so negative.” The negative result of the lack of positive communication, resulted in a low campus morale. While Addie stated that her current principal has limited interaction with her, she also noted her principal’s sparse presence in the classroom, stating, “he’s never in the classroom to help, no conversations ever happen.” She also stated, “We don’t talk about emotional things. It isn’t how are you feeling or what can I do to help? Nothing.” She missed having a principal who she could talk to, and seek help from especially when emotional times arise. Chloe added that she seldom communicates with her principal as well, and noted:

The most important think that I think any leader whether it is school or another business is to listen to your staff. You can’t please everyone, but keep them happy as much as you can, because when you are a happy teacher, you will do anything for them.”

She expressed the value of communication between teachers and leaders, however also added that inconsistencies in communication during challenges times can lead to feelings of resentment and loneliness. Through these negative feelings however, a deeper understanding resulted from knowing what is important in a school leader. Listening and having open lines of communication not only helps minimize problems, but also makes teachers feel valued and appreciated. Laura explained in her response to the journal prompt a week after the interview, how a miscommunication between her and her principal was a result of “each of us not effectively communicating” (journal response, May 1, 2018). This however provided an opportunity to discuss her concerns with her principal in the future and find commonalities, noting, “by the end of the conversation I totally understood where she was coming from...I’m kind of glad it happened this way and it gives me different insight into our working relationship.” Because of this miscommunication, and the attendant relationship repair that was done, she now has a better

understanding and appreciation of her principal. She was also taking personal responsibility for her role in the lack of communication that existed with her principal.

While some principals were more supportive than others, it is beneficial to note the commonalities among participants' responses, in particular the connections between supportive principals and teacher's feeling secure and respected, as well as, principals' social and emotional awareness of teachers. The teachers with more positive experiences have leaders who are more conscious of the teachers' emotions and feelings and communicate effectively. Organizational awareness is an emotional intelligence competency within the empathy cluster according to Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee (1999). This contributes to developing teachers to demonstrate the same awareness and empathy towards their students. It seems to be a leadership characteristic that they appreciated, and what the others longed for.

Coping Mechanisms

While participants had both similar and contrasting views of both prior and current teaching challenges, all emphasized the role of the school leader. The participants indicated coping strategies which led to professional growth as educators; including, self-reflection and self-motivation. While one participant indicated how her leader helped contribute to her abilities to self-reflect, most participants indicated how leader self-reflection was lacking. One participant noted how lack of leader support, encouraged her own self-motivation to persist when enduring challenges.

Self-Reflection

Reflective practice was a common theme among many of the participants when sharing how they cope with challenges in the teaching profession. In particular, Addie and Jenny both

eluded to the importance of self-reflection. When discussing how managing student behavior is a common challenge, Addie noted:

The majority of the time I have to take a step back when they are being disrespectful or they are giving me issues, and reflect as to why this child is acting like this. What is the background of what is going on? And it might not help me in that very moment, but tomorrow when I see this kid, it will be a fresh start.

This shows that she acknowledged her own reactions to student's misbehavior, and self-reflecting on how to reach this child in the appropriate way. She further noted how these challenges made her consider leaving the profession. However, she discussed a moment of self-realization stating that she knew "what was really going on...I kind of knew what I had to do". Jenny also emphasized the need for reflective practice when dealing with challenges stating, "Our principal is national board certified and a huge component is being more reflective in your practice, and she did confess that she did all of the reflection piece of the national board certification process in one week and I think that would really take away that reflective component." She stated how this was a disservice to not only herself, but to other teachers. She further noted:

But I learned so much about myself when I went through this as well, and I even go back and read my binder sometimes. Being reflective is really powerful, and I think that is a huge thing that is lacking for teachers is being reflective in their practice.

They both addressed not only the importance of self-reflection for themselves, but also for the school leaders. Self-reflection is a vital component of emotional intelligence, contributing to increased motivation (Batool, 2013). Without self-reflection, coping with challenges that both teachers and leaders face can be a daunting task. However, Lisa noted how not only is self-reflection critical in her own practice, but also how her school leader helped to encourage this.

When discussing the challenges of difficult students, she approached her principal for advice, noting:

We just had a very honest conversation. And it wasn't that great, but it was honest and we talked through things. And it kind of made me more aware of how I was acting, and how my actions were triggering what was going on with that child, and after that it helped me to think about what I was doing.

Through her principal's guidance, she was able to self-reflect, and see what she was doing that contributed to the student's misbehavior, and then learn how to respond more positively. She later noted that "the whole reflective piece is crucial, what you are doing differently, or what you could do differently, so you are more reflective on what you have done and where you are going." Reflective practice is a crucial teaching practice, in this case it can be done with the help of a principal who has strong reflective skills.

Self-Motivation

Self-motivation was another coping mechanism discussed. Chloe indicated how self-motivation is an important coping mechanism to overcome challenges, especially when you don't have leader support, noting, "I do what I need to do for the kids that I teach and I don't worry about anything else". This was her way of sorting through challenges, and motivating herself to do what is best for her students, even in the face of stress. Madeline has a similar approach to dealing with challenging students. She said,

You know I talk with my student one on one, or just explain to them how it's not fair to act that way...and how to not take advantage of people. I try to teach life lessons, out in the hall, one on one together.

She turns a negative situation, into a positive one, using challenges as learning opportunities for her students. Chloe and Madeline prioritize their students' needs, and in turn often supersedes other challenges that occur, however Madeline also views the challenges as opportunities to teach her students valuable life lessons. Madeline was motivating herself to go beyond simply the official curriculum, but also taking the time to ensure her students turn into quality human beings.

While more than one participant valued the importance of self-motivation; Diane also had the advantage of having a forgiving principal as well.

Our principal is very forgiving. You know if you make your mistake or do something, she is going to tell you about it, but she doesn't hold a grudge. So that makes it easy to put things aside and move forward.

She added how her forgiving principal helped motivate her to still persist when faced with challenges. A key competency associated with the emotional intelligence component empathy, is understanding others (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). The act of forgiveness can be viewed as an extension of understanding others.

Overall, particular social skills participants identified in their school leaders involved emotional support and effective communication. Reflective practice was an essential coping mechanism for most participants, whether self-motivated or encouraged from their school leader. Participants who indicated that they did not have a supportive principal, typically relied on the support from the colleagues. Whereas, participants with leaders who were reflective, they tended to promote self-reflection in their teachers, and also assist in helping them with both personal and professional challenges. Whether intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to cope with challenges, most participants grew professionally in their teaching practice, and this reflected onto their

students, and in some cases students' parents as well. Therefore, reflective practice in school leaders may not only influence the same in teachers, but also increase motivation amidst difficult times. Self-motivation was an additional effective coping mechanism when dealing with challenges in the teaching profession. One participant also had forgiving school leaders which helped her overcome challenges as well.

Summary

This section was included to help provide context to the reader, specifically school leaders' social skills or lack thereof. Participants discussed the role of leader support, teacher and leader communication, and coping mechanisms when dealing with challenges that arise in the teaching profession. High levels of leader support and communication can not only contribute to ways of coping with challenges within the profession, but also instill one's own capabilities to self-reflect and motivate during difficult times.

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles was a significant theme among the participants. Two contrasting leadership styles were discussed; including, coercive leadership and transformational leadership (Bass, 1999; Goleman, 2000). More than one participant discussed emotional components tied to transformational leadership; including, empathy, motivation and self-control, an additional characteristic emerged, intuitiveness. The role of confidence was also addressed.

Coercive Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

More than one participant discussed leaders' attributes that are consistent with a coercive leadership style. Coercive leadership involves a "do as I say approach" which is often times ineffective (Goleman, 2000, p. 3). For instance, Addie indicated that her principal is ego driven, noting, "if you want something, you have to make him feel like it is his idea. So, he approaches

leadership in that way. It is his way or the highway.” Being ego driven, may contribute to being self-centered in their leadership approach. Similarly, Jenny stated, “Our principal is petty, my way or the highway...I find she is a blamer and I think that is a big issue.” She also expanded, saying, “this sets a tone for the campus”, demonstrating how this approach influences the school negatively overall. Furthermore, while both Addie and Jenny shared similar descriptions of their principals’ coercive leadership styles, their particular leadership traits influence the teachers negatively, which affects the overall campus morale. The negative morale stems from teachers’ believing that their input does not matter; thus, leading to feeling defeated. Coercive leaders demand compliance from their followers, often leading to employees’ lack of motivation (Goleman, 2004). Emily shared similar experiences with her type of school leader, stating:

She is very strict when it comes to what teachers can and cannot do. And then when it comes to kids and parents there is favoritism...and that I my biggest thing with her. I just don’t feel like she’s got my back.

