

AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN AN EDUCATIONAL LEADER'S EMOTIONAL  
INTELLIGENCE AND EFFECTIVE TEAMS

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University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2013

ABSTRACT

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, the work of educators has become more demanding and complex. Not only is the work more difficult, the current era of accountability subjects teachers and educational leaders to more public scrutiny. This challenging work, coupled with increased accountability, is a formula for an intensely emotional environment. Leaders in education are charged with successfully managing this emotional environment. Because teams are such prevalent structures in organizations, emotional intelligence is often demonstrated through a leader's work with teams he or she supervises.

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to explore the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the perceived effectiveness of teams they supervise. This qualitative research was conducted using the theoretical tradition of phenomenology. It was informed through heuristic research and narrative inquiry. The themes of the conceptual framework supporting this research are emotions, intelligence,

leadership, and team effectiveness. Separately, there has been a substantial amount of research done on each of these themes. But there are fewer studies that analyze emotional intelligence in the context of leadership and team effectiveness. Adding to this body of knowledge can potentially help leaders use emotional intelligence and enable teams to be more effective.

## APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled “An Exploratory Qualitative Study of the Relationship Between an Educational Leader’s Emotional Intelligence and Effective Teams,” presented by R. Jayson Strickland, candidate for the Doctor of Education Degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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inspiration. I aspire to be like her. Words cannot express my feelings towards her. So it is best for me to keep it simple. Thank you, mom. I love you.

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## PREFACE

The building block of this study was leadership. It is the concept that has the deepest roots with me and is truly one of my life's passions. I can recollect the expectation of leadership being imparted to me at a very young age. I believe it relates to the fact that my parents owned and operated a successful child-care business in an urban setting for several years. My parents' accomplishment was highly respected by the community. This situation caused me to feel that my parents, as well as the community expected leadership qualities from me. As a young person I perceived those types of expectations as extreme and constant pressure. As I matured, I learned to appreciate those expectations. This experience pointed me in the direction of one of my professional passions.

Another topic of this study that I am also extremely passionate about is the concept of team. As I reflect over my experience with teams, I recall situations that they have brought me some of my deepest joy. When I have been on successful teams, I have felt rewarded and confident. I was energized to tackle some of the toughest challenges, and I learned and grew professionally and personally. I always wanted to come back to the team. I also recall situations in which certain teams have had just the opposite effect. The experiences with bad teams have drained me and hindered my development. The feeling of having to work with a dysfunctional team created some the most intense negative emotions. It is my hope that the information from this study can be used in ways that decrease the likelihood that dedicated educators have to work on ineffective teams. They should not be subjected to that type of dysfunction.

My experiences with leadership and teams have evoked some of the most intense emotions one can feel. Those emotions have covered the entire spectrum from good to bad.

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) claim the fundamental task of leaders is to induce good feelings in the people they lead. It is my hope that educational leaders will become more effective at conjuring good feelings in the teams they lead and that those good feelings will be rewarding to committed and deserving educators. If they are feeling good, they will be poised to perform well. High performing teams can ultimately be good for student learning.

Leadership is truly one of my life's passions. I value it and I strive to learn as much as I can about it. It is my belief a person is obligated to contribute to society in a meaningful way. I view educating children as one of life's most meaningful causes. It is my hope this research is a small contribution to one of my life's passions. I humbly wish this work would cause at minimum more thought about important topics. Thinking can be the beginning of dynamic action.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The definition of effective leadership has evolved over time. Contemporary times call for the evolution of this definition to include qualities and characteristics that recognize the need for social effectiveness skills. An empirical study conducted by Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter, and Buckley (2003) uncovered the following finding: “social effectiveness skills are crucial to the performance and effectiveness of leaders” (p. 21). They go on to state emotional intelligence (EI) is one of the most notable social effectiveness constructs, and it is the foundational element of effective leadership (Prati et al., 2003). Emotional intelligence is generally defined as the ability to manage one’s own feelings and recognize the feelings of others to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Goleman, 1995).

Often times a leader’s emotional intelligence manifests itself in interactions with teams. According to the research of Stubbs (2004), teams have become the norm in which organizations are structured to accomplish their goals. The complexity of those goals warrants a team approach (Prati et al., 2003). Leaders must have the ability to make teams productive in order to achieve the organization’s goals. A leader’s emotional intelligence is a critical component of the team’s success, which supports the organization’s success (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). This critical relationship deserves and needs to be thoroughly researched.

The following sections of this research project clearly state the problem and purpose for this research, as well as the background and context in which the problem is evident. In addition, the research questions and the theoretical traditions that informed the study are given. The chapter concludes with an overview of the research methodology.

## **Problem Statement**

The demands and complexity of modern schooling evoke a number of emotions for educators. According to Moore (2009), the work of schools can cause intense turmoil, resistance, stress, anger, frustration and many other types of emotions. Beatty (2000) stated that, “A better understanding of the emotions of leadership could be used to build our capacity for learning and change in schools” (p. 337). Contemporary educational leaders must have a sophisticated set of skills that enable them to manage the emotions of several stakeholders and their own feelings. And because of how the work is organized, teams or working groups are often the context in which this type of management occurs. The behaviors and decisions of the leader are important at the team level (Koman & Wolff, 2008). They can positively or negatively impact the team’s performance.

The new millennium ushered in an era in which most work in organizations is conducted in a team or group structure (Yost & Tucker, 2000). The people who make up these teams depend on leaders to facilitate collaboration and cooperation. The leader has to have the emotional competency to motivate team members to work together towards the team’s goals (Prati et al., 2003). According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002), leaders who are not emotionally intelligent, or those who lead in a way that does not pay attention to the impact of emotions, will be ineffective in promoting productive teams. Because so much of the work in schools is conducted through the team format, unproductive teams in education can hamper the effectiveness of schools.

Leadership, leadership, leadership: it’s all about leadership. That statement is a manipulation of a popular quote taken from the gospel of real estate and the value of location. The revised quote suggests leadership is critical to the positive evolution of

organizations and society as a whole. This assertion is supported by Bennis (1999), who stated:

Precisely at a time when trust and credibility of our alleged leaders are at an all-time low and when potential leaders feel most inhibited in exercising their gifts, America most needs leaders. As the quality of leadership declines the quantity of problems escalates. (p. 30)

Even though history has long documented the importance of leadership, contemporary challenges warrant a special emphasis on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that effective leaders must possess to be effective. In education, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has increased the accountability for school leaders (Lytle, 2012). Regardless of the pros and cons of NCLB, one outcome of it is increased public awareness. It has created a high stakes era of accountability that entices the media to highly publicize student achievement scores. It has made the critique of schools more intense and the challenges more apparent than ever before. This public scrutiny and the so-called supportive sanctions embedded within the law place extreme pressure on schools.

As a leader of a school that intimately felt the so-called supportive sanctions of NCLB, I spent a significant amount of time dealing with my own emotional issues, as well as those of the staff, the students, and their parents. It would have been irresponsible to ignore the feelings of these stakeholders during that stressful time. It is my belief the improvement we made would not have been possible if we did not behave in ways that took into account our emotions throughout the process. My reflection over that time period in my life makes me wish I had been more cognizant of the thinking behind those behaviors.

The emotion evoked by this era in education calls for leaders with a set of skills that is not emphasized enough in our current environment. They must have the ability to manage

emotions effectively in order to support the successful functioning of the organization.

Humphrey (2002) tells us that in order for leaders to be able to persevere during challenging times, they must be good at emotional self-management. Not only do they need to manage the emotions within themselves, they must be able to deal with the emotions of others.

According to Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002), during challenging times people look to leaders for emotional guidance.

Caruso and Salovey (2004) state emotions need to be incorporated into our reasoning and problem solving. Emotions influence how we think, which in turn influences our behavior. Leaders that recognize this and understand the relationship between emotions and leadership can use this knowledge to their advantage. Bloom (2004) reported that emotional intelligence is a prerequisite to effective school leadership.

Some leaders have skills and knowledge about emotional intelligence in their toolbox, and they use them to artistically maneuver through the emotionally land-mined field of high-pressure work environments, while others walk through their settings like emotional lightning rods. This inconsistency inspires questions (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2001) such as: What emotional resources do leaders need to thrive amidst change and chaos? How do leaders create an emotional climate that fosters creative innovations and all-out performance?

These questions are part of the motivation behind the study. This research examined the relationship between an educational leader's emotional intelligence and effective teams. Emotions are powerful influences on behavior. The research tells us emotions are a part of our work experience (Weisinger, 1998). People cannot function absent of emotions, and the work itself causes intense emotions. These emotions affect how they think and ultimately

how they behave. These concepts suggest enormous implications for emotional intelligence as it relates to leadership, especially considering that much of a leader's vision is mobilized through effective teams.

According to Bloom (2004), despite research and mountains of anecdotal evidence that call for us to attend to emotional intelligence, most leaders get very little support in this area. In my current role as direct support to school leaders, I must regretfully admit to failing my colleagues in this area. Even though there are numerous examples that illustrate a need for knowledge about this phenomenon, the system in which I function has failed to have meaningful dialogue about the topic. This is malpractice and unacceptable. My voice should not and cannot remain silent. It is the research cited above and my personal experiences that inspire my desire to “unmute” myself and add to the body of knowledge about emotional intelligence. It is my intention to develop a thick rich description of the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership, and effective teams. It is my belief that school organizations need to pay more attention to this concept. We need to know about the emotional intelligence aspect of leadership and its impact on productive teams. This knowledge has the potential to help leaders be more successful in guiding the organization to its goal.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to illuminate the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the effectiveness of the teams they supervise. The current high pressure and turbulent times of education call for research to explore the under-investigated phenomenon of emotional intelligence. Johnson, Aiken, and Steggerada (2005) state approaches aimed at addressing the current challenges of

education cannot ignore the emotional side of leadership. Adding to this body of knowledge can potentially help leaders analyze their leadership behaviors and work with teams through an emotional intelligence lens in order to more effective.

### **Background and Context**

The study of leadership in education is popular and extensive. The research has revealed that the notion of leadership is multifaceted and dynamic. Hoy and Miskel (2005) state that definitions of the concept of leadership are as numerous as the scholars that study it, “Leadership is like beauty—it is hard to define but you know it when you see it” (p. 375). Evans (1996) stated, “The essence of leadership remains unclear. Is it a matter of skill or charisma? Or situation-specific? Are leaders born or made? Yes. Leadership appears to be all these and more (Evans, 1996, p. 146).

Evans (1996) goes on to state that although we know leadership matters enormously, we have not been able to capture or teach its essence. Even though there are numerous and various definitions of leadership, a common strand shared by most is the assumption that leadership involves a social influence process in which individuals exert intentional influence over others to structure activities and relationships in a group or organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). According to Yukl (2002), leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives (Yukl, 2002).

All the work in education at some level needs people to facilitate its effectiveness. Whitaker states that the most important work of school leaders is to improve the people. “It is

people, not programs, that determine the quality of a school” (Whitaker, 2003, p. 8).

Leadership in schools is nonexistent without people to lead.

Research has documented the use and importance of teams in organizations. Stubbs (2004) reported teams are critical components of organizational success. She also noted that in the early 1990s, over 80% of organizations with more than 100 employees consistently used teams (Stubbs, 2004). The complexities of organizations and organizational goals have contributed to the popularity of work teams. This has resulted in an increasing trend towards team-based work (Stubbs, 2004). It has become the norm and expectation for leaders in organizations to improve people in a fashion that enables them to be assets to teams. And these teams are tools that help reform institutions and achieve organizational goals. Teams are a popular way people are organized in schools and school systems. There are grade level teams, content teams, and stakeholder teams, to name a few.

There is a strong relationship between leadership and team effectiveness as a means to achieve organizational success (Barsade, 2002). I am proposing that the leader’s ability to work with people is key to organizational success. In other words, the leader must be “people smart” in order to get the best out of the people who make up the work teams that organizations depend on to achieve the identified goals.

It is my assertion in this research that leaders must be in tune with their people skills in order to support and facilitate effective teams. In my experience as an educator, I have observed many leaders become successful based upon their “people smarts.” They are able to get people and teams to perform at high levels. They are able to successfully maneuver within a cumbersome system in a way that seems effortless. They are able to manipulate the bureaucratic system to support their school’s vision and attain goals. I have also watched

leaders make relationship mistakes that have prohibited them from being effective. I have experienced a leader's inability to establish the type of relationships that bring people together. This inability has paralyzed a team of highly intelligent people, making them ineffective and ultimately harmful to the organization. I have also seen a leader motivate individuals to create teams that have performed at very high and effective levels. A leader's awareness of their role in establishing these effective or ineffective relationships is critical to a team's success. Mistakes in this area are often more detrimental than technical leadership mistakes.

According to Bloom (2004), leaders found themselves more challenged by the affective demands of the job than by the technical aspects. I have witnessed a higher tolerance on the part of organizations for technical mistakes than people-oriented mistakes. The judgments of people-oriented mistakes seem to carry stiffer and longer lasting consequences. I have seen several instances in which organizations seem to be unwilling to forgive the mishaps that relate to people's feelings or relationship mistakes. Reflection on my own experience as a leader reveals supporting evidence. The lessons I have learned from my people mistakes have had a much more profound effect on me than the lessons learned from my technical mistakes.

When discussing effective leadership, the technical aspect cannot be ignored. I fully acknowledge that leaders must possess technical knowledge about their positions. They must be able manage responsibilities such as budgeting and scheduling in order to be successful at their work. Traditional assessments of leadership have long recognized and rewarded those abilities. More contemporary opinions on leadership have begun to emphasize the importance of the relational aspect of effective leadership.



The complex relational dynamics influencing leadership behavior calls for studies to analyze the emotionality of leadership. Dyer (2001) stated that, “Relational leadership involves being attuned to and in touch with the intricate web of inter-and intra- relationships that influence an organization” (p. 1). This type of research can strengthen leadership practices (Johnson et al., 2005). It is this relational or emotionality component of leadership that is the focus of this research. Although relational leadership is not completely new, its essence remains elusive. However, the need for this type of leadership is apparent.

The current demands on education call for this type of leadership. Cherniss (1998) supports this in the following statement:

Educational leaders...always have needed people skills, but today they need them more than ever. Principals, for instance, must now rely more on consensus and less on formal authority. To be successful, education leaders must be able to forge working relationships with many people. They need to be mediators and mentors, negotiators and networkers. In short, education leaders need to be more emotionally intelligent. (p. 1)

This study illuminates the phenomenon of emotional intelligence through a qualitative phenomenological case study. This phenomenon is analyzed within the context of leadership and team effectiveness. A thorough description of the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the effectiveness of the teams they supervise is the aim of the study. This in-depth analysis took place in a large Midwestern urban school district.

### **Research Questions**

Maxwell (2005) states that research questions “are at the heart of your research design” (p. 65). Their function is to explain specifically what your study will attempt to learn

and understand. They link to every component of the research design. The research questions for this study were:

1. To what degree are school and district leaders aware of their own emotional intelligence?
2. How do school and district leaders in an urban school system use emotional intelligence to promote team effectiveness?
3. What are team members' perceptions of the leader's emotional intelligence as it relates to the team's effectiveness?

### **Conceptual Framework**

In the research conducted by Prati et al. (2003), findings suggested that additional study is needed in regard to the construct emotional intelligence and its relationship to leadership and team effectiveness. Enlightenment of this relationship can lead to more successful schools. The theoretical framework on which this research is built must support and drive the illumination of this relationship.

According to Maxwell (2005), the conceptual or theoretical framework is “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that support and inform the research” (p. 33). Based on my personal experiences, beliefs about the phenomenon (emotional intelligence), and existing research, I concluded that the following themes are the conceptual foundation of my research: emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness.

Emotional intelligence was the foundational theme because it was the phenomenon to be illuminated. Leadership was the second theme because it was the context in which

emotional intelligence was analyzed. Team effectiveness was the third theme because teams are a prevalent structure through which leaders conduct the work of organizations.

It is my argument that these concepts frame this research. To explore the emotional intelligence construct, the research recognizes and analyzes these related concepts. An understanding of these interrelated ideas helped me derive meaning from the research.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Great interest has been shown in recent years in the topic of emotional intelligence. This was primarily a result of Goleman's 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It can Matter More than IQ*, and in particular his claim that EI explains a higher proportion of variance in individual success than measures of intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 2004). In addition to Goleman's theory, there are two other major models of the construct. Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced an ability-based model in 1990. They explained emotional intelligence compared to traditional views of cognitive intelligence. Reuven Bar-On developed a mixed-model theory of the phenomenon (Mayer & Salovey, 2004). His framework combines emotional competencies with social competencies. Although subtle and significant differences can be identified in each of these theories, they have similar origins.

Salovey and Mayer are the researchers credited with coining the term "emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1995). Mayer and Salovey described emotional intelligence as a set of mental abilities. Their original model defines the concept as the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action (Goleman, 1995). Their current model of the concept represents an

evolution of their research on the subject. In a paper prepared by Bob Waris (n.d.), he describes Mayer and Salovey's current model as:

[an] ability model that defines emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (p. 3)

Another major contributor to research on emotional intelligence is Reuven Bar-On. This theorist is noted as one of the first to attempt to assess emotional intelligence in terms of a measure of well-being (Goleman et al., 2001). He defines emotional intelligence as an “array of emotional and social knowledge and abilities that influence our overall ability to effectively cope with environmental demands” (Goleman, 2001, p. 17).

Perhaps the most popular theorist in regard to emotional intelligence is Daniel Goleman. The publication of his book made the concept recognizable outside of the research community. Goleman's theory on emotional intelligence is a competency-based model that was created to predict effectiveness at work and in leadership (Goleman et al., 2001). His model involves 18 competencies that distinguish differences of performance at work. Goleman defines competencies as “a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work” (Goleman, 2001, p. 27). Goleman's (1995) general definition of emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognize our own feelings and those of others; for motivating ourselves; and for managing our emotions well within ourselves and within our relationships.

## **Leadership**

There is a large amount of research on the topic of leadership, and yet, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth. There are almost as

many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Bass, 1981, p. 7). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) extrapolated from the work of Bernard Bass the assertion that the study of leadership is an ancient art.

“Discussions of leadership appear in the works of Plato, Caesar, and Plutarch. Additionally, it is a robust concept that occurs universally among all people” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 4).

Bass (1981) documented over 200 models of leadership. According to Yukl (2002), leadership “has been defined in terms of traits behaviors, influence, interaction pattern, role relationships, and occupation of an administrative position” (p. 2). Although there are numerous theories and definitions of leadership, there are enough similarities to conclude that it is an effort of influence and power to induce compliance (Wren, 1995). Yukl (2002) reinforces this culmination of definitions by stating the essence of leadership is “a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 2).

The historic popularity of the study of leadership would suggest that there is universal acceptance and acknowledgment of its importance. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) state, “for centuries people have assumed that leadership is critical to the success of any institution or endeavor” (p. 4). Leadership has been intimately linked to the effective functioning of complex organizations throughout the centuries (Marzano et al., 2005).

The work of Jim Collins (2001) documented the importance of leadership in regard to an organization’s success. His work suggests the idea that the right leaders have to be in the right position in order to facilitate high performance from the whole organization. According to Collins (2001), these leaders are termed “level 5 leaders” (p. 21) and they are critical to the

organization's success. Collins' work focused on leadership in the context of a corporate setting.

The realm of education has embraced the notion of leadership with the same enthusiasm. "The traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools are not different from those regarding leadership in other institutions. Leadership is considered to be vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of school" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 5). Effective educational leadership is critical to the success of schools and school districts. A substantial amount of research shows a statistically significant impact on student achievement when leaders in educational settings are high functioning in terms of their leadership behaviors (Marzano et al., 2005; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

The work associated with improving student achievement often evokes strong emotions. Teaching, learning, and leading are profoundly emotional activities (Beatty, 2000). Educational leaders should be able to manage these emotions in themselves and in their colleagues. Ignoring the emotional side of the work could set the stage for failure. If educators ignore the emotional dimensions of the work "emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door" (Hargreaves, 1997, cited in Beatty, 2000, p. 331).

### **Team Effectiveness**

There are several definitions of the word *team*. A common strand in all those definitions is some type of interaction between two or more people that centers around some sort of identified purpose or goal. Kreitner and Kinicki (2007) describe teaming in the following statement: "The essence of a team is common commitment. Without it, groups perform as individuals; with it, they become a powerful unit of collective performance" (p. 341). For the purpose of this study, team was defined as a small group of people who

interact interdependently and adaptively to accomplish common goals and hold themselves mutually accountable to those goals (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Morgan, Glickman, Woodard, Blaiwes & Salas, 1986).

As mentioned earlier, the popularity of teams has significantly increased over the past two decades. Organizations use teams in ways that are critical to their mission and survival (Stubbs, 2004). It has become an organizational norm for leaders to coordinate the work in the context of teams. Much of the work of contemporary organizations requires interactions between multiple individuals with various skill sets. Lambert (2003) supports this notion in education by describing the importance of building leadership capacity in the organization. She describes how school leaders can do this through the use of teams.

Organizing work in teams is one step for leaders and organizations. The productivity of those teams is of utmost importance. Ultimately, that is the core goal of the group. Scholars have suggested a measure of a team's effectiveness is multifaceted. Hackman (2002) states team effectiveness is the ability of the team to serve their customer well. Also, measures of effectiveness include a team's ability to become increasingly capable over time with the acquisition of experience. And finally, team effectiveness involves providing each member the opportunity for individual learning and fulfillment.

A group of researchers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln described seven characteristics of an effective team. Those characteristics are: common purpose, clearly defined goals, psychological safety, role clarity, mature communication, productive conflict resolution, and accountable interdependence (Adams, Zafft, Molano & Rao, 2008). Others describe team effectiveness with slightly different nuances, but the essence of the definitions is similar. An interesting similarity in the definitions of team effectiveness is the notion of

how individual members “feel” when the group is together. This psychological or emotional aspect is the core of this research.

### **Overview of the Methodology**

Emotional intelligence is demonstrated and experienced in natural, everyday life situations. The study of it warrants a naturalistic design. Creswell (1998) stated that, “Qualitative designs are naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest (e.g., a group, event, program, community, relationship or interaction)” (p. 39). In addition to the naturalistic facet of qualitative designs:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (Creswell, 1998, p. 15)

Research indicates emotional intelligence is an elusive concept (Pfeiffer, 2000). This suggests the phenomenon is complex. Qualitative data have the strong potential for revealing complexity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research is suited to reveal the intricacies of complex issues because of its orientation to “why” questions.

The nature of the research questions being asked is the initial rationale for determining the type of research to conduct (Creswell, 1998). Additional justification for a qualitative study includes a need for the topic to be explored. A detailed view of the construct is warranted (Creswell, 1998). My desire to bring myself into the study also supported a qualitative approach to the research. I was an active learner through the process. Creswell (1998) suggests researchers employ a qualitative approach when they intend to convey the



story from the participants' perspective rather than as an expert who passes judgment on participants.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to illuminate the construct *emotional intelligence* in the context of leadership and team effectiveness. The intention of this illumination was to provide information that makes leaders more effective.

