Spring 2023

Successful Admissions in a Time of Great Uncertainty: A Case Study of Employees' Perceptions of Employee Well-Being and Emotional Intelligence

Sarah Freed
sfreed@wcupa.edu

Successful Admissions in a Time of Great Uncertainty: A Case Study of Employees' Perceptions

of Employee Well-Being and Emotional Intelligence

A Dissertation Defense

Presented to the Faculty of the

College of Education and Social Work

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of

Doctor of Education

By,

Sarah L. Freed

April 2023

Dedication

      This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their continuous love and support throughout this journey. Without them, this would not have been possible. To my husband, Kevin Michael, thank you for your unwavering support. Your selflessness these last three years did not go unnoticed. Thank you for caring for the girls and our home, allowing me to stay focused and dedicated. Thank you for your endless patience, kind heart, and unconditional love. Steady As We Go, Love! To my parents, Tom and Linda, thank you for instilling in me the importance of education. Your endless love, support, and encouragement makes me feel like I can accomplish anything. As you know, this journey has been emotionally challenging, yet you both stood by my side, quietly guiding me to the end. Thank you also for the love and support you constantly show Kevin and the girls. To Thomas and Samantha, my intellectual north stars, thank you for your willingness to help while you balanced your own families and responsibilities.

      To my sweet, beautiful girls, Reagan Francesca and Madden Elizabeth, this is for you! One of my main motivations these last three years was knowing I was providing you with an example of dedication and persistence. Not everything you embark on in life will be easy, but if you work hard, remain dedicated, and persist, I promise, my sweet "Cookies," you will be proud of your accomplishments. I love you!

Acknowledgments

  I want to acknowledge those who motivated me to start this journey, helped these last three years, and supported me to the end. First, thank you to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri, for your expertise, assistance, support, and patience this past year. We have come a long way since the Summer of 2022! In addition, thank you to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Kristen Crossney and Dr. Megan Nolan. Your expertise, support, and guidance this past year were greatly appreciated. To Dr. Jackie Hodes and Dr. Heather Schugar, and the other Ed.D. faculty, learning from each of you has been an honor. Thank you for encouraging us to be our best.

  I thank and acknowledge the sixteen participants who contributed to this study. I would like to recognize the members of leadership from the case study site. It was a pleasure getting to know you. Thank you for your commitment to the field. Your willingness to support and trust me was greatly appreciated.

  To Cohort 5, we did it! We have each come a long way from those first-time doctoral students starting their program over Zoom™. Congratulations to each of you! Finally, to "Orkideh's Actual Chosen Ones," what an incredible group of women. Thank you for your endless support, kindness, and friendship.

Abstract

This qualitative embedded single-case study explores admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role emotional intelligence has on these outcomes, through the lens of Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984). This study is necessary because of the turbulent higher education landscape and because social factors contributing to this turbulence are expected to stay the same. More specifically, this study is situated in a thriving Office of First-Year Admissions at an institution within a public university system in a rural setting experiencing an unstable organizational landscape. I interviewed sixteen employees in a successful mid-size public university's enrollment management division. In addition, I conducted two days of observation. Three themes related to employee well-being emerged from the one-on-one semi-structured interviews and observation hours: contributions to success, professional development, and work-life balance. Regarding perceptions of emotional intelligence on success and employee well-being, participants emphasized empathy when referring to other staff members and the students they serve. Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984) guides this study, emphasizing the model's structural and human resource frames. This qualitative study adds to the limited literature focused on the obstacles experienced by admissions professionals today and provides enrollment leaders with an example of success to emulate. This study emphasizes the value of investing in the well-being of employees and the positive impact emotional intelligence has on the success of an institution.

Keywords: admissions, employee well-being, emotional intelligence, case study

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

Today's modern-day higher education enrollment landscape is often described as

problematic, diminishing, perilous, and experiencing an impending collapse (Copley & Douthett,

2020; Eide, 2018; Grawe, 2018). More specifically, the public higher education enrollment

landscape is often described as turbulent, unstable, and under constant change (Guraja et al.,

2022). This landscape results from social forces and compounding challenges such as declining

birth rates, decreased state appropriations, the Great Recession, a global pandemic, and another

looming global recession (Grawe, 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Tandberg & Laderman, 2018).

Declining birth rates are attributed to the Great Recession (Campion, 2020), resulting in fewer

high school graduates and, therefore, fewer college-going students year after year (Campion,

2020; Copley & Douthett, 2020). Decreasing state appropriations, which can also be attributed to

the Great Recession but began decades earlier, are causing institutional instability and a more

significant financial burden on today's students (Berger & Kostal, 2002; Ford et al., 2021).

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan research and policy

institution, in 1988, institutional tuition dollars provided a quarter of all public universities'

revenue (Mitchell et al., 2019). Today, because of the decline in state appropriations, this

revenue is split evenly between tuition and state funding (Mitchell et al., 2019). Finally, the

global pandemic and current global economic instability have had and continue to impact the

stability of higher education institutions directly (Ford et al., 2021; Kelchen et al., 2021).

According to Kelchen et al. (2021), the residual financial impacts of the pandemic will deepen

state appropriation cuts for the next five years. In the wake of these challenges, many higher

education institutions struggle to maintain enrollment and financial stability (Grawe, 2018)

because revenue and operating expenses are now dependent on declining student tuition earnings (Ford et al., 2021; Kelchen et al., 2021).

Among all these factors, declining birth rates have the most substantial impact on the enrollment stability of institutions today. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2021), declining birth rates since 2015 decreased enrollment at two-year and four-year institutions. In fact, despite being in the middle of a global pandemic, when college presidents were surveyed in 2020 about future challenges for higher education, 86 percent reported considering enrollment at their institution -- not the pandemic itself -- to be the most critical issue they would face in the future (Kim et al., 2020). This means the state of enrollment has been and continues to be a point of concern for today's campus leaders.

Yet, some higher education institutions seem less affected by these multiple social forces and compounding challenges (Bransberger et al., 2020; Campion, 2020; Eide, 2018). In general, elite colleges seem less impacted by today's turbulent enrollment landscape (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Campion, 2020; Eide, 2018). Furthermore, compared to other schools in their category, there is a group of less competitive public institutions across the nation experiencing enrollment and financial stability. According to U.S. News and World Report, a public institution of higher education is run by state governments and receives funding from tax dollars (Narayan, 2011). Often ranked in the shadow of competitive private and public universities in terms of prestige and popularity, this group of mid-sized, regional public institutions appears less impacted during these unprecedented times. This study focuses on one of these institutions, "Success University," to understand university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. More specifically, because institutions rely heavily on their admissions office to secure enrollment and maintain

financial stability (Baum & Ma, 2012; Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014; Trow, 1988), this study focuses on the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the purpose and rationale of this qualitative study and outlines the research questions and rationale of its methods. Finally, this chapter will conclude with the presentation of the study's significance to research about higher education.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative embedded single case study (Yin, 2018) explores university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. More specifically, this study is situated in a thriving Office of First-Year Admissions at a public university system institution in a rural setting experiencing an unstable m organizational landscape.

The American Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) defines admissions as the area of an institution responsible for recruiting students and processing admission applications and decisions. Hodum and James (2010) described the department's primary functions as the point of contact for prospective students and the institution's public face. The primary responsibilities of an admissions office are to promote their college or university and provide access to higher education (Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014). Offices of admissions report to the divisions of student affairs or academic affairs (Dungy, 2003); however, in the past decade, it has become more popular for these offices to report to a division dedicated to the enrollment management of the institution (Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014).

In the 1960's, admissions offices typically operated with only two people, a Chief Admissions Officer and one clerical support position (Hodum & James, 2010). More recently, however, admissions offices employ, on average, 12 to 20 employees per department

(AACRAO, 2015). Typically, the department has a Director of Admissions, who reports to a Chief Enrollment Management Officer, and other professional staff members like Admissions Counselors and Administrative Assistants (Hossler et al., 2015).

According to the Western Association for College Admissions Counseling (WACAC), during each recruitment cycle, admissions counselors spend two to four months traveling locally, nationally, or internationally (2014). In addition to recruitment travel, admission professionals are expected to conduct application review, event planning, manage marketing and social media campaigns, learn new technologies, lead teams, and develop other professional and student staff. These responsibilities are executed while building trust with students, their families, school counselors, and their campus community (Phair, 2014). In a 2014 National Association of College Admissions Counselor survey, the organization stated that "in some cases the admissions profession bears the burden for their institutions very survival" (Phair, 2014, p. 3).

This burden can cause a high-stress workplace environment, leading to high turnover rates (Edwards et al., 2009; Erasmu et al., 2015). Higher education employees leave the industry because the private sector offers better compensation and benefits (Erasmu et al., 2015). The increased competitiveness in college admission due to declining college-aged students and state appropriations, along with technological advances, contribute to burnout within the profession (Loveland, 2018). Over the last few decades, there has been a shift in responsibilities for admissions professionals. Responsibilities have shifted from advising and counseling students to a more results-oriented and data-driven environment focused on the return on investment (Loveland, 2018; Phair, 2014). This data-driven, high-stress workplace, with changing responsibilities, is affecting the milieu of the admission professional nationwide.

Rationale for Study

The success of admissions offices is vital to an institution of higher education (Baum & Ma, 2012; Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014; Liu, 2022; Trow, 1988). Similarly, employee well-being is also vital to the success of a postsecondary organization (Hossler et al., 2015). Exploring admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence, through the lens of Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984) is necessary because of the turbulent higher education landscape and because social factors contributing to this turbulence are expected to stay the same. Previous research on employee well-being within a higher education setting focused on academic faculty or students (Oshagbemi, 2013; van Straaten et al., 2016). This study focuses on the impact of well-being on the success of higher education non-academic administrators experiencing an unpredictable enrollment environment.

Problem Statement

In a post-pandemic world, industries, including higher education, are more regularly assessing their employees' work environments and well-being (Laker & Roulet, 2021). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, well-being "includes the presence of positive emotions and moods, the absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning" (CDC, 2022). The well-being of higher education employees is an important topic to explore because of the turbulent, unstable, and constantly changing environment (Copley & Douthett, 2020; Grawe, 2018). This type of work setting impacts university employees and causes strain (Woods, 2010), which is undoubtedly true for employees within admissions offices.

The success of admission departments is often measured by their ability to meet established enrollment goals and maintain financial stability (Baum & Ma, 2012; Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014; Trow, 1988). Declining birth rates, decreased state appropriations, and a global pandemic have created stressful, competitive working environments (Loveland, 2018). Trow (1988) discussed the reliance of universities on enrollment. This reliance on enrollment and tuition to meet operating expenses increases pressure on admissions offices (Baum & Ma, 2012; Trow, 1988). Many significant challenges confronting higher education today are addressed by admission policies and are executed by admissions professionals (Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014). Instead of focusing on the enrollment goals and measured outcomes of admissions departments, this study explores the psycho-emotional well-being of admissions professionals, specifically the role(s) admissions staff perceive emotional intelligence to play in their well-being in a "successful" admissions department.

The dynamics within a workplace, including those within higher education institutions, cause employees to experience different emotional states (Cherkowski et al., 2021; Mendzheritskaya & Hansen, 2019; Woods, 2010). While exploring success and employee well-being, this study specifically examines the role of emotional intelligence on well-being and success. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Founded by researchers Mayer and Salovey, EI is influenced by Thorndike's model of social intelligence (Bar-On et al., 2006), which states that social intelligence is "the ability to understand and manage people" (Thorndike & Stein, 1937, p. 275). In a higher education setting, examining well-being and emotional intelligence provides a richer understanding of the employees' experience (Woods, 2010).

Research Questions

Declining enrollments, shifting demographics, decreased state appropriations, and a diminishing employee base are plaguing modern-day public institutions of higher education. Nevertheless, successfully enrolling mid-size public colleges and universities exist. Scholars and postsecondary practitioners can focus on these successful cases to learn what works and to navigate this challenging and stressful time in higher education. The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the admissions staff and related leadership perceptions at Success University, a regional public institution of higher education experiencing stable first-year undergraduate admission enrollment success, about admissions department employee well-being?

2. Specifically, what role(s) do admissions department staff perceive emotional intelligence plays in departmental enrollment success and employee well-being?

Rationale for Methods

This study utilizes a qualitative embedded single case study approach (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Yin, 2018). This case study focuses on the success of the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University, an institution of higher education within a public university system in the Northeast. The Northeast, saturated with public and private universities, is projected to have 12% fewer high school graduates between 2025 and 2037 (Bransberger et al., 2020). The public university system for which this institution is a member has already experienced a 26.7% enrollment decline since 2010 and recently was forced to merge six of its fourteen institutions due to financial challenges. Yet, alongside three large research universities,

this mid-size public institution continues to rank among its state's top 10 public universities and continues to thrive.

This study will include a qualitative embedded single case study approach. A case study "is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2018, p.15). To investigate a phenomenon in depth, a case study requires extensive data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Yin (2018), there are five distinct rationales for using a single case design. This study addresses Yin's third rationale by focusing on the day-to-day operations of an office of admissions, including the daily social interactions of the employees (Yin, 2018). This study is an embedded, single case study because it explores multi-level units of analysis (Yin, 2018). These units of analysis include employees within the Office of First-Year Admissions, as well as subunits categorized by level of responsibility and reflective of the division and department's organizational chart. These subunits include related leadership, interdivisional partners, and departmental student employees. Data was collected via semi-structured one-on-one interviews and through the observation of functions within the department and aspects of the division. In addition, this data was analyzed for themes (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019).

This study gains contextual, detailed knowledge about the perceptions of department success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence at a public institution of higher education. Past studies focused on emotional intelligence and employee well-being mainly used a quantitative approach (Gelaide et al., 2018; Hacket & Hortman, 2008; Woods, 2010). This qualitative embedded case study approach captures a range of perspectives absent from today's research on emotional intelligence in higher education and today's narrative regarding the enrollment landscape and the state of higher education.

Significance of Study

This study is significant because of its value on employees' well-being within the higher education sector. According to Woods (2010), any scholarly interest in the value of employees' lived experiences within higher education is important to the industry. Using an embedded single case study approach, this study focuses on employees' lived experiences within the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University. More specifically, this study explores the perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence.

Offices of admissions are critical to the success of an institution (Baum & Ma, 2012; Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014; Liu, 2022; Trow, 1988). In addition to representing their institutions and recruiting students, admissions departments provide access to higher education (Berger & Kostal, 2000; Ford et al., 2021; Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014). An office of admissions also assists with institutional stability because an institution's enrollment is central to higher education's financial health and social functions (Trow, 1988). The compounding influences contributing to today's unstable enrollment landscape are not expected to end any time soon. Therefore, focusing this research on an admissions office, specifically one less impacted by today's turbulent enrollment landscape, will benefit those institutions struggling to maintain enrollment and financial stability. This study can serve as a conduit for identifying where concerns related to employee well-being and its impact on the organizational structure and human resources might exist for an admissions office experiencing enrollment instability. This study provides a starting point for other universities to identify their limitations while guiding improvement opportunities.

Finally, this study focuses on the individual admissions professional within the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University. Admissions professionals are the first point of

contact with prospective students, and their ability to engage the public directly impacts the financial bottom line for colleges and universities (Hossler et al., 2015). Yet, they are a group typically overlooked. Admissions professionals experience high-stress workplace environments leading to high turnover rates (Edwards et al., 2009; Erasmu et al., 2015). This constant high turnover hinders an institution's ability to meet and exceed enrollment goals (Phair, 2014). With a focus on employee well-being and emotional intelligence, the results of this study will add to the limited literature focused on the obstacles experienced by admissions professionals today, assist with addressing the high turnover rates, and provide enrollment leaders with an example of success to emulate. This study emphasizes the value of investing in the well-being of employees and the positive impact emotional intelligence has on the success of an institution.

Summary

The narrative regarding today's modern-day higher education landscape is one of despair and upheaval (Copley & Douthett, 2020; Eide, 2018; Grawe, 2018; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). While acknowledging the structural realities that have led to this state of affairs, this study focuses on the opposite. The study uses the challenges facing higher education enrollment, like declining enrollments, state appropriations, and a decreasing workforce, as guiding factors but emphasizes learning from the case of a regional institution that appears to be successfully maintaining a healthy enrollment. Rather than focusing on numerical and enrollment success, however, this study focuses on the emotional well-being of the Admissions employees at this institution, specifically their emotional intelligence. This qualitative embedded case study approach captures a range of perspectives absent from today's research on emotional intelligence in higher education and today's narrative regarding the enrollment landscape and the state of higher education.

Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the literature focused on employee well-being, emotional intelligence, and the impact of employee well-being and emotional intelligence on success. Chapter 2 concludes with an explanation of the conceptual framework used for this study.

Chapter 2

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section provides a literature review of two key concepts related to this study's research questions. These topics include employee well-being and emotional intelligence, including their relevance when exploring enrollment success in higher education. In the second part of this chapter, this study's conceptual framework, anchored in Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984), is presented. In addition, provided is a figure displaying the conceptual framework and its relevance to the study.

Literature Review

This study explores how employee well-being and emotional intelligence contribute to the success of public higher education admissions offices. In April 2021, Forbes magazine published The Future Workplace 2021 HR Sentiment Survey and reported that "68% of senior HR leaders rated employee well-being and mental health a top priority" (Future Workplace, 2021). This literature review discusses the concept of employee well-being and its relevance to employees within a higher education setting. This literature review also discusses emotional intelligence, tensions surrounding the concept, and its relevance to employees within a higher education setting. Higher education employees experience high-stress workplace environments, which leads to high turnover rates (Edwards et al., J., 2009; Erasmu et al., 2015). This literature review elaborates on the value of employee well-being and emotional intelligence on success in higher education.

