

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Overall Success of Campus Leaders as Perceived by Veteran Teachers in a Rural mid-sized East Texas Public School District

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Twelve veteran teachers in Texas were interviewed for this qualitative study, to explore their perception of the influence of emotional intelligence on the success of campus leaders in a mid-sized, rural school district in East Texas. Five research questions framed in the context of Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence, guided this study. This theory includes aspects of emotional intelligence such as: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social-skill. All data were collected through face-to-face interviews. Findings suggest that: teachers perceive principals to be more successful when they display and utilize a high degree of emotional intelligence, and less successful when they failed or neglected to utilize a high degree of emotional intelligence. Findings were further interpreted through the detailed accounts of each participant.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, educational leadership, aspiring school leaders, leadership development, rural schools, public schools

In today's global society, many leaders rely upon their emotional intelligence (EI), which is being rapidly shaped by social media (Finkelhor, 2014). Given the imminent evolution of school leadership, campus principals must now exercise a high degree of EI in order to increase the likelihood of being successful (Tomlinson, 2003). Baesu and Bejinaru (2015) argued that leaders and executives maintain specific and distinctive foundations and authority that makes the manner in which they lead unique. Each leader must also possess certain fundamental skills in order to be viewed as a successful leader. This has sparked scholarly debates, which have sought to identify exactly what those common elements are, and which are necessary for the success of leaders. Setting the premise for emotional intelligence, in 1920, Thorndike posited the notion of social intelligence. The researcher suggested that social intelligence is the ability to understand and manage men and women and to act wisely on human relations (Dabke, 2016), a concept that was also supported by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The researchers argued that emotional intelligence was a mental process in which thinking and feeling work tangentially, and found there to be a point in which emotions can be mentally managed (Brown, 2014).

Teachers play a major role in the success of a school. Waruwu (2015) suggested that for campus leaders to increase teacher productivity and lower apathy, a high degree of emotional intelligence is required. He added that leaders might accomplish this by being more cognizant of their emotions as well as the emotions of others. Goleman (1998) posited that emotional intelligence can be honed and developed by training leaders to better understand themselves, others, and the repercussions there within. Olcer, Florescu, and Nastase (2014) pointed out that there is also data that shows that managers with significant levels of emotional intelligence have remarkably positive effects on their workers.

There is limited published research that indicates the extent of success that can be attributed to a leader's emotional intelligence (Dabke, 2016; Gray, 2009; Mayer & Cobb, 2000). Furthermore, few studies exist that analyze an educational leaders' social and emotional skills and the role these skills play in their job performance and success (Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015). Most researchers concur, however, that a principal's emotional intelligence skills are vital to their efforts to improve student achievement in addition to the well being of a school as a learning community (Gray, 2009). According to Bloom (2004), most new principals are comfortable working with parents and teachers, however, they must learn how to navigate the often unforgiving cultural and emotional landscapes of custodians, bus drivers, superintendents, as well as diversity among parent and community groups. Each new situation requires a new response from the leader.

Theoretical Framework: Emotional Intelligence

Potter (2011) posited that as a result of the works of scholars such as Goleman (1995) and Nelson and Low (2007), the concept of emotional intelligence is now providing a useful and practical model for utilization within educational administration and leadership. Specifically, Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory states that those qualities such as intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision are a requirement for success, but do not stand alone. Leaders who prove to be effective on a long-term basis distinguish themselves by also having a high degree of emotional intelligence, which includes: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. However, it is important to note that Goleman's attempt to further explain this phenomena is not intended to devalue cognitive intelligence, but to illuminate the importance of a person's internal characteristics and organizational success (Bardach, 2008). For Goleman (1998), emotionally intelligent managers are

enthusiastic, optimistic, honest, energetic, hopeful and persistent, and they exude empathy, composure and self-assurance which has been perceived as an Americanized portrait of positive mental attitude (Fineman, 2004).

Self-Awareness

Goleman (1998) identified self-awareness as the first component of emotional intelligence. He argued that those with a clear understanding of their inner emotions are neither overly critical nor unrealistic when it comes to hopes and expectations. Moreover, he stated, that they recognize not only how their own feelings affect themselves, but also how they affect others and their ultimate job performance. Self-awareness, he added, is an extension of a person's understanding of his/her own goals and values. A person who is aware of his own values is able to grasp where his/her future lies and why. Self-aware leaders are comfortable with acknowledging their own personal strengths and weaknesses. They do not perceive a threat from someone who offers constructive criticism. In fact, they crave gathering information that will help them grow in their skills and position.

Self-regulation

Goleman (1998) added that self-regulation is the second component of emotional intelligence. He suggested that leaders who are able to self-regulate their emotions are able to control and channel them in useful ways. Like most people, emotionally intelligent leaders have good days and bad days. However, instead of acting on those emotions, emotionally intelligent leaders are able to control their impulses when an employee makes a mistake and handle it in a fair, trusting, and reasonable manner.

Motivation

The third component of emotional intelligence is motivation. Goleman (1998) posited that emotionally intelligent leaders are driven to achieve success that is beyond normal expectations. That includes their own expectations as well as the expectations of others. Specifically, he claimed that emotionally intelligent leaders have a passion for the work itself rather than the external rewards associated with a job well done. Goleman (1998) asserted that leaders with this passion tend to build their work environment with employees with similar traits, which include love for the job or company and a commitment to excel in whatever it is that they do.