This illumination came through a heuristic phenomenological case study approach. Patton (2002) states phenomenological research aims at a description “of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience” (p. 107). Heuristic research is a type of phenomenological inquiry. It “brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). For the purpose of this research, Miles and Huberman (1994) capture the most appropriate definition: A case is a “phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). Emotional intelligence was the phenomenon being studied and the unit of analysis.

This heuristic phenomenological case study was informed through narrative inquiry. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), “narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience. It provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (p. 1).

### **Design of the Study**

This study analyzed the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the effectiveness of teams they supervise. The setting of this analysis was a Midwest urban school district. The city the school district serves had a population of 143,801 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The enrollment of the school district was 21,276 students. The major demographics of that population were:

- 4.7% Asian
- 42.8 % Hispanic
- 36.6% Black
- 13.6 % White
- 32.8% English Language Learners
- 85.2% Free or Reduced Lunch Status

The unit of analysis in the study was emotional intelligence. It was studied in the context of leaders and teams. Leaders are defined as an individual in the school district with formally assigned supervision and/or facilitating responsibilities of staff and teams or groups. Emotional intelligence was examined in the context of educational leaders who were not under my line of authority. That sampling criteria makes elementary building principals and certain central office administrators potential participants of this study. Patton (2002) states, “Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases (N=1), selected purposefully” (p. 230). In this qualitative study, three leaders were identified through a purposeful sampling. “Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Three teams supervised by the leaders were interviewed using a focus group technique. Each of these teams provided information about the emotional intelligence of the leaders that supervised them. A team is defined as “a distinguishable set of two or more individuals who interact interdependently and adaptively to achieve specified, shared and valued objectives” (Morgan et al., 1986, p. 3). All members of these three teams were invited to participate in the study. The exact numbers of team member participants depended on the number of people that comprised the teams and accepted the invitation.

## **Data Sources**

This section describes the data sources I used to explore the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the effectiveness of the teams they supervised. In qualitative case studies, three means of data collection are commonly used (Merriam, 1998). Data collection from multiple sources is important to provide a comprehensive perspective. Multiple qualitative data sources can provide a holistic and rich description of the phenomenon of study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Interviews.** “For a phenomenological study the process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews” (Creswell, 1998, p. 122). Three educational leaders that met the sampling criteria were interviewed one time each. In-depth individual interviews provided me an opportunity to interact with the three educational leader participants in close proximity. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this notion as “local groundedness” (p. 10). This close proximity gave me a chance to analyze meaningful nuances and include them in my interpretation of the conversation.

I conducted in-depth individual interviews with the eligible leaders. I used a general interview guide approach. “The general interview guide approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins” (Patton, 2002, p. 342).

**Focus Groups.** The focus group method was utilized to collect a second form of data. “Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data” (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299). The data were collected through a group discussion (Krueger & Casey, 2009). A set of guiding

questions was used to conduct the focus groups. One focus group interview was conducted with each of the teams participating in the study.

**Documents.** The third form of data in the research was gathered by an analysis of documents. Documents are a rich source of information to provide insight about the phenomenon of study. Patton (2002) believes learning to use, study, and understand documents is a part of the repertoire of skills needed for qualitative inquiry.

Writing prompts were used to elicit narrative responses from the study participants. These responses are equivalent to reflection logs and were the documentary data sources analyzed in this research. Reflection logs are what Merriam (1998) calls researcher-generated documents. They are documents prepared by the participants for the researcher after the research has begun (Merriam, 1998). Using documentary data in the research provided a means of triangulating the data.

### **Data Analysis**

Phenomenology, heuristic inquiry, and narrative inquiry are the theoretical traditions I used throughout the research. Each of these traditions requires the use of certain techniques in relation to data analysis. “Phenomenological research uses analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of an ‘essence’ description” (Moustakas, 1994, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 191). Heuristic inquiry is a type of phenomenology research that allows the researcher to analyze the phenomenon through a personal and intimate lens. “Heuristics is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). “Narrative research employs restorying the participants’ stories using structural devices such as plot, setting, activities, climax, and denouement” (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p.191). Blending these analytical techniques in a creative and appropriate way was my task as I attempted to make meaning of the data and explore the relationship of emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness.

### **Significance of the Study**

Education is challenged to constantly strive towards improving the academic achievement of all students. Various strategies and initiatives, such as cooperative learning, professional learning communities, and standards-based curriculums have been deployed to support improving student achievement. Regardless of the strategy or initiative, leaders are needed to lead it, and people are needed to execute it. Organizing people in a team structure to address the work is a popular approach. Leaders are expected to successfully leverage these teams to accomplish challenging and complex tasks. The formula of challenging complex assignments and working with others in teams can evoke strong emotions. Leaders are expected to manage their own emotions, the emotions of the team members they supervise, and also move their educational system towards the goal. Knowledge about emotional intelligence and its relationship to leadership and team effectiveness can support these leaders.

It is my hope the information brought out in this study can be useful in leadership preparation programs and training programs for existing leaders. Aspiring leaders who enter the work with a deep understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and team effectiveness are poised to be more successful. Existing leaders who are supported with training about emotional intelligence may be better positioned to support their teams.

In addition, I hope this study raises the awareness of the role emotions plays in our work as educators. It is my belief it is important how people feel about their work. I do not

believe it is possible to work with people and students and not have some degree of emotional investment. Millions of educators come to work with the best intentions. They invest their hearts, souls, and minds in an effort to do good things for students. Many times this happens in the context of team structure. Educational leaders who are capable of helping people be successful in teams accomplish the obvious: supporting increased student achievement. But they also make these team members' work circumstances more rewarding.

### **Conclusion**

In Chapter 1, the context of the problem was explained and the purpose of this study was presented. An overview of the methodology was given, and the research questions were highlighted. Finally, the themes of the conceptual framework were introduced. In the following chapters, an in-depth analysis of the background literature is provided. A thorough description of the theoretical traditions and research techniques are captured.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Merriam (1998), the literature review is a synthesis of all the important thinking on the particular topic of study. It is a major part of the interactive process of defining the research questions and determining the theoretical framework. Merriam (1998) suggests a theoretical framework or conceptual framework underlies all research that impacts all aspects of the study. The literature review provides a detailed discussion of the framework.

The literature review of a research project should illustrate rationale for contributing to the knowledge base of a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). It is an opportunity for the researcher to explain how he/she will advance that knowledge base.

My intention in performing this research was to advance the knowledge base of the construct emotional intelligence by studying it through the lens of educational leadership and its impact on a team's effectiveness. Emotional intelligence has become popular over the past two decades. There has been a significant amount of research on the construct and its specific relationship to leadership that illustrates its popularity (Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Cherniss, 1998; Goleman, 2011; Moore, 2009; Prati et al., 2003). But when it comes to analyzing this concept in the context of an educational leader's utilization of emotional intelligence as it relates to a team's effectiveness, the data are not as abundant.

This literature review sets the stage for an in-depth qualitative analysis of the emotional intelligence phenomenon. At this point, the identified underpinning interrelated themes are emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. These themes are the conceptual framework that guided all aspects of the study.

## **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is the pillar theme in the conceptual framework of this study. The analysis of this theme include a look at the historical views and definitions of emotions and intelligence. In addition, the origins of emotional intelligence theory are identified and the three major models of emotional intelligence are examined. Finally, the criticisms of emotional intelligence theory are assessed and synthesized to offer a comprehensive review of this pillar theme of the conceptual framework.

Great interest has been shown in recent years regarding the topic of emotional intelligence (EI), primarily stimulated by Goleman's (1995) book, and in particular the assertion that EI explains a higher proportion of variance in individual success than IQ. Emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as an important issue in the workplace. This has been suggested because organizations and individuals are becoming more interested in their search for competitive advantage and recognize the need to balance rational and emotional aspects of organizational life.

### **Emotions**

A logical starting place for delving into the construct emotional intelligence is with the question: What is emotion? Philosophers and psychologists such as Aristotle, Descartes, James, and several others have grappled with the topic dating back thousands of years. Solomon (2003) documents philosophers preceding Socrates who investigated emotions.

One of the most notable and influential historical philosophers is Aristotle, who developed a theory that stands up to most contemporary critiques. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, he defines an emotion as "that which leads one's condition to become so transformed that his judgment is affected, and which is accompanied by pleasure and pain" (Solomon, 2003, p. 6).



Aristotle's theory is thought to be especially insightful because it avoids the problems of many other theories of emotions. It embraces the idea of both mind and body, which means his theory acknowledges cognitive and physical elements of emotion. Solomon's (2003) interpretation of *Rhetoric*, *de Anima* and *Nicomachean Ethics* suggests Aristotle's interest in emotion was rooted in motivating people to do the morally right thing.

The American philosopher William James asked the question "What is emotion?" in an essay over one hundred years ago (Solomon, 2003). He stated an emotion is a physiological reaction, essentially a feeling (Solomon). James' theory on emotion suggested that humans have an instant and automatic physiological response after perceiving a stimulating event. After assessing the physiological reaction, the individual assigns an emotion to the experience (Niemic, 2002). "The emotional responses existed on a continuum, and the assignment of a specific emotion to one's experience depended solely on the specific physiological reaction that one experienced as a result of the stimulus" (Niemic, 2002, p. 15). James' theory also included a notion of categories. He believed that bodily reactions were ordered and stronger reactions were connected to more intense emotions.

According to LeDoux, "Emotion is a state (of physiological arousal). A brain process that computes the value of an experience" (ICT, 2011, n.p.). Another definition, according to Feldman Barrett, is "A word we assign to a certain configuration of bodily states, thoughts, and situational factors" (ICT, 2011, n.p.). According to Marsella, Gratch and Petta (n.d.), emotions are a cognitive, physical, and social phenomenon. Emotions are associated with cognitive processes such as influencing beliefs, making decisions and prioritizing goals. Emotion processes related to physical behaviors include facial expressions, voice volume, and body language. In social situations, emotions influence the behaviors of others.

Niemic (2002) goes on to summarize the dimensional view of emotion offered by Wilhelm Wundt. Wundt's view did not center on physiological reaction to stimuli as the origin of emotional responses. Wundt purported human emotion could be plotted along a two-dimensional plane consisting of pleasure and arousal. Categorizing and grouping human emotions was the primary driver behind his theory. It was Wundt's work that established the foundation of the most prominent theory used in contemporary research on the psychophysiology of emotion (Niemic).

Following the work of Wundt, Schneirla categorized all motivated behavior into two basic responses: approach and withdrawal (Niemic, 2002). Positive stimuli produce approach-motivated behaviors. Acquisition of something is the purpose for these behaviors. The opposition of these behaviors is withdrawal-motivated behaviors. They are behaviors elicited in response to threatening stimuli that are meant to provide safety for the individual. This means that any emotional response is in a direction either toward or away the emotional-evoking stimulus.

Peter Salovey and John Mayer are authors of one the major models of emotional intelligence. The development of their model grew from the following conceptualization of emotions.

[E]motions are organized responses, crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems, including the physiological, cognitive, motivational, and experiential systems. Emotions typically arise in response to an event, either internal or external, that has a positively or negatively valenced meaning for the individual. Emotions can be distinguished from the closely related concept of mood in that emotions are shorter and generally more intense...we view the organized response of emotions as adaptive and as something that can potentially lead to a transformation of personal and social interaction into enriching experience. (Salovey, Brackett & Mayer, 2004, pp. 2-3)

These theories from the various philosophers and psychologists are just a brief representation of the varying theories on emotion. They illustrate the construct has generated a substantial amount of analysis and study for a long time. In addition, the common theme that can be gleaned from all the theories is at the very least, emotion is connected to human behavior.

### **Intelligence**

When analyzing the concept emotional intelligence, it makes sense to explore the question; “What is emotion?” Posing and analyzing the parallel question, “What is intelligence?” makes just as much sense as it relates to understanding the concept emotional intelligence. Edwin Boring authored one of the most famous (or infamous) definitions in 1923; he stated, “Intelligence is what tests of intelligence test” (Sternberg, 2000, p. 7). Boring understood this definition was limited. The purpose of this somewhat flippant comment was to expand the discussion on intelligence beyond the narrow parameters of the existing measurement instruments at that time.

Exploration of the topic has produced a wide range of definitions. In 1921 the editors of the *Journal of Educational Psychology* compiled a lists of experts’ definitions of intelligence (Sternberg, 2000). Some notable contributors to the discussion were Charles Spearman and Louis Thurstone. Spearman’s theory introduced the idea of the general intelligence, referred to as the *g factor*. Spearman (1904) believed the g factor could be measured and represented with a single number. Thurstone (1938) put forth a pluralistic view of intelligence. He believed intelligence comprised multiple abilities. These two examples illustrate a range of thinking about the topic.

Although variety in the theories is easily seen, there are some commonalities. Common themes within the definitions related to an individual's ability to adapt to the environment and the ability to learn (Sternberg, 2000). Since the early twentieth century many associated with discipline of psychology have continued to grapple with the topic of intelligence. General agreements from the list of 1920s definitions and more contemporary descriptions include "Attributes such as adaptation to the environment, basic mental processes, and higher order thinking" (Sternberg, 2000, p. 8).

As the discussion on intelligence has evolved, the idea that it should include multiple abilities has become more prevalent and more agreed upon. Some see those abilities as interrelated and some them separate (Salovey et al., 2004). This evolved understanding sets the stage for the theory of emotional intelligence.

### **History of Emotional Intelligence**

To understand the origins of formal theories of emotional intelligence, one needs to analyze driving and influential factors of the industrial revolution. On the surface this might seem like a distant connection or unrelated phenomenon. On closer inspection, logical relationships to elements prevalent during this time period become obvious. Specific examples are the discovery of scientific management and the evolution of corporate capitalism.

Although the interest and analysis of intelligence dates back to ancient times, the formal study of it under the context of modern psychology began during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. This specific time period marks the start of the industrial revolution, which is related to, if not contemporaneous with, the maturation of corporate capitalism.

The influence of capitalism cannot be overestimated. Its evolution is arguably the most influential phenomenon of the twentieth century (Dryzek, 1996; Fiss, 1992). According to McKay (2005), corporate capitalism emerged as a new economic system between 1880 and 1920 in the context of the industrial revolution. The goal of capitalism is to increase profit, and industry significantly increased profit during this era. One of the main variables that fueled the rapid growth in industry was Frederick Taylor's work in scientific management (Callahan, 1964). Scientific management was a way to standardize work activities and behaviors to increase efficiency. This new technology increased industry's efficiency, resulting in increased productivity and profit. Capitalism encourages efficiency and productivity (Fiss, 1992).

The resounding influence of capitalism fueled by the emergence and success of scientific management shaped the beliefs of society. One example of this is how the success of scientific management in industry sparked an efficiency movement in all types of disciplines. No entity in society was immune to its influence. For example, education utilized this industry theory as cure-all reform strategy (Callahan, 1964). Efficiency became the ultimate way of measuring productivity.

This new driving standard required resources to be used to search for and discover ways to be more efficient. The science of psychology was a contributing discipline in this area. During this cultural revolution, psychologists experimented with techniques and tools to unlock the mystery of measuring intelligence. These measurement resources were another means of becoming more scientific and more efficient.

Education and the military were some of the first entities to be enticed by intelligence measurement instruments. According to Gerberich (1963), in 1905 Alfred Binet and

Theodore Simon developed the first general intelligence test for children. The purpose of this test was to help identify which students would need special assistance in schools.

Stanford University psychologist adapted and standardized this test in 1939. This revised test was known as the Stanford-Binet intelligence test (Gerberich). The Stanford-Binet intelligence test used a number, known as the intelligence quotient, referred to as IQ, to identify an individual's score on the test. In 1917 Robert Yerkes developed two intelligence tests for the U.S. Army (McGuire, 1994). They were the Alpha and Beta tests and were used in World War I to help determine which recruits were suited for leadership and which soldiers would be assigned specific positions (McGuire, 1994). These same tests were later grossly misused with minorities and immigrants. They perpetuated prejudices against minorities and immigrants (Kamin, 1995).

The authors of these tests readily acknowledged the range of intelligence that was being measured by their psychometric instruments was limited. Alfred Binet believed that human intelligence was too complex to be measured with a single number (Kamin, 1995).

Edward Thorndike, a contemporary of Binet, subscribed to this notion. His belief is illustrated in the following statement:

Intelligence varies according to the life situations in which it works....a man has not some one amount of one kind of intelligence, but varying amounts of different intelligences. His ability to think with numbers may be great; his ability to think with words, may be small. (Landy, 2005, p. 415)

In the 1920s Thorndike suggested three modes of intelligence: abstract, mechanical and social (Landy, 2005). Abstract intelligence was the ability to understand and manage ideas. Mechanical intelligence was the ability to manipulate concrete objects. Social

intelligence was the ability to act wisely in human relations, and understand and manage men, women, boys, and girls (Kihlstrom & Cantor, 2000).

The concept of emotional intelligence is rooted in Thorndike's theory on social intelligence (Bar-On, 2007a; Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 2004). In 1920 in *Harper's Magazine*, Thorndike proposed a form of intelligence distinct from abstract or academic intelligence (Landy, 2005). He termed this unique intelligence "social intelligence" (Landy, 2005). He stated this type of intelligence manifested on playgrounds, in nurseries, barracks, factories and salesroom (Kihlstrom & Cantor, 2000).

Although Thorndike subscribed to the idea that there existed a social intelligence in humans, he fully acknowledged the challenge in trying to measure this type of intellect.

Thorndike stated,

...for most of the activities of intelligence in response to the behavior of human beings, a genuine situation with real persons is essential...It requires human beings to respond to, time to adapt its responses, and face, voice, and gesture, and mien as tools (p. 231). (Thorndike, cited in Landy, 2005, p. 415)

The first attempt at measuring social intelligence came in the form of The George Washington Social Intelligence Test (Kihlstrom & Cantor, 2000; Landy, 2005). It was developed in 1927 and was designed to measure an individual's ability to recognize the mental state of speaker, the ability to recognize emotional expression, and a person's judgment in social situations/relationship problems (Kihlstrom & Cantor, 2000). In 1937, R. L. Thorndike, the son of Edward Thorndike, concluded that the attempts to come up with an effective instrument to measure social intelligence had failed. The construct was too complex. It encompassed too many social habits and attitudes to account for in an intelligence test (Thorndike & Stein, 1937).

Over the next several decades, psychologists studied the construct but none of that work received significant attention until Howard Gardner introduced his theory on multiple intelligences. In the early 1980s, Howard Gardner (1983) resurrected mainstream interest in social intelligence with his multiple intelligence theory. Gardner suggested individuals have at least eight types of intelligences which they draw on separately and collectively to solve problems and manage everyday life experiences.

The eight intelligences identified by Gardner (1999) are linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intra personal intelligence. The definitions of the last two listed intelligences can be directly linked to the social intelligence theories of the early twentieth century. Gardner (1983) calls intrapersonal intelligence and interpersonal intelligence the personal intelligences. Table 1 shows the definitions of inter and intrapersonal intelligences. Gardner’s assertions of the existence of personal intelligences are significant benchmarks in the historical lineage of contemporary emotional intelligence theory.

Table 1

*Types of Social Intelligence*

Intelligence	Definition
Interpersonal	The ability to recognize and understand other people’s moods, desires, motivators, and intentions.
Intrapersonal	The ability to recognize and understand his or her own moods, desires, motivations, and intentions.

(Gardner, 1983, 1999)



## Models of Emotional Intelligence

Although there are several theories on emotional intelligence, the models from Mayer and Salovey, Goleman, and Bar-On are the most recognized in terms of research and application. The *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* states that there are three major models of emotional intelligence:

- (i) the Mayer-Salovey model which defines this construct as the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to facilitate thinking;
- (ii) the Goleman model which views it as an array of emotional and social competencies that contribute to managerial performance; and
- (iii) the Bar-On model which describes EI as a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that impact intelligent behavior. (Bar-On, 2007b, para. 2-4)

According to Emmerling and Goleman (2003), an analysis of the three major models on emotional intelligence illustrates that while “they have significant divergence in the specific language they use to label their theories and constructs, they all share a common desire to understand and measure the abilities and traits related recognizing and regulating emotions in ourselves and others” (p. 12). The emotional intelligence theories tend to complement rather than contradict. All the of the theories attempt to understand how people perceive, understand, utilize, and manage emotions in order to predict and promote personal effectiveness (Emmerling & Goleman). Table 2 shows how all the models compare side-by-side.

Bar-On’s (2007a) theory was the first of the three to emerge. Darwin, Thorndike, and Gardner had significant influence on the development of Bar-On’s model. Darwin’s work about the importance of emotional expression and its relationship to survival shaped Bar-On’s view of emotional and social intelligent behavior affecting successful adaption. Bar-On (2007a) states, “Thorndike’s 1920 description of social intelligence and its importance for

human performance” (p. 1) influenced the development of the model. And Gardner’s identification of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences helped shape the intrapersonal and interpersonal components of the Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (Bar-On, 2007a).

Bar-On’s model is considered a mixed model because it combines ideas related to emotional and social competencies. The model is made of two parts: the conceptual aspect and the psychometric aspect. The conceptual aspect can be thought of as Bar-On’s theory on emotional-social intelligence. The psychometric aspect can be thought of as the measure of emotional-social intelligence. These two aspects combined into one entity make up the Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (Bar-On, 2007a)

According to the Bar-On model emotional-intelligence is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how well we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures. (Bar-On, 2007a, p. 1)

The competencies and skills that make up this broad definition are based on five specific meta-factors. Bar-On (2007a) reported those factors as:

1. Intrapersonal emotional intelligence, which represents abilities, capabilities, competencies and skills pertaining to the inner self;
2. Interpersonal emotional intelligence, representing interpersonal skills and functioning;

Table 2

*Most Recognized Models of Emotional Intelligence*

Bar-On Model	Salovey and Mayer Model	Goleman Model
Mixed Model	Ability Model	Mixed Model (Competency Model)
Definition		
<p>Emotional-intelligence is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how well we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures.</p>	<p>The capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.</p>	<p>The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.</p>
Major Areas of Skill and Examples		
<p><u>Intrapersonal Skills:</u>            *Emotional self-awareness            *Assertiveness            *Self-Regard            *Self-Actualization            *Independence</p>	<p><u>Perceptions, Appraisal, and Expression of Emotion:</u>            *Identifying and expressing emotions in one's physical states, feelings and thoughts            *Identifying and expressing emotions in other people, artwork and language</p>	<p><u>Self-Awareness</u>            *Emotional self-awareness            *Accurate self-awareness            *Self-confidence</p>
<p><u>Interpersonal Skills:</u>            *Interpersonal Relationships            *Social Responsibility            *Empathy</p>	<p><u>Using Emotion to Facilitate Thought:</u>            *Emotion prioritize thinking in productive ways            *Emotions generated as aids to judgment and memory</p>	<p><u>Self-Management</u>            *Self-control            *Transparency            *Adaptability            *Achievement            *Initiative            *Optimism</p>

(table continues)

Bar-On Model	Salovey and Mayer Model	Goleman Model
Mixed Model	Ability Model	Mixed Model (Competency Model)
<u>Adaptability</u>	<u>Understanding and Analyzing Emotions</u>	<u>Social Awareness</u>
*Problem solving	*Ability to label emotions including complex emotions and simultaneous feelings	*Empathy
*Reality testing	*Ability to understand relationships associated with shifts of emotion	*Organization awareness
*Flexibility		*Service Orientation
<u>Stress Management</u>	<u>Regulation of Emotions</u>	<u>Relationship Management</u>
*Stress tolerance	*Ability to stay open to feelings	*Inspiration
*Impulse control	*Ability to monitor and regulate emotions reflectively to promote emotional and intellectual growth	*Influence
<u>General Mood</u>		*Developing others
*Happiness		*Change catalyst
*Optimism		*Conflict management
		*Teamwork and collaboration

3. Adaptability emotional intelligence, representing how successfully one is able to cope with environmental demands by effectively sizing up and dealing with problematic situations;

4. Stress management emotional intelligence, concerning the ability to manage and cope effectively with stress; and

5. General mood emotional intelligence, pertaining to the ability to enjoy life and to maintain a positive disposition.

Each of these dimensions or meta-factors is comprised of 15 sub-factors or competencies, skills and facilitators. They are: Self Regard; Emotional Self; Assertiveness; Independence; Self-Actualization; Empathy; Social Responsibility; Interpersonal Relationship; Stress Tolerance; Impulse Control; Reality Testing; Flexibility; Problem Solving; Optimism; Happiness. Table 3 defines and illustrates the relationship between the sub-factors and the five meta-factors.