Employee Well-Being

Well-being is a complex concept because well-being is influenced by multiple factors, including an individual's physical environment, psychological state, philosophical beliefs, and genetic predisposition (Cloninger, 2004). According to Wright and Huang (2012), well-being has three characteristics which include being a "phenomenological event, involves how we feel, experience, and process emotions, and is a global judgment" (p. 1189). Well-being concerns individuals, communities, and society's physical, mental, and emotional states (Litchfield et al., 2021).

One area that impacts the well-being of the community and society is the workplace (Harter et al., 2003; Krekel et al., 2018). Today's turbulent higher education environment causes a high stress working environment, leading to high turnover rates (Edwards et al., 2009; Erasmu et al., 2015). As stated in Chapter 1, the dynamics at the workplace cause employees to experience different emotional states (Cherkowski et al., 2020; Mendzheritskaya & Hansen, 2019; Woods, 2010). When negative emotions are experienced at the workplace, this leads to stress, job dissatisfaction, and lower levels of commitment (Ablanedo-Rosas et al., 2011).

According to Litchfield et al. (2021), employee well-being (EWB) includes physical and mental health and should consider employees' personal lives and the impact of social-economic conditions. Similarly, Gabriel et al. (2022) identified five areas organizations should prioritize when addressing employees' well-being. One of the areas includes providing resources that assist with socio-environmental disturbances. This study focuses on the assistance with socio-environmental conditions and disturbances because employee well-being for admission professionals at Success University is directly impacted by the social forces and compounding challenges affecting today's higher education enrollment landscape (Loveland, 2018). Employee

well-being includes an employee's satisfaction with the organization, engagement with their job, and the frequency of positive influences like joy, interest, and caring for others (Harter et al., 2003; Krekel et al., 2018). Organizations that focus on the well-being of their employees are more likely to be successful during the present and future turbulent times (Litchfield, 2021).

EWB benefits the employee, the employer, and the workplace (Krekel et al., 2018). Employee well-being impacts overall job satisfaction, job performance, engagement, and retention (Harter et al., 2003; Krekel et al., 2018; Wright & Huang, 2012). According to Hyett and Parker (2015), employee well-being includes job satisfaction, organizational care for the employee, and work-life balance. Overall, job satisfaction positively impacts the well-being of the individual and the organization. Individuals with high levels of job satisfaction are more likely to be engaged and loyal to the organization (Krekel et al., 2018; Wright et al., 2007). Job satisfaction is also connected to job performance. Those more satisfied with their employment will produce at a higher rate and engage more with the job and the organization (Judge et al., 2001; Wright et al., 2007). Those employees engaged with their job are typically positively immersed by and committed to their responsibilities and place of employment (Wright & Huang, 2012; Krekel et al., 2018). Since well-being positively affects job satisfaction, job performance, and employee engagement and retention (Harter et al., 2003; Judge et al., 2001; Krekel et al., 2018; Wright & Huang, 2012), it is essential to understand the relevance of employee well-being in a higher education setting.

Value of Employee Well-Being in Higher Education

Today's higher education landscape results from social forces such as declining birth rates, decreased state appropriations, the global pandemic, and the possibility of another global recession (Grawe, 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Tandberg & Laderman, 2018). These challenges have

forced campus leaders to focus more on their students' and employees' well-being (Ewing, 2021). O'Brien and Guiney (2018) conducted a study on staff well-being in higher education. They found that higher education employees thought the competition for student enrollment caused high-pressure levels, negatively impacting their well-being.

Research on employee well-being within a higher education setting mainly focuses on faculty or students (Oshagbemi, 2013; van Straaten et al., 2016). While there is limited research on the value of employee well-being with non-academic administrators, the research indicates that any emphasis on employee well-being benefits administrators' job satisfaction, job performance, and employee engagement (Thompson, 2020; van Straaten et al., 2016). When the well-being of higher education staff is prioritized, employees are more willing to adapt to change, have more positive relationships with peers and leaders, and feel supported (van Straaten et al., 2016). According to the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR), higher education leaders who focus on the well-being of their staff cultivate a healthy campus environment (Thompson, 2020).

Research on employee well-being and emotions is limited, including within higher education (Briner, 2005; Woods, 2010). Instead, research is focused on employee well-being and attributes like stress and attitude (Woods, 2010). This study will focus on employee well-being and emotions. More specifically, this study highlights the role of emotional intelligence – an aspect of employee well-being – on success within higher education. Therefore, the next section will discuss emotional intelligence in more detail.

Emotional Intelligence

This section includes three sub-sections focused on emotional intelligence. First, a history of emotional intelligence is provided. This includes an overview of influential foundational

concepts in this area of scholarly inquiry. Next, tensions surrounding the concept of emotional intelligence are explored, and the relevance of emotional intelligence in higher education is discussed.

History of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to observe emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, comprehend emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). However, well before Mayer and Salovey popularized the concept, scholars like Thorndike and Stein (1937), Wechsler (1940), Maslow (1950), and Garner (1975) explored the concept throughout the early twentieth century. While scholars searched for a more comprehensive, well-rounded understanding of intelligence, aspects of emotional intelligence were uncovered. For example, Thorndike and Stein's model of social intelligence is similar to emotional intelligence (Bar-On et al., 2006) because it is "the ability to understand and manage people" (Thorndike & Stein, 1937, p.275), including internal feelings and motivations (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). David Wechsler, a psychologist who created multiple types of intelligence tests and supported non-intellective factors in testing, acknowledged that general intelligence included social characteristics and is affected by emotions (1940). Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, discussed the importance of emotional strength when emphasizing the whole person and each person's uniqueness (Maslow, 1950). Before these scholars, intelligence and emotions were studied as separate, unique subjects (Dhani & Sharma, 2016).

Today, however, modern-day scholars study intelligence and emotions as related constructs. In addition to Salovey and Mayer, researchers like Reuven Bar-On (1997) and Daniel Goleman (1996) continued to expand upon the concept. Bar-on, a clinical psychologist engaged in theorizing, researching, and applying emotional intelligence, created the Bar-On Model of

Social and Emotional Intelligence (1997). This model illustrates emotional-social intelligence as an arrangement of interconnected emotional and social competencies, skills, and behaviors that affect intelligent behavior (Bar-on, 1997). In 1996, Daniel Goleman popularized the concept of emotional intelligence in his best-seller, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. This book commercialized and commodified the concept (Mayer et al., 2004), making it a worldwide phenomenon.

In addition, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI), a unit of Yale School of Medicine's Child Study Center, conducts research and training focused on "the skills of emotional intelligence, and building positive emotional climates in homes, schools, and workplaces" (YCEI, n.d.). The research at this center supports communities by studying the value of emotions, including positive emotional environments in homes, schools, and workplaces. While numerous scholars and organizations are researching the benefits of emotional intelligence today, some researchers still disagree regarding aspects of the concept (Matthews et al., 2006; Murphy, 2006). The following section details the tensions in the literature surrounding the concept of emotional intelligence.

Tensions in the Literature

Emotional intelligence is an area of research with disputed viewpoints and practices, resulting in some disagreements (Matthews et al., 2006; Murphy, 2006). Salovey and Mayer postulated that disputes and disagreements over the standards of EI exist due to the commercialization and commoditization of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2004). Emotional intelligence is an area of inquiry with notable tensions because differing viewpoints and practices have created disagreements regarding research standards (Matthews et al., 2006; Murphy, 2006). The tensions regarding emotional intelligence, which are mainly discussed

within the academic community (Fambrough & Hart, 2008), are centered around the legitimacy

of the research methodologies utilized when studying the components of EI (Conte & Dean,

2006; Landy, 2005). There are three aspects of the methodologies essential to highlight. The first

pertains to EI's foundational definitions and models and whether these models justify EI as a

unique construct (Davies et al., 1998; Matthews et al., 2006; Murphy & Sideman, 2006).

Secondly, researchers question if available measures of EI are reliable and valid (Davies et al.,

1998; Matthews et al., 2006), and thirdly, there is limited understanding of EI's impact on human

behavior (Barchard, 2016; Jordan et al., 2006; Matthews et al., 2006).

Foundational Definitions and Models. The first argument focuses on the foundational

definitions and models of EI and whether these models justify EI as a unique construct (Davies et

al., 1998; Matthews et al., 2006; Murphy & Sideman, 2006). According to Murphy (2006),

recent definitions of emotional intelligence are ambiguous and questionable, hindering one's

ability to conceptualize the theory. Some definitions of EI refer to functions rather than processes

(Matthews et al., 2006). For example, Naseer et al.'s (2011) definition of EI includes specific

actions one should take to be emotionally intelligent. This definition assumes emotional

intelligence means one must be able to share emotions and be sympathetic toward the emotions

of others.

The emotional intelligence four-branch ability model (1997), developed by Salovey,

Mayer, and Caruso, focuses on the awareness of emotions, the use of emotions, understanding

emotions, and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2004). According to Matthews et al. (2006), the

four-branch ability model was built on a sound definition of EI. However, Murphy (2006) argued

that other mixed EI models, like the Bar-On model (1997) and Goleman's model of emotional

intelligence (1996), have a weak empirical basis.

Finally, the literature indicates that emotional intelligence constructs are closely related to personality concepts, thus supporting the argument that EI is not unique (Davies et al., 1998; Joseph & Newman, 2010; Murphy, 2006). For some scholars, EI is related to long-standing research concepts like personality, social skills, and empathy rather than being a unique, unconnected concept (Davies et al., 1998; Joseph & Newman, 2010; Murphy, 2006).

EI Measures. The second tension focuses on the measures used to assess EI. Some researchers believe these measures are unreliable and lack validity (Conte & Dean, 2006; Davies et al., 1998). This unreliability and lack of validity are due to EI's weak foundational definitions and models and because the measures vary in content and application (Conte & Dean, 2006). According to Matthews et al. (2006), valid results only occur if findings are founded on explicit theory definition. In addition, the unreliability and lack of validity occur because researchers are not explicit enough when identifying their research problem and questions under consideration (Conte, 2005). Like the challenge of studying social intelligence, there is no valid and widely accepted test to measure emotional intelligence (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Matthews et al., 2006). Some argue that EI assessment should be based on ability and not on "self-reports of attitudes, preferences, and/or values" (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2003, p. 4). Finally, researchers are hesitant to measure emotional intelligence because it commodifies emotions (Fineman, 2000).

Impact on Behavior. The third tension focuses on EI's impact on human behavior (Matthews et al., 2006). While Giorgi (2013) believed EI is impactful, she agreed that the benefits are difficult to measure. There are claims that emotional intelligence predicts success; however, little research exists to either support or discredit this idea (Barchard, 2016). These claims have limited empirical or theoretical support regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace performance, teamwork, and leadership (Jordan et al., 2006).

These arguments address the tension around the legitimacy of the research methodologies used when studying emotional intelligence. Although "extravagant claims" (Jordan et al., 2006, p. 204) have been made about the impact of emotional intelligence on human behavior, there is emerging evidence that emotional intelligence has positive effects (Jordan et al., 2006). The following section will discuss the relevance and significance of emotional intelligence in a higher education setting.

Relevance to Higher Education

Despite disputes over the validity of EI's research methodologies, researchers and scholars continue discussing emotional intelligence's benefits within a higher education setting. EI benefits postsecondary institutions because the concept can assist in developing individuals, both students and employees (Coco, 2011). This section discusses the value of emotional intelligence on work performance within higher education (Yoder, 2004), institutional morale (Vandervoort, 2006), and institutional reform and change (Ayoko et al., 2008; Coco, 2011; Gelaidan et al., 2018; Moore, 2009). Finally, this section discusses the value of emotional intelligence in work related to university admissions.

Work Performance. Over time researchers have discussed the general benefits of emotional intelligence, particularly positive emotions, on work performance and success (Goleman, 1996; Staw et al., 1994). Yoder (2004) found that individuals perform better with an atmosphere of respect, empathy, and open communication. Emotional intelligence positively impacts the university milieu and provides an opportunity for better relationships between faculty and administrators (Vandervoort, 2006). Cohesive, collaborative morale provides an environment where employees can seamlessly transition and change (Ayoko et al., 2008; Moore, 2009).

Organizational Change. Organizational reform in higher education can cause adverse emotional reactions like stress and frustration (Ayoko et al., 2008). According to Moore (2009), when school leaders effectively control negative emotions and focus on more productive positive emotions, the organization, the institution's ethos, staff morale, and attitude toward change and reform are more favorable. Gelaidan et al. (2019) found that emotional intelligence positively impacted employee readiness for change in public higher education institutions. Coco (2011) proposed that aspects of EI assist leaders in higher education and other areas of academics by reducing employee stress, improving holistic wellness, and enhancing organizational leadership.

Admission-Related Work. Scholars also discuss the benefits of emotional intelligence in admissions-related work (Barchard, 2016; Goleman, 2020; Murphy, 2006). Today's competitive higher education enrollment environment is challenging (Ruben et al., 2021), which leads to employee emotional exhaustion and stress. Although Murphy (2006) added to many of the arguments regarding EI's lack of validity in its research methodologies, he did state that emotional intelligence may benefit professionals who require a "frequent need to communicate with a diverse audience" and where "interpersonal stressors are especially common" (Murphy, 2006, p. 351). Higher education admissions professionals frequently need to communicate with diverse individuals and experience interpersonal stressors due to work demands (Stephenson, 2010). Barchard (2016), who is also critical of the research claiming the benefits of EI, explained that EI might predict success for employees in people-oriented jobs like sales. College admissions work is people-oriented and closely related to marketing and sales (Swann,1998). Admissions require professionals to regularly engage with the people when educating and persuading them to enroll at an institution (Swann, 1998). Goleman stated that as artificial intelligence continues to replace people in the workforce, there will be a greater need for people

with high EI levels in jobs that interact with others emotionally (Goleman, 2020). Parrish's (2015) research indicated that leadership in higher education requires connecting to one's emotions while supporting employees' connection to their emotions. More recently, Murugan (2019) added that a contributing factor to the success of an institution of higher education is its leader's ability to interpret emotions displayed by the staff.

Researchers and scholars have discussed the benefits of emotional intelligence in higher education (Coco, 2011; Murugan, 2019; Parrish, 2015) and admission-related jobs (Barchard, 2016; Goleman, 2020; Murphy, 2006). Guided by Mayer and Salovey's model of emotional intelligence, which is considered a gold standard approach by different researchers (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2003; Jordan et al., 2006; Landy, 2005), this study will add to the body of research that underlines the value of emotional intelligence in higher education.

Literature Review Summary

This literature review discussed the concepts of employee well-being and emotional intelligence and their relevance to employees within a higher education setting. While there is limited research on the value of employee well-being with non-academic administrators, the research indicates that employee well-being benefits administrators' job satisfaction, job performance, and employee engagement (Thompson, 2020; van Straaten et al., 2016). Similarly, emotional intelligence benefits postsecondary institutions because it assists with the development of employees (Coco, 2011), institutional morale (Vandervoort, 2006), and institutional reform and change (Ayoko et al., 2008; Coco, 2011; Gelaidan et al., 2018; Moore, 2009).

Emotional intelligence is an area of research with disputed viewpoints and practices resulting in disagreements over its standards. The tension in the literature is centered around the legitimacy of the research methodologies utilized when studying the components of EI (Conte &

Dean, 2006; Landy, 2005). The three fundamental arguments supporting the tension focus on the foundational definitions and models of EI (Davies et al., 1998; Matthews et al., 2006; Murphy & Sideman, 2006), on the measures used to assess EI (Conte & Dean, 2006; Davies et al., 1998), and finally the impact of EI on human behavior (Matthews et al., 2006). This study, which seeks to explore the role of emotional intelligence on employee well-being in the success of public higher education admissions offices, will address these arguments and ensure the use of legitimate research methodologies. The next section of Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework that guides this study.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides a study with a supportive foundation and ensures that theory is integrated into the study's design (Creswell & Clark, 2017). When conducting qualitative research, a theory is "a set of concepts or structures intended to represent or model something about the world" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 42). According to Bolman and Deal (2017), "the impact of organizations on people's well-being and happiness has never been more consequential" (p. 7). This statement reinforces the compatibility of their model with this research. This paper will detail the four-frame model and discuss how each frame is relevant to the study.

The Four-Frame Model

Bolman and Deal's four frames, or perspectives on organizations, include the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 1984, 2017). In this model, frames refer to assumptions or lenses used to navigate situations that arise within an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Individuals can reframe or shift to another frame when considering the circumstances of a situation (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuori, 2018). In addition, individuals can

multi-frame or use multiple or all four frames together (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuori, 2018). Human nature dictates that most individuals will view circumstances through only one or two frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017); however, all leaders, including higher education leaders, should utilize all four frames when managing people, environments, and circumstances (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuori, 2018). Multi-framing provides diverse perspectives when handling complex environments (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Stephenson, 2010; Vuori, 2018).

The Structural Frame

The structural frame, which stresses goals, roles, and rules, focuses on the organization rather than the individual (Bolman & Deal, 2017). This frame assumes organizations seek to achieve goals, increase their efficiencies and performance, and strategically coordinate and control their employees to ensure collaboration (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Additionally, this frame emphasizes rules, technology, the environment, and systematic decision-making (Vuori, 2018). The structural frame also assumes organizations are most productive when the collective goals transcend personal agendas and when an effective organizational structure is present (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Successful coordination efforts are vertical, which is a more formal, top-down approach, or lateral, which is informal and requires a collective effort (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

The structural frame is the foundation upon which organizations like public university systems and admissions offices are built (Black, 2004). This frame will assist when assessing the multi-dimensional organizational framework of an admissions office within a state institution governed by a public university system. The structural frame will also assist with examining the complexity of an admissions organization by explicitly focusing on departmental procedures, organizational structures, mission statement(s), departmental operational goals, new student enrollment goals, and admissions policies.

The Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame focuses on aligning the organization and its people (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuori, 2018). This frame assumes that organizations and people mutually depend on one another; however, the organization exists to serve its employees' needs (Bolman & Deal, 2017). When an organization focuses on the needs of the employees, it is more likely to work cohesively and achieve better results (Bolman & Deal, 1991). This frame emphasizes groups and values informal and formal roles (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The human resource frame focuses on the importance of leaders in motivating and helping their teams reach goals (Vuoli, 2018). Finally, the emphasis is on building relationships and creating an environment of loyalty and commitment (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuoli, 2018).

In this study, the human resource frame will provide guidance when evaluating the relationship among the admissions staff, departmental student employees, and leadership. The human resource lens is vital to this study because relationships are essential to success in higher education (Ellis, 2009). Also, this frame aligns with the study's purpose because of the emphasis on emotional intelligence and employee well-being. In describing the human resource frame, Bolman and Deal (2017) discuss the importance of emotional intelligence when stating that "interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence are vital to personal relationships" (166). The human resource frame will guide the examination of employee well-being, specifically emotional intelligence, on departmental success.

The Political Frame

The political frame assumes that organizations consist of people with different values, interests, and competing priorities (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In addition, the political frame assumes resources are limited, leading to negotiations, conflicts, and competition for power

(Bolman & Deal, 2017). Negotiations, conflicts, and competition for power are not antagonistic but result from depleting resources (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Unlike the structural frame, the political frame focuses on advancing personal agendas rather than prioritizing collective goals (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuori, 2018).

According to Love and Estank (2004), higher education professionals are uncomfortable with the idea of politics, yet politics exists in today's higher education environment. In this study, the political frame will assist in examining the role of state government, the role of a public university system, and institutional and departmental politics on employee well-being and departmental success. In addition, due to declining state funding (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Lueddeke,1999), the political frame will guide the exploration of depleting resources and their role in employee well-being and departmental success.

The Symbolic Frame

Finally, the symbolic frame focuses on signs and symbols which assist individuals in coping with their environment (Bolman & Deal, 2017). This frame assumes an organization's culture is shared through its symbols and stories; and is a columniation of shared beliefs and values (Bolman & Dean, 2017). Consensus is built using symbolism, rituals, and storytelling (Vuori, 2018).

Applying the symbolic frame assists with the examination of departmental and institutional cultures. According to Bolman and Deal (2017), effective organizations have good stories to tell, and this frame guides the process of capturing the department's story. In 1976, the College Entrance Exam Board (CEEB) acknowledged that marketing tactics, including promoting and storing (Kotler, 1972), are conducted by admissions departments. Therefore, admissions departments are the storytellers for the institution. Applying this frame will assist

with determining if the departmental and institutional cultures align with the story told to the public and how this story contributes to employee well-being and success.

Bolman and Deal's four-frame model (1984) will provide this study's conceptual framework because the model assists with understanding the multi-level dynamics and influential factors on employee well-being in an admissions office at public institutions of higher education. The four frame-model conceptualizes organizational theory in a way that relates to higher education (Sriram & Farley, 2014). When attempting to understand the complexities of an organization, the model's structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames provide guidance and direction. Applying Bolman and Deal's four-frame model (1984) ensures a diversity of perspectives when examining employee well-being as a contributing factor to the success of public higher education admissions offices.

The figure below illustrates the conceptual framework for this study, which is built on Bolman and Deal's (1984) model. In Figure 1, each frame is displayed in its section because individuals can utilize each frame independently. The boxes attached to each frame include specific areas related to the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University that will be assessed during the study. Bolman and Deal recommend that each frame within the Four Frame Model be used together when assessing a situation. Therefore, the model is shown in a circular shape with continuous arrows representing the use of all frames together.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework
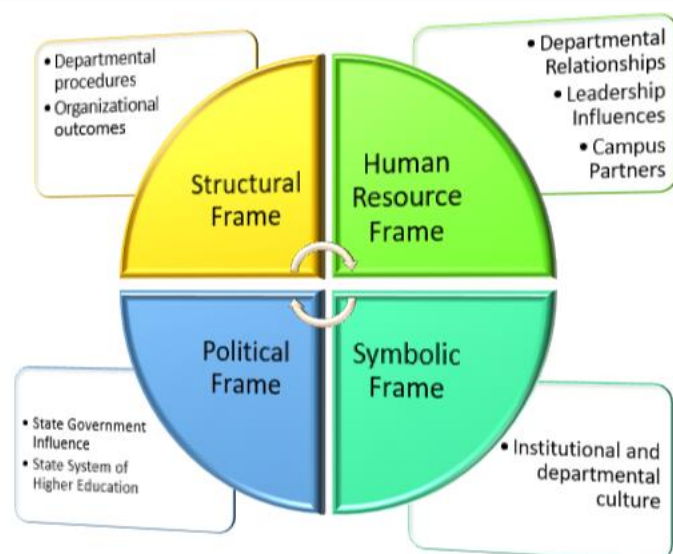
Summary

This chapter discussed the literature on employee well-being and emotional intelligence, the tensions regarding emotional intelligence, and the relevance of employee well-being and emotional intelligence to success in higher education. This chapter also discussed this study's conceptual framework, Bolman and Deal's four-frame model (1984). This model will assist with understanding the multi-level dynamics and influential factors on employee well-being and emotional intelligence in an admissions office at public institutions of higher education. The next chapter will provide the details of the methodology utilized for this study.

Chapter 3

This research aimed to explore university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. More specifically, this study was situated in the thriving Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University, a regional public institution of higher education in a rural setting experiencing an unstable university system organizational landscape. This chapter opens with an overview of the methodologies for this study. The chapter continues with a detailed

description of the case study selection, participants' demographics, materials, my positionality, the validity of the study, and the research procedures.

Overview

In this study, I used a qualitative embedded single case study approach (Yin, 2018) to explore a successful mid-size public university, Success University, in answering the following two research questions: (1) What are the admissions staff and related leadership perceptions at Success University about admissions department employee well-being? and (2) Specifically, what role(s) do admissions department staff perceive emotional intelligence plays in departmental enrollment success and employee well-being? This study sought to determine how Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984) applied to employee well-being and emotional intelligence in the success of higher education admissions departments. Previous research on employee well-being within a higher education setting focused on academic faculty or students (Oshagbemi, 2013; van Straaten et al., 2016). This study focused on the impact of well-being on the success of higher education non-academic administrators experiencing an unpredictable enrollment environment.

A qualitative embedded single case study approach was appropriate because it investigates a phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2018). To investigate a phenomenon in depth, a case study requires extensive data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study gathered data by conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews with individuals essential to the success of the admissions department and by observing participants in their day-to-day environment, including critical meetings. These interviews and observations assisted with understanding if employee well-being and emotional intelligence are factors in the department's success. The following section will discuss the methodology of this study.

Methodology

This section describes the methodologies used for this qualitative embedded single case study. I include a description of the case study site, participant demographics, the instrumentation utilized, the limitations of the study, and finally, how the data was collected and analyzed.

Cases Study Site

Success University is in the western part of a state in the Northeastern region of the United States, specifically in a county which, according to the state's Department of Education (PDE), has experienced a 13% decrease in college-bound students since 2013 (PDE, n.d.). This institution is a four-year, public, coeducational, comprehensive university offering undergraduate and graduate programs to over 9,000 students. Success University opened in 1889 as a normal school with only 168 students. According to the school's website, 88.2% of students are full-time, and 82.2% are undergraduates. The primary program modality is in person on a main campus; however, the institution offers limited academic programs online and at a secondary location in the central part of the state. Again, according to the institution's website, the demographics of its enrolled students include 87.8% in-state residents, 25.6% first-generation students, 11.7% students of color, and 29.1% Pell Grant-eligible students.

Success University was founded over 130 years ago and is steeped in a tradition of offering its students a "comprehensive learning experience." SU's mission emphasizes that its "fundamental educational mission is to transform the intellectual, social, physical and leadership capacities of students in order to prepare them for life and career success." SU's core values include student success, excellence innovation, social responsibility, intellectual freedom, integrity, and free expression, along with diversity, inclusion and equity, openness, shared

governance, and accountability. According to the school's website, SU is "committed to serving a diverse student body and empowering anyone regionally, nationally, and internationally who can benefit from its programs and lifelong learning opportunities." Today, as a comprehensive public institution of higher education, SU offers 150 undergraduate and 40 graduate programs. Again, according to the university, 91% of SU undergraduate students live on campus, 88% of the total student body are residents of the state in which SU is located, 84% are 25 years old or younger, 60% are female, and 12% are students of color. Thus, SU serves a more traditional college-aged population. Success University has more than 1,000 employees, including 400 full-time faculty. The institution publicizes an 82% first year to second year retention rate, the average national retention rate for similar institutions, a 51% four-year graduation rate, and a 66% six-year graduation rate.

This mid-sized regional public institution is located less than an hour north of a major metropolitan city and 45 minutes east of its bordering state. The metropolitan city is the most populous in the region, with a total population of over 2.3 million residents with access to bodies of water that assist with the city's economic stability. There are over ten colleges and universities within the city limits, providing a robust higher education landscape to the region's residents. Finally, this city and SU's boarding states are the home to many of SU's employees who commute up to an hour to campus daily. Being a popular location for employees is not surprising, considering the metropolitan city is often included on the lists of the top 10 most livable cities in the United States. This city and boarding state allow employees to live in urban and suburban settings while working in a rural environment. This metropolitan region also provides Success University's students with broader internship, employment, and social opportunities that may not be available in their immediate rural setting.

Success University's 660-acre rural campus is situated in a safe and friendly community most popular for its proximity to two premier state lands which draws outdoor enthusiasts all year long. According to the 2020 United States Census Bureau, the borough in which Success University is located, is the home to 3,000 total people and has a total area of 1.7 miles. SU's population of over 9,000 students is three times that of their borough's total permanent population, thus constituting the university's importance on its economic stability. The reported median household income is $47,761 and 27.5% of the borough's population lives below the poverty line. Over 90% of the total population hold a high school diploma, however, only 26% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. This statistic signals that only a quarter of the borough's population pursues and persists through higher education. However, this data does not include how many of the borough's residents are employees of Success University who may pursue higher education at a higher rate. Finally, the borough's population is 91.7% White, 1.4% Black or African American, 0.7% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0% Native Hawaiian, 6.1% Two or More races, and 2.4% Hispanic or Latino. Based on these statistics, the borough's racial diversity is limited, which is typical for the region. For example, the broader county in which the borough resides is over 90% White, as are counites located directly to the east and west of the borough. This racial composition is also reflective of SU's student body.

According to the local Chambers of Commerce, the borough and the surrounding town are the home to over 1,000 businesses, with the most prominent industries being professional services, builders and contractors, and higher education. Two primary roads intersect at the center of the borough. One of these roads serves as the campus entrance to Success University's campus, along with a popular coffee chain storefront, fast food restaurants, and a popular gas and convenience store chain location. In addition, the main street includes two traffic lights, four

locally owned restaurants, two tattoo shops, two churches, a vape shop, a dentist's office, and the borough's post office.

Their county's website highlights a recent grant which assisted the municipality in adding enhancements to infrastructure and businesses and developing cultural enrichment opportunities. Due to this new funding, one might assume that the building structures would be more modernized, the streets would be more aesthetically pleasing with modernized landscaping, and the stores would be filled with small boutiques and inviting restaurants. Upon arriving, however, I realized these enhancements were not visible in the ways I expected. Instead, I saw a main street with older buildings, little landscaping, and a few restaurants, while popular with staff not visibly appealing or inviting.

Interestingly for this rural area, there is a second institution of higher education located just 15 miles from Success University. This small, private university is like Success University because both offer undergraduate and graduate education. Unlike SU, a mid-size regional public institution serving over 9,000 students, the other local institution is a religiously affiliated institution with a total student population of only 1,200. Regardless of their differences, having two universities located less than 20 minutes apart in this rural area adds additional enrollment competition pressure for Success University.

On SU's campus, the university's academic buildings, library, and student union are the main focal point because they are situated in the center of campus. To the left of the main academic buildings are the university's older residence halls, additional academic buildings, and the main dining hall. Toward the back of the campus are many athletic facilities and newer suite-style and apartment-style residence halls.

Like other campuses, the university has preserved moments of its history by using statues and the naming of buildings. For example, one of the buildings is named after an individual who served as the principal of the institution's normal school from 1889-1890. On the days I visited, the campus struck me like a traditional undergraduate campus. Groups of students walked around and filled the building like the school's student union. For a portion of the visit, I had an opportunity to sit and observe the campus community, during lunchtime, in one of their main food courts. Students and faculty were observed socializing and eating in this space. One of the professional staff members from the Office of First-Year Admissions and an alum of SU described the university as a "caring community," which was evident throughout campus. For example, staff parking was abundant and very close to the building, which houses the departments within the enrollment management division. This example serves as a sign of care because employee well-being is enhanced when workers do not have to drive around looking for a parking spot each day or walk a long distance from their cars to their offices during inclement weather. This caring community was also evident in the participants I met and had the privilege to interview. A detailed description of these individuals is included below.

Since institutions rely heavily on their admissions office to secure enrollment and maintain financial stability (Baum & Ma, 2012; Gansemer-Topf et al., 2014; Trow, 1988), this case centers on the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University. This office conducts in-state and out-of-state recruitment travel, hosts on-campus and off-campus recruitment events, and reviews admission applications. In addition to the Office of First-Year Admissions, the division of Enrollment Management also includes a separate office dedicated to transfer student recruitment and admissions and a separate office dedicated to graduate student recruitment and admissions. For the Fall 2022 admissions cycle, SU received over 5,500 first-year admissions

applications, admitted 74.3% of the total applicant pool, and enrolled a class of 1,459 students. SU's admit rate of 74.3% is aligned with over half of the U.S. universities and colleges and, like other comparable, less competitive public institutions in their category. The average high school grade point average for the 2022 incoming first-year class was 3.5, and the average SAT score was 1059. In addition to first-year students, for Fall 2022, SU enrolled 475 transfer students and 628 graduate students. These admission statistics indicate that the academic profile of SU's incoming first-year class is on par with national averages. In addition, these enrollment statistics demonstrate that SU serves a more traditional college-aged population.

Examining an Office of First-Year Admissions within a public university system expanded the limited research on admissions professionals working within a public institution of higher education. It was important to situate this case in a thriving Office of First-Year Admissions because it sought to understand the perceptions about admissions department employee well-being and the role(s) admissions department staff perceive emotional intelligence plays in departmental enrollment success and employee well-being. There was added complexity to this case because this thriving admissions department is neighboring institutions experiencing enrollment declines and financial unrest.

Participants

Recruiting and securing participants was a vital step in the success of this study. This section discusses the recruitment of, as well as the demographics of, participants for this embedded single case study.

Recruitment. As an enrollment management administrator in the same university system, I had personal access to the site and professional relationships with enrollment management leadership. This connection helped with facilitating access and cooperation in the

study and building trust with the participants. This access and connection assisted with gathering more robust data throughout the study.

To secure Success University's Office of First-Year Admissions as the primary case study site, an email (Appendix A) was sent to the Chief Enrollment Management Officer. Once the site was secured, an email (Appendix B) was sent to the individuals holding the positions listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Recruitment Recipients

Position Group/Subunit of Analysis	Title	Total
Leadership	Chief Enrollment Officer	2
	Director of Undergraduate Admissions	
Interdivisional Partners	Director of Transfer Admissions	7
	Director of Graduate Admissions	
	Director of Financial Aid	
	University Registrar	
	Director of Career Services	
	Enrollment Marketing & Communications	
	Enrollment Systems	
Office of First-Year Admissions	Associate Directors	11
	Assistant Directors	
	Management Technician	
	Clerical Staff	
Student Employees	Tour Guides	5
	Graduate Assistants	

Note. Table 1 reflects the total number of individuals who received the recruitment email (Appendix B.). 88% responded to the recruitment email, while 64% participated in the study.

I purposefully selected administrators whose role was critical to the success of a first-year admissions department (Maxwell, 2013). Of the 25 potential participants, one was a high-level executive leader who sits on President's cabinet and influences admissions policy. This person holds the title of Chief Enrollment Officer. Another was the Director of First-Year Admissions,

who leads the admissions team and ensures the day-to-day operations are executed. Both leaders set the tone for the working environment, office culture, and prioritization of employee well-being.

In addition, eleven participants were admissions professionals who executed the day-to-day tasks. These included Associate Directors of Admissions who focused on very specific areas of operations like multicultural recruitment, technology, and reporting needs. There were Assistant Directors of Admissions whose primary responsibilities included recruiting new students and reviewing first-year applications. Finally, the office included support staff members who assisted with application credential processing and day-to-day administrative needs. Beyond members of the Office of First-Year Admissions, professionals representing interdivisional partners assisted with the success of the admissions department, such as the Director of Transfer Admissions, Director of Graduate Admissions, Director of Financial Aid, Registrar, the Director of Career Services, and individuals who handled Enrollment Marketing and Enrollment Systems. The final five potential participants were student employees who conducted tours and other administrative duties. These individuals represented undergraduate and graduate students. All potential participants were critical to the success of the admissions department.

The goal was to have the participant demographics reflect the population's diversity. Seeking this group of participants for one-on-one interviews and observations provided a robust, holistic evaluation of the department's success and the role employee well-being and emotional intelligence played in the department's success. This is important when conducting a case study that requires extensive data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participation in this study was voluntary. All individuals who agreed to participate were asked to complete an informed consent

form (Appendix C) followed by a case study participant survey (Appendix D). The following section discusses the demographics of the participants.