Being strict comes along with the coercive style of leadership. In Emily’s experience, this certain trait, along with favoritism negatively impacts the negative way she feels about her principal. Although Don indicated that his leader is effective, “the leadership is a little too stringent on rules.” This affected her ways of disciplining staff. He continued to state, “Sometimes you get written up for something that was not a big deal. It’s like taken so huge instead of let’s talk about what you did...what did you say?” Don’s comments suggest he wanted her to take his input into consideration when confronting him about something she did not agree with, instead of just implementing a consequence. Both Laura and Chloe shared similar descriptions of their principals’ approach to leadership. One key characteristic both of their principals shared was indifference. To illustrate, when describing an incident with her principal, Laura stated, “she was

just acting like ‘who cares?’ She just doesn't care. And I hate that...Even when I see her she just blows me off.” She feels like her principal does not take her feelings into account, leading to bitterness towards her principal. Her need for validation from her principal, contributed to feeling angry and resentful. Similarly, Chloe noted that her “suggestions are rarely taken.” She feels like her input is not valued, even noting that it’s “humiliating”. In Laura’s and Chloe’s explanations, they felt like their leader’s coercive style of leadership contributed to their feelings of discontentment. According to Goleman (2004), in most situations, coercive leadership is ineffective and should be used with caution. While it may be ineffective in most situations, there are underlying emotional intelligence competencies, such as self-control, initiative, and drive to achieve (Goleman, 2004). While these competencies may be beneficial as a leader, this style of leadership contributes to an overall negative climate (Goleman, 2004). The participants indicated how this leadership style lead to feelings of discontentment, humiliation, and invalidation, which in turn contributed to low morale throughout the schools.

Transformational Leadership and Emotional Components

More than one participant shared positive examples of their principals’ leadership styles and characteristics. Particular traits they noted all shared common emotional components, including empathy, motivation, and self-control. Some participants described their leaders as being transformational in their approaches. Transformational leaders have been found to motivate, inspire, and empathize with their followers (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Burns, 1978; Kumar, 2014; Modassir & Singh, 2008). Transformational leadership is linked to exceptional leadership performance (Bass, 1990). Transformational leadership is directly aligned with emotional intelligence components, including self-awareness, empathy, and motivation (Kumar, 2014).

Empathy

Empathy and the transformational leadership construct, individualized consideration, are directly aligned (Barling et al., 2000; Palmer et al., 2001). Empathy involves the awareness of other's needs, concerns, and feelings (Goleman, 1998). Similarly, according to Modassir & Singh (2008), individualized consideration involves treating others in a kind and considerate way, while also being conscious of their needs and concerns. While discussing school leaders' approach to leadership, empathy was a commonality among more than one participant. To illustrate, Lisa's discussion of her school leader's approach to leadership is useful:

She is not the type of person to rule with an iron fist. She is really aware of what is happening in her school. She has been very sympathetic and empathetic to the things that we need. And she is just really aware of what is going on. I have actually seen her like come into a class and see a teacher who is really struggling, and she stepped in and helped.

Lisa communicated how her principal's awareness of self and others, impacted how she helped struggling teachers, and also show empathy towards teachers' needs. Similarly, Michelle indicated in her journal response that she observed her principal demonstrate empathy towards a student, noting, "The principal met with a student who seems unkept and unprepared, and talked to her, made her feel safe and loved" (journal response, May 20, 2018). Through her principal's genuine concern for this student's well-being, she demonstrated compassion towards her, wanting this child to know that she is loved and cared for. Also, when discussing her principal's methods of placing students with the appropriate teacher, she stated, "I think she is very calculated in placing the children, and knowing who needs somebody. She is very empathetic to their needs." Her principal's calculated placement of students with the right teachers to meet

their needs academically, socially, and emotionally, not only illustrates her ability to empathize, but to utilize this skill to help others. This level of empathy her principal shows to the students, also reflects onto the teachers as well. She added, “She provides emotional healing when needed.” Demonstrating how her principal’s empathetic nature aids in mending other’s emotional struggles. Similarly, Diane noted how her principal showed empathy towards her, however also stated that you cannot take advantage of this attribute, stating “She absolutely is an empathetic person to work with, within reason.” This demonstrates her perception of her principal’s empathetic nature has limitations, and cannot be abused. Overall, Lisa, Michelle, and Diane stressed how their leaders show them empathy to ensure their and other teachers’ physical and emotional needs are prioritized. Through their principals ensuring their emotional needs are met, both teachers and students not only feel protected, but also genuinely cared for.

Motivation

Motivation was another common emotional aspect discussed by more than one participant. Motivation involves emotional capabilities that contribute to the drive to reach goals (Goleman, 1998). The transformational leadership component, inspirational motivation, is directly aligned with the emotional intelligence construct, motivation (Barling et al., 2000; Palmer et al., 2001). Inspirational motivation involves a leader’s ability to motivate and inspire both the leader and follower through the leader’s engagement, and ability to make connections with others (Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016). Lisa explained how her principal motivated her to improve the way she managed a difficult child in her classroom. Lisa also mentioned how her principal frequently observes teachers without notice. She further explained how she likes to acknowledge her presence within the school. Therefore, during a walk-through one morning, where the principal came in to observe her lesson, she noted:

It was a really positive note about me being the teacher she remembers. I am glad you found your way back. And it was nice to see that somebody noticed that positive changes were being made....although it was uncomfortable at that time, what happened as a result was very beneficial and it changed the way that I handled the class for the course of the year.

Through her principal's motivation, Lisa was able to improve her practice, and felt valued in return. However, she also believed that her principal's presence is advantageous in the way she manages her classroom. Similarly, Diane indicated how her principal is inspiring and motivational through giving her praise and showing enthusiasm for her efforts. She explained how her principal demonstrates verbal praise, which inspires her to do her best work, stating, "When someone achieves a notable accomplishment, she will let you know and then they announce it to the whole school...or it might even go to the PTA letter. It's definitely a motivational technique." Through verbal praise and acknowledgement, Diane feels motivated and supported from her school leader, and she believes this increases her performance. Therefore, when leaders provide encouragement and praise for their efforts, teachers may be more motivated and driven to work at their highest capabilities.

Self-Control

Self-control is another emotional component discussed from both Michelle and Madeline. Self-control is a major component of the emotional intelligence component self-regulation (Batool, 2013). Madeline stated that her principal, "is not very demanding, but everybody still respects her. She is always in control of her emotions". She valued this as a leadership trait, noting, "I definitely know if I need something handled and taken care of, I will go to her." Her leader's ability to remain poised at all times, contributes to her feeling confident in her abilities

as a leader. Similarly, Michelle's journal response indicated that her principal, "refrained from saying what she was thinking" during a stressful meeting. Instead of taking out her anger on this teacher, "she scheduled a private meeting with her," demonstrating her capabilities to regulate her own emotions (journal response, May 20, 2018). Although her principal may have been upset during this confrontation, she was able to stay in control, and consider ways to handle the situation in private. In contrast to previous discussions, Emily did recognize one instance when her principal did demonstrate self-control. In her journal response she wrote, "She also showed a lot of self-control when parents were calling out names at graduation. She definitely handled it better than I would have" (journal response, May 21, 2018). She praised her ability to handle a difficult situation with such ease. Leaders who demonstrate self-control was an effective leadership attribute noted by the participants. Through their self-control, the participants felt more confident in approaching them when needing assistance when dealing with problems. This confidence in their leaders' abilities to manage their own emotions, suggests that teachers trust leaders who seem like they are in control. This trust could stem from their actions that prove that they will not overact, even in controversial situations.

Intuition

Another significant leadership characteristic that emerged from the data was intuition. Intuition is aligned with the emotional intelligence component, self-awareness (Goleman, 1998). Through self-awareness, their school leaders were able to notice one's strengths and act on them. To illustrate, Michelle first noted that her principal is "definitely in tune to others...I think she has a good read on people. I think with the people she's hiring, she looks for people's strengths, so I think that she is very intuitive." Her principal's ability to identify other's strengths, and therefore use these strengths to for the betterment of the school. Similarly, Diane stated, "She

knows if I am having an off day, and will say you need to go take care of yourself. And I just felt so good about that.” Both leaders are not only aware of their staff’s needs, but employ this ability effectively through identifying and utilizing teachers’ strengths. In turn, both Diane and Michelle are satisfied with their current teaching roles, and view their leaders as effective. This level of effectiveness could be tied to their leaders’ intuitive nature when noticing and acting on teachers’ strengths.

Role of Confidence

All participants discussed their school leaders’ confidence, whether positive, negative, or in one case, non-existent. Madeline noted her school leader’s confidence in a positive light, stating, “I think she is very confident. She acts like she has it together and knows what is going on.” Their leaders’ confidence is demonstrated through their knowledge, and how they extend their wisdom to others. With both of their experiences, they viewed their principals’ confidence as a strength, also acknowledging their awareness as school leaders. Awareness of self and others could possibly aid in leaders being more confident in themselves and their actions towards others. Additionally, Lisa and Michelle viewed their principals’ confidence as a strength. Lisa said:

She is a very confident person. She is very confident in the way she speaks to people. She is very confident when she speaks to the students. She said to the entire school, we are positive, you can do this, believe in yourself, so there is just this sense of positivity that she puts out for everybody, and it helps everyone get through anything.

This demonstrates how Lisa’s principal exudes confidence, and affects the entire school community positively, by promoting positivity for teachers and students. This positivity could also be connected to their ability to intrinsically motivate their staff to do their best. This sense of

positivity from self-confidence was also experienced by Michelle. She added, “I would say she is confident. She is respected among other principals...they will get together and share and bring things back.” Michelle indicated that her principal meets with other principals in the district, and shares what was discussed with her staff. She appreciates the transparency exhibited by her principal, which in turn initiates from her teachers, staff, and students. Michelle’s principal’s confidence also comes with a level of respect and she utilizes this strength through sharing her own experiences.