These components of the model are described as non-cognitive variables that “resemble personality factors” (Bar-On, 1997b, p. 6). They are a means of operationalizing the model.

Bar-On proposes that the components of this model develop over time, change throughout life, and can be enhanced through training and development programs. The model relates to the potential for performance rather than performance itself.

Bar-On created the psychometric aspect of the model as the measure of the construct (Bar-On, 2007a). The full name of this measure or assessment is the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, most often called, EQ-i. Bar-On (2000) reports this inventory to be the first instrument to measure emotional intelligence published by a psychological test publisher. It is a self-report tool that specifically measures emotional and social competent

behaviors distinct from personality traits or cognitive capacity. This psychometric instrument renders a total EQ score as well as scores on the five meta-factors and 15 sub-factors (Bar-On, 2007a). Bar-On believes this instrument provides an estimate of an individual's ability to cope with the emotional and social demands of life as defined by his model.

Peter Salovey and John Mayer developed the second major model of emotional intelligence in 1990. Their theory, like most EI theories, is specifically rooted in the work of Howard Gardner (Salovey & Mayer, 2004). They subscribe to the notions of plural intelligences. They see EI in the same family of intelligences as social, practical, and personal intelligences, which they call the hot intelligences (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso & Sitarenios, 2004). These are hot intelligences because “these intelligences operate on hot cognitions – cognitions dealing with matters of personal, emotional, importance to the individual” (Mayer et al., 2004, p. 197).

The Salovey and Mayer model is considered an ability-based model. As they conceptualized their model, they felt it important to distinguish emotional intelligent abilities from social behaviors, traits and talents (Salovey & Mayer, 2004). This distinction gives their model a cognitive emphasis. It focuses on specific mental aptitudes for recognizing and managing emotions. According to Salovey and Mayer, a mental aptitude in their theory means a measure of thinking about feelings.

Their ability model describes EI as intelligence in the traditional sense; that is, as a set of mental abilities that have to do with emotions and the processing of emotional information that is a part of, and contributes to, logical thought and intelligence in general (Mayer & Salovey, 2004). Their definition of emotional intelligence is:

Table 3

*Bar-On's Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence*

Meta-Factors	Sub-Factors
Intrapersonal	<p>Self Regard – the ability to be aware of, understand, accept and respect oneself</p> <p>Emotional Self – Awareness – the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions</p> <p>Assertiveness – the ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts and to defend one's rights in a non-destructive manner</p> <p>Independence – the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in one's thinking and actions and to be free of emotional dependency</p> <p>Self-Actualization – the ability to realize one's potential and to do what one wants to do, enjoys doing, and can do</p>
Interpersonal	<p>Empathy – the ability to be aware of, understand and appreciate the feelings of others</p> <p>Social Responsibility – the ability to demonstrate oneself as a cooperative, contributing, and constructive member of one's social group</p> <p>Interpersonal Relationship – the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive or temptation to act and to control one's emotions</p>
Adaptability	<p>Reality Testing – the ability to assess the correspondence between what is experienced internally and subjectively and what exists externally and objectively</p> <p>Flexibility – the ability to adjust one's feelings, thoughts and behavior to changing situations and conditions</p> <p>Problem Solving – the ability to identify and define personal and social problems and to generate and implement potentially effective solutions</p>
Stress Management	<p>Stress Tolerance – the ability to withstand adverse events, stressful situations and strong emotions without falling apart by actively and positively coping with stress</p> <p>Impulse Control – the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive or temptation to act and to control one's emotions</p>
General Mood	<p>Optimism – the ability to look on the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity</p> <p>Happiness – the ability to feel satisfied with one's life, to enjoy oneself and others and to have fun and express positive emotions</p>

(Bar-On, 1997b, 2007a)

the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Mayer et al., 2004, p. 197)

These abilities are arranged hierarchically from basic psychological processes to the more psychologically integrated and complex, and are thought to develop with age and experience in much the same way as crystallized abilities. In addition, they are considered to be independent of traits and talents and preferred ways of behaving (Mayer & Salovey, 2004). Mayer and Salovey's framework on EI is divided into four areas of skills called branches. The branches of this model are:

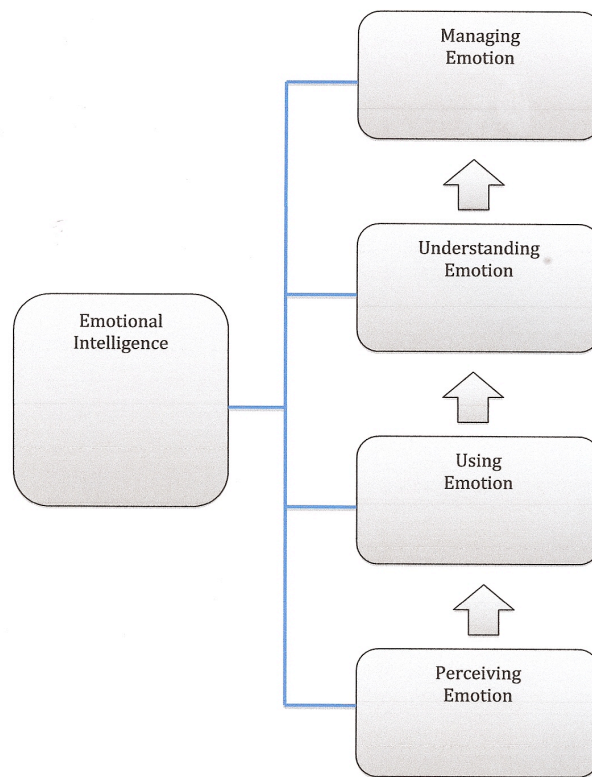
1. Perception, appraisal, and expression of emotion. This involves the ability of individuals to correctly identify emotions and emotional content.
2. Emotion's facilitation of thinking. This entails the understanding of emotions and how well emotional events can aid in intellectual processing.
3. Understanding and analyzing emotions. This involves the ability to understand emotions and use emotional knowledge.
4. Reflective regulation of emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. This entails the conscious regulation of emotions to enhance emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer et al., 2004; Salovey & Mayer, 2004).

The four branches of this model form a hierarchy of skills and abilities. The order of the branches — emotional perception at the bottom and managing emotion at the top — “represent the degree to which the ability is integrated within the rest of an individuals' major psychological subsystem” (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004, p. 198). Figure 1



illustrates the configuration of the four-branch model. The skills and abilities within each branch progress from basic to sophisticated.

The psychometric instrument used to measure this four-branch model is called The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). It is a series of scales made up of eight tasks: two to measure each of the four branches of EI (Mayer et al., 2004). Table 4 is an illustration of how each tasks in the MSCEIT is related to a branch in the Salovey and Mayer emotional intelligence model.



*Figure 1.* Salovey and Mayer’s 4-Branch Model

The MSCEIT consists of 141 items. An individual receives a total emotional intelligence score, two area scores, and four Branch scores. In summary, the MSCEIT asks test takers to:

- **Identify** the emotions expressed by a face or in designs.
  - **Generate** a mood and solve problems with that mood.
  - **Define** the causes of different emotions. Understand the progression of emotions.
- Determine** how to best include emotion in our thinking in situations that involve ourselves or other people (Caruso, 2005).

Table 4

*The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test*

Branch	Tasks
Branch 1 Perceiving Emotions	Task A – (Faces) Participants are asked to identify the emotions in faces. Task B – (Pictures) Participants are asked to identify emotions conveyed by landscapes and designs.
Branch 2 Using Emotions to Facilitate Thought	Task C – (Sensations) Participants compare emotions to other tactile and sensory stimuli. Task D – (Facilitation) Participants identify the emotions that would best facilitate a type of thinking.
Branch 3 Understanding Emotions	Task E – (Changes) This task assesses a person’s ability to know under what circumstances emotional intensity lessens and increases and how one emotional state changes into another. Task F – (Blends) Participants identify the emotions that are involved in more complex affective states.
Branch 4 Managing Emotions	Task G – (Emotion Management) Participants are presented hypothetical scenarios and asked how they would maintain or change their feelings. Task H – (Emotional Relationships) Participants are asked how they would manage other’s feelings so a desire outcome is achieved.

Daniel Goleman is credited with familiarizing the non-scientific community with the emotional intelligence concept through his book, which covered much of the academic literature up until that point and, in addition, “introduced research on emotions, and the brain, emotions and social behavior, and school-based programs designed to help children develop emotional and social skills” (Sternberg, p. 396).

Goleman’s emotional intelligence model was primarily designed for the workplace (Goleman et al., 2002). His theory is a mixed model centered around competencies. It is a mixed model because it includes social competencies. According to Mayer and Salovey (2004), social competencies are often considered broader personality traits such as warmth, outgoingness, and persistence.

Goleman’s framework is centered on 25 competencies. He defines a competence as “a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work” (Goleman et al., 2001, p. 27). These skills distinguish individual differences in workplace performance. The competencies are organized in a personal competence domain and a social competence domain. Personal competencies “determine how we manage ourselves” (Goleman, 1998, p. 26). Social competencies “determine how we handle relationships” (Goleman, 1998, p. 26).

Five general abilities make up those two domains. The abilities associated with the personal competence domain are self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation. The abilities that comprise the social competence domain are empathy and social skills. Figure 2 illustrates the skills that make up the general abilities and how they fit under each competence.

<u>Personal Competence</u>	<u>Social Competence</u>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-Awareness</b> Knowing one’s internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions</p> <p><b>Emotional awareness</b> – Recognizing one’s emotion and their effects  <b>Accurate self-assessment</b> – Knowing one’s strengths and limits  <b>Self-confidence</b> – A strong sense of one’s self-worth and capabilities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Empathy</b> Awareness of others’ feelings, needs, and concerns</p> <p><b>Understanding others</b> – Sensing others’ feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns  <b>Developing others</b> – Sensing others’ development needs and bolstering their abilities  <b>Service Orientation</b> – Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers’ needs  <b>Leveraging diversity</b> – Cultivating opportunities through difference kinds of people  <b>Political awareness</b> – Reading a group’s emotional currents and power relationships</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-Regulation</b> Managing one’s internal states, impulses, and resources</p> <p><b>Self-control</b> – Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check  <b>Trustworthiness</b> – Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity  <b>Conscientiousness</b> – Taking responsibility for personal performance  An authentic openness to others about one’s feelings, beliefs, and actions  <b>Adaptability</b> – Flexibility in handling change  <b>Innovation</b> – Being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social Skills</b> Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others</p> <p><b>Influence</b> – Wielding effective tactics for persuasion  <b>Communication</b> – Listening openly and sending convincing messages  <b>Conflict management</b> – Negotiating and resolving disagreements  <b>Leadership</b> – Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups  <b>Change catalyst</b> – Initiating or managing change  <b>Building bonds</b> – Nurturing instrumental relationships  <b>Collaboration and cooperation</b> – Working with others toward shared goals  <b>Team capabilities</b> – Creating group synergy in pursuing goals</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Motivation</b> Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals</p> <p><b>Achievement</b> – Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence  <b>Commitment</b> – Aligning with the goals of the group or organization  <b>Initiative</b> – Readiness to act on opportunities  <b>Optimism</b> – Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks</p>	

Figure 2. Goleman’s Model of Emotional Intelligence (Adapted from Goleman [1998] Emotional Competence Framework)

Over the years, Goleman's framework has evolved. The later versions include four domains and 18 competencies. The four domains are listed and defined as:

1. Self-awareness – the ability to understand feelings and accurate self-assessment.
  - Emotional self-awareness – the ability to recognize one's emotions and their effects
  - Accurate self-assessment – the ability to accurately identify one's strengths and limitations
  - Self-confidence – the ability to know and understand one's ability and self-worth
2. Self-management – the ability to manage internal states, impulses and resources.
  - Self-control – the ability to not let disruptive emotions and impulses become a distracting issue
  - Transparency – the ability to convey an authentic openness to others about one's feelings, beliefs, and actions
  - Adaptability – the ability to be flexible, handle multiple demands and deal with change
  - Achievement – the drive to constantly seek high personal standards and performance improvements
  - Initiative – the ability to identify, create, and act on opportunities
  - Optimism – the ability to stay positive despite setbacks
3. Social awareness – the ability to read people and groups accurately.

- Empathy – the ability to be aware of a person’s or group’s emotions, needs, and concerns and get along well with people with diverse backgrounds and cultures
  - Organizational awareness – the ability to be politically astute and detect crucial social networks and key power relationships
  - Service – the ability recognize and meet customer needs
4. Relationship management – the ability to induce desirable responses in others
- Inspiration – the ability to create resonance, move people and articulate a vision that gets people to go beyond day-to-day tasks
  - Influence – the ability to persuade others
  - Developing others – the ability to cultivate growth in others
  - Change catalyst – the ability to recognize the need for change, challenge the status quo, and champion the transition
  - Conflict management – the ability to understand differing perspectives and find common ground that most can endorse
  - Teamwork and collaboration – the ability to generate a friendly and collegiality atmosphere for groups in addition this skill includes drawing others into active, enthusiastic commitment to the collective effort to reach a shared group goal (Goleman et al., 2002).

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship of domains and competencies.



*Figure 3. Goleman’s Square Image (Stys & Brown, 2004)*

The Goleman model has changed over time. This newer version includes changes in terminology and organization. For example, empathy is not its own category anymore. It falls within the social awareness domain. The revised definition of empathy absorbs the “leveraging diversity” skill. Relationship Management is the term that replaced the “Social Skill” category. Instead of eight specific skills comprising this domain, the new rendition includes six competencies. Organization awareness is a new skill identified and defined in the newer framework. It encompasses “political awareness” from the initial version. Although some of the elements and concepts of Goleman’s 1998 framework have been reorganized and revised, they all fit and are represented in the newer description of the EI competence model.

Goleman (2011) suggests that the underlying abilities of the model are necessary, though not sufficient, to manifest competence in any one of the five emotional intelligence domains and that the emotional competencies are job skills that can be learned. Within this framework, Goleman and colleagues (2001) define emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize and regulate emotions both within the self and in others.

The main tool used to measure Goleman's EI model is the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) (Stys & Brown, 2004). The ECI assessment, developed by Goleman and Boyatzis, assesses the competencies in the EI model as well as competencies for leaders. The ECI is a multi-rater tool, often called a 360-degree instrument. In addition to being a self-report mechanism, it provides opportunities for supervisors, direct reports, and peers to rate an individual on a series of behavioral indicators of emotional intelligence (Stys & Brown, 2004). Each respondent rates themselves or someone else in relation to the four domains and 20 competencies of Goleman's EI model. Each competency gets two scores, one from the self-report and the average of the other raters. Given that this psychometric instrument has multiple raters, it likely carries greater validity coefficients than instruments that solely rely on self-report measures (Sala, 2005).

### **Critical Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Theory**

One of the first criticisms of the theories of emotional intelligence theory questions the concept's historical roots. Critics say the foundation on which the construct was developed is based on comments taken out of context. Landy (2005) reports Edward Thorndike is credited for being the originator of the idea of a social intelligence in humans, based on comments he made in *Harper's Magazine* in 1920. Thorndike suggested there were three types of intelligences: abstract, mechanical, and social (Landy, 2005). Landy suggests



those that cite Thorndike are merely identifying the person who coined the term “social intelligence.” Landy questions if Thorndike’s comment meant he ascribed any deep theoretical meaning to the term.

An alternative interpretation to Thorndike’s comment could be that he was doing more public relations than theorizing. One might infer this because *Harper’s Magazine* was a popular magazine, not a scientific outlet. Landy (2005) offers the notion that Thorndike was using this outlet to raise awareness and make applied psychology more prominent in both public policy and public consciousness. At that time, magazines like *Harper’s Magazine* were conduits for public discourse of non-scientific nature about scientific concepts. “It was in this context that Thorndike presented his comments about different ‘types’ of intelligence. It was a common-sense caution against a narrowly based measurement of intelligence. It was not a theory of intelligence” (Landy, 2005, p. 415). To support this assertion, Landy states the research on the topic after Thorndike’s comment was sparse and spotty at best. Thorndike’s statement did not prompt substantial interest or study of the concept. The fact that Thorndike is considered a renowned expert in the area of intelligence may have given license to assign an embellished meaning to his comments by contemporary theorists.

Other criticisms of EI theories question the degree of value they add because of their overlap with existing scientific theories. For example, many of the sub-components that make up the framework of the major EI theories overlap with theories on resilience and personality (Bar-On, 2007; Landy, 2005; Sternberg, 2000). This contradicts the goal of parsimony in science. In other words, why use three theories to explain a construct when two will do (Landy, 2005)? This particular criticism more specifically targets the mixed model

theories. By definition, the mixed model theories are broader and incorporate variables connected to things such as personality traits.

Another criticism and one of the strongest of the emotional intelligence phenomenon is that the science behind it has fallen victim to capitalistic enterprise and has cheated adequate scientific inquiry. Even the authors of one of the major EI models caution against premature and overarching claims of emotional intelligence being a predictor of life and work success (Mayer & Salovey, 2004) there are numerous examples where this has become widely accepted and published. Sternberg (2000) quotes the work of Salovey, Mayer and Caruso in an article in which they recommend more empirical studies to support these claims. They say the claims of some EI theories exceed any finding in a century of research in applied psychology. Such claims have manifested into lucrative entrepreneurial products and services such as books, training seminars, and EI assessment tools. Landy (2005) documents a rush to market of EI measurement tools by publishing companies but a lack of willingness by those same companies to share the data supporting the validity and reliability claims of those tools.

Even with all of the criticisms, the critics admit that emotional intelligence theory is a relatively young construct that needs more study (Landy, 2005; Salovey et al., 2004). It is too early to deem it not relevant. Matthews, Roberts, and Zeidner (2004) believe if provided sufficient time and analysis, the documented flaws in the theories could be addressed through empirical scientific studies. Proponents of the EI theory say the debate in itself is healthy. A robust discussion of its viability raises interest and awareness, which has the potential to positively impact institutions such as business and education.

## **Leadership**

Leadership is the second theme of the conceptual framework and context in which this exploratory analysis examined emotional intelligence. The following paragraphs provide information about the historical study of leadership and identify popular models. Leadership in the educational setting, often referred to as instructional leadership, is defined. The current research on the emotions associated with leadership and emotional intelligent leadership are described. And finally, the research on leading teams is investigated to give a thorough description of the second theme in this study.

It is commonly accepted that leadership makes a difference, and people want to understand why (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). This universally accepted premise has motivated a substantial amount of research. “Definitions of the concept are almost as numerous as the scholars engaged in its study” (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 375). Bass (1981) documented over 200 models of leadership. These various models have been defined based upon “traits behaviors, influence, interaction pattern, role relationships, and occupations of administrative position” (Yukl, 2002, p. 2). Although the study of leadership has been massive, a specific and agreed upon definition has been elusive. “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Bass, 1981, p. 7). Hoy and Miskel (2005) eloquently capture this sentiment in the following quote: “Leadership is like beauty – it is hard to define, but you know it when you see it” (p. 375). A common theme extracted from most leadership definitions is that it “involves a social influence process in which one individual exerts intentional influence over others to structure activities and relationships in a group or organization” (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 375).

Not only are the definitions and the study of leadership vast, it has roots back to the beginning of civilization and in all cultures. “Discussions of leadership appear in the works of Plato, Caesar, and Plutarch. Additionally, it is a robust concept that occurs universally among all people” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 4). The value people assign to it is illustrated in culturally passed down stories. For example the stories of Egyptian rulers, Greek heroes, and Biblical patriarchs evoke highly romanticized, emotional, and courageous images of leaders and their overall value (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Stone & Patterson, 2005). The historic popularity of the study of leadership would suggest that there is universal acceptance and acknowledgment of its importance. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) state, “for centuries people have assumed that leadership is critical to the success of any institution or endeavor” (p. 4). Leadership has been intimately linked to the effective functioning of complex organizations throughout the centuries (Marzano et al., 2005).

The intense study of leadership over the years has resulted in theories that have evolved over time. The leadership research of the past focused on traits or characteristics, examined power and authority, and emphasized the individual (Kezar, Carducci & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). The early theories highlighted leadership attributes that were described to be inherent, bureaucratic, and controlling. Conversely, more contemporary theories are imbued with more relational competencies. They emphasize trust, empowerment, collaboration, and teaming (Kezar et al., 2006; Reeves, 2006). The following paragraphs highlight the evolution of leadership theories and some of the more popular models.

### **Models of Leadership**

Centuries ago, Aristotle proposed individuals were born with characteristics that would make them leaders (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). This notion of leadership attributes being

genetically inherent is the foundation of the trait model of leadership, which was identified and heavily studied early in the twentieth century (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Stone & Patterson, 2005). This particular model of leadership was used in hierarchical bureaucratic organizations, which became prevalent during this same time period (Stone & Patterson, 2005).

According to Hoy and Miskel (2005), in 1948 Ralph Stogdill analyzed several studies on leadership traits and categorized the personal attributes into five categories:

- Capacity – intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgment
- Achievement – scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishments
- Responsibility – dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel
- Participation – activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humor
- Status – socioeconomic position, popularity. (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 379)

The study of the trait model of leadership produced confusing and negligible results. According to Hoy and Miskel (2005), a “person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits because the impact of traits varies widely from situation to situation” (p. 379).

Although leadership theories have evolved past the trait model, residual effects of its emphasis still exist. In addition, more contemporary research supports the concept that leaders must have certain traits in order to be effective. Table 5 categorizes traits of effective leaders into three groups.