       Participant Demographics. Below is a table illustrating the total number of participants (see Table 2). While the goal was to include all non-academic staff within the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University, because each employee is vital to the department's success, only the Assistant Directors agreed to participate. This study does not include the perspectives of the Associate Directors, the Management Technician, or the clerical staff.

       Table 2 shows the range of demographic characteristics of the study's participants. A total of 22 employees representing leadership, the Office of First-Year Admissions, interdivisional partners, and student employees completed the participant survey and provided their consent to participate in this study. However, 16 individuals participated in the one-on-one semi-structured interviews. These 16 participants represented all four subunits of analysis (1) leadership, (2) interdivisional partners, (3) Office of First-Year Admissions, and (4) student employees. Below is a table illustrating the total number of semi-structured one-on-one interviews by subunit of analysis and associated demographics (see Table 2).

       Due to commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, the sex and ethnicity of the participant group are not reported or utilized. However, the following demographic characteristics are available. Three individuals completed at least high school or obtained a GED, five obtained a bachelor's degree, six obtained a master's degree, and two obtained a doctoral degree. This participant group represented each possible level of education. In addition, two participants had less than one year of experience, five participants had 1-5 years of experience, three had 5-10 years of experience, and six had over 20 years of experience. This participant group represented individuals with limited experience, moderate experience, and extensive

experience in the industry. One other unique descriptor of this group is that nine participants, or

56% of the participant group, are alums of Success University. The high percentage of alums

indicated a sense of loyalty, connectedness, and pride for the institution. This is particularly

interesting, considering these individual's roles and responsibilities within the university.

Table 2

Participant Demographics and Experience

Pseudonym	Subunit	Education	Age Group	Experience	Alumni
Alex	Office of First-Year Admissions	Bachelor's	25-35	1-5 Years	No
Mary	Student Workers	High School or GED	18-25	1-5 Years	Yes
Kevin	Student Workers	High School or GED	18-25	1-5 Years	No
Meg	Office of First-Year Admissions	Master's	25-35	1-5 Years	Yes
Morgan	Office of First-Year Admissions	Master's	25-35	1-5 Years	Yes
William	Interdivisional Partners	Bachelor's	45 or older	20+ Years	Yes
Paul	Interdivisional Partners	Doctoral	45 or older	20+ Years	No
Holden	Interdivisional Partners	Master's	45 or older	20+ Years	Yes
Derrick	Leadership	Master's	45 or older	20+ Years	Yes
Maddie	Interdivisional Partners	Master's	45 or older	20+ Years	Yes
Francesca	Leadership	Doctoral	45 or older	20+ Years	Yes
Penny	Interdivisional Partners	Master's	25-35	5-10 Years	Yes
Victoria	Office of First-Year Admissions	Bachelor's	25-35	5-10 Years	No
Ray	Office of First-Year Admissions	Bachelor's	45 or older	5-10 Years	Yes
Eric	Student Workers	High School or GED	18-25	Less than 1 Year	No
Rosie	Student Workers	High School or GED	18-25	Less than 1 Year	No

Note. Due to the commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, ethnicity and sex are not reported or used as a descriptor of any participant.

Instrumentation

This embedded signal case study focused on collecting data through observation and open-ended interviews. This case study included subunits of analysis (see Table 3), with the central unit being the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University. The additional subunits of analysis, categorized by level of responsibility and reflective of the division and department's organizational chart, include (1) leadership's role in the working environment and success of the department, (2) the department's relationship with other vital interdivisional partners (3) the working environment and success of departmental student employees who are an extension of the Office of First-Year Admission and are critical in the recruiting of new students.

Table 3

Units of Analysis
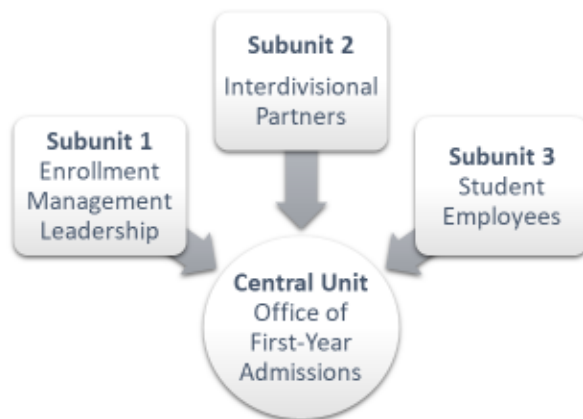
Semi-Structured Interviews. A total of 16 one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately one hour. Each interview was conducted

separately in a private space. Each participant was greeted and interviewed in a private office on Success University's campus or via Zoom™. Before starting the interview, all participants were informed of the purpose of the study, ensured confidentiality, and were informed of the risks and benefits of participating in the study. Each participant reviewed and signed the consent form.

Each participant responded to eight open-ended questions (Appendix E). All questions were guided by this study's conceptual framework and addressed each frame within Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984). Notes were taken on both a laptop and in a notebook during the interview. Finally, the interviews were recorded using a recording device. All recorded conversations were transcribed after the completion of all interviews.

Observations. Two days of field observations were conducted to further explore the working environment and the well-being of the employees within the department and division. These observations were also guided by Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984). For example, any staff meetings held during those two days were observed to address the structural frame. Staff meetings included a clerical staff credential processing meeting led by the Director of First-Year Admissions. In addition, critical functions of the Office of First-Year Admissions were observed. These functions included the observation of an admissions information session, along with a campus tour interaction. Observations of day-to-day staff, departmental, and divisional interactions addressed the human resource frame. Any observation notes focused on departmental success and employee well-being, including group interactions, sub-cultures, day-to-day functions, and strategy conversations. In addition, observation of the larger campus community was conducted. Time was spent in the university's Student Union, where student, staff, and faculty interactions were observed. These observations assisted with further understanding the campus culture and how it was connected to the success of the Office of First-

Year Admissions, and employee well-being. This next section will discuss the researcher's

positionality and its influence on the methodology of this study.

Positionality

I approached this research with over eighteen years of experience as a higher education

professional and a commitment to higher education enrollment management. For the last five

years, I have led an admissions department and two other departments supporting new students

on their journey to higher education. I am committed to this study because I value the hard-

working employees that I have worked alongside for almost two decades as an enrollment

management leader.

As a white, middle-class female, I realize my privilege frames (Boleman & Deal, 2017)

my perspectives, beliefs, and opinions. The frames or perspectives I use daily to lead three

successful, complex enrollment management departments at a large public comprehensive

institution of higher education are the same viewpoints I utilized throughout this study. The

experiences I have obtained through my education and professional career allow me to bring

many strengths to this study. Today, a primary leadership goals is mentoring and protecting my

departments' employees. Over time, I have recognized the importance of valuing our employees.

Focusing on their well-being rather than their outcomes benefits the employee, the institution,

and the students we serve. However, I have witnessed firsthand that admission professionals are

overworked, under-appreciated, and devalued. Focusing this study on employee well-being

emphasizes the value of higher education admissions professionals' physical, mental, and

emotional health.

When conducting qualitative research, especially a study focused on collecting data

through one-on-one interviews and observations; the researcher is an instrument (Poggenpoel &

Myburgh, 2003). As an instrument, the researcher's positionality and bias must be acknowledged and considered when creating and executing the study's methodology (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), a bias is a "partiality or an inclination for or against something" (APA, n.d.). I recognize my affinity to the population (Mehra, 2002) as an admissions leader presents a potential bias. However, I was cognizant of my positionality, including my relationships and experiences within the field, to avoid any partiality or inclination when creating and executing all aspects of this study's methodology.

Analysis and Coding Procedures

All qualitative semi-structured one-on-one interviews were recorded using an iPhone. Most of the interviews were conducted and recorded over Zoom™; however, some were conducted in person while in the field. Field notes were taken by hand in a notebook and on a laptop. All recorded conversations were transcribed verbatim, after the completion of the interviews. In addition, memos from each experience were written to ensure the researcher's positionality was considered.

Coding

This section discusses the two coding procedures, deductive and inductive coding, used to analyze the collected interview and observation data. Coding, which is used as a "method of discovery" (Saldana, 2014, p. 7) in qualitative research, assists with labeling and analyzing data, along with theme creation. Before data analysis, deductive in vivo codes were created and utilized to determine if data was consistent with concepts related to employee well-being, emotional intelligence, and the conceptual framework of Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984). Inductive coding was used to interpret data and develop themes (Thomas, 2006) without any restrictions on the conceptual framework or key concepts. Finally, the second cycle of

coding for categories within interviews and then across interviews was conducted. The final step included identifying and generating themes from the transcriptions that supported the research questions.

Limitations

This section discusses the potential limitations of this study. These limitations include generalizability, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Generalizability

When conducting qualitative research, generalizability is a possible limitation because some researchers are unable to "generalize beyond the confines of the case the study" (Chenail, 2010, p. 2). However, this embedded single case study is focused on the enrollment success of a specific department within a specific institution. Therefore, the findings from this study may not be generalizable to other departments or institutions. Although not generalizable, this study still adds to the limited research on admissions professionals, and themes generated from this study's findings could influence future research on a similar topic.

Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation is another possible limitation of this study. Voluntary participation is a "human research subject's exercise of free will in deciding whether to participate in a research activity" (Lavrakas, 2008, p. 244). From an ethical perspective, subjects in any research study require the opportunity to freely choose and choose not to participate (Lavrakas, 2008). The participants of this study are enrollment management professionals in a related public university system school. This familiarity may have caused feelings of obligation, and participants may have felt they could not exercise freely. Because of any perceived influence, on my current campus or within the field, participants may have believed there were

negative consequences for opting out of the study. To ensure voluntary participation, opportunities to opt-out were provided throughout each step of the data collection process, and voluntary participation was addressed at the onset of each interview.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

In addition to voluntary participation, one other possible limitation of this study is confidentiality and anonymity. Confidentiality and anonymity ensure the privacy of all participants during all phases of the study (Allen, 2017). Although similar, there are slight differences between the two concepts. In research, confidentiality intends to deidentify all data so that no individual can be associated with the study (Allen, 2017). In a qualitative study, however, confidentiality can be difficult to maintain due to the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Sanjari et al., 2014). Anonymity, although slightly different from confidentiality, is data collection without identification elements (Allen, 2017).

Again, the participants are enrollment management professionals, and within the higher education enrollment management industry, it is common for administrators to have formal and informal relationships with colleagues across institutions. Throughout the career of enrollment management administrators, it is also common practice to be employed by multiple institutions. These aspects of the culture could lead to a breach of confidentiality and anonymity by participants in this study. Participants can discuss different aspects of the study with colleagues at their current institution or colleagues at another institution. All essential protocols were followed during and after data collection to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. These protocols included a detailed consent form required for all participants, which included a statement regarding the importance of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. A similar statement was read at the start of each interview.

Summary

      This chapter overviews this research study, discusses my positionality, and describes the embedded single case study methodology. I conducted 16 one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interviews, each lasting approximately one hour, and observed the day to day working environment of the Office of First-Year Admissions and the enrollment management division at Success University. Using Bolman and Deal's four-frame model as the conceptual framework for this research, data collection from the interviews and observation hours were coded for themes related to enrollment success and the role of employee well-being and emotional intelligence. Chapter 4 details the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 4

      This chapter provides an overview of the findings of this qualitative embedded single case study (Yin, 2018) which explores university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. This chapter focuses on the findings aligned with this study's two research questions and concludes with a summary of the results. The findings of each research question include direct responses from participants and observations from the two days spent in the field. These observations are used as a supplement to the descriptive responses and direct quotes from participants.

Research Question 1

      The first research question asked, "What are the admissions staff and related leadership perceptions at Success University, a regional public institution of higher education experiencing stable first-year undergraduate admission enrollment success, about admissions department employee well-being?" Participants addressed this question by discussing three themes related to

perceptions of employee well-being: (1) contributions to success, (2) professional development, and (3) work-life balance. Each theme is related below, including several factors within each theme. In addition, the relevance of these three themes to the success of the Office of First-Year Admissions will be discussed.

Contributions to Success

Participants representing divisional leadership, departmental leadership, interdivisional partners, and Office of First-Year Admissions members perceived their ability to contribute to the overall success of the department or division as an essential aspect of their employee well-being. They described it as "important," as an opportunity "to make a difference," and as "contributing to a fun environment." Participants identified three elements of their contributions to success: staff positioning, a sense of value, and personal relationships. These are each detailed below.

Staff Positioning. Individuals in most of the subunits shared staff positioning or the placement of individual employees in job positions based on their strengths, which contributes to success. Participants explained that divisional and departmental leadership created opportunities for each person to utilize their energy, creativity, and innovativeness. For example, when asked what provided resources promote employee well-being, so staff could conduct their jobs effectively, a member of leadership responded by stating that we "identify the strengths of the players and put them in positions to be successful." An interdivisional partner explained, "it isn't just about putting people on the bus, it's about putting them in the right seats, and I think we've done that better than others." He continued, saying, "we really think about where we're putting people, where they can thrive personally and professionally." Interestingly, this sentiment was expressed by non-leadership staff members, as detailed below.

Ray, an alum of Success University and Office of First-Year Admissions member, compared staff positioning to a basketball team. "You have your bigs, and you have your shooters, and you have your ball handlers, and you know, I think that's kind of what we have. So, everybody's good at something." Ray continued by saying, "we have done a really good job of putting people in a position to maximize what they're good at and minimize what they're not so good at, or maybe not even interested in doing." Similarly, when asked about the department's strengths, Alex, an employee with three and half years of experience at Success University, responded, "I just think that we like being able to divide and conquer. Like, I know what one of the other girls in the office is really good at." Morgan, a double alum of SU and a staff member who joined the Office of First-Year Admissions three years ago provided a similar response. When asked about the department's strengths, Morgan explained, "my director does a very good job of leveraging everybody's personal strengths and then kind of letting everybody find their niche." She provided the following example:

> One of our other assistant directors, just as an example, would prefer to give a thousand presentations to families than answer a single email. Where I would much rather sit in my office, with my slippers, and answer emails all day than have to go give a presentation. So, like, sometimes we know that. So, he'll be like, I'll trade you an email shift for a presentation. And we're both going to be really happy type of thing.

From the quote above, leadership members at SU were particularly adept at recognizing the importance of staff positioning and attributed part of their success to this practice. Staff members interpret this practice as a well-being resource provided by leadership and something that makes them feel confident and happy day to day. An associated finding to staff positioning relates to the competitive mind-set many members of the Office of First-Year Admissions discussed.

Competition Mind-Set. A popular motto for the staff within the Office of First-Year Admissions is "Eat, Sleep, Dominate." One of the participants, Derrick, shared the following story which explains how this motto came to be and how a competitive mind-set bonds the team.

> There was an interview with Shaquille O'Neill, and they said, Shaquille, what's a typical day like for you? And the only the way Shaquille O'Neal can say it, he said, eat, sleep, dominate. And so, we kind of picked that up as a joke. And that's the name of our group chat for texting. And like sometimes we'll sign emails with that. COVID was the toughest thing professionally that I've ever gone through. It was brutal. And the team handled it with spades. I don't know how they did it. So as a thank you gift, we got them all backpacks that say eat, sleep, dom.

Competition motivates the staff to continue their enrollment success. A competitive mind-set was described by other participants as well. For example, one of the students described the competition between Success University and other schools. This participant stated**,** "we can easily bond with the families in comparison to some schools where they're just very stone cold. Not to, you know, bash other people, but that's just how we are."

This competitive mind-set is also present between the different departments within the division. A member of the Office of First-Year admissions stated**:**

> I also love sports. So, like the competitive drive. So, like for us in first-year admissions, like we're always like, we need to one up transfer. Like what can we do to put on a better event first? That sounds really terrible. But like we're gonna try our best because then we get to report better survey results and better numbers." Finally, another team member, Meg, stated:

At times a competitive mentality is just what everyone has. Because, I think a lot of

us in this office have an athlete mind-set, and we all have a very competitive personality.

So, we want to be better, and we want to constantly grow.

This competitive mind-set is connected to staff positioning because admissions work requires staff to compete for students and compete against other institutions. This aspect of the work attracts a certain type of individual. The competitive mind-set associated with these participants indicates that they are positioned well to be successful. As a member of leadership shared "I think that we hate to lose more than we love to win."

Sense of Value. Like staff positioning, a sense of value was another element that supported contributions to success. Participants across all subunits of analysis expressed that their work was valued and added positive contributions to the success of the department or division. Leadership at the departmental and the divisional level explained that "there is an emphasis on good ideas that come from all different levels of the organization." More specifically, another member of leadership stated, "I also think for their well-being, their input and feedback are important and feel that they are really part of what makes a difference here." William, an interdivisional partner, and an employee of SU for over twenty years, stated that staff is "made to feel strongly and positive[ly] about their contributions." Another interdivisional participant shared that the division makes "people feel like their ideas matter, that they can contribute to our success, and we celebrate their contributions." Leadership members shared that they celebrate success and showcase staff, so the staff feel important and valued. Finally, when observing an Office of First-Year Admissions meeting, a member of leadership reminded the staff of their positive contributions to the application process. The staff attending the meeting appeared to appreciate this acknowledgment of their work from a superior.