Moreover, Laura also stated that that her principal is confident as well, noting, “Strong, strong. She really has an adorable personality. She seems like she knows what she is talking about. I can honestly say that I was just spoiled with my other principals. They were stronger.” She finds her confidence appealing as a leader. Although she views her as a confident person, she compared her current principal to previous principals who she believed were more effective. In contrast, Chloe felt like her principal lacked confidence. She said, “I don’t feel like he has enough self-confidence to make a decision and stick with it. It’s like he second guesses himself.” She explained how indecisive he is with decision making, stating, “he makes a decision and then the next day we are going to do this instead, and this has been constant throughout the year.” This lack of confidence correlates with his indecisiveness, influencing the school community negatively overall. This is demonstrated through teachers being confused as to what to do instructionally, contributing to feeling doubtful at teachers, possibly due to their leader’s self-doubt.

Conversely, Addie commented, “Oh I think he is very confident. Not always agree with it. I think he is very confident with himself. Whether he really believes that, just because he portrays that.” She pointed out how even though he portrays himself as confident, she doesn’t

necessarily believe that he is, nor does she think that it is a positive characteristic. Leader confidence could therefore be tied to the power that they have over the staff, rather than true self-confidence. Overall, confidence was viewed as a positive characteristic if it is authentic.

Summary

Leadership styles can impact an entire school community either negatively or positively. The participants shared diverse perspectives when discussing their school leaders' styles of leadership. Some participants highlighted characteristics in their leaders that were viewed as detrimental; leaning toward a coercive leadership style. The participants with positive experiences, had leaders who were more transformational in their leadership approach, and exhibited emotional aspects; including, empathy, motivation, and self-control. Intuition was an additional emotional skill that emerged from the data. Self-confidence was a common trait discussed among all participants, but viewed in varying ways. Although a leader may exude confidence, doesn't mean that it is a positive attribute. On the other hand, true self-confidence in leadership can have many positive outcomes, such as mutual respect, and alacrity. True self-confidence alludes to being self-aware (Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999). Self-aware leaders often instill a level of pride and respect in their followers (Bass, 1990), as demonstrated through Michelle's experiences.

Authentic Leader-Teacher Relationships

School leader-teacher relationships are typically synonymous with effective communication skills, the ability to empathize, and display optimism (Singh & Manser, 2009). Authentic relationships are developed by "followers who follow leaders for authentic reasons and have an authentic relationship with the leader" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 321) it also involves a process between leaders and followers gaining each other's trust through being more

self-aware, while creating genuine and transparent relationships with each other (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Some participants communicated that authentic relationships with their leaders existed, others indicated that leader-teacher relationships were sparse. The beneficial outcomes of leader-teacher relationships were addressed also. Trust also played a key role in all of the participants' experiences involving relationships with their leaders.

Authentic relationships in the leadership context involves a process where leaders promote follower well-being and trust (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Both Lisa and Michelle expressed the quality of leader-teacher relationships within their schools. Lisa referred to her school as a "well-oiled machine". Meaning that the relationships are positive and bonds between leaders and teachers are strong, and is demonstrated through the flawless way that the school functions as a whole. She noted that it functions perfectly and is "a testament to the relationships we have built." She contributes the optimal functioning of the school to the authentic relationships that were formed. While she was explaining that not all teachers have a direct relationship with her, they are supported by other teachers, and said that "it is a fine balance that those relationships are being fostered." Therefore, while some may not have a personal or professional relationship with her, they do have bonds with other teachers. This contributes to the way in which her principal form relationships with teachers. One way in which her principal attempts to foster relationships is through support. One example she mentioned, involved encouraging teachers to continue their education, stating, "she encourages higher education and making sure that our teachers have what they need to be successful." Through this emphasis on teachers' well-being and "building leaders", in turn she creates genuine relationships with teachers, gaining their trust and respect.

Similarly, Michelle noted that relationships formed naturally with her principal due to shared values and passions. For instance, Michelle noted that she has a good relationship with her principal, stating, “we just kind of have the same values...I think we naturally bonded...at the end of the day you have to be open-minded and passionate about what you do.” She further stated that the teachers who do not have a relationship with her principal have a “personal choice” not to have one. While both Lisa and Michelle emphasized the impact their personal relationships have on them, and how they respect their leaders for creating an environment that fosters genuine relationships, Michelle also noted the presence of mutual interests with her principal.

Creating these relationships is not always a passive activity though, and participants talked about the strategies used by principals to build authentic relationships with their staffs. Don noted that his principal tries to foster relationships with teachers through “mostly talking with them.” He also noted that she recently started to become “more personal” and he believes this has had a positive effect. His principal seems to prioritize relationships, however forming these bonds may not come as naturally for her as it does for Michelle and Lisa’s principals. Likewise, Laura noted that her principal does not necessarily foster relationships, however she said during the interview that “we had a get together after testing was over...it was a nice step in the right direction, trying to build relationships you know.” This shows her principal’s attempt to get to know teachers on a more personal level, and is something that Laura appreciated. Madeline added how one way that her principal fosters relationships with teachers is through “sharing her personal life too.” Through her principal’s transparency, teachers get to know her on a personal level, and are therefore more willing to share their personal lives as well. She noted that she promotes “school team-building” in order to form close bonds. Her principal is

attempting to find common interests and form bonds with teachers; showing that she values relationships as a leader.

In contrast, Emily noted that the principal does not build relationships with teachers; however, the assistant principal does, noting, “I think she pushes it off to the AP to come up with team building activities at faculty meetings. We do things every other month outside of the school to build up team building and morality.” She expressed how important this is, and by the lack of her principal’s persistence, the assistant principal takes the responsibility. This could possibly be viewed as an advantage; showing that at least the assistant principal initiates relationship building. Emily seemed to appreciate this is her assistant principal; however still showed resentment towards her principal for not doing the same. Likewise, Chloe’s principal does not foster relationships with other teachers. During the interview she noted, “He does not build relationships with teachers. At school there is nothing...he’s only been here for one year, so there are little things that he has done.” It seems that relationship building is not a high priority; however, it could be due to being new to his position. On the other hand, Addie stated that her principal does not value relationship building. She said, “He’s never asked, he doesn’t even know how many kids I have, he’s never asked anything personal about us...so it’s strictly a work relationship.” Her principal could be viewed as one who does not want to foster relationships with his teachers, however she expressed how this is not necessarily a concern. However, if her principal showed a genuine interest in her personal life, it would be advantageous. Jenny also indicated during the interview that, “She really got burned with a certain group of teachers and I think will forever. I don’t know, she has her groups. Relationships with certain people.” Therefore, this indicates that her principal only forms relationships with certain groups of people in the school, and could possible lead to feelings of resentment from

others who feel they are left out. Possibly the altercations that occurred with certain groups of teachers in the past have negatively affected relationship building due to lasting grudges. These feelings of resentment could also possibly impact both teachers and the culture of the school negatively. Overall, she did not value establish relationships with teachers at her school, and in turn this impacted the school as a whole negatively.

Benefits of Authentic Leader-Teacher Relationships

While more than one participant believed their leaders valued and fostered relationships with teachers, they also identified benefits associated with these relationships. One significant advantage Lisa addressed was the ease of going to her principal with a personal issue, noting:

She has experienced enough challenges in her own personal life to understand that we are all human, and going through the same type of things. And it's much easier for her to be open about it, to allow people to express what they are going through, as opposed to shutting down and putting up that administrator wall.

Being able to connect to her principal on a personal level was viewed as an advantage, finding it easier for Lisa to talk to her principal about both personal and professional challenges. She also feels a sense of comradery based on this relationship. She stated, "It is all about the relationship of course. It's all about the team building and comradery. I feel like I have been in this school long enough...that you've developed that sense of belonging." Perhaps, when teachers feel a sense of belonging within the school, they may be more connected with other teachers, staff, and administration. Through these relationships, they may feel a sense of comradery within the school, promoting overall positivity. In a similar manner, Madeline noted how she feels close with her school leaders, stating:

They do a great job at handling everybody's personal situations throughout the entire school. I don't think anyone feels that they can't go to them and say this is going on with my life and what I am going through right now. And you know they have their own lives and they still hold everything together.

Not only does Madeline have the same sense of belonging, but her school leaders' tactful way of dealing with their own challenges, influences the entire school community. This creates a safe climate, where teachers can open up to their principals, without the fear of being ridiculed.

Relationship building between leaders and teachers can also assist in emotional healing. Michelle noted the benefit of having a relationship with her principal is that it aids in "emotional healing." Emotional intelligence constructs; such as, empathy and emotional healing are directly aligned (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). To illustrate, her principal called her over the summer to tell her she had high test scores. She stated, "She called me during the summer to tell me I was a 3. Something simple, but important." Scoring a 3 on Compass evaluation in Louisiana means that teacher is demonstrating at an Effective-Proficient level (Compass, 2018). She was satisfied with this score, as it is the second highest score that teachers can earn. If it was not for their relationship, she thinks that she would not have called her. The leader-teacher bonds also translate to the classroom as well. Lisa shared that in her own classroom she focused on "relationship building, creating a class community." Similar to Michelle, their leaders model the behavior they want their students to manifest in their own classrooms. This demonstrates the value of relationships within her school. On the other hand, although Don's principal is trying to improve relationships in her school, he seems to understand the value. He said, "What teachers need to learn is that if you have relationships with your students, they will do anything for you. They know you care...they will be successful." This shows how student success as a result of

bonds with teachers, can also be translated into the teacher and leader relationship. Success at any level, teacher, student, school leader may be achieved through nurturing authentic relationships.