Table 5

*Leadership Traits*

Personality	Motivation	Skills
Self-Confidence	Task and interpersonal needs	Technical
Stress tolerance	Achievement orientation	Interpersonal
Emotional maturity	Power needs	Conceptual
Integrity	Expectations	

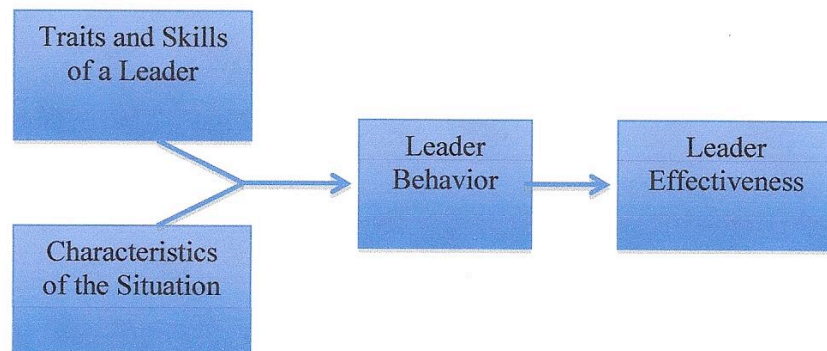
(Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 380)

These traits in individuals are still widely recognized, respected, and honored (Northouse, 2007a). This is consistently illustrated in organizations, which hire and promote individuals with these qualities into leadership positions.

After several years of analyzing the trait model, scholars rejected the notion of leaders being born. The study of leadership shifted to a situational and behavioral analysis (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The situational model of leadership focuses on the specific situation, or the context of the task. This model proposes that leaders are made by the specific situation. The behavioral phase of leadership study focused on the actions of the leader. The behavior model identified two basic behaviors of leaders, initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure behavior is a leader’s behavior that distinguishes the relationship between leaders and subordinates and ensures that work gets done. Consideration is leader behavior that illustrates respect, care, and trust of the subordinates (Hoy & Miskel). This theory purported that leadership was teachable and learnable. These two themes in leadership study were limited and short-lived. “Bass (1990) maintains the situational view overemphasized the situational and underemphasized the personal nature of leadership” (Hoy & Miskel, p. 386).

The behavioral approach posed its share of challenges, too. Leading in whatever circumstance is a dynamic and ever-changing endeavor. Matching the correct leadership behavior is a complex and “knotty problem” (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 387). At this point in the research, the findings had concluded that restricting the analysis of leadership to traits, situations, or behaviors was too narrow.

The next model on the continuum of leadership research includes concepts from the three models previously mentioned. The contingency model entails traits of leaders, characteristics of situations, and behaviors of the leader (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The appropriate integration and execution of these concepts result in leadership effectiveness, which was defined as accomplishment of organizational goals, perceptual approval by significant reference groups, and overall job satisfaction (Hoy & Miskel). Figure 4 illustrates the relationship of these concepts.



*Figure 4.* Pathway to Effective Leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2005).

As Figure 4 illustrates, the traits and skills of a leader combine with the characteristics of the situation to produce leader behavior and potential effectiveness. This is the essence of the contingency model of leadership.

The next phase of the study of leadership introduced the current and most prevalent descriptors of leadership models (Stone & Patterson, 2005). Stone and Patterson report the transactional and transformational models are the most enacted and most desired. Transactional leadership is most common and transformational leadership is most desired by organizations.

Although transactional leadership theory typically does not have positive connotations associated with it, there are times it can be effective, or at least efficient (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). Efficient and effective in this context is defined as being easily executable and measureable. This is one of the reasons this style of leadership can be attractive on a surface level. Leadership behaviors associated with this style have been described as managerial behaviors (Brymer & Gray, 2006; Hoy & Miskel; Stone & Patterson, 2005). Stone and Patterson describe managerial behaviors as low level, task specific, rule or policy driven, and/or reactionary. The leader-subordinate relationship in this model is contingent upon a reward and punishment system that is administered through a hierarchal structure. Rewards and punishments are administered based upon the quality of services rendered. Brymer and Gray (2006) posit this model depends upon individuals being motivated by self-interest. Overall, this leadership approach is short-sighted and limited in regard to organizational growth. The behaviors associated with this style of leadership promote the status quo and focus only on the day-to-day operations and not on a progressive vision (Stone & Patterson).



“In the field of leadership studies, transformational leadership has been the theory of choice for the past several decades” (Stone & Patterson, 2005, p. 7). This style of leadership suggests that traditional bureaucratic, hierarchical leader-subordinate structures/relationships are obsolete. Transformational leaders focus on employee needs in an effort to help them deal with internal and external change as they progress towards organizational long-range goals. This model encourages followers to look past their own self-interest, to be collaborative, and commit to the group or organization (Brymer & Gray, 2006; Stone & Patterson). The primary focus of a transformational leader is the goals of the organization. In close proximity to this primary focus is follower development. Although the development of the followers is sincere, it ultimately is done to help the organization reach its goals. The sincerity of the follower development fosters a mutually trusting and respectful relationship. This model promotes followers converting to leaders and followers emulating the leader (Brymer & Gray; Stone & Patterson). The literature on transformational leadership summarizes the leaders’ behaviors into four functional areas with 15 accompanying attributes (Brymer & Gray; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Stone & Patterson). Table 6 defines those areas and illustrates the relationship of the accompanying attributes.

### **Educational Leadership**

Just like any other entity, education has required quality leadership to propel it forward. Education has been a welcoming setting for the latest leadership model to be implemented. At some point, leaders in education have embraced and practiced each of the previously described leadership models. Currently, the model most desired and associated with leadership in the educational setting is instructional leadership.

Table 6

*Functional Areas and Attributes of Leaders*

Functional Areas	Accompanying Attributes
<b>Idealized Influence</b> – builds trust and respect in followers and provides the basis for accepting radical and fundamental changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Respect</li> </ul>
<b>Inspirational Motivation</b> – changes the expectations of group members to believe that problems can be solved and goals attained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Commitment to Goals</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual Stimulation</b> – creates the conditions for creativity and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationality</li> <li>• Problem-solving</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Consideration</b> – close attention is paid to individual’s needs to promote growth and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Attention</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Empowering</li> </ul>

(Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Stone & Patterson, 2005)

Instructional leadership has been studied intensely since the 1980s (Fulmer, 2006; Hallinger, 2007; Stewart, 2006). As is the case with the leadership definitions in general, instructional leadership is defined differently based upon the perspective. According to Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), “instructional leadership is one of the most frequently mentioned educational leadership concepts in North America, yet despite its popularity, the concept is not well defined” (p. 18). Some researchers provide a broad definition, while others provide a narrow description. One of the more narrow perspectives suggests the starting point for instructional leadership is developing instruction (Gulcan, 2012). A broader definition asserts individuals engaged in instructional leadership focus on bringing about improvement in school environments and student success (Hallinger, 2007).

Gulcan (2012) provides another example of a broad and narrow account of instructional leadership.

In narrow terms, instructional leadership is defined as a function within management and actions directly related with teacher and learning. According to the broader definition, instructional leadership is stated as the process of performing all leadership activities that may affect learning at school. (p. 627)

Smith and Andrews (1989) described another framework for instructional leadership. Their model identified four key roles of an instructional leader. They propose that instructional leaders are expected to be a resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. The resource provider role ensures instructors have the materials, facilities, and budget necessary to adequately perform their duties. The instructional resource role entails actively supporting day-to-day instructional activities and programs. In addition, the leader is expected to model desired behaviors, participate in professional learning activities, and give priority to instructional concerns. In the role of communicator, the leader is expected to articulate clear goals for the staff. And finally, a visible presence means the leader frequently visits the teaching environment (Marzano et al., 2005; Smith & Andrews).

Although the model of presented by Smith and Andrews (1989) may have garnered the most attention, several other researchers have created renditions of the instructional leadership concept (Marzano et al., 2005). Heck and Hallinger's (1999) conceptualization of instructional leadership focuses on the administrator's effort to define the school's mission and goals, manage the instructional program, and promote a safe school environment.

"Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (1995) identify the following: direct assistance to

teachers in their day-to-day activities, development activities, curriculum development, and use of action research” (Marzano et al., 2005, pp. 18-19).

A relatively recent but interesting analysis in the field of education is the connection made between instructional leadership and transformational leadership, which overlap. They share the goal of increasing the capacity of those in subordinate positions to reach the organization’s goals (Marzano et al., 2005). To be a successful instructional leader, an individual must embody the principles of transformational leadership.

Like definitions of general leadership, there are many definitions of instructional leadership. Some common themes extracted from the vast number of models include:

- Leaders developing and communicating a clear vision
- Leaders working to create the optimal environment for all constituents
- Leaders supporting the professional learning of teachers
- Leaders being a resource and providing resources to teachers
- Leaders consistently and intimately engaged in day-to-day classroom instruction
- Leaders making teaching and learning the priority
- Student success increasing (Fulmer, 2006; Gulcan, 2012; Hallinger, 2007; Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Marzano et al., 2005; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Stewart, 2006).

Successfully executing these behaviors is challenging and complex. Success with the work can offer a degree of intrinsic satisfaction, and at the same time be very taxing on a person. It can wear on an individual mentally, physically, and emotionally. This sentiment is captured eloquently in a quote documented by Beatty:

Leadership has its highs and lows, its successes and failures. Principals cry, laugh, dream and become suspicious. There are times when principals do want the fairy godmother to come and save them. While leadership is about courage, about creating the tomorrow of our choice, heroism does not come easily. (Loader 1997, p. 3 cited in Beatty, 2000, p. 333)

### **Emotions of Leadership**

“Teaching and leading are profoundly emotional activities” (Fried, 1995, cited in Beatty, 2000, p. 331). Beatty (2000) gives a strong warning about not paying attention to the emotional side of leadership. “If we continue to ignore the emotional dimension of organizational life in general and leadership in particular, we do so at our peril” (p. 337). In addition, other leadership scholars have suggested that a fundamental component of leadership is the emotional nature of the process (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000; Bass, 2002). Ashford and Humphrey (1995) have written about how the leadership process is emotional and about personal values. It is not possible to separate cognition or rational behavior from emotion. Bass and Avolio (1990) suggest that leaders provide the symbolic and emotional force behind organizational change. Leadership is merely a function of emotion management and that emotion-related variables are a critical part at every phase of the process, linking leadership to work group outcomes (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000). Goleman (1998) has proposed leaders of today’s organizations are being judged not only by how much expertise and knowledge they possess, but also by their ability to handle themselves and others. He goes on to state the skills and traits that define emotional intelligence are significant variables in the successful leadership formula.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Leadership**

Being an effective leader does not happen in the absence of emotion (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). A leader uses emotional data to lead, which involves setting a vision,

molding the climate, building relationships, solving problems, and making decisions.

Utilizing the emotional data is a product emotional intelligence.

George (2000) wrote, “creating a compelling vision for an organization can be an exercise in creativity, positive thinking, and flexibility and such an exercise will be facilitated by positive emotions” (p. 1040). Leaders who understand their emotions know how to regulate them in a manner so they appropriately contribute to the visioning process, which is a social activity that involves the contributions of multiple people. “The process by which managers or leaders create a shared vision, motivate others, and encourage workers are likely based on intelligent use of emotions and the integration of feeling with thinking” (Caruso & Salovey, 2004, p. 20).

The leader uses their emotional intelligence to set the climate for people to contribute to the vision and do their work. “A leader’s emotional intelligence creates a certain culture or work environment. High levels of emotional intelligence, our research showed, create climates in which information sharing, trust, healthy risk-taking and learning flourish” (Goleman et al., 2001, p. 44). A positive climate reduces work anxiety. People enjoy doing their jobs in upbeat environments. Goleman and colleagues report positive environments foster mental efficiency. They allow people to better take and understand information.

This climate shaping is influenced by a phenomenon known as mood contagion (Goleman et al., 2001). “It’s akin to ‘Smile and the whole world smiles with you.’” The leader’s emotions affect the emotions of followers. George (1992) asserted, “Leaders who feel excited, enthusiastic, and energetic themselves are likely to similarly energize their followers, as are leaders who feel distressed and hostile likely to negatively activate their followers” (p. 84). Energized followers are positioned to operationalize and emotionally

commit to the vision. Emotional commitment to the vision manifests in positive motivated behavior. It increases the likelihood of successful implementation. “Emotionally intelligent leadership focuses on using emotional and relationship ‘know-how’ to motivate others to accomplish workplace goals that address the needs of the staff, the organization, and the customer” (Feldman, 1999, p. 10).

A positive climate does not mean there are never problems to be addressed. Much of leadership involves solving problems. The job of an effective leader is to solve problems (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Problems can elicit all types of emotions. A leader can use emotional intelligence to make decisions and address issues. An emotionally intelligent leader views the problem or issue with an optimistic lens. Shankman (2008) states leaders that take this stance when facing challenges are generally more successful. According to George (2000), emotions have been shown to influence quality of decision-making, creativity, memory, and inductive as well as deductive reasoning. These are all competencies essential to a leader’s work. In the decision making process, leaders are integrating emotional management with logical and cognitive skills. This use of emotions allows the leader to make optimal choices (Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

The above paragraphs document a significant amount of theoretical evidence connecting emotional intelligence and leadership. It can be inferred that insight in this area could support effective leadership. Findings from Brenda Beatty’s research endorse this notion. She suggests that leaders need to better understand emotions in themselves and others. Insight into this area will shape their behaviors and actions. Deep knowledge can foster collaborative environments and effective teams (Beatty, 2000).

## **Team Effectiveness**

There is a saying “two heads are better than one.” In an oversimplified way, this statement captures the essence of the third theme in the theoretical framework of this study. Teams are popular structures utilized to operationalize a leader’s vision and progress towards the organizations goals. “The glue that holds people together in a team, and that commits people to an organization, is the emotions they feel” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 20). The following paragraphs synthesize the literature on teams. Specifically, the concepts covered are: the history and definition of a team, the rationale for a team approach to organizational goals/leader’s vision, the use of teams in the educational environment, emotions in a team, and the definition of an effective team.

### **History and Definition of Teams**

Teams are structures with ancient roots. Our survival as a human species and as leaders of organizations is not because of solitary efforts but is due to collaborative success (Reeves, 2006).

Teams of people working together for a common purpose have been a centerpiece of human social organization ever since our ancient ancestors first banded together to hunt game, raise families, and defend their communities. Human history is largely a story of people working together in groups to explore, achieve, and conquer. (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, p. 77)

The study of teams over time has produced multiple definitions. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) define a team as “a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (p. 112). Duygulu and Ciraklar (2008) capture Morgan, Glickman, Woodard and Sala’s definition. A team is a “distinguishable set of two or more individuals who interact interdependently and adaptively to achieve specified, shared and



value objectives” (p. 2). Duygulu and Ciraklar provide a very broad definition of a team. They suggests, “a team should be defined as an active unit...members are mutually committed, mutually supportive, and collectively responsible for achievement” (Duygulu & Ciraklar, p. 2). Another definition comes from Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006), who define a team as two or more individuals who socially interact face-to-face or virtually. They possess one or more common goal, are brought together to perform organizational tasks, exhibit interdependence, have different roles and responsibilities, and are embedded in an encompassing organizational system (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Some common and important themes in the definitions of teams are: more than one person; interdependence; common goals; and collectively responsible.

### **Rationale for a Team Approach**

What is the benefit of more than one person coming together, working interdependently for a common goal? What is the rationale of taking a team approach to an organization’s goals and a leader’s vision? The work of organizations is becoming more and more complex and demanding. These demands exceed the capacity of one person or one leader. “The task of the leader is to create an organization that is exemplary in every dimension and not engage in performance or behaviors suggesting that a single person bears the burden of exemplary performance in every area” (Reeves, 2006, p. 24). According to Bolman and Deal (1992), “Modern organizations are full of ambiguity, complexity, turbulence, and confusion” (p. 35). Leaders are forced to deal with these things in a very fast-paced environment. Leaders have to work intelligently to survive these challenges.

Teams are powerful and effective structures for leaders to utilize to address these issues. Reeves (2006) asserts that a group of people will always be smarter than the

individual person. It behooves an organization to tap into the power of teams. Effective teams can accomplish extraordinary things. People are the most important asset of an organization, and teams provide a structure to tap into those people's potential (Smith, 2012). Since one person cannot be an expert in every function of an organization, a team can offer multiple talents and abilities. A leader who has the ability to gather together a group of people with a variety of skills can help them achieve their potential as a team (Smith).

### **Teams in Education**

Education has embraced the use of teams to increase student achievement. As in other organizations, leaders in education must construct and utilize the power of teams. According to Hallinger (2007), the days of the lone instructional leader are over. They must garner the support and get the participation of other educators. "Teams are everywhere in school systems. Whether formal or informal, permanent or temporary, teams are a common way of getting the work done" (Smith, 2012, p. 30). Table 7 defines different types of teams and provides examples of those teams in the educational setting.

Educational leaders bring these types of teams together to complete task efficiently and help schools, departments, and entire school districts meet their goals. Rottier (2002) lists the following reason why teaming is so valuable in education:

1. Teaching continues to become a more complex task.
2. Teachers desire to become more involved with the operation of the entire teaching and learning process. Teaming provides opportunities.
3. Teaming is a powerful professional learning tool.
4. Professional communication is improved dramatically with teaming.
5. Teaming provides an opportunity for curriculum improvement and integration.

Table 7

*Teams in Education*

Type of Team	Purpose of Team	Examples in Education
Information Team	Gather intelligence and exchange important information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development Team</li> <li>• Teacher’s Council</li> </ul>
Consultative Team	Provide perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Council</li> <li>• Budget Committee</li> <li>• Student Advisory Group</li> </ul>
Coordinating Team	Coordinate activities and man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum Adoption Committee</li> <li>• Grade level team</li> <li>• Content Department Team</li> </ul>
Decision-Making Team	Make critical and strategic decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent’s Cabinet</li> <li>• School leadership Teams</li> </ul>

(Smith, 2012)

**Emotions in a Team**

The behavior of every member in the group is influenced by emotions. An individual person is never absent of emotion. Emotions influence a person’s behavior; they are a source of motivation that influences people’s judgment and decisions (Feldman, 1999). As organizations shift to more team structures, individuals at work bring their emotion-driven behavior to team settings. Barsade (2002) reports shared emotions occur in organizational work teams. Research suggests the emotions individuals bring to the team are contagious (Barsade). Contagious emotions are known as a phenomenon called emotional contagion,

which is “a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotional states and behavioral attitudes” (Barsade, p. 646).

When it comes to spreading emotions in a group, the leader has the biggest impact. According to Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002), groups take their emotional cues from the leader. “The continual interplay of limbic open loops among members of a group creates a kind of emotional soup, with everyone adding his or her own flavor to the mix. But it is the leader who adds the strongest seasoning” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 8). The limbic system is the emotional center in the brain. Open loop means it is receptive and dependent on outside stimuli. “An open loop system depends largely on external sources to manage itself” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 6). In other words, interaction with people provides emotional stability (Goleman et al., 2002). The collective emotional soup influences all the interactions of each group member and the leader. Ultimately, this impacts the effectiveness of the team (George, 2000).

### **Definition of Team Effectiveness**

There are many definitions of team effectiveness. “Sundstrom and Associates (1999) state that effectiveness of teams start with meeting the performance expectations, of those who receive, use, or review the team’s output” (Duygulu & Ciraklar, 2008, p. 3). Schein (1970) classifies a team as effective if they complete organizational responsibilities while meeting personal responsibilities, such as providing social support to team members. Beal, Cohen, Burke, and McLendon (2003) suggested that team effectiveness equals effective performance behaviors and successful performance outcomes.

Of all the definitions of a team, Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) claim there is one prevalent conceptualization of team effectiveness. That definition comes from J. Richard Hackman (2002), who defines team effectiveness with three dimensions: results, socialization, and individual growth. Results are judged by relevant others outside of the team. Socialization means team members are willing to remain in the team and want to work together in the future. Individual growth means the team interaction meets the needs of individual team members. This definition is multidimensional, dynamic, and applicable to all types of organizational environments (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

In the context of education, teams strive for success in those three dimensions. Individual teachers and various educators engage with their colleagues in team structures to stretch themselves and grow in their profession. This can come in the form of learning how to better deliver a specific lesson, how to have a deeper understanding of a educational construct and/or how to be more efficient at managing a classroom (Rottier, 2002; Smith, 2012). Educators desire to work with others in a way that is rewarding and promotes ongoing collaboration. Smith (2012) encourages this by advocating for teams in schools to set norms, practice norms, and enforce norms. The third dimension of effective teams in the education ultimately comes down to increased student success. That result is a step removed from the teams' work, but it is the indirect target for teams in the educational setting.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the themes that make up the conceptual framework: emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. The exploration of the emotional intelligence theme included an analysis of the constructs that make up the term and a review of the origins of the theory. The three major models of EI were defined and then compared

and contrasted. The criticisms of EI theory were identified and examined. The analysis of leadership included a chronological review of the evolution of prominent leadership models and a discussion of leadership in the context of education. Next, emotions in leadership and emotional intelligent leadership were highlighted. Finally, the history of teams, rationale for a team approach, teams in education, emotions in teams, and the definition of effective teams were documented. All these elements comprise the conceptual framework supporting the overall study and guiding the methodology. The following chapter provides a thorough description of that methodology.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to illuminate the construct emotional intelligence in the context of leadership and its impact on team effectiveness. This insight has the potential to help educational leaders be more effective with the teams they utilize to do work associated with teaching and learning. The empirical research of Prati et al. (2003) suggests when there is a lack of emotional intelligence from educational leaders, the teams they supervise suffer.

Teams depend on leaders to facilitate an understanding of their goals and purpose. The leader has to have the emotional competency to motivate team members to work together towards the mission of the team (Prati et al., 2003). According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002), leaders that are not emotionally intelligent or lead in a way that does not pay attention to the impact of emotions will be ineffective in promoting productive teams. Unproductive teams in education will hamper the progress because a significant amount of the work is dependent on that structure.

A leader's work with their teams can be impacted by the emotions of team members and their own emotions. These emotions can be extreme. In education there is an increased amount of stress for leaders trying to navigate through the current high pressure and turbulent times. Johnson, Aiken, and Steggerda (2005) state, "Leadership work in educational institutions has become more stressful and complex with multiple demands and complex relational dynamics influencing leadership behavior each day" (p. 236). In order for leaders to be successful in the current educational environment, they must have the ability to adaptively process emotions in themselves and others in a way that can be applied towards

personal and organizational goals or problems. Johnson and colleagues refer to this ability as emotional literacy. Emotionally literate leaders are needed during these times.

There is a need for research to explore the under-investigated phenomenon of emotional intelligence. Johnson, Aiken, and Steggerda (2005) state approaches aimed at addressing the current challenges of education cannot ignore the emotional side of leadership. Adding to this body of knowledge can help leaders analyze their leadership behaviors with teams through an emotional intelligence lens, putting them in a more advantageous position to advance education. Goleman (1995) suggests emotional intelligence can be the variable that distinguishes good and excellent leaders. William Bennis supports this idea: “Emotional intelligence is much more powerful than IQ in determining who emerges as a leader. IQ is a threshold competence. You need it, but it doesn’t make you a star. Emotional intelligence can” (1994, p. 79).