Empathy

The fourth component associated with emotional intelligence is empathy (Goleman, 1998). Goleman postulated that empathy does not imply to take on another person's feelings as one of your own or to try to please everyone; rather, for a leader it means thoughtfully considering your employees' feelings as well as other things when making intelligent decisions for the organization. The rise in globalization in today's society, according to Goleman (1998), has enhanced the need for empathy in leaders more than ever before. Specifically, leaders need to be able to have a deep understanding of both the existence and the importance of cultural differences. As a result, leaders are then

able to use their understanding and knowledge to improve their organizations in subtle yet significant ways.

Social Skills

Goleman (1998), attested that the fifth component of emotional intelligence is social skills, or the ability to manage relationships with others. Social skills encompass more than just being friendly with others; it is being friendly with a purpose and being able to move people or employees in whatever direction a leader wants. Goleman (1998) added that socially skilled leaders do not limit their relationship building to small groups but instead cast a wide net in the prospect of building bonds with someone that may be needed to help or assert influence in the distant future. This aspect of emotional intelligence operates under the premise that the bonds built today act more as an investment that may be called upon at a later time.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the influence of emotional intelligence on the overall success of campus leaders as perceived by veteran teachers in a rural mid-sized East Texas public school district. Adopting Huberman's (1988) definition, a veteran teacher for this study is a teacher with six or more years teaching in a classroom of students. Furthermore, the researchers utilized Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligent Development Theory to guide this study. This framework includes the following attributes: (a) self-awareness; (b) self-regulation; (c) motivation; (d) empathy; and (e) social-skill. Therefore, the following questions guided the research:

1. How do veteran teachers perceive the influence of self-awareness on the overall success of a campus leader?
2. How do veteran teachers perceive the influence of self-regulation on the overall success of a campus leader?
3. How do veteran teachers perceive the influence of motivation on the overall success of a campus leader?
4. How do veteran teachers perceive the influence of empathy on the overall success of a campus leader?
5. How do veteran teachers perceive the influence of social skill on the overall success of a campus leader?

Literature Review

Since Darwin's time in the late 1800s to early 1900s there has been much speculation among anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists, as to whether and to what extent human expressions of emotion are universal (Morand, 2001). Thorndike identified and defined social intelligence in 1920 as an ability to understand and manage men and women and to act wisely on human relations (Dabke, 2016). Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts (2004) demonstrated that after Thorndike's identification and subsequent definition, the concept of social intelligence in regards to leadership proved slow to gain footing in scholarly research and studies. Specifically, they determined, that while some researchers correlated social intelligence as necessary and important to leadership in the decades after Thorndike's definition, many scholars classified emotional intelligence more as a myth than as accurate science.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first to introduce emotional intelligence as social intelligence in scholarly research. They posited that a person's skill at reflecting and understanding his own feelings and emotions as well as those of others had a positive correlation to one's capacity to mold thoughts and actions (Brown, 2014). After his research in 1995, Goleman's work gave rise to numerous scholars who researched emotional intelligence as it related to business leaders. He argued that an individual's emotional quotient (EQ) was often identified as a deciding factor in whether or not a leader proved to be successful in contrast to that person's degree of intelligence quotient (IQ) (Brinia et al., 2014). Leaders with high emotional intelligence display patience, perseverance, adaptability, impulse control, optimism, hope, and a jovial and family-like professional and academic mantra (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

School Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Potter (2011) posited that in the last several years, there has been a transition in thought as to what a leader is, and what skill a leader needs in order to be successful. He further added that these transitions in thought are founded upon research-based data that show a positive correlation between successful educational leaders and the utilization of a high degree of emotional intelligence. Waruwu (2015) espoused that relationships, friendships, and personal treatment from superiors to subordinates only occur if the principal has good emotional intelligence. In line with this, Gray (2009) added Emotional intelligence remains the cornerstone of every decision a campus principal makes in which solving problems and making judgments are part of an educational leader's system of values and beliefs. There is a critical distinction that exists between expressing emotion versus perceiving it in others. One set of leadership skills may be more expressive in nature, entailing the demonstration of consideration, camaraderie, friendship, and consultation while another important set of components in leadership entail listening, understanding, empathy, and correctly perceiving others' emotional states (Morand, 2001).

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in a Campus Leader's Ability to Build Enthusiasm

Tatlah and Aslam (2012) demonstrated that educational leaders at the campus level that display a high degree of emotional intelligence concentrate their energy on creating excitement within their team by the infusion of positive synergy that allows them to continue moving toward successful goals. Jahanian, Zolfaghari, and Bagherpour (2012) in a quantitative study of emotional intelligence and principal efficacy, suggested that emotional intelligence is one of the main factors that affects a person's effectiveness, and that there is also an important correlation between it and an educational leader's success in transformational leadership. When leaders utilized a significant level of emotional intelligence, the scholars argued, campus leaders had a greater degree of accomplishment in working with teachers and students, building meaningful and lasting relationships with parents, improving testing proficiency in students, and were generally much more successful in managing the school overall. In support of this, Tatlah and Aslam (2012) asserted that principals with a high degree of emotional intelligence direct their energies on building excitement within their team and imparting in them an abundant energy to motivate them to move forward. Learning, after all, is a cultural and emotional process just as leading people who participate in that process is (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).

Emotional Intelligence Role on Campus Leaders Nurturing Relationships

Brinia et al. (2014) analyzed the influence a campus leader's emotional intelligence holds in a primary school's leadership setting. The researchers noted that it is evident that a strong connection exists between culture and human capital and that the principal facilitates growth and a nurturing environment. The best leaders today attribute this success to the talent and skill of building relationships. Mazurkiewicz (2011) reinforced this thought and proposed that when discussing educational leaders in conjunction with the role of teachers both must maintain a profound consciousness of their own attitudes and limitations in order to determine their own functionalities, and must also have a willingness to serve others in the process of maturing and developing. In other words, they must have intellectual sensitivity.