Non-leadership staff members and student staff also expressed this same sentiment. Staff members within the Office of First-Year Admissions, including student staff, provided responses aligned with leadership. For example, one Office of First-Year Admissions staff member shared that staff is asked to join executive-level meetings, including meetings with the University President. This participant shared, "I clearly have no business being at that table from a title standpoint, but I feel every bit as valued with what I have to say as anybody in that room." Meg, an alum of Success University and a member of the Office of First-Year Admissions stated, "here it's like, let me hear you out, you know, explain your thought process, how you got here. And then if we try it and it doesn't work out, then we don't do it again – I feel heard." Eric, a student employee with nearly two years of experience, shared that leadership "still try and incorporate me into helping them with their process, rather than just shutting the door and just doing it by themselves, which I kind of appreciate." Eric affirmed that, although he is a student, he feels included "100%." Penny, an interdivisional partner to the Office of First-Year Admissions, shared the following when explaining the culture:

> Leadership creates a culture of collaboration, and I think they trust their colleagues. They
> trust the people who work for them, which is huge. And I think, I mean, I feel like people
> feel valued. I feel like, they feel like, they're contributing.

Participants discussed a sense of value for individuals and departmental contributions to success; however, this sense of value for staff contributions and for them as individuals was visible throughout the Office of First-Year Admissions. For example, an "acknowledgement wall" was located directly outside the director's office, and on the "acknowledgment wall" hung printed emails from visitors and guests acknowledging the excellent work of staff members. Centrally located, staff walk by this wall throughout their day, reminding them of their positive

contributions to the office and the students and families they serve. A similar wall was in the student staff office space. This wall reminded student staff of their positive contributions to the department's success and their positive impact on students and families. The following statement from a member of leadership summarized this theme as follows:

> You take interest in people because it's those people who are doing the work and making the difference for Success University. And if anything, we want to make sure that they really feel valued as part of what they do.

Personal Relationships. The third element, determined by the responses from participants representing all subunits of analysis, is focused on the importance of personal relationships within the department and division. The responses indicated that personal connections and positive relationships are a prominent part of the culture within the division and in the Office of First-Year Admissions. A member of the leadership team shared the following:

> There's always business to go over, and then there are, you know, updates to share. But I keep an hour meeting with my recruitment staff and then separately with my clerical staff every week, no matter what. And we might have two things to go over, and then we're sitting there for 45 minutes, and that's a chance for them just to talk about their families, about what's going on. I think it's important that it's not all business all the time. We spend too much time together, and we ask too much of each other for it not to be personal in some sort of way.

This statement from leadership is just one of many which supported the importance of personal relationships. The following section will highlight leadership, professional, and student staff statements proving that personal connections were viewed as a well-being resource that added to the unit's success.

Morgan also shared the following:

> We are very close to one another. So, like honestly, these people are my family. Sometimes emotions get wrapped up into things. Typically not, but that's always something to consider. So, my director always says like, we're a family. This is just so funny, because you see posts on the internet all the time that say, if your boss says you're a family, it's going to be a terrible work environment, but like genuinely, that's how I feel. So, we are just like your family, like you're always going to get along. There's going to be bumps in the road, but like, in the end, that's what's best to stick together for the best results.

A few of the other staff members described their relationships outside of work. Alex said, "I just find that we all get along very well. Like we do things outside of work too. I don't know, you know, we've been able to make that deeper friend connection." Meg similarly shared:

> So, for us, it works out that we all just mesh really well together. And something that I think is interesting, and that you don't find at other places, is that a lot of us have relationships with each other outside of the office. So, we're coworkers, but you know, when work is over, we might do something on the weekends, or we might do something after work. And that is really important because I feel like we genuinely care about each other outside of just the professional stuff.

Individuals outside the Office of First-Year Admissions also noticed and referenced these relationships. For example, when asked to describe the Office of First-Year Admissions' culture, Maddie and Paul shared that the team is very close and family oriented. They both shared that the group tended to spend time together outside of work, which helped with camaraderie.

Observations confirmed that employee relationships were important and that meetings involved more personal conversations than professionally work-related ones.

While these relationships are present for the professional staff, the student staff shared similar comments. For example, Eric shared:

> I have so much fun every time I go to work, the staff is just very friendly. We like to hang out in the office. They're not very, you know, far away from us. They always come in and say hi to us. They incorporate us into the conversations. We like to make jokes with each other. Yeah. So, we're all like, just like what I like to call one big happy family.

Other members of the student staff expressed similar feelings.

Additionally, during interviews, leadership, and staff referenced the importance of eating lunch together and spending quality personal time together each day. On both days in the field, I observed different Office of First-Year Admissions participants enjoying lunch together. In addition, one of the staff members from the office brought baked goods to share with the team. Staff stood together and ate, enjoying the baked goods and discussing personal stories. The following section discusses the second theme, professional development, which also emerged as an essential component of employee well-being.

Professional Development

The second theme, professional development, was identified as an important part of employee well-being by participants across the Office of First-Year staff, the divisional and department leadership, and the interdivisional partners. Professional development opportunities were one of the primary ways that participants perceived employee well-being to be present in their work environment.

Non-leadership participants were asked, "What resources, aimed at your well-being, does your leadership provide to help ensure that employees, in your role, can do their job effectively which contributes to this success?" At the same time, participants who were leadership members were asked, "What resources do you provide as leaders that promote employee well-being so the department can do their job effectively and contribute to success?" Both groups' responses focused on the appreciation for professional development opportunities. Members of interdivisional partners and the Office of First-Year Admissions shared their appreciation for opportunities to learn, grow, and become the best versions of themselves. Staff reported being supported when wanting to attend conferences and other professional development opportunities. Leadership shared that they ensured that staff were provided the resources necessary to do their jobs. Morgan stated, "I went to a conference for professional development, something that they support here, which I really appreciate." William shared that Office of First-Year Admissions staff can attend conferences and are provided opportunities to develop and grow. Holden stated it eloquently when he shared:

> I think they [staff members within the Office of First-Year Admissions] are given quite the range of opportunities to own what they do creatively and think about how they accomplish what they're asked to do. So, we give them the opportunity to learn and grow and become the best version of themselves.

Work-Life Balance

The third and final theme, work-life balance, will focus on two specific elements: Personal time and remote work. As described by a member of the Office of First-Year Admissions, the work-life balance allowed the staff throughout the enrollment management division to recover from the stress associated with their work and recharge to ensure the team has

the energy to complete their work each day. According to Alex, "balance is part of the culture. Balancing between work and personal." The concept of balance is something leadership discussed frequently; however, the topic prompted conversations regarding generational differences, which are discussed in further detail.

Personal Time. Participants in all subunits emphasized the concept of personal time when asked what employee well-being recourses are provided by leadership. In addition, participants representing the leadership subunit also discussed the importance of supporting personal time for each staff member and acknowledged the importance of their personal lives. Members of leadership instilled the importance of self-care with personal time. This set the tone for the division and made the employees feel supported when personal time was needed. For example, a member of the leadership team said:

> If you need to be a caretaker? You need to take half days on Tuesdays and Thursdays? Not a problem. We can work through this. Family comes first. Let's come up with a plan. As opposed to, if you don't know your employees that way and it's a quality-of-life piece, right?

Because members of leadership prioritized personal time, participants representing the Office of First-Year Admissions, interdivisional partners, and students discussed personal time as a well-being resource in detail. For example, participants representing the Office of First-Year Admissions referenced feeling comfortable taking personal time when having to handle things like the death of a loved one, a home repair in a different state, caring for a pet, or a mental health day. Alex shared that their direct supervisor was "always very good that if you need like a personal day because you just feel overwhelmed. He's never denied vacation or if I just need a day to like to regroup." While personal time was prioritized, participants shared that leadership

was flexible with the time taken. For example, Morgan shared that her supervisor often said, "take as much time as you need off. We'll cover whatever you were supposed to do." Meg shared:

> Leadership advocates for your well-being and gives you the time that you need to relax and recover. They [supervisors] are always very straightforward and honest and say, if you need a day off, take a day off. If you need to take a vacation, take a vacation. Now, are they going to encourage a vacation in the middle of travel season? No, probably not. But if you need time to yourself, you're never going to be told no.

Interestingly, when participants discussed personal time, some referenced the importance of not taking advantage of time or how it may be perceived. For example, one participant shared that leadership supports the days they need; however, they would never take advantage of that support. They would not take advantage of this flexibility because they want to be at work and enjoy their time at work, but they still need to rest sometimes because it helps with their well-being. Ray shared "I never have that worry that I can't take care of something personally because of how that's going to be perceived here. So, you never, never have to worry about that."

The resource of personal time was also discussed with participants representing interdivisional partners and student staff. Participants from both groups acknowledged personal time as a benefit they appreciated because it assists with work-life balance. For example, Penny continued to stay at Success University, even with her experience and talent, due to the benefits, job security, and paid time off. As she said, "I like have higher PTO than anybody that I know, you know." Penny continued to share that her direct supervisor has "always been really supportive if I need to take time or you know, I've had some health issues and some relationship issues." Rosie, a participant representing the student staff, similarly shared that she feels she is

often supported when she needs to take time off to handle personal things. For example, Rosie

shared "like say something happens in your family and you have to go home, and you have to

miss an open house, like it's nothing against you that you have to go home."

Personal time was discussed by participants as a resource that supported their well-being.

Personal time was addressed by participants representing all subunits. Examples included

participants representing the Office of First-Year Admissions, interdivisional partners, and

student staff. The following section will discuss the second sub-theme of work-life balance;

remote work.

Remote Work. The second element related to work-life balance is the opportunity to

work outside the office, typically from an individual's home. Participants in most subunits,

excluding the student staff, addressed this element. Student workers did not discuss remote work

because their job responsibilities, like providing campus tours to admission visitors, require them

to work on campus and in person. Members of the Office of First-Year Admissions indicated

they enjoy working from home, with one participant, Morgan, describing remote work as the

"biggest blessing ever." Morgan went on to explain:

> Remote work keeps me feeling physically healthy and rested. I don't ever feel run down
>
> even though we work crazy hours, travel weekends, nights. But I also think it helps that
>
> we all love our jobs, so it doesn't take much to appease us.

Penny, a participant representing one of the interdivisional partners, shared that she commutes a

hundred miles daily and would rather not drive that far to sit on Zoom™ calls each day. The

remote work policy allowed her to conduct these same meetings at home. Paul, another

participant representing one of the interdivisional partners, also shared that the work-from-home

policy helped the division with employee retention. Some staff members stay at Success University because of the remote work policy's flexibility.

However, the concept of remote work was associated with debate and disagreement. Members of leadership viewed remote work as a symbol of generational differences. While they understood that remote work allowed for more balance and younger staff were more comfortable working remotely, it was still not their preference. This next section will discuss the generational differences and the perceptions of remote work.

Generational Differences. Discussions regarding work-life balance, specifically remote work, included differing opinions by the generations. As a participant representing leadership said, "work life balance, a couple generations ago, was not a part of the conversation. Right? It's not always about more pay, but how can we help you balance things?"

While participants representing the younger generations discussed the benefits of remote work and viewed remote work as a primary resource supporting their well-being, participants representing older generations thought differently. For example, a participant representing an older generation struggled to support remote work because admissions work was focused on building relationships, and remote work stifled the opportunity to build those relationships. However, as Meg shared:

> I feel like us younger ones are trying to get a point across that sometimes the older people or the people who have been in higher ed for a long time might not understand why we're trying to push this initiative or how it makes sense.

Generational differences in opinion on employee well-being, like work-from-home opportunities, are not unique to Success University. Regardless of these differences, however, it

was apparent that leadership was willing to support these resources because they recognized that employees were more committed and happier.

The next and last section, related to Research Question 1, discusses why the three themes of contribution to success, professional development, and work-life balance are relevant to the success of the Office of First-Year Admissions.

Relevance to Success

All participants, regardless of subunit were asked, "What do you think of the identified employee well-being resources?" and "To what extent do you believe these resources to be helpful?" This next section discusses how participants felt resources like contributions to success, professional development, and work-life balance were helpful to them or the department. Mainly, participants discussed how these resources were motivating and increased staff morale and overall happiness.

Participants in multiple subunits discussed how resources aimed at their well-being motivated them to work harder. Meg shared that these resources, coupled with a work environment supporting risk-taking, motivated her to be creative. In other work environments, staff may be intimidated by their supervisor or colleagues to share a creative idea; however, supervisors and colleagues were willing to listen and often tried new ideas in this work environment. This environment motivated her and other participants to do their best work. In addition to these resources being motivating, participants also discussed that these resources assisted with increasing staff morale. Holden shared that "moral has to be sustained. And if it isn't, we, we lose people and people don't perform to their best potential."

Finally, happiness was identified as something provided by these resources. Derrick shared:

So, in my particular situation no complaints whatsoever about what was done and what

needed to be done because eye on the prize. They're [staff] are all in from a value and an

emotional standpoint. And they [staff] also recognize the importance of the service

they're providing to the university, and then also to the prospective students.

He shared that admissions people are "happy people." People working in admissions can only

"effectively communicate and sell the experience of Success University if they are happy."

Similarly, other participants shared those resources aimed at their well-being increased

happiness. Holden shared "happy people are committed to doing the work, and people who

aren't happy don't stay. People who aren't happy don't perform well." Meg and Morgan also

shared how these resources made them feel happy. For example, Meg said:

I think that it positively impacts my work because just having the ability to do that [take

time off] and   have the flexibility to make that decision makes me, you know, go home. I

decide to take the day off. I have eight, eight hours to do nothing and then I come back

refreshed. Stepping away from it for a day or two and then coming back, I'm excited to

come back to work.

Because of the resources and support, she receives Morgan shared, "like I always joke, when I

start my presentations with families, that I've been at Success University for seven years in

various roles and I'm never leaving. Like I love it here. This is my home." These responses

amplify the importance of happiness for these participants and the importance of happiness on

the department's success.

Research Question 2

The second research question of this study asked, "specifically, what role(s) do

admissions department staff perceive emotional intelligence plays in departmental enrollment

success and employee well-being?" Participant responses indicated an emphasis on empathy. This section will discuss empathy's role in departmental enrollment success and employee well-being.

Once again, emotional intelligence is the ability to observe emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, comprehend emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Empathy is an attribute of emotional intelligence essential in connecting individuals (Fowler et al., 2021). Empathy allows individuals to care for someone other than themselves (Fowler et al., 2021). This next section will focus specifically on the participant responses which support Research Question 2 and the theme of empathy among the participants.

Empathy

Empathy, first introduced in the early twentieth century (Becker, 1931), is considered the ability to observe and recognize other people's emotions (Leiberg & Anders, 2006). Participants were asked, "How do you think your awareness of your emotional intelligence impacts success, if at all?" More specifically, this section will discuss the importance of empathy when working with others as a team and with external, public constituents like students and other guests.

Empathy Within the Team. Some participants focused on how they treated other team members when discussing emotional intelligence. For example, a student staff member, Rosie, shared "if I notice that somebody's having a bad day, I am like, hey, I'll give the tour for you. Like you don't really seem like you're having the best day." Rosie's reflection can be labeled empathetic because of her awareness of a teammate's emotions and how those emotions could negatively impact that individual's work. This awareness of other teammates and what they may be experiencing starts at the top. For example, a member of the leadership team shared:

So, there's going to be times when you're, you know, outside of work is not going great, and you're getting pulled in five different directions. And you know what? It's foolish to think that's not going to impact people in the office, but let's talk about it, right? And let's be supportive and let's show each other grace. And I think that also helps us because collaboration is so important, not only within the division, but across the university. You have to put yourself in other people's shoes.

Ray, a participant representing the Office of First-Year Admissions, shared that as he ages, he is more inclined to appreciate people's differences, particularly those he works alongside. Alex also shared that she could open up and have an honest dialogue with her teammates. This honest, open dialogue is because the team is willing to share and respect their feelings. Finally, a member of leadership also shared:

I'm personally invested with my staff. I'm not one of those people who, you know what, I want to get to know everybody equally because I don't want to know more about one person (…) you know it's; I'd rather know more and I'd rather care more than care less. And that has served me well in a variety of instances, especially when things go bad.

These participants and others recognized the importance of interpreting and understanding the emotions of the people they work with daily. These participants believed this awareness assisted with the success of their department. While these participants shared awareness of the emotions of the individuals on their team, other participants recognized the importance of interpreting and understanding the emotions of the constituents they serve.

Empathy With the Public. When discussing emotional intelligence, some participants focused on how they treated external constituents like campus visitors or prospective students. Empathy with the public was discussed by participants representing interdivisional partners,

members of the Office of First-Year Admissions, and student staff. For example, Alex explained that she often shares a personal story with campus visitors, including the fears and anxiety she experienced during her first year of college. Her rationale for being vulnerable and sharing a personal story focused on her emotional state during her first year in college was to assist any students who may be experiencing the same fears and anxiety or are feeling overwhelmed with the idea of going away to college. She wanted those students to know they were not alone. Similarly, Mary shared the following when discussing emotional intelligence and empathy with the public:

> I think with my role is really important to connect to families. So, trying to put myself in their shoes, trying to connect and remember when I, like, back when I was in their shoes. And just trying to use that emotional intelligence, as aspect, to really connect with families and make them feel like they're heard and understood, and also while getting them excited for the next steps.

When working with the public, especially when presenting at an admission information session Morgan shared that she used her ability to read people's emotions and anticipate how they may react. Morgan shared the importance of showing students and families empathy was helpful, especially when she shared difficult news with prospective students and families. Finally, Rosie shared that she had learned to be aware of people's emotions which helped when giving campus tours. Rosie notably showed empathy when working with those guests who had a negative experience or were generally unhappy. She shared that she felt it was her job to acknowledge how those visitors were feeling and ensure them she was there to help. She also provided an example of when she showed empathy toward students unsure of what to study in college or uncertain of what profession they want to pursue. She understood how they were feeling because

she was struggling with similar uncertainties. These participants used empathy as a way to connect with prospective students and guests, as well as a way to relate to students experiencing negative emotions about the college selection or college transition process. These participants believed that being empathetic toward the public assisted with their success, as well as the success of the department.