This heuristic phenomenological case study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. Patton (2002) states a phenomenological approach aims at a description “of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience” (p. 107). Miles and Huberman (1994) state a case is a “phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). Emotional intelligence is the phenomenon and unit of analysis. This research analyzed four information rich cases. Because the information from multiple cases was analyzed, this study is a collective case study. According to Stake (1995), a collective case study is a study in which the researcher investigates more than one case to learn not about the specific case but about a phenomenon connected to the case. The researcher must coordinate the data from each case to make meaning.



This heuristic phenomenological case study was informed by the theoretical tradition narratology, also known as narrative inquiry. “Heuristics is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). According to Webster and Mertova (2007), “narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience. It provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (p. 1).

Maxwell (2005) states that research questions express what the study will attempt to explore, focus the research, and give guidance for determining the most appropriate research methodology.

The questions that guided this study were:

1. To what degree are school and district leaders aware of their own emotional intelligence?
2. How do school and district leaders in an urban school system use emotional intelligence to promote team effectiveness?
3. What are team members’ perceptions of the leader’s emotional intelligence as it relates to the team’s effectiveness?

A description of the methodology for conducting this research is documented in the following paragraphs. I provide rationale for conducting a qualitative study about the phenomenon emotional intelligence. I detail how the theoretical tradition of narrative inquiry informs this phenomenological case study. Next, I provide an explanation of the design of the study, which includes the setting of the research, the sampling techniques used, and the participants involved in the project. I follow with a description of the data sources used to inform the examination and how the data were managed, analyzed, and interpreted. Finally, I

conclude with an account of the ways validity, reliability, and ethics were addressed throughout the research.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Research**

Research indicates emotional intelligence is an elusive concept (Pfeiffer, 2000). This suggests the phenomenon is complex. Qualitative data has the strong potential for revealing complexity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research is suited to reveal the intricacies of complex issues.

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (Creswell, 1998, p. 15)

The notion of qualitative research being naturalistic is reiterated by Patton (2002): “Qualitative designs are naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest (e.g., a group, event program, community, relationship or interaction)” (Patton, p. 39). Emotional intelligence is demonstrated and experienced in natural everyday life situations. The study of it warrants a naturalistic design.

Creswell (1998) goes on to compile a list of qualitative research characteristics:

- Natural Setting (field focused) as source of data
- Research a key instrument of data collection
- Data collected as words or pictures
- Outcome as process rather than product
- Analysis of data inductively, attention to particulars
- Focus on participants’ perspectives, their meaning
- Use of expressive language
- Persuasion by reason (p. 16)

The nature of the research questions being asked is the initial rationale for determining the type of research to conduct (Creswell, 1998). If the topic has not yet been

explored thoroughly in a qualitative way, or if a detailed view of the construct is warranted, a qualitative study is appropriate (Creswell). I was an active learner through the process. In addition, an intimate analysis of the construct from the participant's perspective is critical in this study. The participants were provided various opportunities to illuminate the phenomenon from their perspective through techniques best suited for qualitative analysis. Creswell suggests researchers employ a qualitative approach when they intend to convey the story from the participants' perspective rather than that of an expert who passes judgment on participants.

### **Theoretical Traditions**

#### **Phenomenology**

In a sense, all qualitative research is phenomenological. "Phenomenology is a school of philosophical thought that underpins all of qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 15). Patton (2002) states a phenomenological approach aims at a description "of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (p. 107). One dimension of a phenomenological approach is the accepted assumption that there is an essence to the shared experience (Patton). According to Patton, the essence is the core meaning mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. A primary task of phenomenologists is to capture the essence of the experience (Merriam).

In this study, the phenomenon commonly experienced is emotional intelligence, which has been defined as "the ability to read and understand others in social contexts, to detect the nuances of emotional reactions, and to utilize such knowledge to influence others through emotional regulation and control" (Prati et al., 2003, p. 21). My task as a phenomenological researcher was to depict how this phenomenon is experienced. I

employed methodology that allowed me to thoroughly describe how people “perceive it, describe, feel about it judge it, remember it, and make sense of it “(Patton, 2002, p. 104).

In Merriam’s text, she pulls from the work of Spiegelberg (a main architect of phenomenological research) to describe the steps a researcher should follow when conducting a phenomenological study.

First, a researcher must have an “intuitive grasp” (p. 659) of the phenomenon, and then follow up by investigating several instances or examples of the phenomenon to gain a sense of its general essence. The next steps are to apprehend a sense of its general essence. The next steps are to apprehend relationships among several essences and then to systematically explore “the phenomena not only in the sense of what appears, whether particulars or general essences but also of the way in which things appear” (p. 684, emphasis in original). Next to be determined is how the phenomena have come into consciousness; next beliefs about the phenomena are bracketed, and finally, the meaning of the phenomenal can be interpreted. (Merriam, 1998, p. 16)

Patton (2002) states the foundational question of phenomenology is “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people” (p. 104)? I am posing this question to illuminate the phenomenon emotional intelligence and analyze its relationship to leadership and team effectiveness.

### **Heuristic**

Patton (2002) notes, “heuristic research epitomizes the phenomenological emphasis on meanings and knowing through personal experience; it exemplifies and places at the fore the way in which the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry” (p. 109). Emotional intelligence is a construct I experience consistently on an intimate basis. This relationship makes heuristic inquiry a fitting approach to this research. The foundational question of heuristic inquiry is, “What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?” (Patton, 2002,

p. 107). This approach allowed me to analyze my personal experience with the phenomenon and honor the intimate insight I could offer through thorough self-reflection. “The uniqueness of heuristic inquiry is the extent to which it legitimizes and places at the fore these personal experiences, reflections, and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 108).

Patton (2002) proposes that a focusing element of heuristic inquiry within the framework of phenomenology is the researcher must have personal experience with the phenomenon. When doing a strictly phenomenological study, Creswell (1998) suggests that bracketing the personal experience of the researcher may be difficult. Bracketing is a process where the researcher sets aside all prejudgments to obtain a picture of the experience (Creswell, 1998). Heuristic inquiry emphasizes connectedness and relationship (Patton, 2002). This phenomenological study informed through heuristic inquiry provides a means for these two theoretical traditions to complement each other and address one of the inherent challenges.

Other attractive attributes of the heuristic inquiry are the way in which the researcher is expected to creatively synthesize his/her intuition and tacit knowledge. Heuristic research gave me permission to discuss the data in the context of the person in the experience (Patton, 2002). In other words, the research participants remained visible in the examination of the data (Patton, 2002). These principles of heuristic inquiry are compatible with my beliefs as a researcher and provided effective means to deeply explore the phenomenon emotional intelligence.

### **Narratology**

Narratology, also referred as narrative analysis or narrative inquiry, “is set in human stories of experience” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 1). According to Clandinin and

Connelly, (2000) narrative inquiry is stories lived and told. It is a way of understanding an experience. “It is a collaboration between the researcher and participants” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Elliot (2005) identifies three key features of narratives.

First, that it has a temporal or chronological dimension in that it provides a representation of a series of events or experiences rather than describing a state of affairs. Second, that it communicates the meaning of events or experiences through the use of evaluative statements and through the temporal configuration of events. Third, that there is an important social dimension to narrative: narratives are ubiquitous in society and are a popular form of communication. (p. 15)

Elliot (2005) goes on to document five common themes of research that pays attention to narratives.

1. An interest in people’s lived experience and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience.
2. A desire to empower research participants and allow them to contribute to determining what are the most salient themes in an area of research.
3. An interest in process and change over time.
4. An interest in the self and representation of the self.
5. An awareness that the researcher him – or herself is also a narrator. (p. 6)

There are other advantages of using narrative inquiry in this study. It supports a phenomenological investigation because of its emphasis on understanding lived experiences and perceptions of experiences (Patton, 2002). Emotional intelligence is something experienced in an intimate and sometimes very subtle way. Providing participants the vehicle of personal stories to describe the experience is ideal for illuminating the complexity of emotional intelligence. This notion is supported by Webster and Mertova (2007) in their assertion that narrative research is well suited to address complexities and subtleties of

human experience. Narrative analysis allows the researcher to present the experience in all its complexity and richness (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

## **Design of the Study**

### **Site Selection**

This study analyzed an educational leader's emotional intelligence and its relationship to a team's effectiveness. The setting of this analysis was a Midwest urban school district. The city that the school district serves had a population of 145,786 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). According to the School District's data warehouse program, the total enrollment was 21,276 students. The demographics of that student population were:

- 4.7% Asian
- 42.8 % Hispanic
- 36.6% Black
- 13.6 % White
- 32.8% English Language Learners
- 85.2% Free or Reduced Lunch Status

The sites eligible for this study were departments at the central office and elementary schools. At the central office there were a total of four eligible departments and there were a total of 30 eligible elementary school sites. The total population at the elementary level was 10,713 students.

### **Participant Selection**

The pivot point of the cases in the study was leaders. Leaders are defined as individuals in the school district with formally assigned supervision and/or facilitating responsibilities of teams or groups. These leaders were identified through two forms of

purposeful sampling. “Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Criterion and chain sampling were the specific types of purposeful sampling used to identify the eligible leaders.

According to Merriam (1998), a criterion-based selection calls for the researcher to list elements essential to the study and then find units that have those attributes. One criterion to make leaders eligible for selection was that the leader could not be under my line of authority. Currently, I am the assistant superintendent of secondary schools. I am responsible for supervising secondary school principals and the special education, curriculum, and research/assessment departments of the school district.

The second criterion was the leaders must consistently meet with their teams. Some examples of the potential teams are leadership teams, professional development teams, grade level teams, and department teams. Some functions of those teams include: making critical decisions about curriculum and instruction; sharing information to assess program effectiveness and influence the allocation of funding; planning and executing training; creating and sharing resources such as lesson plans and common assessments.

Additionally, the leaders had to have at least two years experience in their current assignment. Eligible positions included elementary school principals, chief of staff, chief of finance, assistant superintendent of elementary schools, and director of student services. The membership or makeup of the team had to have been consistent for a minimum of one year. These tenure criteria were established to allow team members and leaders to draw from an ample amount of experiences. Non-novice teams have multiple experiences together. They are able to analyze these experiences and bring out data about the phenomenon under study.



An invitation questionnaire (see Appendix A) was sent to all the administrators not under my line of authority. The information from the questionnaire allowed me to identify leaders that met the rest of the criteria.

After a pool of leaders was identified through criterion sampling, chain sampling was used specific strategy to identify the information rich cases. Chain sampling is a process where well-situated people are asked to identify individuals that know a lot about a specific subject relevant to the research. Their level of knowledge distinguishes them from their colleagues or peers (Patton, 2002).

Other participants in the study were members of a team supervised by each of the identified leaders. These participants were invited to participate in a focus group interview. These participants were well suited to illuminate data about their leader's emotional intelligence because they experience it in relation to the goals and work of the team.

### **Data Sources**

In this section, I describe the data sources I used to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. In qualitative case studies, multiple means of data collection are commonly used (Merriam, 1998). Popular collection techniques include various forms of interviews and document analysis. Data collection from different sources is important to provide a comprehensive perspective. Multiple qualitative data sources can provide a holistic and rich description of the phenomenon of study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Individual interviews, focus groups, and document analysis were the data sources utilized in the research.

**Interviews.** “For a phenomenological study the process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews” (Creswell, 1998, p. 122). Patton (2002) states:

The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of the other person is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories. (p. 341)

In-depth individual interviews provided me an opportunity to interact with the educational leader participants in close proximity. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this notion as "local groundedness" (p. 10). This close proximity gave me a chance to analyze meaningful nuances and include them in my interpretation of the conversation. "The general interview guide approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins" (Patton, 2002, p. 342). It was my responsibility as the investigator to develop a guide for the interview. The purpose of this guide was to ensure the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each participant (Patton). The advantage of this approach was that it allowed for flexibility. It gave me the opportunity to probe to get a deeper meaning or a new understanding related to the phenomenon of emotional intelligence. This idea is supported by Merriam (1998) in the following statement. "This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and the new ideas on the topic" (p. 74). This type of interview usually takes place in a semi-structured interview process (Merriam). In the semi-structured interview the questions are flexibly worded (Merriam). The interview questions used to guide the interviews is included in Appendix B.

***Focus groups.*** The second method utilized to gather additional data about the phenomenon was focus groups. "Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299). The data are collected through a focused group discussion (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

The group setting and group interaction is critical in extracting data about a specific experience or construct. This data collection method creates a convenient way for the researcher to gather multiple perspectives simultaneously.

According to Krueger and Casey (2009), there are several reasons a researcher would use focus group interviews. Two reasons germane to this study are:

1. You are looking for a range of ideas or feelings that people have about something.
2. You want ideas to emerge from the group. A group possesses the capacity to become more than the sum of its parts, to exhibit a synergy that individuals alone don't possess. (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 19)

In this study, a range of perspectives about the leader's emotional intelligence was beneficial in determining its relevance to the teams' effectiveness. In addition, the idea of a focus group being greater than sum of its parts is the same rationale for leaders utilizing teams to accomplish organizational goals. That is the major premise of the entire study. This interview technique provided rich and illuminating data about the construct.

“The focus group presents a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others – just as they are in real life” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 7). The focus group setting is one that mirrored many of the teams' routine interactions. This familiar experience allowed for a comfortable and relaxed stance from the participants. A comfortable, permissive, and non-threatening environment is key to a successful focus group (Krueger & Casey).

Participants of focus groups have a common characteristic that connects them. In this study, the common characteristic was membership on a specific team. As mentioned earlier, the focus group was made up members of a team supervised by each of the identified leaders

in the study. Kitzinger (1995) refers to this type of focus group as a naturally occurring group. He specifically states people that work together can participate in focus groups.

Using pre-existing groups like the teams in this study affords opportunities for colleagues to relate each other's comments to incidents in their shared experiences (Kitzinger, 1995). This type of participant interaction allows data to be brought to the surface through the telling of stories. Storytelling as a data collecting method is the essence of narrative inquiry, which is the theoretical tradition informing this phenomenological case study.

This type of interaction between the participants is very important and was prompted by the questions guiding the discussion. I used a well sequenced question route or interview guide in the focus group interviews (see Appendix C). The quality of the questions dictated the quality of the information gleaned from the interview. Good questions are imperative to getting good data (Merriam, 1998). This means as the researcher I had to identify and practice procedures that produced effective questions, such as conducting pilot interviews. Interviews have the potential to be a powerful data collection technique as long as the researcher uses the technique appropriately. "The quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (Patton, 2002, p. 341).

***Documents.*** The third form of data in this research was gathered by the analysis of documents. Documents were a rich source of information to provide insight about the phenomenon of study. Patton (2002) believes learning to use, study, and understand documents is a part of the repertoire of skills needed for qualitative inquiry.

The term documents can refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material (Merriam, 1998). Some specific examples of documents used in qualitative research are

novels, newspapers, love songs, diaries, and psychiatric interviews (Merriam). Patton (2002) and Merriam suggest the term documents in qualitative inquiry could include artifacts such as photographs, tools, furnishings, and other sentimental objects.

Reflection logs were the documentary data sources analyzed in this research. The educational leaders and the focus group participants in the study were given a transcript of their interviews. Then they were asked to capture their reflections in writing related to their interview. Reflection logs are what Merriam (1998) calls researcher-generated documents. They are documents prepared by the participants for the researcher after the research has begun (Merriam, 1998). The logs gave the participants an opportunity to add to and expand on their transcribed interviews. In addition, participants were asked to respond to a writing prompt that allowed them to describe an experience with their leader or with their team in greater detail (see Appendices D and E). Excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from the written responses were a rich source of qualitative data.

There are several other advantages of using documents as a data source. This source of information is usually free and easily accessible. Typically, documents are not susceptible to the threat of reactivity. The analysis of documents is unobtrusive. “One of the greatest advantages in using documentary material is its stability. Unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied” (Merriam, 1998, p. 126).

Documentary data was a valuable source of information and critical to the entire project. Using this form of data in the research provided a means of triangulating the data, which helped address reliability and validity issues. Analyzing reliable and valid data

allowed me to extract meaningful information about the relationship between emotional intelligence leadership and team effectiveness.

### **Data Analysis**

Patton (2002) reports there is no absolute distinction in the ending of the data collection phase and the beginning of the data analysis phase in naturalistic inquiry. He suggests the researcher begins to make sense of the data while still in the field. This idea is supported by Merriam (1998) in the following statement, “Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research” (p. 151). This ambiguous transition ultimately moves the researcher to an intense phase where he or she has to effectively and efficiently organize and analyze the collected data. This is a critical point in the research. Miles and Huberman (1994) postulate the strength of qualitative research rest “centrally on the competence with which their analysis is carried out” (p. 10). This phase of the research involves making sense of the text and image data, which tends to be a massive amount in qualitative inquiry. Not only is the analyst responsible for determining how the data will be analyzed, he or she must report the process. “However analysis is done, analysts have an obligation to monitor and report their own analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible” (Patton, p. 434).

Even though no specific recipe or exact formula exists for transforming data into findings, there are some common characteristics worth considering as guides (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). This portion of the research tends to be unique to each analyst and ultimately determined by him or her. I used the generic steps defined by Creswell to guide this portion of the research. According to Creswell, those steps are:

Step 1 Organize and prepare the data for analysis.

Step 2 Read through all the data. A first general step is to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning.

Step 3 Begin detailed analysis with a coding process. Coding is the process of organizing the material into “chunks” before bringing meaning to those “chunks” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171).

Step 4 Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis.

Step 5 Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative.

Step 6 A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data. (Creswell, 2003, pp. 193-194)

Phenomenology, heuristic, and narrative inquiry were the theoretic traditions I used throughout the research. These theoretical traditions had specific attributes when it came to the data analysis phase of the study. “Phenomenological research uses analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of an ‘essence’ description (Moustakas, 1994)” (Creswell, 2003, p.191). Phenomenological analysis incorporates “several specific techniques – such as epoche, bracketing, imaginative variation, first- and second-order knowledge, and so on – are used to analyze experience” (Merriam, 1998, p. 158). There are six phases in heuristic inquiry: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). According to Moustakas (1990), organizing and analyzing the heuristic data take place during the immersion and incubation phases. Core themes and patterns emerge during these phases. Merriam (1998) postulates the core of narrative analysis is the ways people experience the world. “Narrative research employs restorying the participants’ stories using structural devices such as plot, setting, activities, climax, and denouement (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)” (Creswell, 2003,

p. 191). Blending these analytical techniques in a creative and appropriate way was my task as I attempted to make meaning of the data and explore the relationship of emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness.

### **Limitations**

All research has its limits and is susceptible to validity and reliability threats. Those limitations and threats are inherent in variables ranging from data collection techniques to personal biases. It is the responsibility of the researcher to be aware of the limitations and threats and explicitly address them with appropriate protocols (Maxwell, 2005). In the remaining portion of this section, I identify the known limitations and validity and reliability threats and share how I addressed them throughout the research process.

Creswell (2003) lists a few limitations of interviews. An interview “provides ‘indirect’ information filtered through the views of interviewees; provides information in designated “place” rather than the natural field setting; researcher’s presence may bias responses; people are not equally articulate and perceptive” (p. 186).

Careful consideration of these issues was accounted for in well-developed interview questions and comfortable interview settings. I interviewed the participants in a place they were familiar with so the conversation occurred in a comfortable setting. Krueger and Casey (2009) state a well-sequenced question route helps establish comfort for the participants. The question route included introductory questions to help establish a comfortable atmosphere. In addition, the questions should be clear, use words the participants understand, and allow natural to conversation to flow. It was my intention to solicit feedback on my composed questions from experienced qualitative researchers in order to test how understandable they were and to see how they evoked conversation. This practice was equivalent to field testing



the questions. Field testing (also known as pretesting or pilot testing) questions for the survey, questionnaire or interview is the practice of gathering data on the collection instrument prior to beginning of the formal research study (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998).

The reflection logs of the participants had a dual purpose. It was a means to collect data, and it also provided participants an opportunity to review and verify their interview responses. This respondent validation occurred by providing the participants transcripts of their interviews. At that point they were allowed to add or revise to their responses. This clarifying activity ensured the meaning of their responses was accurately recorded. According to Moustakas (1990), validity in qualitative methodology comes from vivid and accurate accounts of the experiences and phenomena under investigation.

There are some limitations when using documents as a form of data in a research project. Documents may not be in a useful form. They may not be authentic. They may not fit the definition of the concept under scrutiny (Merriam, 1998). These examples were not an issue in this study because I used research-generated documents which were specifically designed to investigate emotional intelligence. This approach makes some the inherent limitations of document analysis less of a concern (Merriam, 1998).

Although most typical limitations of document analysis did not apply to this study, one challenge was the participants' ability to accurately convey their thoughts in writing. I addressed this potential challenge, by giving the participants an opportunity to review their transcribed written comments. This allowed them to confirm the meaning they intended to express was accurately captured.

The final known limitation is related to the personal biases of the participants and the data collection techniques. In order for participants in the study to adequately respond to the

writing prompts and interview questions about emotional intelligence, they had to have some degree of knowledge about the phenomenon. Without some understanding, personal bias or background knowledge may have skewed the data gleaned from the data sources. This potential limitation was addressed in the participant preparation phase of the project. The definition used in this study was communicated to participants. An understanding of the definition allowed them to respond from an informed position.

In addition to planning for the limitations associated with the study, the researcher must account for validity and reliability within the study. According to Merriam (1998), internal validity is “the extent to which the research findings are congruent with reality” (p. 218). A validity threat is “a way you might be wrong” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 106). Merriam (1998) suggests six strategies to enhance internal validity:

triangulation, which is “using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm emerging findings”...checking interpretations with individuals interviewed or observed, staying on site over a period of time, asking peers to comment on emerging findings, involving participants in all phases of the research, and clarifying researcher biases and assumptions. (pp. 204-218)

This study triangulated the data using multiple data sources to address validity threats.

According to Merriam (1998),

Reliability is the extent to which there is consistency in the findings. It is addressed by the investigator explaining the assumptions and the theory underlying the study, by triangulating data, and by leaving an audit trail, that is, by describing in detail how the study was conducted and how the findings were derived from the data. (p. 218)

Like validity, reliability was addressed by triangulating the data. Also, I employed the strategy suggested by Merriam. I detailed how the research was conducted and how the conclusions were drawn. To ensure the process was thoroughly detailed, I used an expert qualitative researcher to consult and guide me in documenting the process.

Deepening the body of knowledge about the construct of emotional intelligence was the intention of the research. Effective implementation of qualitative research practices described above illuminated useful information about emotional intelligence and its impact on the effectiveness of teams. This knowledge was helpful to leaders because a better understanding of their practice increased the likelihood that they would successfully achieve their goals.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to explore the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the effectiveness of teams they supervise. This research is important for several reasons. The demands of modern schooling evoke intense emotions, and the complexity of the work often calls for a collaborative team approach (Moore, 2009; Yost & Tucker, 2000). In this era of accountability, the public expects educational leaders to manage strong emotions and leverage teams to be successful at complex work so students can perform at high levels. Leaders with a better understanding of the dynamics between emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness have the potential to increase the capacity of critical educational stakeholders, allowing them to perform better and support school improvement (Beatty, 2000). Intentional growth in emotional intelligence will support leaders in this endeavor.