Role of Trust

According to Singh & Manser (2009), a leader must be trustworthy in order to build healthy relationships with teachers. Trust is a key emotional intelligence competency (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999). Some leaders were perceived as being more trustworthy than others. More than one participant spoke about how they and others trust their principals. While Lisa trusts her principal, she noted how “it depends on the relationship of course”, emphasizing that some may not trust her as much as she does. She continued to say:

I know what I have here and I appreciate that. It is not always perfect, but I know what is going on. So, I feel like that makes it easier and that does allow me to trust her. Because I know she respects me...I don't feel like she is a *talk behind your back* kind of person.

Specific components of trust that are being referred to here are respect, honesty, and transparency. She seems to trust her principal, because she is honest with her staff. Also, she believes the principal is transparent with her staff, ensuring they know what is going on both negatively and positively in the school. Therefore, this aids in Lisa being able to more easily accept change and therefore trust her leader in the process. Michelle also discussed the trust that exists between her principal and teachers at her school, and how teachers who are more willing to accept change that occurs in the school, are more trusting towards her principal. Michelle stated, “I am thinking that the people that still want to make a difference trust her. Kind of like will and skill. Like yes, I have had to change ten times, but if I need to change twenty that is what I will do.” She was referring to changing both her instructional strategies and content. She

noted how the curriculum changes constantly; however, she is open and adaptable to change. She feels like her principal appreciates her willingness to adapt. Overall, trust is dependent upon the relationship the teachers have with the principal, and their individual role in adapting to change. Don shared how some teachers do not trust the principal, because they haven't resolved issues from the past. He explained how the principal used to be very strict and stern, and was also not easy to get along with. He stated, "she used to rule with an iron fist". Meaning that she had all the control, and the rest of the staff had to listen, or endure consequences. Some teachers even feared they would lose their jobs if they did not live up to her expectations. However, now he said, "For the most part, yes she is trusted. She is more personal now." While although she may have hurt teachers in the past, she is now trying to show a personal side, build relationships, and gain their trust. Even though his principal may have fragmented relationships with some teachers, she is not trying to repair those relationships, but showing her staff a more personal side. When asked what brought this out, Don indicated that he did not know, however stated, it is a "long process".

School leaders also demonstrated ways in which they are not trustworthy. To illustrate, Madeline shared in her journal response an example of how her school leader is not trustworthy. She explained a situation where she observed her administrator email a private matter to the entire school which offended her coworker. She stated:

She is in the middle of applying for a new position and went to the school leader in confidentiality to discuss the position... A few days later the leader posted the email to the entire school to let them know they may need a new teacher. This really upset my coworker, she thought the information was confidential and didn't want anyone else to know at this time (journal response, May 11, 2018).

Madeline did mention the close bonds she has with her leader; therefore, this could be an example of how trust depends on the relationship a teacher has with the principal. Although this did not happen to her directly, she was still affected by it and showed that her principal can be untrustworthy. She also noted how this teacher did have a good relationship with the principal before this occurred. She communicated that both she and the other teacher were disappointed in their principal. This could possibly be due to the sensitivity of the situation, and also because this was something that was typically out of character for her principal.

Summary

Authentic leader-teacher relationships can contribute to instilling a sense of belonging, comradery, and emotional bonding. This can lead to organizational commitment and overall success. Moreover, interactions between leaders and teachers can lead to positive effects, both personally and professionally (Modassir & Singh, 2008). The participants who have positive interactions and close bonds with their principals, overall were more satisfied with their current teaching positions. Furthermore, trust played a critical role in the relationships that existed. Conversely, the participants who did not have close ties with their principals, did not view them as trustworthy. This did not just impact them personally, but the school community as well. Therefore, the more trust was prevalent, the more united they felt with their school leaders.

Perceived Benefits of School Leader Emotional Skills

School leaders' emotional skills can impact teacher's emotions and well-being (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). Job satisfaction and success may also be influenced by leaders' emotional competence (Goleman, 1995). More than one participant identified associated benefits of school leaders' emotional skills; such as, empathy, motivation, and self-control. These

benefits included an increase in awareness of others' emotions, teacher morale, and job satisfaction.

Awareness of Teachers' Emotions

Self-awareness involves understanding and recognizing other's moods, strengths, weaknesses, and emotions (Goleman, 2004). While more than one participant indicated that their leaders are self-aware, they also explained how they understand teacher's emotions. In Lisa's experience, not only does her leader understand the emotions of others, she also said, "A couple of years ago, we had this big push on empathy, and that whole conscious discipline...we started having a lot of reflective conversations and it basically started on the teacher level." This demonstrates how her principal encourages teachers to be empathetic, thus reflects her own abilities to understand others' emotions. As a result of her principal's efforts, she added, "...having that background and that mindset, she has really pushed us to be a really empathetic staff, as opposed to a responsive staff. So, we look at everything from the big picture before we fault the child." This is reflected on how they discipline students, viewing it from a holistic level. Similarly, Michelle stated that her principal does understand the emotions of others, and also reflects upon the students, stating:

When students are crying, they know they can go sit in her office. I think she is very firm with the way she corrects them, but she does it so motherly and lovingly that even when it's the toughest conversations and she has to raise her voice, they still know she loves them. I think she has a good read on people.

Both Lisa and Michelle's principal utilizing their skills in understanding others' emotions through conscious discipline. This ability also impacts the way they discipline their students as well. For example, Lisa stated, "Sometimes you have to put the academics aside and take care of

the children's needs first." Showing that she cares about her student's emotional well-being as well.

Madeline also noted how her principal notices when "teachers are having a bad day", and "they do what they can to ease things." She was referring to teachers and students, noting, "...if you don't look like yourself walking down the hall, they will ask you if you are okay." This behavior helps to make the staff feel more at ease. Diane also said that "they do a good job" of understanding the emotions of others". She added, "they do a good job of listening, just sitting there and listening." Her school leaders try to understand what others are experiencing before they react; showing their capabilities of not only understanding the emotions of others, but also their self-control. Similarly, Don said, "For the most part, I think she understand other's emotions. Asks you how it is going, it's sincere motive, not just casual." He added how the sincerity means a lot to him. Furthermore, Emily indicated that her principal has contradictory emotional responses to teachers and students. When discussing her school leader's role in establishing emotional well-being in themselves and the staff, she said:

She has her own little system to calm the kids down. And she has a very strong voice, so they do listen. But we do laugh when it comes to teachers, we do think she's like Dr. Jeckel and Mr. Hyde. We never know what she is going to come in like each day.... but when it comes overall with the kids, I have never witnessed her go crazy, she seems to have a lot of control.

So, although she attempts to keep emotions regulated within the school, she demonstrates self-control for the students, but not always for the teachers. She also added that, "She understands others' emotions I think a little too well." Noting this may be a fault, stating, "This is where the

problem comes in.” She explained how she is sometimes too lenient on students for their misbehavior, because she can be overly empathetic.

In contrast, more than one participant pointed out how their leaders do not understand the emotions of others. Addie said, “I don’t know if he truly understands them...I don’t see anything like he’s emotionally trying to take care of us.” She also added that if her school leaders did understand teachers’ emotions, then, “...it would make them more empathetic. If they knew more of what was going on in our lives, they maybe more empathetic to why we may react how we react to something or do things differently.” Although she doesn’t believe her school leaders understand others’ emotions, she knows the benefits if they did. She wants her school leaders to be more empathetic in order to have a deeper understanding of their needs and actions.

Teacher Morale

According to Moore (2009), leadership has a direct effect on staff morale. Emotionally intelligent leaders may be able to instill confidence and emotional stability in them, while increasing morale (Moore, 2009; Singh & Manser, 2009). Therefore, emotional intelligence may be an attribute in leaders that teachers would find beneficial, as they are more inclined to help build their confidence and provide emotional support. Addie acknowledged the importance of having a leader who understands the importance of increasing teacher morale in order to achieve greater success. She expressed that if “morale is down, then you will not achieve your overall goal, but if you are in a leader position, you should take that into consideration.” Addie believes if her principal was more empathetic, then morale wouldn’t be so low, and greater success could be possible. According to Emily, “one way to boost morale is through teacher praise.” Adding, “We never hear good job, no praise, none.” While overall morale is low at her school, she suggested, “leaving a nice note...it could be simple, just something so someone sees a

compliment because it goes a long way.” This absence of praise and empathy not only negatively impacted her views towards her principal, but also made her consider a simplistic approach her leader should consider; such as a simple compliment or other forms of verbal praise. Similar to Emily’s experience, Chloe noted a low morale at her school as well; adding that this could be a result of her principal’s lack of self-confidence. A leader’s confidence could influence staff’s morale (Harris, 2002). Self-confidence is another extension of the emotional intelligence trait, self-awareness (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). This illustrates how her principal’s lack of self-confidence negatively impacts teacher morale. In comparison, Jenny shared a journal response indicating how the lack of emotional skills impacts teacher morale, in particular self-confidence. She explained how she compiled a list of complaints from teachers and presented this to her principal. Some of the complaints noted was “there was not a good morale club or social support system.” She did say her principal was openly affected by it, noting her “insecurity” (journal response, May 14, 2018). This demonstrates the connection between low morale and her principal’s lack of self-confidence.