Summary of Research Question 2

This section focused on the findings related to Research Question 2. When discussing the impacts of emotional intelligence on success, participants identified and discussed the importance of empathy when working with each other and with students and guests. Empathy, the ability to care for someone other than oneself (Fowler et al., 2021), allowed participants to understand and respect their colleagues' emotions, leading to more open dialogue and trust. Empathy also assisted participants with understanding the emotions prospective students and families experienced during the college admissions and selection process. Empathy helped the participants connect with students experiencing feelings of isolation and fear.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. Findings associated with Research Question 1 centered around three themes: contributions to success, professional development, and work-life balance. Findings associated with Research Question 2 centered around emotional intelligence and empathy.

Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the study, followed by an explanation of its connection to its conceptual framework. Chapter 5 will conclude with the implications of the study's findings for practice and the implications for future research.

Chapter 5

This qualitative study explored the perceptions of admissions employees' well-being and emotional intelligence on departmental success. This chapter begins with a summary of the study, followed by the study's connection to its conceptual framework. The chapter will also explore implications for practice and future research.

Summary of Study

This study focused on university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. More specifically, this study was situated in a thriving Office of First-Year Admissions at a regional public institution of higher education in a rural setting experiencing an unstable public university system organizational landscape. Through a qualitative embedded single case study (Yin, 2018), I conducted sixteen semi-structured one-on-one interviews with non-academic staff within an enrollment management division at a mid-sized public university. Participants represented all subunits of analysis, including leadership, the Office of First-Year Admissions, interdivisional partners, and student staff. Participants of the one-one-interviews represented administrators whose role was critical to the success of a first-year admissions department (Maxwell, 2013). Interview questions were guided by this study's conceptual framework and addressed each frame within Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984). In addition, I also conducted two days of observation at Success University and in its Office of First-Year Admissions.

Through this study, I pursued two research questions. These two research questions aimed to understand better how employees perceive the impact of resources aimed at their well-being and emotional intelligence on their collective enrollment achievements. The section below summarizes each research question and the findings identified by the participants through their

responses to the one-on-one interview questions, along with the information collected during the two days of observation hours.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "What are the admissions staff and related leadership perceptions at Success University, a regional public institution of higher education experiencing stable first-year undergraduate admission enrollment success, about admissions department employee well-being?" Data signaled that the participants believed resources aimed at their well-being contributed to their enrollment success. Specifically, participants discussed three main themes related to employee well-being: their ability to contribute to success individually, opportunities for professional development, and the importance of work-life balance.

When discussing individual contributions to success, three elements emerged. These elements included staff positioning, feeling a sense of value, and the importance of personal relationships. Data indicated that the staff positioning, or the intentional placement of individuals in positions based on their strengths, contributed to the department's success. Participants described the practice as placing people in positions so they can thrive personally and professionally. This practice was considered a well-being resource because it maximized an individual's strengths while minimizing limitations.

A sense of value focused on the contributions made by the participants and how their work was valued and added positive contributions to the department's success. Participants discussed how their input and feedback are essential and are made to feel that their work makes a difference. Overall, their ideas mattered, and their contributions were celebrated. One participant described how leadership created a culture of collaboration, and leadership trusted the staff. This collaboration and trust made people feel valued, which added to their overall success.

The third element, personal relationships, also contributed to the department's success. In addition to the data collected from interview responses, personal relationships were observed firsthand during the two-day visit to the case study site. The Office of First-Year Admissions' culture was described as very close and family oriented. Participants shared that the group tended to spend time outside work, including vacationing, which helped with camaraderie and trust. However, it is essential to note that most staff members came from similar ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and perhaps contributing to the sense of relationship.

The second theme related to the findings associated with Research Question 1 was professional development. Participants shared their appreciation for opportunities to attend conferences that allowed them to learn, grow, and become the best versions of themselves. Professional development opportunities were one of the primary ways that participants perceived employee well-being to be present in their work environment. Leadership also prioritized providing staff with the resources necessary to conduct their jobs effectively.

Finally, the third theme related to Research Question 1 was work-life balance. Participants identified two primary resources connected to work-life balance: personal time and remote work. Participants emphasized the opportunity to take personal time when asked what employee well-being resources leadership provides. The prioritization of personal time signaled that leadership cared about their personal lives. Leadership advocated for participants' well-being by giving them time to relax and recover. Remote work, or work from home, opportunities were also associated as a well-being resource provided by leadership. Remote work assisted with the retention of employees across the enrollment management division. Interestingly, however, participants discussed generational differences in opinion regarding remote work. For example, a participant with over twenty-five years of experience shared that remote work prohibited

connection building and believed connection building was a primary responsibility of an admissions professional.

Overall, the data related to Research Question 1 indicated that participants perceived their ability to individually contribute to success, opportunities for professional development, and the importance of work-life balance contributed to the department's success. These resources aimed at employee well-being created an environment that supported risk-taking, motivated staff to perform their best, maintained staff morale, and increased overall staff happiness. The following section will discuss the findings related to Research Question 2.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, "Specifically, what role(s) do admissions department staff perceive emotional intelligence plays in departmental enrollment success and employee well-being?" Data revealed that participants perceived that emotional intelligence played a role in departmental enrollment success and employee well-being. Specifically, one attribute of emotional intelligence, empathy, was identified by all subunits of participants as particularly important.

Participants discussed the importance of empathy when working with two distinct groups. These two groups include their internal team and external public constituents. When discussing the importance of practicing empathy with their internal team, participants recognized the importance of interpreting and understanding the emotions of people they work with daily. Participants discussed that awareness of the emotions of those on their team assists with the enrollment success of the department of first-year admissions and division of enrollment management.

In addition, when discussing emotional intelligence, participants identified the importance of practicing empathy when working with external constituents like campus visitors or prospective students. Participants shared that showing empathy to prospective students and other guests assists them through the admissions process and difficult transition to higher education.

One participant indicated that it is essential to be empathetic to prospective students, along with being personally vulnerable. Being empathetic towards students while personally vulnerable shows students they are not alone during a stressful time. The college admissions process and college transition can produce negative emotions for students, such as stress, anxiety, and uncertainty. Participants discussed the importance of being aware of these negative emotions. Showing care or concern (Fowler et al., 2021) for students experiencing these negative emotions helps build a connection with these students and their families and makes them feel seen, heard, and understood. Participants shared that they felt it assisted students and families with shifting any negative emotions associated with a stressful process to the excitement for their next steps. The following section will discuss how these findings and those associated with Research Question 1 are connected to this study's conceptual framework.

Connections to Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework is supported by Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984). Bolman and Deal's four frames, or perspectives on organizations, include the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 1984, 2017). While Bolman and Deal recommend that each frame be used together when assessing a situation, and the data collected through interviews and observations addressed all four frames, the main findings from the study focused on the structural and human resources frames (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Connections to Conceptual Framework
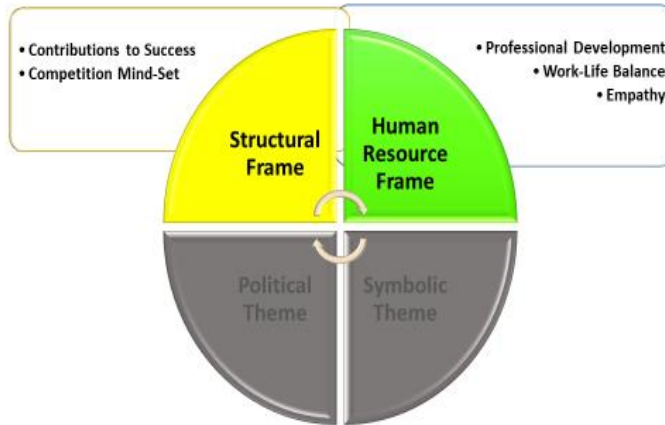
The Structural Frame

The structural frame focuses on the organization rather than the individual (Bolman &

Deal, 2017). It assumes organizations seek to achieve goals and increase their efficiencies and

performance while strategically coordinating and controlling their employees to ensure

collaboration (Bolman & Deal, 2017). This study expanded the use of the structural frame in a

higher education setting, specifically in the realm of enrollment management.

The structural frame assists with examining the complexity of an admissions

organization, like departmental procedures, organizational structures, departmental operational

goals, new student enrollment goals, and admissions policies. To better understand the

organizational structures, departmental operational goals, and new student enrollment goals of

the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University, all participants were asked the

following three interview questions: "What are the strengths of this department, and what are the

challenges?", "Can you provide 1-2 examples of when the department was particularly

successful? Tell me a story. (Explore who, what, when, where, how, etc.)", and "How would you

define the culture of your office?" Responses provided a broader understanding of the institutional, divisional, and office operational goals, achievements, and culture that supports these achievements.

Competition is an aspect of the structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017), particularly when attempting to reach goals. Participants, especially those representing the Office of First-Year Admissions, discussed having a competitive mindset that contributes to their success and is associated with staff positioning. Many participants described themselves or referred to others as having a competitive mindset. This attribute is essential considering the competitive nature of higher education admissions work.

The Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame focuses on aligning organizations with their people (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Vuori, 2018). This frame assumes that organizations and people mutually depend on one another and that organization exists to serve its employees' needs because, in return, employees achieve better results (Bolman & Deal, 2017). This frame also emphasizes the importance of employee well-being and emotional intelligence; therefore, the human resource frame guided this study's research questions. Mainly, this frame is associated with further understanding the impact of employee well-being and emotional intelligence on the success of the Office of First-Year Admissions at Success University.

More specifically, the human resource frame guided this study to explore further the relationships among the admissions staff, interdivisional partners, student employees, and leadership. To understand the relationships, through the human resource frame, participants were asked the following interview questions: "What resources, aimed at your well-being, does your leadership provide to help ensure that employees, in your role, can do their job effectively which

contributes to this success?", "What do you think of these resources? To what extent are they helpful?" and "Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). How do you think your awareness of your emotional intelligence impacts success, if at all?". Findings from this case study indicated that resources aimed at well-being motivated participants to work harder, take risks, and be creative. Participants shared that a work environment focused on employee well-being and emotional intelligence, particularly empathy, motivated them to do their best work.

Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (1984) provides the conceptual framework that supports this qualitative study. While data collection relates to all four frames, findings associated with this study's two research questions, emphasize Bolman and Deal's Structural Frame and Human Resource Frame (1984), mainly because of the focus on employee well-being and the use of emotional intelligence. This study expands the use of this model in a higher education setting. The following section will discuss further implications of this study.

Limitations

This embedded single case study is focused on the enrollment success of a specific department within a specific institution, therefore, the findings from this study may not be generalizable to other departments or institutions. While not generalizable, this study still adds to the limited research on admissions professionals, and the themes generated from this study's findings could influence future research on a similar topic.

Implications

There are many implications for practice and future research based on this study. The findings suggest the importance and relevance of employee well-being and emotional

intelligence with admission professionals. Below are four implications for practice and another set of implications for future research.

Implications for Practice

Understanding and accepting that the current turbulent higher education landscape and the social factors contributing to this turbulence are not changing, this study provides important insights that can assist university leaders, enrollment management leaders, and admissions professionals in navigating this challenging and stressful time in higher education. When the well-being of employees is prioritized, staff are more willing to adapt to change, have more positive relationships with peers and leaders, and feel supported (van Straaten et al., 2016). Findings from this study indicate that even during these difficult times, campus and enrollment management leaders and admission professionals at other campuses can implement similar tactics that benefit their employees and the organization. The section presents four recommendations for practice.

Invest in Employee Well-Being. While this study focused on an Office of First-Year Admissions, findings can be translated and utilized by other areas of campus. Findings from this study can serve as a starting point for university executive leaders, like Presidents or Vice Presidents, to diagnose where issues regarding employee well-being may exist and use these findings as a starting point toward improvement. University executive leaders should first acknowledge and recognize the importance of investing in the well-being of their personnel. Findings from the study indicate that executive leaders should consider investing in and prioritizing employee well-being at the same level they invest in and prioritize operational work demands and expectations. Each campus is unique, with its own set of challenges. Therefore, campus leaders should begin by understanding the well-being needs of their personnel and

catering their well-being resources to meet those needs. To understand personnel well-being needs that may lead to success, surveying personnel would be necessary. This recommendation would benefit a campus community because findings indicate that cultivating a positive working environment that meets well-being needs leads to more motivated, committed, and happy staff overall.

Empathetic Campus Culture. In addition, findings indicate that executive campus leaders should consider creating an empathetic campus culture. Participants identified empathy as essential when discussing emotional intelligence's impact on success. Creating a campus culture, steeped in empathy, benefits the campus community along with the external constitutions it serves. Findings from this study indicate that empathy can assist campuses with navigating the challenges facing higher education today. Perhaps empathy leads to more understanding, open dialogue, and trust among colleagues. Empathy may also assist with stronger personal connections. More personal connections and understanding, especially on a campus experiencing a turbulent environment, can offset feelings of isolation and seclusion.

Campus leaders can operationalize an empathetic campus culture by incorporating the concept and its importance into a university's strategic plan and mission statement or include it as a principle that guides the campus' work. Placing the concept of empathy in a strategic plan, mission statement, or as a guiding principle signals to the campus community that empathy is valued and should be incorporated into their day-to-day work. If executive leadership places value on empathy, other leaders will also begin to place value and incorporate it into their divisions and departments.

Professional Development and Other Supports. In addition to executive campus leaders, enrollment management professionals can also operationalize findings from this study.

Leaders of university departments who assist with the enrollment of students, like Graduate

Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, and Student Success, can operationalize findings from this

study into the day-to-day cultures of their offices. Some ways include supporting and prioritizing

professional development opportunities, mainly focused on employee well-being. Findings

indicate that these professional development opportunities increase their staff's chances of output

and success. Another practice is supporting and instituting more robust work-from-home

policies. Findings indicate remote work assists with positive feelings toward work-life balance.

Finally, professionals leading key enrollment management departments would benefit from

placing value on employee contributions and including staff, from all levels of the organization,

in critical decisions about day-to-day operations. Findings from this study indicate that placing

value on employee contributions and including staff in critical decisions makes staff feel

important and creates a culture of collaboration.

       Staff Positioning and Personal Relationships. Finally, individuals in leadership

positions at other admissions offices could also benefit from incorporating findings from this

study into their day-to-day operations. First, admissions leaders should consider staff positioning

and whether a staff member's current position suits that employee's strengths. Findings indicate

it is important to understand an employee's personal and career objectives and to place them in a

position that aligns with these aspirations. Understanding and placing each employee's strengths,

in the proper role, leads to higher energy, increased creativity and innovativeness. Especially in

today's turbulent enrollment landscape, increased energy, creativity, and innovativeness could

assist with future enrollment success. Finally, participants from this study discussed the

importance of prioritizing personal relationships within the department. These personal

relationships assist with building a community of trust, increased empathy, and overall positive

camaraderie within the team. Robust personal relationships can assist with the overall success of a department.

Overall findings from this study indicate that employee well-being resources were motivating, led to higher levels of creativity, and increased overall morale and happiness. Participants were more willing to take risks which are essential considering today's turbulent enrollment landscape. University executive leadership, enrollment management leaders, and admission professionals can institute these recommendations to cultivate a more positive and supportive working environment, conducive to creativity and risk-taking. However, since this study was focused on a specific case, opportunities to further expand this research which will be discussed next.

Implications for Research

As shared previously, research on employee well-being within a higher education setting has been focused on academic faculty or students (Oshagbemi, 2013; van Straaten et al., 2016). This study adds to the limited research on the value of employee well-being with non-academic administrators, particularly admissions professionals. Considering that the research indicates that any emphasis on employee well-being benefits administrators' job satisfaction, job performance, and employee engagement (Thompson, 2020; van Straaten et al., 2016), continuous research focused on the employee well-being of admissions professionals is essential.

This study used a qualitative embedded single case study approach (Yin, 2018) to explore the perceptions of employee well-being at a successful mid-size public university. Findings from this study may not be "generalize beyond the confines of the case the study" (Chenail, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, a different qualitative study approach with participants representing a broader admissions population would expand results and understanding of employee well-being on

success. This study also intentionally focused on the success of a specific admissions department. In contrast, future qualitative studies could explore the benefits of employee well-being at the individual or divisional levels.

Data collected on the perceptions of the role of emotional intelligence on success was limited. While participants resonated with the concept of emotional intelligence, responses to questions related to emotional intelligence were not expansive. Further research on admission professionals' perceptions of emotional intelligence on success would add to the limited research on the topic. While employee well-being and emotional intelligence are closely linked, further understanding the impact of emotional intelligence with admissions professionals would assist with understanding its impact on success.

Interestingly, data collected from participants representing interdivisional partners to the Office of First-Year Admissions indicated increased competition for resources related to employee well-being. Future studies should focus on the perspectives of different departments within an enrollment management division and the impact competition plays on perceptions of employee well-being and success. Future research would expand the understanding of employee well-being in higher education.

Summary

The study of employees' perceptions of employee well-being and emotional intelligence on the success of the admissions department is essential because it assists admissions professionals, and other campus leaders, in navigating this challenging and stressful time in higher education enrollment management. This chapter summarized the study's findings and the connection to its conceptual framework while presenting implications for practice and future research on the employee well-being of higher education professionals.