In another view of emotional intelligence and its impact on educational leaders, Waruwu (2015) approached the subject through a teacher's lens as he noted the correlation between teachers' perceptions about their principal's emotional intelligence and the overall organizational climate and job satisfaction of their school. Specifically, he determined that educators who perceived campus leaders as having a high degree of emotional intelligence had higher morale among faculty, experienced increased student success, and the overall campus operated more effectively in comparison to schools in which faculty perceived principals as having a lesser degree of emotional intelligence reflected in their leadership style. Jahanian et al. (2012) concurred with this view when they pointed out that the emotional intelligence of a campus principal has a positive effect on teachers' commitment and self-satisfaction.

IQ Versus EQ

One topic that has divided philosophers and religious leaders over the years has been the debate of which is the better part of the human self, the head or its heart (Shaffer & Shaffer, 2005). While there are different perspectives regarding the characteristics that make a leader successful, there is a continuous need to have a clear picture of the phenomena involved in professional leadership (Florina, Simona, Rita-Monica, & Michaela, 2012). Murphy (2006) suggested that there is quite a bit of hope and promise regarding emotional intelligence and leadership, but while there are reasons for such optimism, there is still a lot of research that needs to be completed before the concept will come close to living up to all of the hype that is currently present in scholarly work.

Some researchers have argued that research on leadership traits have emphasized the importance of cognitive ability over emotions and implied that feelings are obstacles to rational behavior and logical decision-making (Gray, 2009). A criticism in response to emotional intelligence research is the scholarly disagreement of the general idea of emotional intelligence as anything beyond the realm of current research in IQ as well as personality research (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2003). Locke (2005) asserted that emotional intelligence has too broad of a definition and the concept is constantly changing; whereas, emotional intelligence is not truly a form of intelligence even though it can be applied to many aspects of life including emotions.

Fullan (2002) stated that leaders who are typically identified as being charismatic and well liked are actually a liability for sustained improvement because they are not able to sustain long-term relational gains; instead, those leaders who build enduring greatness are able to do so because they know that sustainability depends on many leaders and thus the qualities of leadership must be attainable by many rather

than one. Scholars have argued that emotional intelligence offers a broader spectrum in recognizing why problems exist (Gray, 2009). Van Genderen (2012) acknowledged that researchers still considered the idea that IQ was more important to a leader's success as late as the 1990s. Goleman (2005) declared that emotional intelligence trumps IQ primarily in those soft domains where intellect is relatively less relevant for success—where, for example, emotional self-regulation and empathy may be more salient skills than purely cognitive ability.

Emotional intelligence is approximately 85% of what supports a leader's success, while intellectual intelligence accounts for approximately 15% of this mixture (Rada-Florina et al., 2012). Baesu and Bejinaru (2015) added that the emotional intelligence level in leaders helps them to think positive in their attitude, which makes them comfortable building work relationships and plays a significant role in their leadership practices. IQ suffers from range restriction in many applied settings, and thus is even more limited in its ability to predict performance and career success; even in entry-level positions, IQ cannot reliably distinguish average and star performers (Emmerling & Goleman, 2005). Singh (2006) poised the assertion that while IQ helps to get a person hired, EQ is what ultimately gets him/her promoted. It is emotional intelligence that differentiates star performers from average ones and is actually four times more important than IQ in determining professional success (Subhashini, 2008).

Methodology

The design of this study was a qualitative design using a phenomenological approach, in an attempt to better understand the influence of emotional intelligence on successful campus leaders. According to Creswell (2012) a qualitative research study is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. The research questions in this study were open-ended, general questions that allowed the researchers to delve into the perspectives of each participant. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews. The use of a phenomenological approach allows the researcher to study a problem if the inquiry explores a phenomenon in terms of a single concept or idea with a group of participants who have all experienced the phenomenon by stressing that only those who have experienced the phenomena can communicate them to the outside world (Roberts, 2013.) Doing so enabled the researchers to examine patterns that participants expressed in relation to their perceptions of experiences with successful educational leaders.

The researchers purposefully selected a mid-sized rural East Texas school district that consisted of three separate campuses. The student population at the time of the research consisted of 1,150 students, which included 559 at the elementary campus, 268 at the junior high campus, and 323 at the high school campus. The district was chosen because it represents an average sized school in the middle of East Texas. It is a large 3A district, which is in the middle of the state's classification system for public schools (1A being the smallest and 6A being the largest). According to reports from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the district identified for this study has never failed to meet academic standards according the state's online database of Academic Performance Reports. This agency establishes performance criteria for school districts each year, for the purpose of rating both schools and districts.

Participants for this study included 12 veteran teachers with at least six years experience who have worked with the same principal for at least three years. In order to equally represent each of the individual campuses within the district, the researcher selected four teachers from each of respective campuses. Thus the population of this study was

purposeful. All participation was on a voluntary basis and no minors were involved. Responses were transcribed, reviewed, classified and interpreted by multiple authors. All notes were reconciled to recorded interviews. All names were recoded to pseudo names to conceal the identity of participants.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the influence of emotional intelligence on the overall success of campus leaders as perceived by veteran teachers in a rural mid-sized East Texas public school district. The researchers reported the major findings of this study, which include common themes that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants. The findings of the study are detailed according to each research question, and a summary of the major findings follows.