#### **Research Questions**

According to Maxwell (2005), research questions “are at the heart of your research design” (p. 65). They drive all components of the investigation. This research study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree are school and district leaders aware of their own emotional intelligence?
2. How do school and district leaders in an urban school system use emotional intelligence to promote team effectiveness?

3. What are team members' perceptions of the leader's emotional intelligence as it relates to the team's effectiveness?

### **Qualitative Research Traditions and Unit of Analysis**

The foundational theoretical research tradition of this investigation was phenomenology. It was informed through heuristic and narrative inquiry methods. Patton (2002) states that phenomenological research aims at a description “of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience” (p. 107). Heuristic research is a type of phenomenological inquiry. It “brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). The researcher's intimate relationship with the unit of the analysis is a defining characteristic of heuristic inquiry. This characteristic emphasizes connectedness and relationship with the phenomenon.

According to Webster and Mertova (2007), “narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience. It provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (p. 1). Participants in this study were provided opportunities to tell stories that illustrated examples of emotional intelligence and its impact on their team's effectiveness. The stories allowed analysis of the phenomenon in context and close to real life. Providing participants the vehicle of personal stories to describe experiences is ideal for illuminating the complexities and subtleties in those human experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Emotional intelligence is a complex phenomenon often experienced in a subtle way. This phenomenological case study was informed through heuristic and narrative inquiry aimed at delving deep into those complex and subtle variables.

Patton (2002) describes the unit of analysis as the focus of the study. The unit of analysis is the phenomenon the researcher explains at the end of the study. Emotional intelligence was the unit of analysis of this research. The context in which the unit of analysis was analyzed included leadership and team effectiveness. In order to analyze emotional intelligence in this context, four information rich cases were identified for the study.

Miles and Huberman's (1994) definition of case was utilized for this study. A case is a "phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 25). Emotional intelligence was the phenomenon, and the leader was the bounded context. A case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003 p. 13). That definition most accurately captures the analysis process of this study. The unit of analysis was emotional intelligence, and the bounded context was leadership or leaders.

### **Sampling Procedures**

The leaders in this study were defined as individuals in the school district with formally assigned supervision and/or facilitation responsibilities for teams or groups. Eligible leaders for the study were identified through two forms of purposeful sampling: criterion and chain sampling. "Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Criterion-based sampling calls for the researcher to list elements essential to the study and then find units that have those attributes (Merriam, 1998). The criteria for this study were:

- The identified leaders could not be under the line of authority of the researcher.

- The leaders must consistently meet with their teams at regularly scheduled meeting times.
- The leaders must have at least one year of experience in their current assignments.

According to Patton (2002), chain sampling is a process in which well-situated people are asked to identify individuals who have substantive knowledge about a specific subject relevant to the research, and their level of knowledge distinguishes them from their colleagues or peers (Patton, 2002). The chain sampling in this study was conducted by asking the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools, Chief of Human Resources (CHR), and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for names of leaders that met the specified criteria. The people in these positions were well suited to identify leaders perceived to have high levels of emotional intelligence and high functioning teams.

The CFO and the CHR were unable to identify leaders that met all the criteria. The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools provided a viable list of leaders. It was not the initial intent of the researcher to study only elementary school principals. Any educational leader who met the criteria was eligible to participate. But because the list of eligible cases came from the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools, all the leader participants recommended were elementary school principals.

The recruitment process began with a presentation about the study to the eligible participants. The presentation explained the purpose of the study, the sampling process, the data collection techniques, and rights of the participants. At the end of the presentation, consent forms were left with the eligible participants. All the participants returned the informed consent forms prior to the data collection phase of the study.

The leaders who participated in the study were four elementary school principals. The original plan for the study was to have three cases, but as the data were collected, there was a challenge securing all the information from Leader One and Team One. So a fourth principal and team were identified. While in the process of collecting the data from Leader Four and Team Four, all the data from Leader One and Team One were returned. At that point, I decided to use the data from all the leaders and teams rather than exclude a team in order to adhere to the original plan. A total of four cases were analyzed in the study. Data were collected from four leaders and a team that each of those leaders supervised, for a total of four different teams. Table 8 illustrates the total number of participants in the study, the relationship between leaders and their teams, and the specific positions of the team members that were in the study.

### **Case Profiles**

#### **Case 1: Leader One and Team One**

Leader One was a female Caucasian elementary school principal who had been in her current assignment for four years. She had a total of six years experience as a principal, including work at the middle school level and in another school district. The participating team supervised by Leader One was the school's leadership team, which consisted of the principal, assistant principal, and two teacher leaders. Teacher leaders in this particular school district function as coaches for classroom teachers. Team One had been intact for three years.



Table 8

*Participant Structure of the Study*

Case	Leader	Team Title	Team Members
One	One	Leadership Team	Assistant Principal Teacher Leader Teacher Leader
Two	Two	Instructional Leadership Team	Intern Principal Teacher Leader
Three	Three	Vision Team	Teacher Leader Kindergarten Teacher 1st Grade Teacher 3rd Grade Teacher ESL Teacher
Four	Four	Instructional Team	Assistant Principal Teacher Leader Instructional Coach Reading Intervention Teacher 1st Grade Teacher 4th Grade Teacher

**Case 2: Leader Two and Team Two**

Leader Two was a female Caucasian elementary school principal. She had been in her current assignment for 17 years. She had been an administrator for a total of 19 years. All of her administrative experience was at the elementary level at the same school. The identified team supervised by Leader Two was the school’s leadership team. The school’s leadership team was made up of the principal, an administrative intern, and the building teacher leader. Leader Two’s team had been in place for one school year.

### **Case 3: Leader Three and Team Three**

Leader Three was a Caucasian male elementary school principal. He was completing his second year as the principal in the building. He had a total of five years of experience as an administrator. His previous administrative experience was at the high school level as an assistant principal in another school district. The team connected to Leader Three was the school's Vision Team, which was made up of representatives from every grade level in the kindergarten through fifth grade school for a total of six teachers: Special Education, English as a Second Language, Specialized Teachers (Art, Music, P.E.) representative, a classified staff representative, two teacher leaders, the assistant principal, and the principal. There were a total of 14 people in Leader Three's Vision Team, which had been in place for one year.

### **Case 4: Leader Four and Team Four**

Leader Four was an African American female elementary school principal. She was completing her second year as the principal in her school. Prior to being the principal in that school, she was a central office administrator for one year. Before she came to her current district, she was a principal of an alternative school for nine years. Team Four was Leader Four's Instructional Leadership Team, which was comprised of two primary teacher representatives, two intermediate teacher representatives, two teacher leaders, an assistant principal, and the principal. There were eight people on their team, and they had been together for one school year.

These four cases were the sources from which all the data for the study were collected.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Data for the study were collected over 45 days. Data were gathered from three distinct sources: individual interviews, focus group discussions, and writing prompt responses. Individual interviews were conducted with each leader. Focus group discussions were conducted with each team. Responses to writing prompts were collected from individual team members and each leader.

The individual leader interviews were scheduled at the convenience of each principal. The principal interviews took place in their buildings in late spring and early summer of 2013. The interviews ranged from approximately 15 to 45 minutes long. Every principal was supportive of the research and seemed genuinely interested in the topic. Their support and interest facilitated rapport-building. In addition to their interest and supportive natures, I believe my elementary principal background helped to build rapport. My understanding of their pressing responsibilities and goals was a good starting place for our conversations, and it helped establish credibility with leaders. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The principals received a copy of the transcribed interview and were asked to verify accuracy in regard to intended meaning. This was specifically done to increase validity.

One team supervised by each of the principals was interviewed in a focus group structure. Three of the four focus group interviews with the team members took place on the same day as the one with their leader. Data were collected from a total of four teams using focus group discussion interview techniques. Not every member on each team participated in the focus group. One specific reason stated by a few team members was they had a schedule conflict with the interview time. The size of the focus groups ranged from as small as two members to as large as seven.

The interviews with a larger number of people made the rapport-building process more time consuming than it was in the individual interviews. I purposefully made an effort to connect with each team member and provide space at the beginning of the interviews for each person to ask me questions and gain a clear understanding of the study. I found my elementary background to be especially important in helping to establish a connection with each team. At the beginning of each focus group interview, I spent several minutes discussing my background, my connections to their schools, and why emotional intelligence was a topic of interest to me.

The focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed. Each member was emailed a transcribed copy of the interview and given an opportunity to provide additional feedback. They also could amend their own comments if they felt they did not accurately capture their thinking. This was done to increase validity.

In order to prepare the focus group participants for the interview, I felt it necessary to share the definition of emotional intelligence and team effectiveness. This gave the participants a context from which to engage in the discussion and respond to the questions. I used a general interview guide to provide some structure to the discussion. “The general interview guide approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins” (Patton, 2002, p. 342). The interview was conducted through a semi-structured approach. In a semi-structured interview, the questions are flexibly worded (Merriam, 1998). Although the interview protocol was semi-structured, the interview session was a very open and organic process. Since narratology was one of the theoretical traditions used in this study, the interview and writing prompts were structured in a way to provide the participants an opportunity to tell stories.

At the end of the individual interviews and the focus group interviews, hard copies of the writing prompts were left with the participants. In addition to the hard copies, each participant was emailed a digital copy of the writing prompts. They were asked to return their responses to me in a week. They had the option to send me a hard copy or email me a digital copy. All the participants who chose to respond emailed me their responses. Of the 20 total participants in the four cases, 15 returned the writing prompts. Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12 show the writing prompt return rate for all the cases.

Table 9

*Case One Writing Prompt Response*

Participant	Returned Writing Prompt Response	Did Not Return Writing Prompt Response
Leader One	X	
Assistant Principal	X	
Teacher Leader	X	
Teacher Leader	X	

Table 10

*Case Two Writing Prompt Response*

Participant	Returned Writing Prompt Response	Did Not Return Writing Prompt Response
Leader Two	X	
Intern Principal	X	
Teacher Leader		X

Table 11

*Case Three Writing Prompt Response*

Participant	Returned Writing Prompt Response	Did Not Return Writing Prompt Response
Leader Three	X	
Teacher Leader	X	
Kindergarten Teacher		X
1st Grade Teacher		X
3rd Grade Teacher		X
ESL Teacher	X	

Table 12

*Case Four Writing Prompt Response*

Participant	Returned Writing Prompt Response	Did Not Return Writing Prompt Response
Leader One	X	
Assistant Principal	X	
Teacher Leader	X	
Instructional Coach	X	
Reading Intervention	X	
1st Grade Teacher		X
4th Grade Teacher	X	

The five participants who did not return the writing prompts were members of three different teams. Every leader in the study returned their writing prompt and Case One had a 100% return rate from the team members.

**Data Analysis Process**

A cross-case analysis format was used to extract meaning from the data. According to Patton (2002), a cross-case analysis is one in which the researcher aggregates the data from multiple individual cases. Researchers choose this approach when it can increase the understanding and deepen an explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I chose a cross-case analysis approach because it centers the data analysis discussion on the phenomenon and not on the individual cases. Each case was selected based upon a supposition that it was highly likely to illuminate the unit of analysis. The

exploration of the unit of analysis across each case was common. Excluding uniqueness was not the intention, but highlighting it was not the primary goal or necessary to analyze the unit of analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) support this kind of approach:

Doing a cross-case analysis with a core list of variables found to have significance across several cases is a powerful way to move from case-specific explanations to findings that bridge to the discovery or reinforcement of constructs. At the same time, we can identify and account for local particularities. We are going from local causality to clusters or “families” of cases sharing important attributes. (p. 228)

In addition, I felt this approach was beneficial because of some data collection challenges encountered in some individual cases. Of the four cases in study, only the first case, Leader One and Team One, returned all of the data. In the other three cases, at least one member of the team did not return the writing prompt. Analyzing all the cases with a cross-case analysis approach minimized the impact of those missing pieces of data.

After all the data were collected, the analysis process followed the phases of heuristic inquiry as described in Chapter 3. It was during the immersion phase when the data began to infiltrate all parts of my life. It felt like I thought about it all the time. In the immersion phase, I became engrossed in the information. I repeatedly read the transcripts and writing prompts. I listened to the audio recording when I did house chores, as I worked out, and when I drove to work. I became very familiar with the information. For me, it was as Moustakas (1990) describes: “the immersion process enables the researcher to come to be on intimate terms with the question – to live it and grow in knowledge and understanding of it” (p. 28).

After the immersion and incubation phase, my tacit knowledge about the phenomenon, emotional intelligence, began to crystallize in a way that allowed me start the coding process. The data collected from the individual interviews, the focus group



interviews, and the writing prompts were coded, categorized, and analyzed for themes.

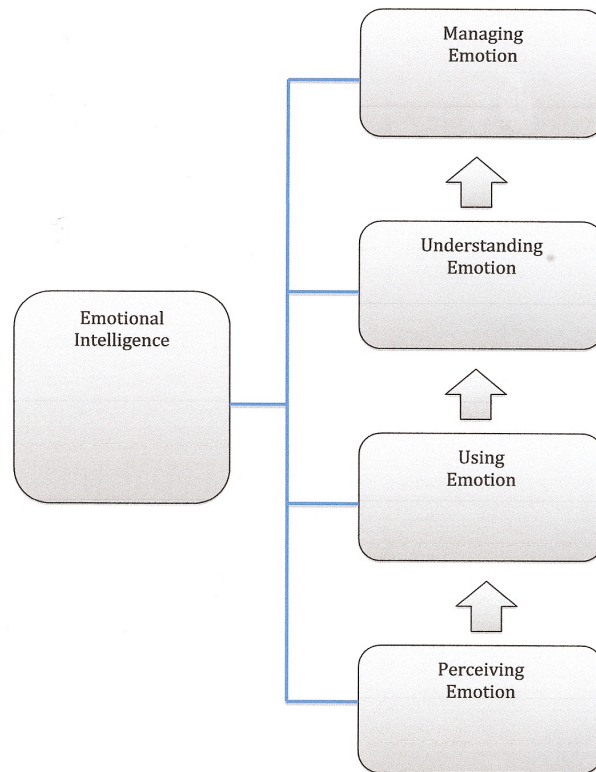
According to Miles and Huberman (1994):

Coding is analysis...Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to “chunks” of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one (e.g., a metaphor). (p. 56)

In an effort to organize the information gleaned from the codes, I utilized the notion of sensitizing concepts. “Sensitizing concepts refer to categories that the analyst brings to the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 456). In qualitative research, analysts often use sensitizing concepts to orient fieldwork (Patton, 2002). It should be noted that although this approach was utilized, I made every effort to honor the inductive nature of qualitative inquiry. Patton (2002) advances this notion, which requires the analyst to use “concepts to help make sense of and present the data, but not to the point of straining or forcing the analysis” (p. 457). My philosophy in using this approach is captured in the following quotation from Patton (2002):

The notion of “sensitizing concepts” reminds us that observers do not enter the field with a completely blank slate. While the inductive nature of qualitative inquiry emphasizes the importance of being open to whatever one can learn, some way of organizing the complexity of the experience is virtually a prerequisite for perception itself. (p. 279)

The initial concepts that influenced the coding and organization of the data came from Salovey and Mayer’s (2004) four-branch model of emotional intelligence. Figure 5 is an illustration of their model.

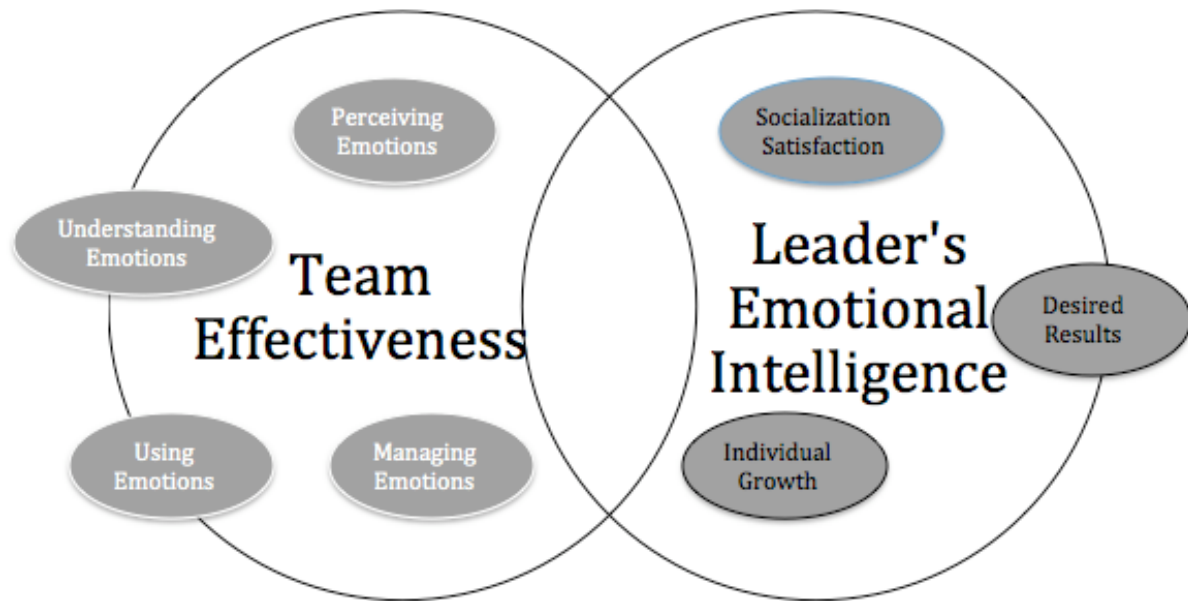


*Figure 5.* Salovey and Mayer’s 4-Branch Model

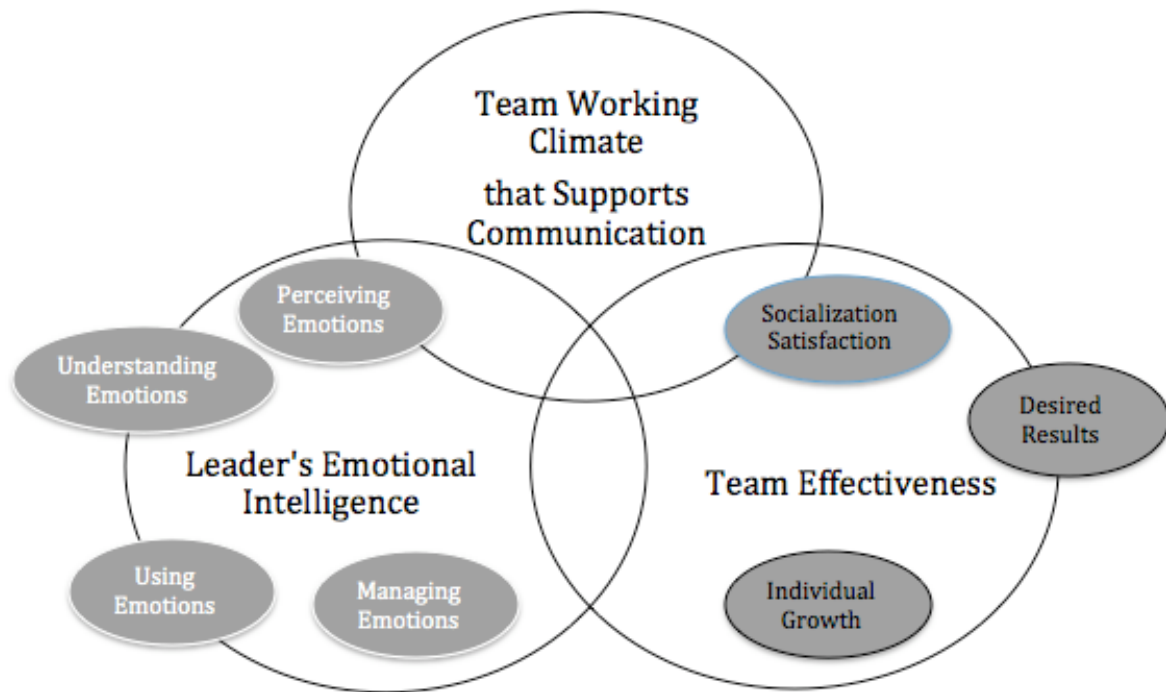
In addition, to the four-branch model of emotional intelligence Hackman’s (2002) three dimensions of team effectiveness were used as guidance for the coding and organization of the data. Figure 6 is a visual representation of the relationship between Salovey and Mayer’s four-branch model of emotional intelligence and Hackman’s dimensions of team effectiveness. It was the initial sensitizing concept graphic I used to guide the coding process.

The more I interacted with the data, the more it became evident that my first thoughts about the sensitizing concepts would have to be adjusted. The first sensitizing concept category was the branches that define emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 2004). The sensitizing concept category derived from the three dimensions of team effectiveness

(Hackman 2002). The new sensitizing category that surfaced and became necessary in order to code the data accurately was Team Working Climate, which was the third category used to make sense of the data. This evolution was an example of the inductive nature of qualitative research. Figure 7 illustrates the evolution and the revised sensitizing concept graphic used to guide the coding.



*Figure 6.* The emotional intelligence and team effectiveness sensitizing concept graphic used for the coding process.



*Figure 7.* The emotional intelligence, team climate, and team effectiveness sensitizing concept graphic used for the coding process.

To help manage the large amounts of data from the audio recordings, the transcribed individual interviews, the focus group interviews, and the 15 returned writing prompts, a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, HyperRESEARCH, was used in this study. HyperRESEARCH allowed me to efficiently code text, search for specific codes, and identify patterns in the data. Once patterns were identified using the QDA software, themes began to emerge. Being able to digitally manage the information with the QDA software increased the efficiency and clarity of the data analysis process.

## **Findings**

In this section the findings from the individual interviews, focus group discussions, and the written responses are reported. The analysis of all these data revealed the participants perceived a relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence and a team's effectiveness. The study participants in Cases One, Two, Three, and Four described how they thought the emotionally intelligent behavior of the team leader shaped the working climate of the team, which fostered better communication. This working climate and quality communication was perceived to support the team's effectiveness. The findings presented in the subsequent paragraphs are organized in three sequential categories, which can be thought of as interrelated themes that illustrate the relationship between emotional intelligence and team effectiveness. Those themes include (a) intentional emotionally intelligent leader behaviors, (b) team working climate that promotes quality communication initiated by the leader, and (c) perceptions of team effectiveness. Each theme is presented, explained, and illuminated through examples. Finally, the connections between the themes and the research questions are reported. A response is provided to those questions based on the analysis of the data.