In contrast, Diane’s principal does praise teachers for their accomplishments; thus, contributing to increased teacher morale. She stated that she was giving a social skills lesson to her class, and her principal came in and wrote a note that said, “*You are a Zen master*. I was like wow this is so sweet.” This demonstrated how a simple note can go a long way. Similarly, Michelle noted that overall teacher morale is high at her school. She noted, “She includes shout outs to teachers’ accomplishments. If you are teacher of the year, you are getting roses brought to your classroom. She will reward you.” Through teacher praise, morale was increased, along with rewards for notable accomplishments. In a similar way, regarding teacher’s accomplishments, she said, “I definitely think they give recognition for it. You know they are very excited and send

a nice email or announce it during announcements...things like that. So, it is noticed.” Overall morale is high at her school, and through teacher praise and acknowledgement this is achieved in part. Praise was not limited to work accomplishments, but personal as well. Overall, praise, recognition, empathy, and leader self-confidence were all contributing factors to teacher morale.

Job Satisfaction

School leaders’ awareness of interpersonal emotions in themselves and others can contribute to the job satisfaction of teachers (Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012). Participants’ levels of job satisfaction varied significantly. Madeline, Lisa, Diane and Michelle all discussed high levels of job satisfaction. To illustrate, Madeline said, “I have thoroughly enjoyed it, I do enjoy coming to work. I love my job every day.” In a journal response, she also shared an example of how her principal helped her with a parent complaint. She stated, “She was there to back me up, and wanted to make sure that I was comfortable with what she was emailing her in response, I appreciated this” (journal response, May 11, 2018). This was just one example of shows why she is happy with her job. This example demonstrates her appreciation of her principal’s conscious efforts to involve her in the decision-making process, valuing her feelings towards how a difficult situation was addressed. Additionally, Michelle noted a high level of job satisfaction, stating, “I love my school. I am very happy there.” She attributes this to having a good faculty, due to her principals’ ability to identify teachers’ strengths and then “strategically placing people to build the school to be a better school”. Empathy involves social awareness, emphasizing understanding and appreciating other’s strengths (Modassir & Singh, 2008, p. 7). This may be due in part to her leader’s empathetic nature.

On the other hand, some participants noted low levels of job satisfaction. Emily noted that other teachers are not happy with their positions. One reason is due to feelings of

humiliation if expectations are not met. To illustrate, if a teacher does not meet her principal's expectations, Emily said, "You really do get on her black list and the next year...It has never happened to me, but I have seen it happen to a few teachers at our school. She is downright ugly". This humiliation contributes to low levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, Chloe noted that her principal "humiliated" her. She was explaining an incident related to a student complaint. She added, "I was asked to leave campus, because they had to conduct an investigation, so you have to understand that would be humiliating for anybody." She expressed feelings of discontentment due in part by how her principal did not approach her first before making such a harsh decision in her opinion.

Summary

School leaders' emotional skills; such as, empathy, motivation, and self-control were common among teachers who showed high levels of morale and job satisfaction. Another benefit of school leaders' emotional skills was an increased awareness in teachers' emotions. Whereas the teachers who did not identify their leaders as highly skilled emotionally, reported low levels of job satisfaction and overall morale within the school. Additionally, leaders who provided teacher praise and recognition were found to be more emotionally skilled.

Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of ten elementary teachers in order to obtain their perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence. The following interrelated themes emerged from the data analysis: 1) school leader social skills, 2) leadership styles, 3) authentic leader-teacher relationships, and 4) perceived benefits of school leader emotional skills. While all participants experienced challenges within their profession, they all had both similar and unique strategies to overcome these challenges. Teachers who have leaders who are more highly

skilled emotionally were able to overcome challenges more easily, through the bonds they have with their school leader. Typically, these leaders tended to be more confident and self-aware. Moreover, authentic relationships between teachers and their school leaders led to more satisfaction with their current positions, with trust playing a key role. School leaders who were more aware of their teachers' emotions also helped increase teacher morale through teacher praise and recognition.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This phenomenological study examined public elementary school teachers' perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence. This chapter discusses the findings from chapter four and also makes linkages to the literature as well as Transformational Leadership Theory and Emotional Intelligence. In addition, this chapter will include recommendations for policy and practice and implications for future research.

Discussion of Findings

While literature unique to leader emotional intelligence within the K-12 context exists (Allred et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2005; Moore, 2009; Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015), there have been few studies emphasizing the impact on elementary teachers' experiences. Furthermore, controversy involving leadership preparation programs is prevalent (Schultz, 2007). Leadership effectiveness is prioritized, yet fails to include social and emotional components (Cobb, 2004; Schmidt, 2010). This study was conducted to have a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence in order to identify specific emotionally intelligent behaviors, traits, and practices are the most impactful and answer the research question: *What are teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence?* From the participants' responses, four interrelated themes emerged: 1) school leader social skills, 2) leadership styles, 3) authentic leader-teacher relationships, and 4) perceived benefits of school leader emotional skills. This chapter summarizes comments according to themes and makes connections to their school leaders' perceived emotional intelligence. The interrelatedness of the themes is discussed, specifically how leader support is a major commonality among each theme.

Although there are countless challenges that occur in the teaching profession, school leaders can utilize these challenges as opportunities to assist teachers in overcoming challenges successfully. Elementary teachers in particular identify negative work experiences as lack of recognition from administration, and lack of student and parent interest (Perrachione, Peterson, & Rosser, 2008). In this study, participants also identified lack of parental and leader support, and student behavior, as common challenges for elementary teachers. The role of leader support, coping mechanisms, and teacher and leader communication were also emphasized. With respect to leader support, participants' views varied regarding the level of support their leaders provided. For some participants, school leaders did not provide adequate support; leading to detrimental effects. Feelings of stress, loneliness, and anxiety resulted from the lack of support. When teachers experience challenges, whether it involves students, parents, job responsibilities, or other aspects; leaders who are emotionally intelligent tend to be more genuine and instill trust and support during challenging times (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). For other participants, this was reflected in the ways in which leaders' support was provided. Through emotional and social support, these participants were less stressed, and felt a sense of safety and security. They were also empowered to view challenges as opportunities for growth; thus, emulated onto their students. Emotionally intelligent leaders provoke creative thought and reduce workplace stress (Gray, 2009). Through creative thought, solutions to problems were more easily constructed. According to George (2000), disagreements are settled more easily, and solutions where everyone is satisfied are achieved through constructive thinking. Therefore, when teachers experience conflict or other negative occurrences, leaders who help to encourage creative problem solving and sincere support are often more emotionally intelligent than others.

Along the same lines of leader support, coping mechanisms were varied among participants. Participants with leaders who were more supportive, were often more self-reflective as well. Self-reflection aids in effective problem-solving strategies and skills (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005); thus, allowing one and others to effectively engage in self-talk and to better understand the underlying issues surrounding conflict. Participants with school leaders who were more self-reflective, instilled the importance of self-reflection within themselves as well. Batool (2013) suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders often are more self-aware, and take into consideration how their own emotions and actions impact others. The participants who had more self-reflective principals, considered how their own actions influenced their students' behavior. Therefore, they responded more positively towards their students when they misbehaved, and also viewed challenges overall in a more positive light.

Leader self-reflection also coincides with both leader and teacher motivation. Participants were more apt to dealing with challenges more productively with encouragement from their principals. Furthermore, their principals were more positive overall. Motivational leaders remain optimistic even during challenging times, and is a sign of emotional intelligence (Batool, 2013; Goleman, 2004). Motivation is demonstrated through the persistence of reaching goals (Batool, 2013). Through perseverance, both leaders and teachers were motivated not to give up when conflict arises. On the other hand, participants who did not have supportive leaders, were more self-motivated to overcome challenges, often emphasizing their students' needs as driving forces. The participants valued personal motivation as a coping mechanism, even when their leaders did not; demonstrating the impact motivation has on effective problem-solving. Therefore, leaders are perceived as being more emotionally intelligent based on their capacity to motivate teachers, specifically during arduous times.

Moreover, communication between school leaders and teachers was viewed as a vital coping mechanism. Communicative leaders were synonymous with being effective listeners who valued understanding teachers' dilemmas. Conversely, leaders who did not communicate sufficiently, often contributed to teacher stress. One emotional intelligence competency involves social skills (Goleman, 2004). A subset of social skills involves communication (Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999). In the leadership context, communication skills are critical in order for teachers to work productively (Goleman, 1998). Therefore, when communication is lacking between leaders and teachers, effective work may diminish, and inept coping mechanisms when confronting the onset of stress will prevail.

Leadership styles were viewed as both effective and non-effective in this research, specifically in the ways in which participants described leader support. Some participants viewed their leaders as taking a more coercive approach. The coercive style of leadership tends to be the least effective, contributing to low morale and pride in employees (Goleman, 2000). Participants noted leadership traits affiliated with coercive leadership; such as, being rigid, strict, and unsupportive. Each trait had a detrimental impact on their well-being. These negative traits could impact their well-being adversely by making them feel like they are not valued for their work and effort. Furthermore, the participants' leaders who were too stringent on rules, decreased the chances of teachers' voices being heard. The participants noted how they wanted the opportunity to provide their input in the decision-making process. Another negative characteristic identified with this style of leadership was being ego-driven. Leadership that is often viewed as more favorable, puts others' needs at the forefront, and values persuasion in lieu of coercion, and spirit instead of ego (Shugart, 1997). While this type of leadership may be beneficial, it could also be a more effective approach.