Research Question 1

The first research question was used to investigate participant group responses regarding self-awareness skills veteran teachers perceive that principals need in order to effectively lead their perspective campuses. The researchers reviewed the responses of all participants for emerging patterns and themes. The emerging themes, which are described below included: acknowledging weaknesses builds synergy with staff and transparency in admitting mistakes builds trust with staff.

Acknowledging weaknesses builds synergy with staff. More than half of the study participants responded by saying that they liked when their principals acknowledged to their weaknesses in front of staff. By acknowledging their weaknesses, the majority of participants felt the principal created a sense of synergy and team building, and often leaned upon staff to compensate for their weaknesses. This made them feel like a more valued part of the campus. Furthermore, some participants acknowledged school is a stressful place and principals have an extremely challenging job. They felt more aligned with principals who knew and acknowledged their weaknesses. For example, Rachel Cook pointed out:

I don't think you can be a leader if you can't be real with your staff. My principal is an example of that to me. She's not up here saying, "I'm better than you down there." I don't feel like she's casting judgment on me. When a leader does that, it adds a sense of positive energy with the employees.

Mary Peters added:

I think that when a principal has the ability to be aware of who they are and correctly compensate for their weaknesses, it brings a refreshing vibe or synergy to the school community. We feel that we all need growth, and when our principal tells us to grow and we see her working to grow in her weak areas also, everyone feels good about trying to better themselves.

Participants noted that principals who fail to acknowledge them as meaningful contributors to the campus vision, were not perceived as effective leaders of their campus. Lewis Clark, remarked, "I think the principal I had who knew her own strengths and weaknesses, the most, was good at finding people to help her in her weaknesses and had the right staff and right professionals to help her." Gloria Gibson stated:

My current principal will be the first to tell you that she loves to learn. She absolutely loves it. She reads all of the time, but she says that she's also scatterbrained too. She knows her strengths and weaknesses, and I think that if they know their strengths and

weaknesses they can help other people come up to their level. I think that a principal who understands themselves and allows the staff to know that they are cognizant of their weaknesses and make adjustments accordingly are much better leaders, and the staff feels good about having them lead their school.

Transparency in admitting mistakes builds trust with staff. Seven participants in this study noted that they tended to believe that campus principals were more successful when they admitted to their staffs when they made a mistake because it builds trust among staff members. With the many decisions principals make on a daily basis, participants articulated that they felt as though principals who admitted to their mistakes were more genuinely relatable and successful as campus leaders. Mary Peters, a veteran teacher of over 20 years, added that her favorite principal is aware of her weaknesses, and she:

acknowledges when she is wrong or when she has made a mistake. This tells me that she cares about what I think, and it demonstrates that she knows that her actions affect others. I want that in a principal. I need that in a principal.

Rick Roberts, a veteran teacher of 24 years, has worked with 11 principals throughout his teaching career. He stated there are not too many principals that he felt were aware of his or her own emotions or how that awareness affected their respective staffs. He pointed out that one of the principals whom he thought did one of the best jobs leading their campuses was a principal who would say in staff meetings from time to time that she felt that she was “too open at times concerning her weaknesses and mistakes.” Mr. Roberts also stated that as he reflected on that statement, he felt:

To myself, I didn't feel as though her being too open was a detriment to her leadership. I felt like it was honesty. I felt like it was open. It made me think that I can follow someone like this; I can follow someone who owns up to their own mistakes.

Other participants pointed out that it is within reason for a principal to have weaknesses, but that successful leaders that they have encountered are not only aware of those weaknesses, they also acknowledge them and compensate for them. In doing so, they apologize for their mistakes and work collaboratively with their staffs to ensure that those mistakes do not happen again. They also felt that this acknowledgement of weaknesses and mistakes garnered respect for such campus leaders. Overall, the veteran teachers interviewed felt that this made principals more successful as educational leaders.

Research Question 2

The second research question was used to investigate participant group responses regarding self-regulation skills veteran teachers perceive that principals need in order to effectively lead their perspective campuses. The researchers reviewed the responses of all participants for emerging patterns and themes. The emerging themes, which are described below included: Negative behavior and moods alienate staff and maintaining poise, positive professionalism in stressful situations builds a sense of reliability with staff, and failing to think before reacting loses staff confidence.

Negative behavior and moods alienate staff. Eleven of the 12 participants interviewed noted that campus leaders who displayed negative behavior or negative moods were among the worst principals that they worked for. The bad moods or negative behaviors tended to alienate staff members who sought to isolate themselves from their employer rather than work cohesively as a team. In most cases, participants stated that they were glad to see principals replaced who were moody on a regular basis in that this significantly impacted their ability to successfully lead.

Pam Parker, a veteran teacher of 20-years, has worked for nine different principals. She pointed out that she got along with all of her principals, but that there was one in particular who was much moodier than the others and one of her least favorites as well. She stated:

When I think about the principal whom I think did the worse job, I think about one principal in particular. We knew as a staff the minute that he started walking down the hall what kind of mood he was in. He would start doing something that we would call puffing. He had his chest out and shoulders back, and he was strutting down the hall. You knew the moment you saw him do that that you didn't want to have any interactions with him. The sad thing was that he was puffing more times than he wasn't. Nobody wants to work for someone who is always in a bad mood. What ends up resulting is everyone doing their own thing instead of following the leader. This makes for poor leadership. Hank Hess, a veteran teacher who claims to have worked with more than 15 different principals throughout his educational career, added he has had principals who were always in good moods, and he has had principals who were always in bad moods. He shared, "A principal's mood is contagious and it has a huge effect on the teaching staff. Those that are not friendly, sociable, and always in a bad mood have staffs with poor morale who don't want to follow them."