References

2021 HR sentiment survey. Future Workplace (n.d.). Retrieved October 2, 2022, from

    https://futureworkplace.com/ebooks/2021-hr-sentiment-survey/

Ablanedo-Rosas, J. H., Blevins, R. C., Gao, H., Teng, W. Y., & White, J. (2011). The impact of

    occupational stress on academic and administrative staff, and on students: An empirical

    case analysis. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 33*(5), 553–564.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2011.605255

Allen, M. (2017). *The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods*. Sage

    Publication. https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n86

American Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admissions Officers (2015). *Admissions*

    staffing and responsibility: Results of the AACRAO November 2015 60 second survey.

American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology. (n.d.). Definition of bias.

    Retrieved from https://dictionary.apa.org/bias

Astin, A. W., & Oseguera, L. (2004). The declining "equity" of American higher education.

    Review of Higher Education, 27(3), 321–341. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2004.0001

Ayoko, O., Callan, V., & Hartel, C. (2008). The influence of team emotional intelligence climate

    on conflicts and team members' reactions to conflict. *Small Group Research*, *39*(2), 121-

    149. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1046496407304921

Barchard, K. (2016). Does emotional intelligence assist in prediction of academic success?

    Educational and Psychological Measurement, 63(5), 840-858.

    http://doi.org/10.1177/0013164403251333

Bar-on, R. (1997). *Emotional quotient-inventory.* Multi-Health Systems.

Bar-On, R., Handley, R., & Fund, S. (2006). The impact of emotional intelligence on

performance. In V. Urch Druskat, G. Mount, & F. Sala (Eds.), *Linking emotional*

intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and

groups, *(3-19).* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Baum, S., & Ma, J. (2012) Trends in college pricing, 2012. *Trends in Higher Education Series.*

College Board Advocacy & Policy Center.

Becker, Howard. (1931). Some forms of sympathy: A phenomenological analysis. *The Journal*

of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 26 (1), 58-68. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0072609

Berger, M.C., & Kostal, T. (2002). Financial resources, regulation, and enrollment in US public

higher education. *Economics of Education Review, 21*(2), 101-110.

https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7757(00)00065-0

Black, J. (2004). Defining enrollment management: The structural frame. *College and*

University, 79(4), 37-39.

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, T. E. (1984). *Modern approaches to understanding and managing*

organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, TE (1991). Leadership and management effectiveness: A multi-frame,

multi-sector analysis. *Human Resource Management, 30*(4), 509-534.

https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.3930300406

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, T.E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership.*

John Wiley & Sons.

Bransberger, P., Falkenstern, C., & Lane, P. (2020). Knocking at the College Door: Projections

of High School Graduates, Revised. *Western Interstate Commission for Higher*

Education.

Briner, R. (2005). What can research in emotion at work tell us about researching well-being at

work? *International Journal of Work Organization and Emotion, 1*(1), 67-73.

https://doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2005.007327

Campion, L. L. (2020). Leading through the enrollment cliff of 2026 (Part I). *TechTrends*, *64*(3),

542-544.

Center, N. S. C. R. (2021, April 30). *Publications*. National Student Clearinghouse Research

Center. Retrieved October 25, 2022, from https://nscresearchcenter.org/publications/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Retrieved from

https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/wellbeing.htm#:~:text=Well%2Dbeing%20integrates%20men

tal%20health,disease%20prevention%20and%20health%20promotion.

Chenail, R.J. (2010). Getting specific about qualitative research generalizability. *Journal of*

Ethnographic & Qualitative Research, 5, 1-11.

Cherkowski, S., Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Crawford, M. (2021). Conceptualizing leadership

and emotions in higher education: wellbeing as wholeness. *Journal of Educational*

Administration and History, *53*(2), 158-171.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2020.1828315

Cloninger, C. R. (2004). *Feeling good: the science of well-being*. Oxford University Press.

Coco, C.M. (2011). Emotional intelligence in higher education: Strategic implications for

academic leaders. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice,11*(2), 112-117.

College Entrance Examination Board. (1976). *A role for marketing in college admissions:*

Papers presented at the Colloquium on College Admissions, May 16-18, 1976. College

Entrance Examination Board.

Conte, J. (2005). A review and critique of emotional intelligent measures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *26*, 433-440. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.319

Conte, J.M. & Dean, M.A. (2006). Can emotional intelligence be measured? In KR. Murphy (Ed.), *A critique of emotional intelligence* (59-77). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Copley, P. & Douthett, E. (2020). The enrollment cliff, mega-universities, COVID-19, and the changing landscape of US colleges. *The CPA Journal*, *90*(9), 22-27.

Creswell, J.W., & Clark, V.L.P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd Edition). Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W. & Guetterman, T.C. (2019). *Educational research planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (6th Edition)*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches (4th Edition).* Sage Publications, Inc.

Davies, M., Stankov, L., & Roberts, R.D. (1998). Emotional intelligence: In search of an elusive construct. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(4), 989-1015. http://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.4.989

Daus, C. & Ashkanasy, N. (2003). Will the real emotional intelligence please stand up? On deconstructing the emotional intelligence "debate." *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist, 41*(2), 69-72.

Dhani, P. & Sharma, T. (2016). Emotional intelligence; history, models and measures. *International Journal of Science Technology and Management, 5*(7), 189-201.

Dungy, G.J. (2003). Organization and functions of student affairs. In S.R. Komives & D.

    Woodward, Jr (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession*, (4th Edition) (*339-*

    356). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Edwards, J. A., Van Laar, D., Easton, S., & Kinman, G. (2009). The work-related quality of life

    scale for higher education employees. *Quality in higher education*, *15*(3), 207-219.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13538320903343057

Eide, S. (2018). Private colleges in peril: Financial pressures and declining enrollment may lead

    to more closures. *Education Next, 18*(4), 34-42.

Ellis, S. (2009). Developing effective relationships on campus and in the community. In G. S.

    McClellan & J. Stringer (Eds.), *The handbook of student affairs administration* (3rd

    Edition) (447-462). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Erasmus, B. J., Grobler, A., & Van Niekerk, M. (2015). Employee retention in a higher

    education institution: An organizational development perspective. *Progressio*, *37*(2), 33-

    63.

Ewing, L. A. (2021). Rethinking higher education post COVID-19. In *The Future of Service*

    Post-COVID-19 Pandemic, Volume 1 (pp. 37-54). Springer, Singapore.

Fambrough, M. & Hart, R.K. (2008). Emotions in leadership development: A critique of

    emotional intelligence. *Advances In Developing Human Resources, 10*(5), 740-

    758. http://doi.org/10.1177/1523422308323542

Fineman, S. (2000). *Emotion in Organizations*. Sage.

Ford, K. S., Rosinger, K. O., & Zhu, Q. (2021). Consolidation of class advantages in the wake of

    the Great Recession: University enrollments, educational opportunity and

    stratification. *Research in Higher Education*, *62*(7), 915-941.

Fowler, Z., Law, K.F., & Gaesser, B. (2021). Against empathy bias: The moral value of

    equitable empathy. *Psychological Science*, 32(5), 766-779.

Gabriel, A.S, Arena, D.F., Calderwood, C., Campbell, J.T., Chawla, N., Corwin, E.S., Ezerins,

M., Jones, K.P., Klotz, A.C., Larson, J.D., Leigh, A., MacGowan, R.L., Moran, C.M., Nag, D.,

Rogers, K.M., Rosen, C.C., Sawyer, K.B., Shockly, K., Simon, L.S., & Zipay, K.P. (2022).

    Building thriving workforces from the top down: A call and research agenda for human

    resource management to proactively support employee well-being. *Research in Personnel*

    and Human Resources Management, 40, 205-272.

    https://doi.org/10.1108/S0742-730120220000040007

Gansemer-Topf, A. M., Von Haden, K., & Peggar, E. (2014). Aligning competencies with

    success: What does it take to be an effective admissions counselor. *College and*

    University, *90*(1), 14.

Gelaide, H.M., Al-Swidi, A., & Mabkhot, H.A. (2018). Employee readiness to change in public

    higher education institutions: Examining the joint effect of leadership behavior and

    emotional intelligence. *International Journal of Public Administration, 41*(2), 150-158.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2016.1255962

Giorgi, G. (2013). Organizational emotional intelligence: Development of a model.

    International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 21(1), 4-18.

    http://doi.org/10.1108/19348831311322506

Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bloomsbury

    Publishing.

Goleman, D. (2020). *Emotional intelligence*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Grawe, N. D. (2018). *Demographics and the demand for higher education*. JHU Press.

Guraja, P. K., Badar, M. A., Moayed, F. A., & Kluse, C. (2022). Systematic literature review of the impact of state budget cuts on public higher education institutions in the US. In *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*, 7-10.

Hackett, P. & Hortman, J.W. (2008). The relationship of emotional competencies to transformational leadership: Using a corporate model to assess the dispositions of educational leaders. *Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies, 8*(1), 92-111.

Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Keyes, C. L. (2003). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies. In C. L. M. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 205–224). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10594-009

Hodum, & James, G. W. (2010). An Observation of Normative Structure for College Admission and Recruitment Officers. *The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus)*, *81*(3), 317–338. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2010.11779055

Hossler, D., Kalsbeek, D. H., & Bontrager, B. (2015). Successful strategic enrollment management organizations. In D. Hossler & B. Bontrager (Eds.), *Handbook of strategic enrollment management*, 31-46. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hyett, M. P., & Parker, G. B. (2015). Further examination of the properties of the workplace well-being questionnaire (WWQ). *Social Indicators Research*, *124*(2), 683-692.

Ioannidou, F., & Konstantikaki, V. (2008). Empathy and emotional intelligence: What is it really about? *International Journal of Caring Sciences, 1*(3), 118-123.

Jordan, P.J., Ashton-James, C.E., & Ashkanasy, N.M. (2006). Evaluating the claims:

    Emotional intelligence in the workplace. In K.R. Murphy (Ed.), *A critique of*

    emotional intelligence (189-210). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Joseph, D.L. & Newman, D.A. (2010). Emotional intelligence: an integrative meta-analysis and

    cascading model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95*(1), 54.

Judge, T. A., Thoresen, C. J., Bono, J. E., & Patton, G. K. (2001). The job satisfaction–job

    performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Psychological*

    Bulletin, *127*(3), 376. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.3.376

Kelchen, R., Ritter, D., & Webber, D. (2021). The lingering fiscal effects of the COVID-19

    pandemic on higher education. *Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia*.

    https://doi.org/10.21799/frbp.dp.2021.01

Kim, H., Krishnan, C., Law, J., & Rounsaville, T. (2020). COVID-19 and US higher education

    enrollment: Preparing leaders for fall. *New Jersey: McKinsey & Company*.

Kotler, P. (1972). A generic concept of marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 36*(2), 46-54.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297203600209

Krekel, C., G. Ward, and J.-E. De Neve. (2018) "Work and Wellbeing: A Global Perspective,"

    In: Sachs, J. (ed), Global Happiness Policy Report, 2018.

Laker, B., & Roulet, T. (2021). How organizations can promote employee wellness, now and

    post-pandemic. *MIT Sloan Management Review*.

Landy, F. (2005). Some historical and scientific issues related to research on emotional

    intelligence. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26*, 411-424.

    http://doi.org/10.1002/job.317

Lavrakas, P. (2008). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods.* Sage Publications.

https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963947.n629

Leiberg, S., & Anders, S. (2006). The multiple facets of empathy: A survey of theory and

evidence. *Progress in Brain Research, 156*, 419-440.

http://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-6123(06)56023-6

Levine, A., & Van Pelt, S. J. (2021). *The Great Upheaval: Higher Education's Past, Present,*

and Uncertain Future. JHU Press.

Litchfield, P. (2021). Workplace wellbeing. *Perspective in Public Health, 141*(1), 11-12.

Love, P. G. & Estanek, S. M. (2004). *Rethinking student affairs practice.* San Francisco, CA:

Jossey-Bass.

Loveland, E. (2018). Feeling the Burn. *Journal of College Admission*, *238*, 48-53.

Liu, O. L. (2022). Holistic Admissions in Higher Education: Challenges and Promise. *Journal of*

Postsecondary Student Success, *1*(4), 1-19.

Lueddeke, G.R. (1999). Toward a constructivist framework for guiding change and innovation in

higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education, 70*(3), 235-260.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1999.11780763

Maslow, A. H. (1950). Self-actualizing people: a study of psychological health. *Personality*,

Symposium, 1, 11-34.

Matthews, G., Emo, A., Roberts, R., & Zeidner, M. (2006). In K.R. Murphy (Ed.), *A critique of*

emotional intelligence: What are the problems and how can they be fixed? Lawrence

Erlbaum Associates.

Mayer, J. & Salovey, P. (1993). The intelligence of emotional intelligence. *Intelligence, 17*(4),

433-442. http://doi.org/10.1016/0160-2896(93)90010-3

Mayer, J., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and

implications. *Psychological Inquiry, 15*(3), 197-215.

https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1503_02

Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage Publications,

Inc.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative research design (3rd ed.)*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Mehra, B. (2002). Bias in qualitative research: Voices from an online classroom. *The Qualitative*

Report, 71(1), 1-19. http://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2002.1986

Mendzheritskaya, J., & Hansen, M. (2019). The role of emotions in higher education teaching

and learning processes. *Studies in Higher Education*, *44*(10), 1709-1711.

https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665306

Mitchell, M., Leachman, M., & Saenz, M. (2019). State higher education funding cuts have

pushed costs to students, worsened inequality. *Center on Budget and Policy*

Priorities, *24*, 9-15.

Moore, B. (2009). Emotional intelligence for school administrators: A priority for school

reform? *American Secondary Education, 37*(3), 20-28.

Murphy, K.R. (2006). *A critique of emotional intelligence*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Murphy, K.R. & Sideman, L. (2006). The two EIs. In K.R. Murphy (Ed.), *A critique of*

emotional intelligence (37-58). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Murugan, J. (2019). Emotional intelligence as a tool to enhance leadership within a private

higher education institution. *Educor Multidisciplinary Journal, 3*(1), 81-101.

Narayan, A. (2011). US higher education glossary. *US News & World Report*.

Naseer, Z., Chishti, S., Rahman, F., & Jumani, N.B. (2011). Impact of emotional intelligence on team performance in higher education institutes. *International Online Journal of Educational Services*, *3*(1), 30-46.

Oshagbemi, T. (2013). *Job satisfaction in higher education*. Trafford publishing.

Parrish. DR (2015). The relevance of emotional intelligence for leadership in a higher education context. *Studies in Higher Education*, *40*(5), 821-837. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.842225

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (n.d). Retrieved from https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Pages/default.aspx

Phair, J. (2014). Career paths for admissions officers: A survey report. National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Poggenpoel, M., & Myburgh, C. (2003). The researcher as research instrument in educational research: A possible threat to trustworthiness? (A research instrument). *Education, 124*(2), 418-423.

Ruben, B. D., De Lisi, R., & Gigliotti, R. A. (2021). *A guide for leaders in higher education: Concepts, competencies, and tools*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Saldaña, J. (2014). Coding and analysis strategies. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, 581-605. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199811755.013.001

Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani F.K., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M.A. (2014). Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: The necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine, 7*(14).

Sriram, R. & Farley, J.H. (2014). Circular framing: A model for applying Bolman and Deal's four frames in student affairs administration. *Student Affairs, 23*, 103-112.

Staw, B.M., Sutton, R.I., & Pelled, L.H. (1994). Employee positive emotion and favorable

  outcomes at the workplace. *Organization Science, 5*(1), 51-71.

  https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.5.1.51

Stephenson, S. (2010). "Faces" and complexities of continuing higher education units: A

  postmodern approach. *The Journal of Continuing Education, 58*(2), 62-72.

  http://doi.org/10.1080/07377361003618333

Swaan, C. (1998). *Handbook for the college admissions professional.* Greenwood Publishing

  Group.

Tandberg, D. A., & Laderman, S. A. (2018). Evaluating State Funding Effort for Higher

  Education. MHEC Policy Brief. *Midwestern Higher Education Compact*.

Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation

  data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *27*(2), 237-246.

  http://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748

Thompson, J. (2020) A comprehensive look into the well-being of higher ed employees. *College

  and University Professional Association of Human Resources.*

  https://www.cupahr.org/blog/a-comprehensive-look-into-the-wellbeing-of-higher-ed-

  employees/

Thorndike, R.L. & Stein, S. (1937). An evaluation of the attempts to measure social intelligence.

  The Psychology Bulletin, 34(5), 275-285.

Trow, M. (1988). American higher education: Past, present, and future. *Educational Researcher,*

  17(3), 13-23. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X017003013

Van Straaten, L., Du Plessis, A., & Van Tonder, S. P. (2016). Enhancing the well-being of

    support services staff in higher education: The power of appreciation. *SA Journal of*

    Industrial Psychology, *42*(1), 1-10.

Vandervoot, D.J. (2006). The importance of Emotional Intelligence in Higher Education.

    Current Psychology, 25(1), 3-7. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-006-1011-7

Visit Butler County Pennsylvania (n.d.) Retrieved from www.visitbutlercounty.com

Vuori, J. (2018). Understanding academic leadership using the four-frame model. *Theoretical*

    and Methodological Perspectives on Higher Education Management and

    Transformation-An advanced reader for PhD students.

Wechsler, D. (1940). The measurement of adult intelligence. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental*

    Disease, *91*(4), 548.

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence Child Study Center. (n.d.). Retrieved October 2, 2022,

    from http://www.ycei.org/

Yin, R. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods.* Sage Publications.

Yoder, D.M. (2004). Organizational climate and emotional intelligence: An appreciative inquiry

    into a "leaderful" community college. *Community College Journal of Research &*

    Practice, *29*(1), 45-62. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920390276966

Western Association for College Admissions Counseling (2014). Retrieved from

    https://www.wacac.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Travel-Tips.pdf

Woods, C. (2010). Employee wellbeing in the higher education workplace: a role for emotion

    scholarship. *Higher Education, 60*(20), 171-185.