Not all participants viewed their school leaders' styles as ineffective. Several participants noted traits they viewed as positive, while also encompassing emotional attributes. Aspects such as empathy, motivation, and self-control were prevalent in their leaders. These emotional components are often associated with transformational leadership. Transformational leaders often motivate their followers to reach their maximum potential (Burns, 1978). Major components of transformational leaders are aligned with emotional intelligence constructs including: self-awareness, empathy, and motivation (Kumar, 2014). The participants' leaders who demonstrated self-control, were more aware of their own actions and how they influenced their teachers. Participants noted how struggling teachers were supported by their leaders due to not only their self-awareness, but also their ability to empathize with them. This aligns with theme one involving school leader social skills. When school leaders are more self-aware and empathetic in their approach, they tend to provide more support to their teachers. This could be because of their ability to understand what they are going through, at both the personal and professional level. Participants noted how this provided emotional healing for them, and also gave them a sense of security.

Furthermore, their leaders also demonstrated self-control, which is a form of the emotional intelligence component, self-regulation (Batool, 2013). Participants valued principals who were in control of their emotions, because it set a positive tone for the school overall. Additionally, these leaders also tended to be more motivational, specifically in helping teachers improve their own practice. Consistent with the school leaders' emotional skills identified in theme one, motivation was aligned with the transformational leadership style. Motivation was demonstrated through praise and enthusiasm towards these participants. Moreover, both transformational and emotionally intelligent leaders increase motivation and inspiration in their

followers (Gray, 2009; Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016). The participants mentioned how they were inspired to work at their highest capacity, because of their leaders' motivation and support, demonstrating their transformational leadership styles, and emotionally intelligent behaviors. Another characteristic unique to two participants' leaders was being intuitive. George (2000) asserts that emotionally intelligent leaders have an "intuitive sense" that allows them to understand the emotions of others (p. 2). Through their leaders' intuitive nature, the participants were more content, because their strengths were noticed and appreciated. Perhaps training focused on being sensitive to others emotions, could help connect leader's intuitive nature, to a more concrete concept.

In addition, the participants also spoke about their school leaders' self-confidence. The participants who viewed their leaders' self-confidence positively, noted how they encouraged positivity in others, earning teachers' respect. However, some participants viewed self-confidence as a negative attribute, implying that their leaders were pompous. This negative take on leader self-confidence had an overall adverse effect on the participants. While emotionally intelligent leaders are known to be more self-confident (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998), their self-confidence tends to be genuine, and not guided by control of others or ego.

All participants spoke about relationships with their leaders, or lack there-of. Transformational leaders were often more likely to establish authentic relationships with their teachers. Participants who identified with having positive relationships with their leaders described them as authentic. Authentic relationships in the educational leadership context have underlying values involving the importance of relationships, listening, and ensuring teachers have a voice (Quick, 2013). Moreover, according to Avolio & Gradner (2005), authentic leader-

follower relationships involve trust, respect, and positive influence. The teachers in this study who reported close relationships with their principals, noted their principals gained their trust and respect through forming close bonds, and continuing to foster their relationships through ongoing support, encouragement, and showing a genuine interest. This is consistent with the literature, as well as, both theme one, school leaders' social skills, and theme two leader support. Leaders who were more communicative and personal, were more likely to form healthy, productive relationships with teachers. This also illustrates the positive impact authentic leader-teacher relationships have on teachers. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent leaders cultivate meaningful relationships through trust and cooperation (George, 2000). Therefore, in this study, leaders' perceived emotional intelligence involves their ability to form genuine relationships with teachers, through trust, respect, and support.

Furthermore, the benefits associated with teacher-leader relationships identified in this study were the establishment of comradery, sense of belonging, and emotional healing. One commonality tying all benefits together was trust. Perhaps leaders' who did not foster relationships with teachers in this study, lacked their trust. Trust is a major component of emotional intelligence (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Participants' who noted high levels of trust in their leaders, also said they were more committed to their job, because of their principals. They were also willing to adapt to change more easily. While research indicates emotionally intelligent leaders are more flexible during times of change (George, 2000; Moore, 2009; Schultz, 2007), this study found that the teachers of perceived emotionally intelligent leaders embrace change more readily as well.

As noted in the second theme, leadership styles, participants identified empathy, motivation, and self-control as contributing factors influencing the prevalence of their leaders'

emotional skills. However, some participants also discussed how these emotional skills contributed to related benefits; specifically, their awareness of others' emotions, and their role in increasing teacher morale and job satisfaction. One underlying commonality involving each benefit was the role of leader support. According to Goleman (1998), empathy comprises the awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. Empathy has been identified as a crucial emotional intelligence trait a leader should possess (Batool, 2011; Goleman, 1998, 2004; Mayer & Salovey, 1990, 1997). Motivation also involves leader's connections with others (Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016). Through the leaders' awareness of the teachers' emotions, and personal connections, the participants had an increased morale and were more satisfied with their jobs. While literature suggests leaders high in emotional intelligence influence teachers' job satisfaction (George, 2000; Goleman, 2004; Singh & Madela, 2013), this study found that teacher morale is also increased through the prevalence of leader support.

In the elementary education context, another significant finding from this study is that leader awareness of teachers' emotions and self-control results in conscious discipline. Self-control involves the management of their emotions (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000). Leaders' abilities to demonstrate self-control and understand teachers' emotions, specifically when students misbehave, confirms their emotional skills. Conscious discipline involves a classroom management technique that highlights social and emotional learning (Baily, 2000). Although conscious discipline is related to social and emotional learning, research is sparse regarding the impact of leader emotional intelligence and teachers implementing conscious discipline in their classrooms. All participants indicated that student behavior was a challenge as an elementary teacher; however, participants who noted that their principals were skilled in self-control and understanding emotions through conscious discipline, impacted the way they also

discipline students. These findings add to leader emotional intelligence literature, highlighting both increased teacher morale and conscious discipline as potential impacts.

Answering the Research Question

The intention of this study was to gain understanding of elementary teachers' perceptions of their school leaders' emotional intelligence. The majority of research focusing on the role of emotional intelligence in the educational leadership context has seldom emphasized followers' perceptions of leader emotional intelligence (Smollan & Parry, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005). Specifically, elementary teachers' perceptions have been neglected in the research (Allred et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2005; Moore, 2009; Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat, & Tarasi, 2012; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). While benefits associated with leader emotional intelligence have been identified, this study found that pertinent emotional intelligence competencies included the ability to motivate, self-reflect, effectively communicate, provide social and emotional support, and demonstrate self-control.

Moreover, research also suggests that leadership preparation programs are not prioritizing social and emotional intelligence knowledge, abilities, and dispositions with unanimity (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace, 2010), however suggest programs should focus on emotional intelligence (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; McDowelle & Bell, 1997; Schmidt, 2010; Schultz, 2007; Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015). Therefore, there is a call for reform (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Guerra & Pazet, 2016; Mills, 2009; Wallace, 2010). For this qualitative study, a single research question was presented in an effort to better understand elementary teachers' perceptions of their school

leaders' emotional intelligence through identifying integral components of emotional intelligence, and the associated impacts:

What are teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence?

This sole question was the foundation for the study. Because this research emphasized elementary teachers' perceptions only, the challenges they endured were significant in understanding how their beliefs about their leaders' emotional intelligence were developed. Leader support was a commonality among all four themes. While school leader social skills helped contribute to effective problem solving, this benefit increased teacher trust and respect in their leaders. Transformational leaders often demonstrated emotional intelligence skills, which lead to increased motivation and performance in their teachers, through their emphasis on teacher support. Leaders who used their intuitive sense for the betterment of the school, were also more supportive to both teachers and students. This support contributed to meaningful relationships with their teachers, and in turn increased job satisfaction and teacher morale, through a deep emotional awareness of their teachers.

Emotional intelligence involves understanding the communication that exists between leaders and teachers; therefore, the ways in which leaders support teachers is valuable to explore (George, 2009; Gray, 2009; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This study emphasized teachers' perceptions of their leaders' emotional intelligence, so it is important to note that emotional intelligence can be defined and measured as a unique ability, and it is also crucial to acknowledge what it predicts (Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002). Additionally, "emotional intelligence should be viewed as broadening our understanding of human mental abilities" (Caruso et al., 2002, p. 318). Therefore, for this study, the level of leader emotional intelligence related to particular traits and abilities, and associated impacts are discussed. It is also beneficial

to note that due to only one participant interviewed per school, the perceptions of the school leaders' emotional intelligence were limited to only one point of view.