Debbie Poe, a veteran teacher in her twenty-third year of teaching, has worked for seven principals. Of those with whom she has worked for, she also noted that there were some principals who were in good moods most of the time, and then there were some who were constantly in bad moods. She posited that the ones who were in good moods most of the time, were those who she felt were more successful in leading the staff. They were approachable. They made her feel accepted and valued her concerns. Those who were constantly in a bad mood were the ones that the staff avoided, and so the school was polarized with the staff doing one thing and the principal doing something else. There was no cohesion, and the staff felt alienated. Poe stated:

Nobody wants to take all of their problems to the principal all of the time. Teachers with any sense of reason know that you have to solve a great deal of your own problems by yourself inside of the classroom. But, there are times when you need guidance from the principal. They are the disciplinarians of the school. They are the instructional leaders of the school. They are the ones that are supposed to be the experts, and they are supposed help you when you need it.

Positive professionalism in stressful situations builds sense of reliability with staff. Rick Roberts, a 24-year veteran teacher who has worked with 11 principals throughout his teaching career, stated that the principal whom he felt did the best job and whom he identified as his favorite principal always had a smile on his face no matter what he was facing. He stated:

Jeff Hasting always had a smile on his face. He was a great guy and did the best job of any principal that I have ever worked with. You know he had a difficult job. Heck, we were an extremely high needs school with more problems than most schools around. I know that life wasn't always joyful in his office, but he always smiled when we saw him. I think that everyone that he came across felt the same way. He lightened the mood for everyone for sure. Certainly, there were times when some people might think that he should have been a little tougher in this situation or a little more lenient in that situation, but every principal is going to have that. When you're the person that's making decisions and you never let that affect your mood and attitude toward your staff or other students, people can rely on you and depend on your leadership more. His jovial mood drew people to him, and I think it helped his teachers work a little bit harder for him. And, I think that it really did improve the overall aspect of

the school as a whole.

Rachel Cook, a 41-year-old veteran teacher who has been teaching for 11 years, identified that her current principal's positive attitude in spite of constant stressful situations is one of the reasons her campus has been so successful over the last several years. She stated:

My current principal is the best principal that I have ever had. The mood of the campus is reflective of her mood. She is upbeat, and so is the school as a whole. Despite all of the troubles and things that go wrong on a daily basis, we know we can count on her. You as a teacher that we might have a bad day and that everything around us may be falling apart, but Mrs. ___ holds things together. She kind of keeps everything in check even if she is screaming on the inside side. She maintains that steadiness about her, and we all know that she is going to stay steady and dependable. That's what keeps us going, and that helps to feed the positive working atmosphere that we all share. We have a good school, and we all think that our Mrs. ___ is a major reason why.

Failing to think before reacting loses staff confidence. Of the study's 12 participants, seven noted that a campus leader who failed to think before reacting to various situations tended to lose the confidence of the staff. Five of the seven acknowledged that there were times in which a decision needed to be made immediately because of the seriousness of a situation, but all seven wanted to see their principals take the time to think out the problem to see the entire picture rather than making a rash decision if there was time enough to do so. Gloria Gains, a seven-year teacher who has worked for three different campus principals, declared the frustrations felt with a principal who failed to think before reacting. She stated:

One time, I had a little girl out in the hall who was having a meltdown. I was trying to calm her down and was making progress and about to get her back into class when my principal walked-up on the situation. She just walked right up without even knowing what was going on or without even asking me. She came up to the little girl and told her that she wasn't going to act that way and that the girl was supposed to go with her. I didn't need that. I almost had her calmed down and under control to the point that I could get her back into the class so she wouldn't miss anymore instruction. And, just like that, the principal escalated everything back to the starting point. That wasn't the first time the principal did that, and each and every time that she did, I lost a little bit more confidence in her.

Heather Wiggins, a 62-year-old teacher with 24 years of teaching experience also noted this loss of confidence that the staff had for a campus leader who reacted without thinking. She stated:

I think that it's always better for a principal to think before he reacts to a situation. I've had some that did, and some that didn't. The ones who didn't usually didn't see the entire picture and made a wrong decision that they ended up having to correct a little later. Teachers rarely wanted to listen to those principals who didn't think things out first because that generally meant that the teachers would have to do something all over again whenever the principal finally realized that they gave out wrong information.

Research Question Three

The third research question was used to investigate participant group responses regarding motivational skills veteran teachers perceive that principals need in order to effectively lead their perspective campuses. The researchers reviewed the responses of all participants for

emerging patterns and themes. The emerging theme described below is: use of positive praise and encouragement builds confidence in staff.

Use of positive praise and encouragement builds confidence in staff. All 12 participants acknowledged that motivational skills are essential for a leader to be successful. Each participant had a different story of what motivational strategies their best principals used, but all agreed that those who used the motivational strategies of positive praise and encouragement were much more successful than those educational leaders who did not. For those leaders who enveloped words of praise and encouragement to their staff, they also infused a sense of confidence among them that let them know that their principal thought that the things that they were doing was being noticed and liked.

Heather Wiggins noted that a good leader does many things to make the staff want to do a better job. She mentioned that her favorite principal used to go around the campus in the mornings before the students entered the building and offer all of the staff members chocolates or candy. She stated:

What I liked the most about my favorite principal was that aside from all of the little things that let us know that he was thinking about us, he would always tell us when he thought we were doing a good job. He would always tell us how proud he was of us when we did something good or something that stood out. I think that it's that type of motivation that helps make a principal lead a school better. I know that to hear those positive things makes people feel good about themselves. It makes people feel like they are doing a good job. When your boss tells you that he is proud of you. You want to continue to do things to make him proud. I know that is how other staff members feel because that's how it makes me feel, and I see it in others even if we don't talk about it. The assurance that you are doing a good job makes you feel sure about yourself and your school.