### **Theme One: Intentional Emotionally Intelligent Leader Behaviors**

The parameters of the first theme were defined by the repeated comparable behaviors intentionally exhibited by the leaders in the study. These behaviors were categorized by using Salovey and Mayer's (2004) sequential four-branch model of emotional intelligence. The four branches and their sequence are perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, using emotions, and managing emotions. As described in Chapter 2, the four branches of the model form a hierarchy of skills and abilities. The branches—emotional perception at the

bottom and managing emotion at the top—“represent the degree to which the ability is integrated within the rest of an individuals’ major psychological subsystem” (Mayer et al., 2004, p. 198). Within the context of this research study, the leadership behaviors could be identified in the perceiving emotions branch, understanding branch, and the managing emotions branch.

Salovey and Mayer (2004) define the perceiving emotions branch as one’s ability to identify and appraise emotions in people, physical states, feelings, thoughts, artwork, and language. In the interview with Leader One, she spoke to the importance of perceiving emotions. She shared:

...emotions can be a thermometer or they can be a thermostat. And so I think that a good leader, an effective leader has to understand that emotions fluctuate. You have to be in tune to it, you have to be able to read people. So that you can triage people.

Leader One went on to share a story that illustrated how she perceived some emotional turmoil within one of team members from a very subtle cue. “I noticed one team member walked away, and there was just a flick in their eye as they walked away, immediately my radar went off” (Leader One).

Another example of perceiving emotions was provided in Leader Two’s writing response. She described a time when she recognized stress among members of her team: “Neither teacher leader routinely complained about the other person, but I could sense the tension from time to time, usually noting non-verbal behaviors such as someone getting very quiet or appearing to pull away from the work” (Leader Two).

In the following example a member of Team One shared what she thought about her leader’s ability to perceive emotions:

When tasks evoke some sort of emotions from team members, she normally assesses the emotions accurately. I think that she is usually accurate because she takes into consideration the member's character, their thoughts or way of thinking as well as that person's expectations and desires to carry out the goals for the success of students and to do their job. Also, she analyzes the moment. As she reads the body language and thinks of the current status of the person's personal life, she is able to discuss your emotions as well as the task at hand. Overall, she identifies the emotion from your responses or actions. (Member A of Team One)

The next two branches in the Salovey and Mayer's (2004) model include understanding emotions and using emotions. The using emotions branch is defined by one's ability to use emotion to prioritize thought in productive ways. In this branch, emotions are used as aids to support judgment and memory. The understanding emotions branch involves behavior that demonstrates an ability to label complex emotions and simultaneous feelings. It also is the ability to understand relationships associated with shifts in emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 2004).

The study did not reveal a significant amount of information connected to these two branches. The data collection methods identified only one example related to the understanding emotions branch. The example came from Leader Two as she shared her definition of emotional intelligence, which included a description about behaviors that fell within the understanding emotions branch:

To me, emotional intelligence is being aware of how what you're doing affects or relates to other people and what they are saying and doing affects and relates to other people. And how you respond. And so you can escalate a situation or de-escalate a situation. And it may not be right, may not be wrong. My personal style is, the more upset a person is, whether it's a student, adult, parent, teacher, whoever—the more upset they are, the more calm I have to be. (Leader Two)

According to Salovey and Mayer (2004), examples of leaders using emotions would involve behaviors illustrating emotions being used to support mental abilities such as memory and judgment. The leaders would also prioritize thought based on emotions. No

explicit examples of these behaviors could be harvested from the individual leader interviews, focus group discussions, or the writing prompt responses. Although specific examples from the collected data were not evident, it cannot be concluded that leaders' behaviors associated with these two branches were not exhibited. The data revealed leaders practiced behaviors in the managing emotions branch. The hierarchical nature of the Salovey and Mayer (2004) emotional intelligent model would suggest a high potential of the existence of behaviors in the using emotions and understanding emotions branches. Salovey and Mayer (2004) stated emotionally intelligent behaviors builds from one branch to the next. In order for the leaders to get to the managing emotions branch of emotional intelligence, they would have had to use and understand emotions as defined by Salovey and Mayer (2004).

The last branch of a person's emotional intelligence is the managing emotions branch. According to Salovey and Mayer (2004), it is the most complex. Before a person gets to the managing emotion phase, they have matriculated through the other three phases. Managing emotions is one's ability to regulate emotions in oneself and in others to promote intellectual and emotional growth (Salovey & Mayer, 2004). The data in the managing emotions branch were most easily identifiable in the study. The participants offered additional examples that illustrated this behavior. Following are responses that illuminate managing emotions behavior:

[Leader One] read my frustration level, and asked several clarifying questions to better understand my point of view. These were asked in front of the whole team so each member became aware of my position. This defused any frustration or disagreement. I was heard, as were the others on the team. (Team One Member B)

The above excerpt of a comment made by a member of Team One illustrates



how Leader One was able to analyze the situation. Member B of Team One perceived that Leader One accurately identified the frustration that was felt. Leader One strategically asking question of Member B made the whole team aware of an important perspective. Leader One asking the questions facilitated better communication, which helped defuse the tension. This example illustrates how the leader managed emotions connected to the frustration felt by Member B of Team One.

But you never see [Leader Two] get heated. It's like she's that calm, listening, really open force guiding the conversation. But never really participating in the conversation. Just really seeking to see what everybody else is thinking. And so even if, like I said, I mentioned this earlier your idea is not selected, you still feel heard. And that helps you with your own emotions. (Team Two Member B)

Member B of Team Two uses the term *guiding force* to describe how Leader Two facilitates communication and shapes conversation. Member B felt that behavior coupled with the consistent calm demeanor helped her with her emotions she felt while working with the team. Member B felt heard and respected even when things did not go exactly as she expected. Leader Two's behavior was perceived to manage the emotions of the team members.

I think you deal with emotions on a daily basis. And I think part of, part of my role is to be, is to model the emotion when situations arise that I'd like to see from my colleagues and my teachers and staff. (Leader Three)

Leader Three's comment shows how his approach of managing emotions involves modeling the appropriate or desired emotion. Leader Three felt this technique was effective in shaping behavior that supported the team's work.

I also have to model it. I have to model that. And it used to be difficult for me...to be quite candid with you. But it, when you do it over and over again, it begins to become a part of who you are. Modeling what you want to see. From your people on your leadership team and on your instructional team. (Leader Four)

Leader Four's discussion highlighted a method comparable to Leader Three's approach. Leader Four modeled what she needed from her team members. Modeling was the way she managed the emotions of her team members. She concluded the team benefited from her managing the emotions through modeling.

**Theme Two: Team Working Climate that Supports Quality Communication Initiated by the Leader**

The second theme identified in the study was team working climate that supports quality communication enabled by the leader. This climate was fostered by the emotionally intelligent behaviors of the leaders. Descriptors of this climate that were identified across multiple cases were: emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect. The participants perceived consistent emotionally intelligent behavior from the leader helped establish an ideal working climate for the team. This suggest a relationship between first theme (a) intentional emotional intelligent leader behaviors to the second theme (b) team working climate that supports quality communication enabled by the leader. Following are some comments from participants that illustrate the second theme and its connection to the first theme.

Team Two Member B described how her leader creates an emotional stable environment.

I think in order for an effective staff to work together, they rely on their leaders to be calm and rational and open and willing to listen to a variety of perspectives. I don't think there's, you know, the climate can fall apart quickly if they feel like someone's going to snap at them, or, you know, walk away, or, you know, not be open to listening to a different perspective. And, you know, kids really need that calm emotional presence, especially when they're coming in, you know, I mean, they come in with a variety of baggage from home that morning, whatever. And, you know, everyone on the staff, I think it's really important to provide that grounded emotional response. But even more so, I think from the leader's perspective. That we have to be ready to calm people down, and okay, I hear—and listen. And be, you know, open

to hearing their perspective and understanding their perspective. But then helping them to cope with it. (Team Two Member B)

This comment emphasizes the importance of calm, consistent behavior from the leader, which supports the climate. This team member specifically identified the leader behavior of listening and reacting calmly. Those behaviors are examples of the leader self-regulating her emotions. When the leader does that, it makes team members comfortable. They can rely on the leader to shape the climate with their calm emotional presence. This team member's comment suggests the leader has the biggest influence on a stable team climate. The stable climate fosters communication demonstrated by team members being able to speak and being heard.

Team One Member B talked about how her leader has promoted a sense of trust among team members on their team.

I enjoy working with my team. We are constantly learning from one another. We freely share articles, books, and our ideas with each other. There is a strong sense of trust. I'm not afraid that anyone on my team will think less of me if I make a mistake. Therefore, I feel quite satisfied with my professional and personal growth. [Leader One] is a very democratic leader, and a role model for our team. (Team One Member B)

Trust surfaced as an important component of the team climate. Trust facilitated quality interaction between team members. The statement by Member B of Team One described how this was evident in the group because team members could freely share information. This team member felt this was made possible because the leader modeled it. In addition, the comment expresses that not afraid was important for quality communication. Team members not being afraid connects to safety felt within the team. It was another component important to team climate fostering quality communication.

Team Three Member A discussed how their leader's behavior helps create a safe environment and allows for honest conversations among team members.

[Leader Three] believes in building teams and leadership. The vision team has been one way that we have connected. I know at any time I can easily approach those vision team members to have a candid conversation about an issue. This was not always the case. (Team Three Member A)

This second example from Team Three emphasizes the team's safe team working climate.

And I think, what I love about our Vision Team is that we can be free and clear to be emotional and be passionate within our meeting and understand that when we leave, you know, we always revisit, here's our key points that we need to take back to our teams or our key, and key decisions we have to make. And as we're making those key decisions, I feel like the people on that Vision Team understand that, understand each other's emotions and where they're coming from. And they can take that feedback and are not gonna, not gonna, they're gonna hear each other, so they're not going to let their emotion get in the way of hearing what their colleague has to say. And most typically we come to a consensus. (Leader Three)

The comment by Member A of Team Three expresses that there is a comfort when approaching team members for candid conversations. That illustrates that the climate is safe enough initiate the discussion, a discussion actually happens about issues, and emotions are regulated to a degree that people feel safe. That specific team member felt that was a product of Leader Three's beliefs about teams and leadership. Again, this behavior and example illustrate a perception of effective communication. Leader Three's statement highlights that their team climate allows for emotion and passion, which is managed to such a degree that it does not interfere with the team members' communication or understanding of each other's position.

Respect was another team attribute identified in the cases as critical to the team's climate. Team One talked about respect being a quality they established as a team. Team

One Member C talked about respect: “there’s some things, you know, that we’ve developed as a group. One is just straightforward respect. And when we disagree, it’s not about the individual, it’s about what we’re working on.” This example shows how a respectful team climate supports effective communication among team members. Team One felt the leader was key in establishing their respectful climate. It was reported that Leader One was attentive to everyone’s needs, valued them, and modeled what was expected.

The participants in the study identified emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect as important qualities of their team’s climate. The participants perceived the leaders’ emotional intelligent behaviors were key in establishing this the climate. They reported because the climate had these characteristics the teams communicated better. Communication was perceived to be a key to their team’s effectiveness.

### **Theme Three: Perceptions of Team Effectiveness**

The third theme, perceptions of team effectiveness, is connected to the first and second themes identified in the study. The participants reported a leader’s intentional emotionally intelligent behavior fostered certain team climate attributes, which supported quality communication. The cases describe communication as vital in supporting the effectiveness of their teams. The team effectiveness data in the study affirm the work of Hackman (2002), who defines team effectiveness in three dimensions: results, socialization, and individual growth. Results means the team accomplishes goals associated with their purpose. Socialization means team members are willing to remain in the team and want to work together. Individual growth means the team interaction meets the needs of individual team members.

The criteria established for the sampling technique in this study would increase the likelihood that the teams in the study would be effective. The collected data supported this assertion. The teams in the study perceived themselves as effective. The following statements illustrate the teams' perceptions as they relate to each dimension of Hackman's (2002) definition of team effectiveness.

I think we work really well together, like strictly business. Like we get in there and get done what we need to get done. Sometimes, yeah, there's probably some things that we take too long on, but it's our first year and we're all learning, so I think that's expected. (Team Three Member B)

Team Three Member B's statement represents achieving desired results, which is one of the dimensions that define team effectiveness. The purpose of their team required tasks such as planning professional leaning, making budget decisions, and distributing resources. All the members who were interviewed felt they had been successful at working together as a team and achieving their goals. This specific comment from Member B of Team Three illustrates the dimension of achieving desired results because she believes their team works together and they get things done.

This excerpt from the writing response submitted by Member A on Team One captures several descriptive codes that spanned across multiple themes. I am using it to illustrate the socialization dimension, the desired results dimension, and the individual growth dimension.

It is her method to discuss the emotions with you later. Or there are times during our meetings when she gets your permission to give you support and other times when she makes a comment that lets you know that she is there for you if needed. Of course, there are times when team members use her "open door policy." The team member ends up knowing how to handle their own emotions in the situation and the team moves on to the work at hand that will produce our action plan or product. I think she does things like that so you will know that she cares about you as a person, personal and professional welfare. It gave me a sense of relief and comfort. I felt

satisfied and eager to continue interacting with the team. It was also encouraging to me because I was learning more about myself and how to interact with the team members to get quality work done in a timely manner. (Team One Member A)

Member A's statement, "the team member ends up knowing how to handle their own emotions," demonstrates there is learning. She believes the leader facilitated the learning. That specific learning is an example of the individual growth dimension of team effectiveness. Member A of Team One reports after that learning, the team "moves on to the work at hand that will produce our action plan or product." That specific statement shows achieving the desired results. Finally, this team member's writing response also illustrates the socialization dimension of team effectiveness. She states, "I felt satisfied and eager to continue interacting with the team." This excerpt specifically communicates she wanted to continue working with the team. This is almost the exact definition of the socialization dimension.

As I analyzed the data across all the cases, more examples of the socialization dimension were identified. The following exchange among Team Three members illustrates that they enjoy working together on their school's Vision Team. It specifically represents the socialization dimension of team effectiveness.

"I hate meetings. I really dislike meetings a lot. But I enjoy, I liked going. It's always positive. And even when people disagree, it's not..." (Team Three Member B)

"It's done politely." (Team Three Member C)

"Yeah." (Team Three Member B)

"And professionally." (Team Three Member C)

Member C described her typical experience with meetings as unpleasant. In general, she did not like meetings. She would prefer not to go them. But her experience with the school's Vision Team is different. The above dialogue illustrates Member C's experience

with the team has been rewarding to the extent there are positive feelings about coming to the meetings and working with colleagues.

The data analyzed in this study brought out the three themes described. The analysis suggested there was a relationship among the three themes. It was the perception of the participants in this study that a leader's emotionally intelligent behavior initiated and nurtured the teams' working climate. A cross-case analysis of the data illuminated emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect as key team climate characteristics that fostered quality communication. The team members and leaders felt good communication was key to the teams being effective.

### **Relationship of Themes to Research Questions**

As mentioned above the themes that surfaced in the study were: (a) intentional emotional intelligent leader behaviors, (b) team working climate the supports quality communication initiated by the leader, and (c) perceptions of team effectiveness. The research showed there was a perceived relationship between these themes.

Answers to the research questions were embedded in the identified themes. The following paragraphs explain how the data and themes addressed each research questions.

#### **Research Question 1: To What Degree are School and District Leaders Aware of Their Own Emotional Intelligence?**

The approach to collecting the data related to this question was straightforward. The leaders were asked to describe what they knew about emotional intelligence. Asked to describe what they knew about emotional intelligence, some replied as follows:

Well, I guess first and foremost, I know myself. You know, and I think that's where it starts. I think, you know, you have to be really reflective. You have to read, because it doesn't come naturally. And I do. I read all types of works. I, I don't get



to read full books, but I read chapters. Or I'll pick up an article. Or I love quotes. Quotes can elicit a whole bunch of emotion for me and thinking. And so I'm constantly trying to self-improve. And I think in doing that, it helps me to actually see a different perspective than an employee would feel. When I think of myself and I think of myself as a leader, I don't, I wish, I don't know if you watch Star Trek, but years ago in Star Trek, there was a cosmic chess game that was planes of clear glass, so glass being clear. But it was several planes of glass, and it was 3D, and it was multiple levels. And so a move that you made at the lower level may cause you to lose a rook at the fourth or fifth level. And it was turning, and it was so cool, you know. But when I think of myself as a leader, you know, especially in regard to emotional intelligence, that's how I see myself. I see myself on several different planes with several different pieces. Those pieces being my employees, the planes being the levels with which they're thinking and doing. And every move that I make is going to affect the game in another level. And so I'm constantly, you know, it's just constantly something I'm thinking about and I'm doing, and I'm always looking for cause and effect. And I'm always, you know, you know, and of course kids are at the center of all that (Leader One).

Not much. [Probing question] To me, emotional intelligence is being aware of how what you're doing affects or relates to other people and what they are saying and doing affects and relates to other people. And how you respond. And so you can escalate a situation or de-escalate a situation. And it may not be right, may not be wrong. My personal style is, the more upset a person is, whether it's a student, adult, parent, teacher, whoever—the more upset they are, the more calm I have to be (Leader Two).

I know that people, people are, are driven by their emotions and so I guess I always grew up with, with, you know, my parents being very even keeled. You know, never being, never flying off. And when they did, you know, they'd earned their... I look it, now I look back on it as a parent look back on it and understand that they had their, they'd earned their chips. So when they did go have instances where they had to go off emotionally, they had stored up enough chips that you knew it was important. So I guess that taught me that sense of balance. So having emotional intelligence to me means knowing when to use emotion and knowing how to read others' emotions so that you can guide them in the right direction. Um, which is having a, not everybody has that innate ability to be, you know, to be balanced. You have to be conscious about that and think about it and plan how you go into coaching conversations or how you go into, you know, meetings with parents, or you know, meetings with kids. So, it's just having the wherewithal or the self-awareness to me to know exactly where you're at, and to know if you're upset and unable to have a productive conversation yourself, you have to know that, too. Be able to pinpoint that. (Leader Three)

The response of Leader Four was not as extensive, but the sentiment was comparable to the other leaders in the study. "Actually, I have not. Outside of my, you know, teacher

training or classroom behavior management, and you know, studying child development or...but I haven't" (Leader Four).

Although the approach to collecting data related to this research question was straightforward, extracting themes and meaning involved a comprehensive analysis. Initially, I thought I would be able to determine to what degree they were aware of their emotional intelligence by them telling me what they knew about it. The data related to this question were not handed to me this way. The data related to this research question were somewhat elusive.

The body language, tone of voice, and exact words of the responses would suggest some of the leaders felt they did not know a lot about emotional intelligence. In fact, Leader Two and Leader Four specifically said they did not know much about emotional intelligence. But with probing and a deeper dive into the data, it was revealed each leader knew about their own emotional intelligence to some degree. Their conscious understanding of emotional intelligence may not have been at a level where they could articulate the textbook definition; but their description of how they dealt with emotional situations illustrated someone exhibiting emotional intelligent behaviors, and they were intentional about those behaviors. For example, when I asked Leader Four "What is the role of emotions in your work as a leader?" she responded:

I think it's important, I think that a lot of times people try to remain emotionless. "My emotions don't play a role," is what you typically hear from leaders. "I try to take my emotions out of it." But when you're working with kids and people, you're working with grown folks, with issues. And you're working with kids who need you, my emotions play a big role. My emotions play a big role. I'm sensitive. I have feelings. I feel pain that other people feel, you know. If one of my students is hurting, then I have to feel that on some level. Still remain in balance as the leader, but feel it on some level that says I understand. I'm compassionate. I understand what you're feeling right now. Maybe I can help you through this, whether it's a

parent, a teacher, a student. I think we have to have a level of emotion where they know we're human. Where they know that we have compassion. And passion. I think we can be so stoic that we're unapproachable. (Leader Four)

Leader Four's response indicates that she recognizes emotions play a big role in her work. She says, "I'm sensitive. I have feelings. I feel pain other people feel." This illustrates a leader recognizing and using emotions to support her work. Recognizing and using emotions to accomplish work are examples of emotional intelligence. Leader Four did not think she knew much about emotional intelligence, but the behaviors she cited were demonstrations of emotional intelligence.

All of the leaders in this study recognized that emotions played a critical role in their work, and it was incumbent upon them to pay attention to those emotions. They all spoke about how they intentionally managed emotions to keep their team productive. This was the essence of the first theme, (a) intentional emotional intelligent leader behaviors.

The leaders in this study were recommended because it was suspected they had high levels of emotional intelligence. The data from this study would support those predictions. Each leader reported they felt they were effective at dealing with emotional situations and leveraging emotions to support their work. All of the leaders mentioned specific examples of dealing with emotions in their work. They all had to analyze emotional situations and respond appropriately. Each leader cited explicitly how they entered those situations. The common technique mentioned by all four leaders was to stay balanced and model the expectations. Each of them felt that approach was effective when dealing with emotions in their work with their teams and outside of their teams.

## **Research Question 2: How Do School and District Leaders in an Urban School System Use Emotional Intelligence to Promote Team Effectiveness?**

The answer to this question is connected to the second theme that surfaced in this study. A team leader's emotionally intelligent behavior helps establish quality communication practices among team members. Team members perceived that the leaders' emotionally intelligent behavior initiated and nurtured an appropriate climate. The participants identified emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect as important team climate attributes. The teams in this study thought these team climate descriptors helped their teams speak, hear, and understand each other effectively.

An example of this was cited earlier in this chapter. Member B of Team One talked about how her leader asked questions in way that defused tense situations. When the leader does that it, reduces frustration in the team. It allows frustrated team members a means to express a message, and it supports others team members by helping them hear the message behind the emotion.

An excerpt from Member B of Team Two was documented in a previous section as an example of how her leader managed emotions. It is also applicable in this theme as an illustration of how the leader uses emotionally intelligent behavior to promote team effectiveness. Member B said, "you never see [Leader Two] get heated." Leader Two is "seeking to see what everybody else is thinking" (Member B of Team Two). She explained how this approach invited everyone to participate in the discussion, which helped team members manage their emotions. When team members see that the leader is calm, their own emotions de-escalate. When the environment is calm and stable, the study participants felt communication was better and easier.

The final examples illustrating how the leaders in this study use emotional intelligence are derived from the data extracted from the leaders' interviews and writing prompts. Leader One explained how she monitors the feelings of her team members. When she sees something may be off balance, she checks on them. This excerpt was cited earlier as an example of a leader perceiving emotion, and it is applicable in this theme as well. "I noticed one team member walked away, and there was just a flick in their eye as they walked away, immediately my radar went off" (Leader One). Leader One went on to explain how she managed the situation so that the team member was adequately heard and able to return to the team without harboring any feelings that could impact the team's effectiveness.

Leader Two shared a story in her writing response that illustrated that she perceived emotions and then used that information to take the necessary steps to facilitate communication among team members. She described how she had to dignify and value the team members in order to keep the lines of communication open and keep them moving forward toward their goals. She went on to explain how she models professional behavior and responses to support the team's effectiveness. "I had to model how to professionally support both people by focusing on their assets" (Leader Two).