Wright, T. A., Cropanzano, R., & Bonett, D. G. (2007). The moderating role of employee

positive well-being on the relation between job satisfaction and job performance. *Journal

of Occupational Health Psychology*, *12*(2), 93.

https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.2.93

Wright, T. A., & Huang, C. C. (2012). The many benefits of employee well-being in

organizational research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *33*(8), 1188-1192.

https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1828

Appendix A

Request For Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Chief Enrollment Management Officer,

My name is Sarah Freed, and I am a doctoral student in West Chester University's Education Policy, Planning, and Administration program. I am reaching out to you, based on previous conversations we have had, to formally request permission to conduct my doctoral study with members of your Admissions team.

As discussed, my research aims to explore university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. My faculty sponsor for this research is Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri, Associate Professor at West Chester University, and you can reach her at omohajeri@wcupa.edu.

I am requesting your formal consent to focus this qualitative embedded single case study on the Office of First-Year Recruitment & Admissions at your university and contact the following employees within the division of Enrollment Management to request their participation in the study:
1. Each member of the Office of First-Year Recruitment & Admissions, including the Director of First-Year Recruitment & Admissions.
2. The Directors of all other Departments within the Division of Enrollment Management, including the Director of Transfer Admissions, the Director of Graduate Admissions, the Director of Financial Aid, the University Registrar, and the Director of Career Services.
3. All student workers employed by the Office of First-Year Recruitment & Admissions.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at sfreed@wcupa.edu or (516)729-3741. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sarah L. Freed
West Chester University

Appendix B

Recruitment Email

Dear [Name]:

My name is Sarah Freed, and I am a doctoral student in West Chester University's Education Policy, Planning, and Administration program. I am seeking your assistance with my dissertation research study.

This study aims to explore university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. It is important to situate this study in a thriving office of first-year recruitment and admissions just like yours. More specifically I am seeking to focus on an Office of First-Year Admissions at a regional public institution of higher education experiencing an unstable university system organizational landscape.

Would you like to help? To see if you are eligible, please read the requirements below.

Why You Should Participate:
- You will have an opportunity to discuss the success of Office of First-Year Recruitment and Admissions.
- You will have an opportunity to discuss the value of admissions professionals at your institution.
- You will have dedicated time to focus on your personal well-being.
- You will be helping to advance the limited research on public enrollment management administrators.

Who Can Participate?
- Adults 18 years or older
- Professional staff employed by the Office of First-Year Recruitment and Admissions
- Leaders of Departments within the Division of Enrollment Management
- Students employed as tour guides by the Office of First-Year Recruitment and Admissions

If you fit these requirements and are interested in helping, sign up for the study by clicking the link here. You will be agreeing to participate in one-on-one interviews and would be allowing the researcher to observe you during related meetings.

Please note that I have already secured permission from your Chief Enrollment Management Officer to reach out to members of your team. Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect any services you receive from either Slippery Rock University or West Chester University. Furthermore, I will take the utmost care to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, and your individual responses will not be shared with anyone beside me and my Dissertation Advisor.

Please let me know if you have any questions we could answer. Thank you for helping to advance research on the admissions profession.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Project Title:

Investigator(s): Sarah Freed; Orkideh Mohajeri

Project Overview:

Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being done by Sarah Freed as part of her Doctoral Dissertation. This study explores university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence.

Your participation will take approximately 1 hour to complete one semi-structured individual interviews. In addition, I also hope to attend and observe some of the team meetings at your institution of higher education.

There will be minimal risk to participants. There is a small risk that participant may negative or intense emotions during the interview. If this happens, we can pause or discontinue the interview altogether. I will provide participants with a list of support services. There is also a small risk of hacking of my computer. Interview and survey responses will be kept confidential, and all data will be de-identified and kept in a password protected computer; however, there is always a chance of hacking and the data could be found.

There are expected benefits of participating in this study which include contributing to a better understanding of the role of employee well-being and emotional intelligence in the success of admissions departments, as well as advancing the limited research on the well-being of public university system admissions professionals.

If you would like to take part, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form.

You may ask Sarah Freed any questions to help you understand this study. If you don't want to be a part of this study, it won't affect any services from West Chester University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**
   - o This study explores university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. More specifically, this study is situated in a thriving Office of First-Year Admissions at a regional public institution of higher

education in a rural setting experiencing an unstable university system organizational landscape.

2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following:**
   o Complete 1 semi-structured individual interviews
   o Be observed during key meetings
   o This study will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**
   o No

4. **Is there any risk to me?**
   o There will be minimal risk to participants. There is a small risk that participant may negative or intense emotions during the interview. If this happens, we can pause or discontinue the interview altogether. I will provide participants with a list of support services. There is also a small risk of hacking of my computer. Interview and survey responses will be kept confidential, and all data will be de-identified and kept in a password protected computer; however, there is always a chance of hacking and the data could be found.
   o If you become upset and wish to speak with someone, you may speak with either Sarah Freed (sfreed@wcupa.edu) or with Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri (omohajeri@wcupa.edu).

5. **Is there any benefit to me?**
   o Expected benefits of participating in this study include contributing to a better understanding of the role of employee well-being and emotional intelligence in the success of admissions departments, as well as advancing the limited research on the well-being of public university system admissions professionals.

6. **How will you protect my privacy?**
   o Your records will be private. Only Sarah Freed, Orkideh Mohajeri, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.
   o Your name will **not** be used in any reports.
   o Records will be stored:
     ▪ Password Protected File/Computer
   o All data collected for the interviews and survey will be kept in a locked, private office only accessible by the researcher. All recordings and transcriptions will be stored on a passcode-protected computer only used by the researcher. Any individually identifiable data collected during the study will be saved from any other data collected for this study. This information will also be saved on a passcode-protected computer only used by the researcher.
   o Records will be destroyed three years after study completion.

7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?**
   o No, there is no monetary compensation for participation.

8. **Who do I contact in case of research related injury?**
   o For any questions with this study, contact:
     ▪ **Primary Investigator:** Sarah Freed at 516-729-3741 or sfreed@wcupa.edu
     ▪ **Faculty Sponsor:** Orkideh Mohajeri at 610-436-2941 or omohajeri@wcupa.edu

9. **What will you do with my Identifiable Information/Biospecimens?**

   o Not applicable.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557.

I, _____ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

_____

Subject/Participant Signature Date:_____

_____

Witness Signature   Date:_____

Appendix D

Case Study Participant Survey

Case Study Participant Survey

Thank you for your interest in participating in A Case Study: An Exploration of University Admissions Employees' Perceptions of Departmental Success and Individual Employee Well-Being and Emotional Intelligence.

Participation or non-participation in this study will not effect any services you receive from your institution or from West Chester University. Furthermore, I will take thee utmost care to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, and your individual responses will not be shared with anyone beside me and my Dissertation Advisor.

I am at least 18 years of age or older?

○ YES (1)

○ NO (2)

Please identify the role that best describes you within the Division of Enrollment Management?

○ Chief Enrollment Management Officer (1)

○ Director of First-Year Admissions (2)

○ Director of an interdivisional department (Transfer Admissions, Graduate Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Career Services) (3)

○ A professional staff member within the Office of First-Year Admissions (Associate Director, Assistant Director, Administrative Assistant, Management Technician, Clerk) (4)

○ Student worker for the Office of First-Year Admissions (Tour Guide, Student Ambassador) (5)

○ My role is not represented on this list (6)

End of Block: Inclusion Criteria

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Project Title: A Case Study: An Exploration of University Admissions Employees' Perceptions of Departmental Success and Individual Employee Well-Being and Emotional Intelligence.

 Investigator(s): Sarah Freed; Orkideh Mohajeri

 Project Overview: Participation in this research project is voluntary and is being done by Sarah Freed as part of her Doctoral Dissertation. This study explores university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence.

Your participation will take approximately 1 hour to complete one semi-structured individual interview. In addition, I also hope to attend and observe some of the team meetings your institution of higher education.

 There will be minimal risk to participants. There is a small risk that participants may experience negative or intense emotions during the interview. If this happens, we can pause or discontinue the interview altogether. I will provide participants with a list of support services. There is also a small risk of the hacking of my computer. Interview and survey responses will be kept confidential, and all data will be de-identified and kept in a password-protected computer;

however, there is always a chance of hacking, and the data could be found.

The expected benefits of participating in this study include contributing to a better understanding of the role of employee well-being and emotional intelligence in the success of admissions departments, as well as advancing the limited research on the well-being of public university system admissions professionals.

If you would like to participate, West Chester University requires you to agree and sign this consent form.

You may ask Sarah Freed any questions to help you understand this study. If you don't want to be a part of this study, it won't affect any services from West Chester University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?** This study explores university admissions employees' perceptions of departmental success and individual employee well-being, including the role of emotional intelligence. More specifically, this study is situated in a thriving Office of First-Year Admissions at a regional public institution of higher education in a rural setting experiencing an unstable university system organizational landscape.

2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following:**
Complete 1 semi-structured individual interviews. Be observed during key meetings. This study will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?** No

4. **Is there any risk to me?** There will be minimal risk to participants. Two possible risks are related to privacy and social or psychological risk. Interview and survey responses will be kept confidential, and all data will be de-identified; however, participants may decide to discuss aspects of their experience with others which may cause a breach of privacy. In addition, due to the questions asked during the interview or asked on the survey, participants may experience negative social or psychological responses.

If you become upset and wish to speak with someone, you may speak with either Sarah Freed (sfreed@wcupa.edu) or with Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri (omohajeri@wcupa.edu). If you experience discomfort, you have the right to withdraw at any time.

5. **Is there any benefit to me?** Expected benefits of participating in this study include contributing to a better understanding of the role of employee well-being and emotional intelligence in the success of admissions departments, as well as advancing the limited research on the well-being of public university system admissions professionals.

6. **How will you protect my privacy?** Your records will be private. Only Sarah Freed, Orkideh Mohajeri, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.

o Your name will not be used in any reports.
o Records will be stored on a password protected file/computer
o All data collected for the interviews and observations will be kept in a locked, private office only accessible by the researcher. All recordings and transcriptions will be stored on a passcode-protected computer only used by the researcher.

Any individually identifiable data collected during the study will be saved from any other data collected for this study. This information will also be saved on a passcode-protected computer only used by the researcher.

Records will be destroyed three years after study completion.

7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?** No, there is no monetary compensation for participation.

8. **Who do I contact in case of research related injury?** For any questions with this study, contact:

Primary Investigator: Sarah Freed at 516-729-3741 or sfreed@wcupa.edu
Faculty Sponsor: Orkideh Mohajeri at 610-436-2941 or omohajeri@wcupa.edu

9. **What will you do with my Identifiable Information/Biospecimens?** Not applicable.

 For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557.

I have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all

possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

○ I consent (1)

○ I do not consent (2)

Demographic information is collected and used to better understand the identities of participants in the study. Only the study investigators, Sarah Freed and Orkideh Mohajeri, will have access to this information. Your responses will be kept anonymous and secure on the private, password protected computer of Sarah Freed separate from other study information. All questions are optional for you to respond to based on your personal comfort. You can change this information in the future by emailing Sarah Freed sfreed@wcupa.edu.

First Name

_____

Last Name

_____

Email Address

_____

To ensure your anonymity, what pseudonym would you like to be used in this study?

_____

How do you categorize yourself in terms of the work roles listed below?

○ Manager (1)

○ Staff (2)

○ Faculty (3)

○ Student (4)

○ Other (5) _____

What gender do you most identify with?

_____

What is your race? Select all that apply.

☐   American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

☐   Asian (2)

☐   Black or African American (3)

☐   Hispanic or Latino (4)

☐   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)

☐   White (6)

☐   Multiracial (9)

☐   Prefer not to respond (7)

☐   Other (8) _____

What is your age?

○ 18-25 (1)

○ 25-35 (2)

○ 35-45 (3)

○ 45 or older (4)

What is your citizenship status?

○ US Citizen (1)

○ Non US Citizen (2)

○ Permanent Resident (3)

What is your highest academic level?

○ High school or equivalent (GED) (1)

○ Technical or occupational certificate (2)

○ Some college completed (4)

○ Associates degree (3)

○ Bachelor's degree (5)

○ Master's degree (6)

○ Doctoral degree (7)

○ Other (8) _____

Years of experience in higher education as an employee?

○ Less than 1 year (1)

○ 1-5 years (2)

○ 5-10 years (3)

○ 10-15 years (4)

○ 15-20 years (5)

○ More then 20 years (6)

How long have you worked in higher education enrollment management?

○ Less than 1 year (1)

○ 1-5 years (2)

○ 5-10 years (3)

○ 10-15 years (4)

○ 15-20 years (5)

○ More than 20 years (6)

End of Block: Participant Demographic Information

Start of Block: Block 3

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I will be reaching out to schedule our one-one interview shortly. Please indicate your preferred day and time for the interview. Select all that apply.

☐   Weekday Mornings (8:00 am-11:00 am) (4)

☐   Weekday Lunchtime (12:00 pm-2:00 pm) (5)

☐   Weekday Afternoons (2:00 pm-4:00 pm) (6)

☐   Weekday Evenings (5:00 pm-7:00 pm) (7)

☐   Weekend Mornings (8:00 am -11:00 am) (8)

☐   Weekend Lunchtime (12:00 pm - 2:00 pm) (9)

☐   Weekend Afternoons (2:00 pm - 4:00 pm) (10)

☐   Weekend Evenings (5:00 pm - 7:00 pm) (11)

End of Block: Block 3

Appendix E

Qualitative Interview Questions

Participant Group 1	Employees within the Office of First-Year Admissions

1. First, please describe your role in the department and your primary job responsibilities.

2. How long have you been in this role, and what have you liked the most about your work? Why?

3. What are the strengths of this department, and what are the challenges?

4. Can you provide 1-2 examples of when the department was particularly successful? Tell me a story. (Explore who, what, when, where, how, etc.).

5. What resources, aimed at your well-being, does your leadership provide to help ensure that employees, in your role, can do their job effectively which contributes to this success?

6. What do you think of these resources? To what extent are they helpful?

7. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). How do you think your awareness of your emotional intelligence impacts success, if at all?

8. What influences does a public university system of higher education have on your success?

9. In what ways do you feel there are politics at play within your department or with other departments? Provide 1-2 examples.

10. How do you think these politics have impacted department success?

11. How would you define the culture of your office?

12. How do you feel supported day-to-day by your colleagues? How do you feel supported day-to-day by your leadership? (Prompt for specifics).

Participant Group 2	Interdivisional Partners

1. First, please describe your role in the university and your primary job responsibilities.

2. How long have you been in this role, and what have you liked the most about your work? Why?

3. What are the strengths of the Office of First-Year Admissions, and what are the challenges?

4. Can you provide 1-2 examples of when the department was particularly successful? Tell me a story. (Explore who, what, when, where, how, etc.).

5. What resources do leaders of the Office of First-Year Admissions provide their employees that promote employee well-being within the department so they can perform their job effectively and contributes to this success?

6. What do you think of these resources? To what extent are they helpful?

7. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). How do you think your awareness of your emotional intelligence impacts success, if at all?

8. What influences does a public university system have on the department's success?

9. In what ways do you feel there are politics at play within this department or with other departments? Provide 1-2 examples.

10. How do you think these politics have impacted department success?

11. How would you define the Office of First-Year Admission's culture?

12. How do you feel supported day-to-day by your colleagues? How do you feel supported day-to-day by your leadership? (Prompt for specifics).

Participant Group 3	Student Employees within the Office of First-Year Admissions

1. First, please describe your role in the department and your primary job responsibilities.

2. How long have you been in this role, and what have you liked the most about your work? Why?

3. What are the strengths of this department, and what are the challenges?

4. Can you provide 1-2 examples of when the department was particularly successful? Tell me a story. (Explore who, what, when, where, how, etc.).

5. What resources aimed at your well-being does your leadership provide to help ensure that employees in your role can do their job effectively which contributes to this success?

6. What do you think of these resources? To what extent are they helpful?

7. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). How do you think your awareness of your emotional intelligence impacts success, if at all?

8. What influences does a public university system have on your success?

9. In what ways do you feel there are politics at play within the Office of First-Year Admissions or with other departments? Provide 1-2 examples.

10. How do you think these politics have impacted the department's ability to be successful?

11. How would you define the culture of the Office of First-Year Admissions?

12. How do you feel supported day-to-day by the admission staff members? How do you feel supported day-to-day by members of admission's leadership team? (Prompt for specifics).

Participant Group 4	Chief Enrollment Management Officer Director of First-Year Admissions

1. First, please describe your role in the department and your primary job responsibilities.

2. How long have you been in this role, and what have you liked the most about your work? Why?

3. What are the strengths of this department, and what are the challenges?

4. Can you provide 1-2 examples of when the department was particularly successful? Tell me a story. (Explore who, what, when, where, how, etc.).

5. What resources do you provide as leaders that promote employee well-being so the department can do their job effectively and contribute to success?

6. What do you think of these resources? To what extent are they helpful?

7. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself, access emotions to enhance thinking, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to improve cognitive growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). How do you think your awareness of your emotional intelligence impacts success, if at all?

8. What influences does a public university system have on the success of the department?

9. In what ways do you feel there are politics at play within your department or with other departments? Provide 1-2 examples.

10. How do you think these politics have impacted department success?

11. How would you define the office culture in the Office of First-Year Admissions?

12. How do you feel members of the department will respond when asked if they feel supported day to day be their colleagues? Or by you as a leader? (Prompt for specifics).