Hank Hess recognized in his interview that his current principal does not do much to motivate staff, and he feels that this is a detriment to her ability to lead effectively. As he listed all of the principals that he has worked for throughout his career from least successful to most successful, he placed her as one of the ones at the bottom of the list. He stated:

My current principal doesn't really motivate the staff. I have had several that went out of their way to make sure you knew that they approved of the job that you did. I have had some that would do things for the staff to let them know. They might cook food for everyone. They might come by and visit with you from time to time. They might bring you something special for you on your birthday. The best thing that I thought that the good ones did, though, was to give you positive notes about something specific that you did good. One of the best principals that I ever had used to give us a hand written note in our box of something that we did that was above and beyond. I think that a staff that is motivated has a principal that cares for them. We are confident in one another. They will take care of us, and we as a staff will work hard to take care of them.

Weldon Wilcox acknowledged much of the same sentiments as the other participants did in his interview. He added that motivating staff and students was one of the most important things that a campus leader has to do if he is going to be successful at leading a school. He posited:

All of the good campus leaders that I have ever had always took the time to acknowledge the good things that their staff members did. Teachers are usually intrinsically motivated to do a good job already. They want to please their boss, and that acknowledgement and encouragement of a job well done does more for their

confidence and morale than the measly raise that we all get with our teacher pay step going into the next year. The best principal I ever had took the time to send encouraging emails or to stop by my class and tell me he was proud or excited to see something good that I was doing. One time, he mentioned something that I was doing in my class in front of the entire staff at a faculty meeting. It made me feel like I was an expert teacher even if I wasn't any better than the other teachers in the building.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was used to investigate participant group responses regarding empathy skills veteran teachers perceive that principals need in order to effectively lead their perspective campuses. The researchers reviewed the responses of all participants for emerging patterns and themes. The emerging themes, which are described below included: displays of compassion build family atmosphere with staff and empathetic equilibrium is valued by staff.

Displays of compassion build family atmosphere. All participants interviewed acknowledged that they felt that being an empathetic leader was an important trait for principals to display in order for them to be successful as leaders of a campus. When principals are empathetic, the participants noted, the school feels more like a family atmosphere. Those that failed to show empathy to staff, were mentioned as some of the least successful principals that the participants worked for.

Forty-one-year-old veteran teacher, Rachel Cook, added that a principal who is ultimately empathetic towards their staff is usually one that is more successful. She stated that it was a positive thing for a principal to think about the staff as though they were the head of the family looking out of the best interest of everyone. Cook said:

When I was not having success in my classroom on a particular lesson, I knew that the principals that I had who were empathetic towards me wanted to give me guidance and support to help me be more successful. They were pulling for me, and I could tell that. They would give me pointers and tips and build me up so that I had a chance to be successful the next time I taught a similar lesson. Because most new teachers are young when they enter the teaching profession, they look toward the principal almost as a parent figure. Every teacher wants a principal to care for them in spite of their weaknesses. On the other hand, I remember having a principal who I did not like, and I don't think anyone else in the school liked them either. When I did not do well on a lesson and that principal saw it, it was like he wanted to get rid of us right away. I didn't feel as though he cared about me or my feelings. I think he just expected perfection and got rid of teachers when he didn't find that in them. And since nobody is perfect, he was constantly in conflict because of it. If you don't have a campus leader who is leading the school as though they are leading a family with all of the hurts and heartaches that go with that, then teachers and other employees won't respect them.

Mary Peters concurred with this train of thought as she noted that just like a family may have a bad home life because of the actions of the head of the family so too might a school have a bad school life because of the actions of the head of the school. She further demonstrated that nobody benefits when the campus principal is not able to lead their school with care and compassion for those under their care. She claims that she has had both good and bad campus leaders throughout her career, but the ones that she thought were more successful than the others showed empathy to the students, parents,

and staff members that they interacted with. She concluded:

My current principal cares deeply about her job, but what's more important than that is that she cares deeply for us. That is not something that you can hide or fake. We all know as a faculty that she cares about us. When we hurt, we know that she hurts too. When one of our students has something happen to them at school or at home, we know that she is truly troubled by it. When a parent comes to her office with a legitimate issue, we know that she tries to see things from the parent's point of view. We care about her that much more because we know that she cares about her school family, us.

Empathetic equilibrium. While all participants noted that they felt that campus principals cannot be successful unless they were also empathetic, five of them went a step further and argued that empathy has an appropriate level that a leader has to find. In other words, these five participants noticed that some of the principals that they had were too empathetic at times. While they liked having empathetic leaders, they also liked when a leader knew when to set feelings aside in order to make decisions that were in the best interest of the campus. Those that were constantly too worried about what the staff felt or how they would be perceived if they did not make decisions were considered by these five participants as being just as ineffective or sometimes even more ineffective than those who did not show empathy at all.

Weldon Wilcox realized this as he analyzed that being an empathetic leader definitely helps a principal be more successful as a leader, but it can also hurt them. He said:

I think that at times principals can be much too empathetic. [Laughs] And that hurts them in the long run. They can't do this because they are scared it will hurt someone's feelings. They can't do that because they are scared that will hurt someone's feelings too. So instead of doing something, they do nothing. Or, I have seen a principal let his staff run all over him because he was a nice guy and couldn't say no to someone when they raised an issue with him. When he was asked why he did that, he would say things like we don't understand what that teacher is going through or that the teacher must be going through a tough time right now and we need to help out. Of course we need to take people's feelings into consideration, but sometimes we also need to make tough decisions that are in the best interest of the school. I think that a successful principal is able to be empathetic and understand where that line is not to cross.