To illustrate, while Addie, Chloe, and Jenny noted their leaders' lacked support when dealing with challenges, they in turn felt more stress, lonely, and anxious. While emotionally intelligent leaders provide support to teachers and make them feel emotionally secure and confident (Moore, 2009; Singh & Manser, 2009; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015), these participants' view their leaders as having low levels of the emotional intelligence attribute, support. High teacher turnover was also reported as a result of lack of leader support. On the other hand, Lisa, Michelle, and Diane noted high levels of leader support, contributing to feeling safe, secure, and peaceful. These feelings were connected with specific emotional components; such as, empathy, and social and emotional awareness of teachers. Empathy and organizational awareness are both significant emotional intelligent traits (Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Emotionally intelligent leaders also instill feelings of respect and appreciation in their followers (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Participants' leaders who exhibit empathetic behaviors, also reported feeling more respected and appreciated. This is consistent with this study's findings that leaders with higher emotional intelligence, were also more empathetic, respectful, aware of others, and supportive.

Moreover, coping mechanisms used when dealing with challenges helped explain their perceptions of their leaders' emotional intelligence, through their leaders' abilities to self-reflect, motivate teachers, and effectively communicate. Most participants indicated the importance of leader self-reflection, although only few actually believed their leaders were self-reflective in their practice. Self-awareness is a significant emotional intelligence trait (Boyatzis et. al, 1999). Goleman (1998) asserts that understanding one's internal states, resources, preferences, and

intuition constitutes self-awareness. Goleman (2004) found that leaders who are emotionally intelligent have high levels of self-awareness. While this study supports this finding, unique to this study was the act of self-reflection being a contributing factor to self-awareness.

Boyatis et. al (1999) identified communication and motivation as key emotional intelligence competencies. Through efficient communication between participants and leaders, participants felt compelled to confide in their principals when enduring challenges. They were also motivated to overcome challenges both with their leaders' support, and through their own internal motivation. Participants descriptions of leader emotional intelligence emphasized their abilities to communicate effectively, motivate teachers, and demonstrate self-control. The ability to motivate and effectively communicate were both prevalent in some leaders; however, all participants eluded to the importance of these attributes in school leaders. Some leaders utilized these abilities to not only help teachers overcome challenges, but also were perceived as effective leadership traits. For this study, this is useful to acknowledge because some participants consistently associated these abilities with their leaders. In addition, self-control is another major emotional intelligence competency. Self-control involves the ability to adapt during stressful situations (Batool, 2013). Michelle added that her principal appreciates her willingness to adapt as well. In addition, Lisa, Michelle, Madeline, and Diane, identified their leaders as effective communicators, motivational, and able to demonstrate self-control; therefore, they perceive their leaders as being high in emotional intelligence. Whereas, leaders who were low in emotional intelligence were strict, ego-driven, and were typically unsupportive.

Although confidence is often associated with high level of emotional intelligence (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998), some participants who identified their leaders as confident, did not perceive them as emotionally intelligent. For instance, Addie,

Emily, and Jenny viewed leader self-confidence as a negative attribute, fostered by having control of others. However, Diane, Madeline, Lisa, and Michelle did make linkages between leader self-confidence and other positive attributes; such as, respect, awareness, and overall positivity. In this study, in order for self-confidence to be considered an emotional intelligence construct, there must be connections to respect, accurate awareness of self and others, and impact others in a beneficial way.

Additionally, participants' who reported having authentic relationships with their leaders, also reported higher levels of leader trust and overall well-being. Michelle noted the benefit of having leader-teacher relationships is that it provides emotional healing. Emotionally intelligent leaders have the ability to promote emotional stability in their followers through trust (Moore, 2009; Singh & Manser, 2009). Trustworthiness is also an important emotional intelligence competency (Batool, 2013; Boyatis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Lisa and Michelle perceive their leaders to be more emotionally intelligent than other participants, due to these commonalities. While not all participants had relationships with their leaders, they recognized the value of them. Overall, participants perceived leaders who fostered authentic relationships to be higher in emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, Lisa, Michelle, and Madeline perceive their leaders as having high levels of emotional intelligence due to emotional skills such as empathy, motivation, and self-control. These leader traits lead to several benefits; including, awareness of others' emotions, teacher morale, and job satisfaction. While Moore (2009) noted that leadership impacts staff morale, research is limited regarding the influence leader emotional intelligence has on teacher morale. This study found that both empathy and teacher praise contribute to higher teacher morale. Participants who noted the lack of praise and empathy, reported low teacher morale. On the other

hand, Diane, Michelle, and Lisa who consistently indicated high levels of emotional intelligence in their leaders, also noted high levels of staff morale and job satisfaction. Moreover, Madeline, Lisa, Diane, and Michelle reported that they are extremely satisfied in their positions. Singh & Mandela (2013), assert that there is a lack of knowledge concerning what specific emotional intelligence behaviors of leaders contribute to the job satisfaction of teachers. This study found that empathy, praise, and awareness of other's emotions are emotional intelligence competencies that impact teachers' job satisfaction.

Intuition

A unique characteristic identified in this study was intuition. While Goleman (1998) noted intuition partially constitutes self-awareness, participants in this study identified their leaders as being intuitive, acting on teachers' strengths for the betterment of the school. This suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders have the capacity to utilize their intuition when making decisions involving school improvement.

Connection to Theory

Both transformational leadership theory and emotional intelligence helped to shed light on both the most important components of emotional intelligence and related benefits. According to Kumar (2014), transformational leadership components idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation are aligned with constructs of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, empathy, and motivation. However, the fourth major component of transformational leadership theory, intellectual stimulation, was found in participants' descriptions of leader emotional intelligence. Intellectual stimulation involves leaders helping followers to view challenges as problem solving opportunities; exploring new strategies, and putting forth effort towards overcoming organizational challenges, not just small, immediate

problems (Bass, 1990). This study however found that leader support demonstrated through empathy and emotional awareness, instilled the confidence necessary for the participants to overcome challenges successfully for the greater good of the organization. Therefore, this study found a connection between the emotional intelligence competency empathy, and intellectual stimulation, in the form of viewing challenges as opportunities for growth.

Moreover, both idealized influence and emotional intelligence have commonalities involving trust and respect (Gray, 2009; Moore, 2009; Northouse, 2016). Respect was developed through the leaders' instilling confidence in teachers to effectively solve problems, while also helping them create class communities of protection and respect. In this study, leaders perceived as emotionally intelligent also gained participants' trust and respect through fostering authentic relationships, being transparent, and building bonds through personal connections. However, relationship building was not a priority for all leaders, contributing to feelings of stress and loneliness. Additionally, individualized consideration and empathy are both closely linked (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Individualized consideration involves leaders who notice unique differences in their employees and act as mentors to help struggling teachers (Bass, 1990). In this study, a participant noted how her principal helps struggling teachers by showing them empathy, due to her own self-awareness and awareness of others. While this did not hold true for all participants, it does demonstrate a connection between individualized consideration and empathy in the form of teacher support.

Furthermore, inspirational motivation and emotional intelligence are closely connected due to the motivational aspect (Gray, 2009; Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016).

Teachers are motivated as a result of their leaders' engagement with others and abilities to

connect with them (Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016). In this study, some participants perceived their leaders' ability to motivate them during challenging times highly effective.

Although not all participant's leaders' provided motivation towards them, they all still valued motivation as a useful coping mechanism. Additionally, motivation was apparent in leaders' who were more self-reflective, encouraging teachers to also be more self-reflective in their practice.

While inspirational motivation involves leaders' engagement with others (Modassir & Singh, 2008; Northouse, 2016), this study's findings adds the value of self-reflection as a key motivational technique. Motivation was also instilled in the participants through leader praise and enthusiasm for their notable accomplishments; contributing to greater sense of job satisfaction.

Inspirational motivation also involves communication between leaders and followers (Kumar, 2014; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). Participants noted how they felt supported and understood through positive communication with their leaders. Communication was an effective coping mechanism and minimized challenges, because leaders understood teacher's actions and behaviors, and also provided constructive criticism. Communication also helped to minimize challenges; emphasizing practical solutions to problems. This is consistent with the findings of Bass (1990), that transformational leaders emphasize rational solutions to problems; however due to intellectual stimulation. This solidifies this study's findings that emotional intelligence and intellectual stimulation are connected, while also being linked to inspirational motivation. Additionally, some participants noted how miscommunication between leaders and teachers leads to feelings of resentment and discontentment; thus, contributing to low campus morale. This illustrates the impact transformational behaviors, or lack there-of, have not only on just the individual, but the entire school community.

As noted above, based on the data from this study, the transformational leadership component intellectual stimulation can also be linked to emotional intelligence in the form of viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. This study's findings also link intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration through empathy. Participants' leaders in this study were able to develop their problem-solving abilities, and alter their view of problems to be considered in a positive light. Therefore, empathy is not only linked to individualized consideration, but intellectual stimulation as well.

Overall, the most important components of emotional intelligence found in this study are empathy, self-awareness, organizational awareness, motivation, communication, trustworthiness, and adaptability. Self-reflection was also found as an additional emotional intelligence competency that should be an extension of self-awareness. Moreover, this study found benefits associated with these leader emotional intelligence competencies; including, effective problem-solving strategies, increased respect for teachers, establishment of authentic leader-teacher relationships, increased leader support and teacher praise, greater teacher job-satisfaction, and elevated teacher morale.

Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Preparation

While general consensus is that leadership preparation programs have failed to stay current with the constant changes and new challenges that educational leaders have to endure (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Mitgang, 2012), an overlooked aspect has been the instruction of leadership traits and characteristics for transformational change occurring in schools (Schultz, 2007). One way to address this deficit is to incorporate emotional intelligence skills and competencies in the curricula in order to address the myriad of new challenges and demands placed on educational leaders (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerada, 2005; Mills, 2009). Incorporating

emotional intelligence into leadership preparation programs may help better equip leaders with the skills and abilities to overcome emotional challenges successfully, while also promoting well-being in their staff (Trinidad Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015). On a school-district level, professional development opportunities could be provided to school leaders emphasizing self-reflection, communication skills, motivational techniques, and learning self-control.

While this study emphasized the lack of leadership training in emotional intelligence (Johnson et al., 2005; Schultz, 2007; Schmidt, 2010; Wallace, 2010), research suggests that emotional intelligence is an ability that can be learned and developed (Goleman, 2004; Moore, 2009). Johnson et al. (2005) suggests that emotional intelligence should be taught exclusively or confined within other courses. Moore (2009) also recommends school boards, universities, and state departments of education should implement emotional intelligence training and development for both current and future school leaders. It was important to know teachers' perceptions of leader emotional intelligence, because of the vast challenges that come along with the teaching profession. The unique difficulties of teaching, including the lack of leader presence on a daily basis are not typical of other professions, therefore school leader emotional intelligence is necessary. Emotional intelligence training could be beneficial for leadership effectiveness at both the university level, and both school district and individual school level.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The recommendations from this study are based on the data implications and findings. This study focused on identifying emotional intelligence constructs, in order to address the lack of emotional intelligence leader training. While emotional intelligence competencies are vast, this study helped clarify the most compelling; including, empathy, self-awareness, self-control, organizational awareness, motivation, communication, trustworthiness, and adaptability.

Although not all participants' leaders encompass these emotional intelligence characteristics, they all valued them in their leaders. Conversely, participants who did have first-hand experience with leaders who did possess these qualities reported an abundance of related benefits.

Recommendations for School Districts

In this study, participants helped clarify significant emotional intelligence traits and practices. Associated benefits were also identified; including, effective problem-solving strategies, increased teacher-leader respect, establishment of authentic leader-teacher relationships, increased leader support and teacher praise, greater teacher job-satisfaction, and elevated teacher morale. In order to address leadership preparation reform, school districts should implement professional development and training centered around the specific emotional intelligence competencies identified in this study.

In the elementary school context, challenges teachers face are vast. School leaders at this level also endure difficulties due to current pressures to increase school accountability; while meeting the diverse needs of students, and improving the quality of education overall (Guerra & Pazy, 2016; Litchka, 2007). Training school leaders how to be more empathetic can be beneficial to both teachers and students. In this study, participants indicated how principals' displays of empathy provided emotional healing to not only them, but the students as well. Leaders who are more empathetic are more aware of the needs of teachers, students, and staff; therefore, training should emphasize self-awareness and awareness of others. While self-aware individuals understand how their own feelings, emotions, and actions impact others (Batool, 2013), this can be useful trait in school leaders. Being self-aware also involves a level of self-control. One participant noted the impact of her principal's ability to show self-control during

stressful situations. This instilled confidence in her principal, while also allowing her to feel comfortable confiding in her.

Leaders who are empathetic, also demonstrate more organizational awareness as well (Boyatzis, et al., 1990). Participants who noted their principals' social and emotional awareness of teachers were more appreciative of their leaders, and demonstrated the same behaviors to their students. Training specifically designed to increase awareness in both the leaders themselves and those around them, would be useful in order to provide emotional support to distressed teachers and students. Increased self-awareness will also allow school leaders to identify teacher's strengths and act appropriately. Training in self-awareness, should also encompass a self-reflective component. School districts should provide opportunities for leaders to engage in self-reflection to look at themselves through a critical lens, to not only learn from their own mistakes, but grow in the process. Reflective practice could be implemented by way of coaching. This could increase accountability of leaders that they are in fact participating in self-reflection.

School leaders should also participate in district level professional development and training emphasizing motivational techniques. Motivation inspires teachers to achieve excellence in their professional practice (Gray, 2009). In this study, leaders motivated participants through increased positivity and enthusiasm. Positivity could be in the form of verbal praise, and acknowledging notable accomplishments. School leaders should also implement school level trainings focused on motivation to help teachers inspire students to be successful as well. Moreover, training focused on effective communication skills is critical to implement. Through clear and positive communication, authentic leader-teacher relationships were fostered and developed. Participants who experienced close relationships with their leaders, also have a deeper level of trust in them and their abilities as leaders. Leader trust can increase follower's

interest, acceptance of the school's mission and purpose, and increase comradery to the betterment of the organization (Bass, 1990). Therefore, training focused on ways to increase communication between leaders and teachers can help instill a deeper sense of trust, and establish genuine relationships that will in turn impact the effectiveness of the school and stakeholders.

Lastly, learning to be adaptable during challenging times can also be beneficial for leaders. While one participant noted how her principal appreciated her willingness to adapt to change; leader adaptability should also be developed, as it has proven to be beneficial for the school and everyone involved. Considering the immense challenges that occur, learning how to accept them and adapt to change will benefit the entirety of an organization. Moreover, leaders should learn how to adapt their behavior to a myriad of situational demands in a sincere way (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). This will also increase leader and teacher trust, loyalty, and overall well-being. Therefore, when training both experienced and emergent leaders, emphasizing emotional intelligence attributes will benefit not only teachers, but the entire school community. As a result, problems can be solved more effectively, mutual respect between teachers and leaders will be increased, authentic leader-teacher relationships will be fostered and developed; leading to an increase in overall teacher morale and job satisfaction.

Implications for Future Research

This study sought to understand teachers' perceptions of school leaders' emotional intelligence. It incorporated elementary teachers' experiences from their points of view. Research involving leader emotional intelligence should be studied further, considering school leaders' perceptions as well as other considerations. For instance, this study found intuition to be an additional characteristic with both emotional intelligence and transformational leadership

connections. While Goleman (1998) noted that intuition constitutes self-awareness, it would be useful to explore in what ways this holds true. Further research could emphasize the relationship between school leader's intuition and success of leaders, teachers, and students. Additionally, the practice of conscious discipline emerged from the data. This concept and connections to leader emotional intelligence would be advantageous to explore.

Moreover, the role of reflective practice and emotional intelligence in the educational context should be further analyzed. In this study, while some participants noted that leader self-reflection is lacking, it was also found to be an effective leadership ability. Therefore, it would be beneficial to emphasize the role of reflective practice and ties to emotional intelligence further. While research exists highlighting the connections between authentic leadership and emotional intelligence (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), there is limited research concerning the role of authentic leader-teacher relationships in the leadership context. While advantages were identified in this study; such as, increased teacher well-being and leader trust, the frequency of authentic leader-teacher relationships were scarce. Therefore, it would be useful to examine this relationship further.

Summary and Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions of ten elementary public-school teachers' perceptions of school leader emotional intelligence. A qualitative approach was utilized to collect the data. In-person interviews were employed, transcribed, and analyzed as well as responses to journal prompts. Four interrelated themes emerged as a result of data collected: 1) school leader social skills, 2) leadership styles, 3) authentic leader-teacher relationships, and 4) perceived benefits school leader emotional skills. The findings were affiliated with Transformational Leadership Theory, emotional intelligence, and relevant literature. While emotional intelligence

competencies were more prominent in some leaders than others, there was a consistency among participants' views of beneficial leadership abilities. Specific emotional intelligence competencies identified were: empathy, self-awareness, self-control, organizational awareness, motivation, communication, trustworthiness, and adaptability. The findings can be beneficial when considering the implementation of leader emotional intelligence training at the school district level. This information can help guide leaders and districts to implement policy and practices that promote emotional intelligence.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Gender:

Age: 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-70 70+

Educational background (degree(s) and certification):

Current position at your school:

Year in current position:

Years of experience in education:

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. How would you describe your current position and responsibilities?
2. Why did you choose to become an elementary teacher?
3. Let's talk about being an elementary teacher. Tell me about the experiences.
4. What challenges have you encountered throughout your teaching career?
5. What strategies did you use to cope with these challenges?
6. How did school leaders help you cope with these challenges?
7. How would you describe your school leader's approach to leadership at your school?
8. Can you tell me about a time when your principal made you feel good about yourself or your teaching? And a time when they made you not feel good about yourself or your teaching?
9. Tell me about a particular experience that involved the emotions of your school leader.
10. How would you describe the school leader's role in establishing emotional well-being in themselves and others in the school?
11. How do you feel your school leader understands the emotions of others?
12. Do people trust your leader? How do you know? What does the principal do?
13. How would you describe your school leaders' self-confidence?
14. Can you tell me how your school leader builds relationships with teachers at your school?
15. Is your principal an empathetic person to work with? Can you think of a time when your principal showed empathy towards you?
16. What do you wish school leaders understood more about teachers' experiences?
17. Is there anything else that you would like to add to what you have already said?

Appendix C: Journal Prompt

Were there any incidents in the last week where you observed your school leaders' emotional capacities; for example: self-awareness, empathy, motivation, social skills, or self-control?

What was your response to these experiences?

Vita

The author was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She obtained her Bachelor of General Studies degree in 2002 with an emphasis on Child Development from the University of New Orleans. She obtained a Master of the Arts Degree in Elementary Education in 2011, and immediately enrolled in the doctoral program focusing on educational leadership. She has worked in both elementary and middle schools, and is now teaching at the University level.