Hank Hess added to this sentiment as he stated that it is important for a principal to be empathetic, but that there is a fine line on how empathetic to be. He went on to say that he has known some good principals who were very successful at leading their schools because they knew where that line was. Others, he added, did not know where that line was and they went to the extreme in regards to empathy. He stated:

I've known one principal that didn't want to make anybody mad, and I think that is way too much empathy. As a principal, you've got to make some people upset when you are constantly dealing with tough decisions. You've got to be able to walk that fine line in order to move your campus forward. The principal who didn't want to make anyone mad, ended up frustrating everyone instead. No, they didn't get mad at him because they felt like he had a good heart, but they were frustrated that he couldn't see past the issue and consider the entire school's situation over one teacher getting her feelings hurt. The principal ended up getting reassigned at the end of that year, so I don't think the people in the district office thought he was successful either.

Research Question 5

The fifth research question was used to investigate participant group responses regarding social skills veteran teachers perceive that principals need in order to effectively lead their perspective campuses. The researchers reviewed the responses of all participants for emerging patterns and themes. The emerging themes, which are described below included: building positive relationships with students are relevant and building relationships with staff are relevant.

Relationships with students are relevant. Of the 12 participants interviewed, seven acknowledged that building relationships with students was an integral part of being a principal and necessary for success. The veteran teachers noted that when principals take time to build relationships with students, they bring about a cohesiveness to the climate of the student body, and ultimately the school. Tiffany Lamb noted this in her interview:

My best principal always mingled with the students, especially in the cafeteria. She would sit around the cafeteria with them talking to them and asking them questions. She got to know them, and they got to know her. I think that by doing this she let them know that she wasn't this cold, removed, authority figure. Paying them attention and getting to know them as people let the students know that she cared about them. She always had incentives for the kids to work for, and she always pushed them individually and in groups to reach their goals. I mean, our school is about getting kids excited about learning, and the leader of the school should be someone they respect and who they know actually cares about learning. It brings us all closer together.

Rick Roberts also discussed the feeling of cohesion in the school as he mentioned that his most successful principal did a good job at the social skill of building relationships with students. He referred to his most successful principal as a father figure that made sure that he made time to spend with the students while guiding them and listening to their conversations about their daily lives. He felt that if they were comfortable talking to him, he could steer them out of trouble if it ever arose. Roberts stated:

One of the very best principals that I ever worked for was at a low socioeconomic school district. The principal was a super good guy to the kids, and they listened to him as they might listen to their father. In fact, many of the students that gravitated toward him did not have fathers in their lives, and so I think they looked up to the principal to fill that need. He would always cook out for the kids. He had a huge grill and would talk with the as he cooked. He stayed after school and watched them practice in whatever events that they were in. He traveled with the team sometimes so that he could encourage them before their games, or congratulate them after their games, or sometimes even console them. The students looked up to him. They loved him, and they worked hard for him. He made the school feel like a family unit that was held together by his passion for the students whom he served.

Relationships with staff are relevant. Of the twelve participants, all stated they felt that when a principal builds relationships with staff, a stronger bond develops between them. This bond led to support from the teachers toward the principal and from the principal toward the teachers. Each of the principals that the participants discussed building positive relationships with their staffs were the some of the very same principals with whom they considered most successful.

Participant Gloria Gains mentioned in her interview that her principal went out of the

way to make sure that not only she built relationships with her staff but that they also built relationships with each other. She claimed that it made the school a strong family unit that was led by a successful principal who each and every staff member knew that she loved them. Gains stated:

We have teacher team cook-offs that our principal puts together. She organizes the teams, and we have so much fun working together as our principal mingles among us making sure things are going well. We also have family nights where we do things as a school family a few times throughout the school year. None of the other schools that I know do this, but we feel like a family when we do. Like, one night we may all vote on a movie to go to and then we all load up and take over a movie theater to watch the movie together. Or we may all decide that we are going to go antique shopping, so we caravan and take over the antique stores. Once we decided to all go out to dinner together, and made reservations for thirty at a Mexican-food restaurant. We always have a blast. If one of us has an idea for something for everyone to do as a team, she is always up to trying to make sure it happens. She does all of these things I think because she has very high expectations for us, and this allows us to blow off some steam. Our school is much stronger as a team, and we are more successful as a staff because of it.

Mary Peters pointed out that the most successful principal that she ever had not only cared about her professional life, she also took the time out of her busy schedule to care about her personal life as well. In doing so, she created a bond that has remained intact the entire time she's been associated with the campus. Mrs. Peters indicated:

I know of one instance in my life when things were going horribly wrong. I went straight to her and said that this is what is going on in my life right now. She didn't tell me that I needed to leave my personal baggage away from the job as I have seen other principals do with staff sometimes. No, she took the time to listen to me, give me advice on what she thought that I should do, and then checked on me often afterwards to make sure that I was ok. I always remember that, and the very few times I hear someone say something negative about her, I make sure to correct them and let them know how lucky they are that we have her. I'm not the only one who feels this way about her; in fact, really, just about the entire staff feels the same way I do. Almost all of us have a bond with her and it makes our school stronger.

Conclusions and Implications

An overall conclusion of the findings revealed that veteran teachers perceive that principals are more successful when they display emotional intelligent traits as outlined in Daniel Goleman's (2017) Emotional Intelligence Theoretical framework. These traits included Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Empathy, Motivation, and Social Skills. Incorporation of these traits among principals in addition to cognitive intelligence, led veteran teachers to perceive that those principals were more successful than those who did not incorporate these traits. Mehdinezhad and Mansouri (2016) posit that the guidance and perceptions of teachers about principals' leadership behaviors on the overall efficacy of teachers has a positive impact on individual teachers.

The findings of this study support Goleman's (2017) first component of emotionally intelligent framework for leaders in which he posited that self-aware people know and are

comfortable talking about their limitations and strengths. They often demonstrate a need for constructive criticism. Those without self-awareness, he argued, interpret the message that they need to improve as a sign of failure. Paren (2015) noted that one of the things that inspirational leaders do is to selectively show their weaknesses; doing so reveals their approachability and humanity. Thus a conclusion in this study is that principals who were comfortable talking about their strengths and weaknesses and who were also comfortable in admitting when they made mistakes were perceived by veteran teachers to have built synergy and trust with their employees.

The findings of this study also support Goleman's (2017) second component of emotionally intelligent framework for leaders in which he stated that people who are in charge of their feelings and impulses are able to create an environment of trust and fairness. Many of the bad things that happen in companies and organizations, he further added, are the result of impulsiveness. Self-regulation, then, is a propensity for reflection and thoughtfulness and instills comfort and integrity with ambiguity and change. In this research study, findings suggest the conclusion that veteran teachers perceived that those principals who maintain a high degree of professionalism and poise in stressful situations build a sense of reliability of their actions among staff whereas those principals with negative behaviors and those who failed to think before they acted, lost trust in their staffs and alienated them.

The findings of this study further support Goleman's (2017) third component of emotionally intelligent framework for leaders in which he argued that leaders who keep setting the performance standards high for themselves, also do the same for the organization when they are in a position to do so. In other words, a drive to surpass goals and an interest in keeping score is contagious. Goleman argued that when people love their jobs for the work itself, they often feel committed to the organizations that make that work possible. This suggests the conclusion that veteran teachers perceive that principals who use positive praise and encouragement build confidence in their staff.

The findings of this study support Goleman's (2017) fourth component of emotionally intelligent framework for leaders in which he identified that leaders who thoughtfully consider employees' feelings as well as other factors when making decisions know how to give effective feedback. Furthermore, they know when to push for better performance and when to hold back. This study demonstrates the conclusion that veteran teachers who found that their principals used empathetic equilibrium with staff were able to build a family-like atmosphere and were valued by the staff overall.

Finally, the findings of this study support Goleman's (2017) fifth component of emotionally intelligent framework for leaders in which he indicated that social skills involve friendliness with the purpose of moving people in the direction you want them to go. Having social skills does not mean that you socialize constantly; rather, it means working according to the assumption that nothing gets done alone. Goleman summarized that social skill is the ability to find common ground and build rapport with others. In this study, social skills involve principals finding common ground and building rapport with students, staff, and community members in an effort to move them in a positive direction that benefits them and the school campus. Thus a suggested conclusion is that veteran principals perceive that those principals who can do this were more successful than those who cannot.

Implications for Practice

Mathew and Gupta (2015) asserted, "The role of emotional intelligence in forecasting effective leaders is an area of research that is gaining energy and popularity in industrial/organizational psychology (p. 76). Gray (2009) pointed out that current research on

leadership traits emphasizes the importance of cognitive abilities over emotions and implies that feelings are obstacles to rational behavior and logical decision-making. He argued, however, that for a principal, emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of every decision that he makes; solving problems and making judgments are a part of a leader's system of values and beliefs. The findings from this qualitative research study indicate that veteran teachers perceive that a high degree of emotional intelligence is necessary for an educational leader to possess in order to successfully lead their campus. Based on these findings, the following implications are recommended for educational leaders:

- Reflect and recognize emotional intelligence. Service and Fekula (2008) asserted that effective leaders must recognize their emotional blind spots because they will ultimately determine success.
- Hone emotional intelligence skills. Chamorro-Premuzic (2013) posited that emotional intelligence can increase with deliberate practice and training.
- Develop leadership programs that highlight emotional intelligence skills and the overall importance and usability for campus leaders. Dabke (2016) stated that those in charge of educational institutions would benefit from the insights from training and leadership development activities that sensitizes them to subordinate needs.
- Pay attention to teacher job satisfaction. While it is important for an educational leader to self-reflect on his or her own strength and weaknesses and how they affect employees, it is just as important to gather information that demonstrates staff perceptions about a leader's success or lack thereof. Waruwu (2015) added that policies need to be implemented that look at teachers' job satisfaction by educational leaders.
- Focus on each component of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence framework. Sadri (2012) suggested that organizations focus on each one of the emotional intelligence competencies as discrete skills and assist leaders in developing each skill independently.
- Provide on-going professional development in schools as well as in university programs that focuses on EI.

This study highlighted the inherent influence that emotional intelligence can have on a principal's success, as perceived by veteran teachers. Given this, the practical value of this research is grounded in the fact that it delves into the lived experiences of teachers, which are arguably the employee most impacted by a principal's leadership. It was found that veteran teachers perceive principals as more successful when they display emotional intelligent traits as outlined in Daniel Goleman's (2017) Emotional Intelligence Theoretical framework. In today's world, only educational leaders who are equipped to manage their own emotions as well as that of their team will have greatest chance for success (Gage & Smith, 2016).

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