Leaders Three and Four talked about how they modeled emotionally intelligent behavior. They stayed calm when it was necessary to keep everyone engaged and on track. They provided a balance in emotionally tense situations. This strategy was perceived by their team members to be effective and supportive of the desired team climate. The desired climate fostered communication even with challenging issues. The challenging issues could be talked about with passion and not be threatening to anyone. The following commentary by Leader Three illustrates his impression of the communication in his team. "I think what I

love about our Vision Team is that we can be free and clear to be emotional and be passionate within our meeting” (Leader Three). He went on say that those feelings do not hinder the team. They have a climate that is safe enough to allow that type of discussion.

The data in this study revealed the leaders in cases one, two, three, and four practiced emotionally intelligent behavior in ways that shaped the environment. The team climate helped team members communicate successfully. The team members perceived that this type of communication supported the team’s effectiveness.

**Research Question 3: What Are Team Members’ Perceptions of the Leader’s Emotional Intelligence as It Relates to the Team’s Effectiveness?**

The team members’ focus group interviews and their written responses conveyed the message the leaders in the study practiced behaviors that illustrated emotional intelligence. The team members expressed appreciation toward their leaders for consistently interacting with them in an emotionally intelligent way.

Member C of Team One shared her opinion of her leader’s emotionally intelligent behaviors. She felt her leader could accurately assess the emotions of the team. The story she shared in her writing response documented how the leader identified frustration and asked questions in a calm way to manage the tension in the team. The emotionally tense situation was resolved in a way that allowed the frustrated team member to be heard and the other team members to empathize with the frustration.

Member A of Team One communicated in the focus group that her leader took the time to learn each member. And she used this knowledge when assessing a team member’s mood. Member A spoke of this behavior in a very appreciative way. It was obvious by the way she described the mode of operation of the leader that she really appreciated it. Member

A's writing response illustrates her perception of the way her leader operates and deals with emotions of team members:

...she analyzes the moment. As she reads the body language and thinks of the current status of the person's personal life, she is able to discuss your emotions as well as the task at hand. Overall, she identifies the emotion from your responses or actions. (Member A of Team One)

The members of Team Two communicated a similar message about their perception of their leader's emotional intelligence. In the focus group interview, Team Member A talked about how her leader stays calm when she is very excited.

I tend to be one of those more emotional Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! kind of people. And I've had my experiences with [Leader Two] where it's like the more I go, the calmer she gets. And then that really helps me calm down. And you know, deal with it on a non-emotional level. (Member A of Team Two)

This statement by Member A demonstrates how her leader supports her. She felt this type of reaction to her when she is animated was an emotionally intelligent response. It helped her calm down and address the cause of her anxiety.

Members of Team Three expressed strong feelings about their leader's emotional intelligence. Their leader had been with them for only one school year. They noted how much things had improved because of the their leader's approach, which included behaviors that illustrated the Salovey and Mayer (2004) branches of emotional intelligence. An excerpt from Team Three's Focus Group interview follows:

I think our staff knows each other better than they ever have. I mean, like last year, if you think about how we sat and what we did, I think that also helps in our staff development meetings. Because I look at how we mix now. We never mixed last year. Never. And I liked how, the Vision Team did that. Like, because we had to communicate... I mean, because we had to get together, and we had to listen. Cause we share like, you know, my team said this... So more than anything, it's brought our school together... And I think that it's good. (Member C of Team Three)

Team Three Member C's impression is that the school is more united because of her leader's behavior. She felt the Leader's emotionally intelligent approach brought the Vision Team together as a cohesive group; this cohesiveness was reflected by the entire school. She stated the staff intermingles more than they did in the past as evidenced in their staff development meetings. As she shared her opinion, all the other focus group members endorsed her statements with affirming comments and body language messages, such as nodding heads. I observed sincere gratitude by this team for their leader's style. The team's perception was that the style was manifested through emotionally intelligent behavior.

The Team in Case Four had a similar interpretation of their leader's behavior as it relates to emotional intelligence. Of the four teams in the study, this team was the only one whose perception of the leader communicated an evolution of emotional intelligence. And in the leader's individual interview, she reinforced the team's description. The leader mentioned she had not always paid attention to the affective side of the work in regard to her staff and team. She felt she had just recently started to do things differently with them. Her instructional leadership team expressed a similar opinion. This was made evident by the level of comfort the team felt when approaching the leader, which was illuminated by a comment made by Member A. "But we've allowed her to grow and allowed ourselves to become comfortable enough to ask those questions" (Member A of Team Four). The team's description of the newer approach was a portrait of a leader exhibiting emotionally intelligent behavior as defined by Salovey and Mayer (2004).

Member B of Team Four shared a story in her writing response that illustrated the emotional intelligence of her leader. It also expressed that the team was more effective because of it.



During an Instructional Team meeting there was some tension and disagreement that came up about how Professional Learning Communities should function daily. We were not in agreement on how exactly that should look. Our leader had her mind set on one way while a few of us had a different vision. As we continued to listen to our leader, our faces and body language towards each other changed and became very evident. Our leader picked up on these changes right away. She began to repeat what she was saying and slow down a bit, going back over it again. When she realized that everyone understood, she then asked if everyone was in agreement. We began to reveal our thoughts more openly and make suggestions. She made sure that each voice was heard... she checked in with us to make sure that each person was ok... Our emotions were assessed by check-ins and questioning. I believe that she assessed them in this way because that was a natural way to assess them. I think that this work was led this way because each voice needed to be heard in order to have collective responsibility. I felt good about our team and our work. I felt that we all ended up having a chance to express our thoughts and have input. This meeting showed me how as a leader you may have to back up sometimes and allow yourself and others to process in a different way. (Member B of Team Four)

This story highlights behaviors that illustrate emotional intelligence. When Leader Four identified messages in facial expression and body language, Member B perceived that she was reading the emotions of the team members. When Leader Four slowed down, started asking questions, and made sure everyone was heard, Member B felt she was managing the emotions of the team. Because Leader Four did these things, Member B interpreted Leader Four's emotionally intelligent behavior to be beneficial to the team's productivity.

The cross-case analysis of the data in this study suggests the members of teams in this research were aware of their leaders' emotional intelligence and perceived it to be important as it related to each team's working climate and quality communication. Team members recognized when their leader displayed behaviors that fostered an environment of emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect. The team members expressed gratitude toward their leader as they spoke about this team climate. They felt this atmosphere made it easier for members to listen and to be heard. That translated into support for team effectiveness.

## **Summary**

As discussed in the in previous chapters, the research questions are the heart of any study. The research questions shaped the theoretical framework and guided the research design. The intent of the entire investigation was to come to an understanding about each research question. All the work in this investigation was geared toward exploring and discovering answers related to the questions. The above paragraphs have illustrated how specific themes surfaced and how those findings connected to each research question.

Although the study was adequate in terms of addressing the research questions, it generated more questions worthy of investigation. In Chapter 5, those questions are identified and further study is recommended.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter restates the purpose of this study, paraphrases the conceptual framework, reiterates the guiding research questions, summarizes the qualitative research traditions, and recaps the research design. A synopsis of the themes that surfaced from the analysis of the data is reviewed, and the answers to the research questions are affirmed. The conclusion presents potential professional implications related to the results, and make recommendations generated from the research design and findings.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to develop a thick and rich description of the relationship between the emotional intelligence of educational leaders and the effectiveness of the teams they supervise. The current challenges facing education need solutions that incorporate the effective use of teams and the emotional side of leadership (Barsade, 2002; Johnson et al., 2005; Stubbs, 2004). Information in this area is needed because emotional intelligence is a construct in need of more investigation as it relates to educational leadership and team effectiveness (Prati et al., 2003). Deepening this body of knowledge can give leaders access to additional information that can better position them to deal with the emotions inherent in the work of teams.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework or theoretical framework is the theories, concepts, beliefs, and assumptions that provide the basis for the research project (Maxwell, 2005). Drawing from my personal beliefs and experiences and conducting in-depth analyses of the existing

research established the theoretical framework for this research project. It was concluded the foundational constructs for this study were emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. Emotional intelligence was the primary pillar of the study because it was the unit of analysis and the phenomenon meant to be illuminated. Leadership was the second pillar of the study because it was the context in which emotional intelligence was examined. And team effectiveness was the third pillar in the study because teams are a prevalent structure in organizations, and educational leaders leverage them to conduct the work. These three concepts were the pillars on which the study was constructed.

### **Research Questions**

The design of the study was structured around the research questions (Maxwell, 2005), which shaped every component of the investigation. Their function was to clarify exactly what the research project attempted to learn and understand. The research questions for this study were:

1. To what degree are school and district leaders aware of their own emotional intelligence?
2. How do school and district leaders in an urban school system use emotional intelligence to promote team effectiveness?
3. What are team members' perceptions of the leader's emotional intelligence as it relates to the team's effectiveness?

### **Qualitative Research Traditions and Research Design**

Emotional intelligence is a phenomenon experienced in a natural setting. It is ideal for qualitative research designs. Qualitative research designs are naturalistic. They are intended to explore phenomena without any manipulation from the researcher (Patton, 2002).

This research project was a qualitative phenomenological case study intended to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. It was informed through heuristics and narrative inquiry traditions. Phenomenology is a research tradition with the foundational question, “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). It aims at exploring the nature and essence of a phenomenon or experience. Researchers who employ the theoretical tradition of phenomenology “explore the structures of consciousness of human experiences” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51).

This study was informed through heuristic inquiry techniques. Heuristic inquiry is a personal form of qualitative research. The researcher taking a heuristic approach “includes an analysis of his or her own experience as a part of the data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). According to Patton (2002), heuristics “brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (p. 107). My experiences with the phenomenon of emotional intelligence are deeply personal and intimate. The heuristic approach taken in this study allowed me to access those personal experiences to make meaning of the collected data.

Narratology or narrative inquiry was the other research tradition used to inform this study. It is a way of understanding an experience. Clandinin and Connelly stated narrative inquiry is “stories lived and told” (p. 20). This type of qualitative inquiry provides the researcher an opportunity to extract meaning from the stories of the study participants. Webster and Mertova (2007) reported that narrative analysis provides researchers with a rich structure through which they can study the ways humans experience the world or a phenomena through their stories. Emotions are embedded in stories of experienced

situations. Analyzing those stories through a narrative inquiry approach was a fitting way to examine emotional intelligence.

The research design I used to incorporate these qualitative research traditions was aimed at illuminating emotional intelligence. The specific types of purposeful sampling used to identify the participants were criterion and chain sampling. The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education recommended study participants based on the participant criteria. Four leaders and their teams were identified as the cases for this research project.

Three forms of data were collected from the four cases. Individual interviews with each leader, focus group interviews with each team, and documents in the form of writing prompt responses from the leaders and team members were forms of data analyzed in this research project. This triangulation of data provided an opportunity to analyze the unit of analysis from multiple perspectives and served as an embedded validity check for the investigation.

After the data were collected, it was coded using a sensitizing concept approach. Sensitizing concepts refers to categories the researcher brings to the data coding process (Patton, 2002). Meaning was made of the data by progressing through the phases of heuristic inquiry. That meaning was captured and documented during the creative synthesis phase and was detailed in Chapter 4. A summary of the findings from the data follows.

### **Summary of Results**

Three themes emerged from the data: (a) intentional emotionally intelligent leader behaviors; (b) team working climate that promotes quality communication initiated by the leader; and (c) perceptions of team effectiveness. Theme (a) was defined as things leaders purposefully did that could be categorized into the branches of Salovey and Mayer's (2004)

four-branch model of emotional intelligence. The second theme (b) was defined by certain attributes perceived to be prevalent in the working climate. Those attributes were emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect. The participants felt the leader initiated these climate attributes, and because they were in place, the team had better communication. The third theme was an affirmation of Hackman's (2002) definition of team effectiveness. Leaders and team members perceived their team was effective because they achieved desired results, individual members experienced personal growth, and there was socialization satisfaction.

In addition to the themes that surfaced, answers to the research questions were gleaned through the analysis of the data. Research question one was, To what degree are school and district leaders aware of their own emotional intelligence? The leaders were intentional and conscious of their behaviors that connected to their own emotions and the emotions of their team. That behavior is the essence of emotional intelligence. Although all the leaders in the study consistently exhibited emotionally intelligent behaviors, their responses communicated they all had some doubt of the accuracy of their understanding of concept.

Research question two was, How do school and district leaders in an urban school system use emotional intelligence to promote team effectiveness? A team leader's emotionally intelligent behavior helps establish quality communication practices among team members by creating a desired team climate. This climate was enabled and fostered by the leader's emotional intelligence. The participants identified emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect as critical team climate characteristics. The teams in this study felt these team climate descriptors helped their teams speak, hear, and understand each other more effectively.

Research question three was, What are team members' perceptions of the leader's emotional intelligence as it relates to the team's effectiveness? The team members in this study had a high regard for their leader's emotional intelligence. It was a factor that helped establish a preferred working climate, which supported communication. They felt it was an important factor in the effectiveness of their team.

### **Implications of Findings**

The data in this study clearly revealed team members perceived a leader's emotional intelligence was important in regard to the climate. Team members felt an ideal climate fostered quality communication, which supported the effectiveness of the team. The implications from this finding could fall under three categories: the selection of leaders, the development of leaders, and the maintenance of teams.

In Chapters 1 and 2, the importance of leadership was documented. Leadership is a key component to the success formula for schools. School districts should invest a sufficient amount of resources in selecting individual that have the propensity to be effective. That means school districts should have sophisticated methods of selecting the best candidates to lead schools. Emotional intelligence should not be the only variable considered, but it could be an important characteristic to consider in the selection process.

Mayer and colleagues (2004) describe the person with a high level of emotional intelligence as unlikely to engage in problem and negative behaviors. They desire to manage feelings because they recognize and respect people's feelings. They are drawn to professions that are social in nature, such as teaching. Because the work of schools can be emotional and challenging, this is the type of person a school district wants to select to lead schools.



Adding emotional intelligence to the selection criteria for school leaders is a rather foreign concept, but it is one worth considering. Three different emotionally intelligent assessments were described in Chapter 3. A school district could use a comparable instrument to measure the emotional intelligence of potential candidates. Data from these assessments could be one of the selection criteria used to evaluate candidates. These measures could provide important information about how a candidate will manage their own emotions and the emotions of others (Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

The data from this study underscored the notion that emotional intelligence is a desired trait in leaders. The team participants valued leader behaviors defined as emotionally intelligent. If a school district selects leaders with this competency, they will create a scenario in which members of teams supervised by those leaders can evolve into an effective team.

In addition to selecting leaders with a high level of emotional intelligence, school districts could invest in raising awareness of and developing emotional intelligence. Mayer and colleagues (2002) have documented that emotional intelligence can be improved just as anything else that can be learned. Cherniss and Goleman (2001) advocate for emotional intelligence training programs in the workplace. The leaders in this study intentionally practiced emotionally intelligent behaviors, but they all felt a lack of confidence in their awareness of the topic. This would suggest there is opportunity to increase their knowledge about the subject. This could occur through professional learning experiences and job embedded coaching. A heightened awareness of emotional intelligence could position leaders to recognize and understand their emotionally intelligent behaviors.

As stated earlier, the leaders in this study were not overly comfortable in articulating

their understanding of emotional intelligence. Even though they did not feel comfortable in defining emotional intelligence, there seemed to be an unconscious awareness of the phenomenon. Each leader specifically gave examples of emotionally intelligent behaviors that were intentional on their parts. The interview gave each leader an opportunity to reflect over those behaviors. As they talked about the events and their behaviors they seemed to appreciate the opportunity to reflect. This opportunity to reflect allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of their emotional intelligence. The positive response the leaders in this study had to the reflection opportunities suggests this activity could be beneficial to other leaders. Similar reflection opportunities, such as creating an autobiography to explore what has shaped an individual as a leader, could help them gain a better understanding of their emotional intelligence. These reflection opportunities could be an emotional intelligence training mechanism. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) reported emotional intelligence can be taught. This could enhance a leader's ability to support the team climate that is ideal for quality communication. And it could increase their overall leadership capacity.

The final implication from this study relates to the functioning of a team. Participants in this study reported the leader had to be aware of many intricacies about each team member. This specific research project analyzed this behavior through an emotional intelligence lens. But overall, this behavior could be interpreted as a means of team maintenance. When the leader is perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions, they are engaged in a form of team maintenance. The team members in this study communicated an appreciation of this type of leader behavior, and the leaders in this study expressed these behaviors were beneficial and necessary for the team to be effective. Leaders could incorporate designated opportunities for teams to reflect over the emotionally

intelligent behaviors. This practice could be a way to keep this at an awareness level of all team members. This would help team members not take these behaviors for granted. The team members and leaders in this study expressed sincere gratitude for these behaviors. Intentional practices that allow these behaviors to be identified and recognized could be a means to reinforce them.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The implications and findings in this study exposed additional opportunities for follow up to this research. The first recommendation is to revise the research design. The teams in this study were selected because they were perceived to be effective. A sampling technique that identified teams functioning at different levels would give a researcher an opportunity to compare data. During the interviews, several participants in this study referred to times when they were on dysfunctional teams. They did this to make a point about their current effective team. This made me wonder what could be gleaned from a dysfunctional team. I would also suggest including observations in the data collection phase of the research. Hearing and reading the participants' stories made me want to observe their experiences with the unit of analysis. I suspect a researcher monitoring a team's interactions would identify significant nuances which could add thickness to the description of the phenomenon being studied.

I would also recommend utilizing a research design that would involve quantitative measures. Qualitative designs, like the one in this project, are not intended to look for causal relationships. I would encourage an investigation strategy aimed at analyzing the effect of emotional intelligence on a team's performance. An effect size analysis or correlation analysis are potential ways effect could be evaluated.

This study prompts questions about another area: group emotional intelligence. What is a group's collective emotional intelligence? In what ways does a group's emotional intelligence manifest? Druskat and Wolff (2001) reported that teams can develop emotional intelligence and increase their overall performance. I wonder what their research would reveal in an education setting. How could this research design be modified to examine a leader's emotional intelligence and its relationship to a team's emotional intelligence?

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are popular structures in educational settings. Dufour (2004) explains that a PLC is defined by its actions. It is a group that focuses on learning rather than teaching, they work collaboratively, and they hold themselves accountable. This study invites the question, What is the relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence, a group's emotional intelligence, and professional learning communities?

Cultural identity is another variable to examine in regard to its relationship to emotional intelligence, leadership, and team effectiveness. A person's culture is significant in defining who that person is and what that person believes. Such belief systems guide an individual's behavior. Emotional intelligence is about recognizing internal emotions and emotions in someone else, then knowing how to respond accordingly. How might cultural differences impact this behavior? Exploration of that question seems relevant and necessary to expand the body of knowledge about the phenomenon emotional intelligence.

Finally, this study identified characteristics of a team climate that were valued by team members. Those characteristics were emotional stability, safety, trust, and respect. The study was not designed to delve deeply into aspects of climate. But because in this study those attributes surfaced as valuable variables important to teams and the quality of their

communication, I am curious about other variables that are desired and important to a team climate. In addition, the idea of climate is often synonymous with culture. What is the role of culture related to team performance? And how does a leader's emotional intelligence shape a school's culture?

### **Summary**

Studies have documented that educational leaders have complex and challenging responsibilities. Teams are a significant structure utilized to help accomplish these goals. The work of these leaders and teams can be highly emotional and stressful, and a leader's level of emotional intelligence can influence how emotions and stress are managed within the teams. The findings in this phenomenological case study suggest the degree to which this is done well could impact the effectiveness of the teams.

The results in this study showed team members perceived a leader's emotional intelligence was important to a desired team climate. Team members felt their leaders exhibited a number of emotionally intelligent behaviors that promoted a climate described as being emotionally stable, safe, trusting, and respectful. This climate allowed the team to communicate better. Good communication among team members supported them to achieve goals, grow individually, and be satisfied socially.

This information has the potential to shape the hiring practices of school districts, inform leadership preparation programs, and guide the professional learning experiences for existing educational leaders. At a minimum, those that have a responsibility to support leadership and teams should let the findings of the research project raise their awareness. Increased awareness on the part of leaders about emotional intelligence could translate into behavior that is perceived by team members to be supportive of their team climate. The data

from this study advance the idea that this emotionally intelligent behavior will be appreciated by team members and help their teams to be effective.

APPENDIX A  
LEADER QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your job title?
2. How long have you been in your leadership position?
3. Do you supervise at least one team?
4. What is the name of one team you supervise that includes team members who have been consistent for at least 6 months?
5. What are the names of the team members?
6. How long have you supervised that team?
7. When do you meet with that team?
8. What are some of the responsibilities of the team?

## APPENDIX B

### INDIVIDUAL LEADER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your job title, and how many years have you been in this job?
2. What are some of the responsibilities in your work?
3. What is the role of emotions in your work?
4. Please describe what you know about emotional intelligence.
5. How would you assess your own emotional intelligence?
6. What is role of emotions in the work of your \_\_\_\_\_ [name] team?
7. What are ways you manage emotions related to supporting the work of your team?
8. How do you think emotional intelligence helps you lead your team?



## APPENDIX C

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of your team, and how many years have you been involved with this team?
2. What are some of the responsibilities in your work on this team?
3. What is the role of emotions in the work of your team?
4. What impact do emotions have on your team's effectiveness?
5. How does your leader manage the emotions related to the work of your team?
6. Describe how you perceive your leader using her/his emotional intelligence to support your team's effectiveness.

## APPENDIX D

### LEADER WRITING PROMPT

Describe a time when you had to deal with an emotional situation related to the work of your team. What was the emotion? How did you know that was the emotion? What did you do? Why did you do those things? What was the outcome or impact of your actions? How do you think your team felt after the event? How do you think emotions impacted the effectiveness of the team?

## APPENDIX E

### FOCUS GROUP WRITING PROMPT

Think of a time your team was dealing with a task or project that evoked some sort of emotions. Do you feel your leader assessed the emotions of the team members accurately? Why do you think they assessed the emotions that way? What was your leader's response? What was the end result? Why do you think your leader did those things? After that specific event what were your feelings about working with the team? What was your personal level of satisfaction after this event? How did the event impact your personal growth? How do you think those emotions impacted the your satisfaction with your team, your personal growth and the end results?

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## VITA

R. Jayson Strickland was born on April 6, 1971, in Kansas City, Kansas. He received a portion of his formal education at Grace Lutheran School, then attended and graduated from Washington High School in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. He started his post-secondary education at Kansas State University, where he completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education.

This educational foundation gave Jayson the opportunity to begin working in the Kansas City, Kansas school district as a third grade teacher. In addition, Jayson worked as a technology instructor at Kansas City, Kansas' first technology magnet school. While in his teaching positions, he received his Master's Degree in education administration from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. This gave him the appropriate credentials for endorsement as a building administrator.

After teaching in the classroom for five years, he was encouraged to become an administrator. Mr. Strickland was appointed principal of Caruthers Elementary School in 2000. While at Caruthers, he decided to pursue an Educational Specialist degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, which he completed in 2002.

After serving at Caruthers for five years, he had a desire to support the entire school district, and he became a central office administrator in 2005. He served in different roles where he supervised and supported elementary principals and departments including early childhood education, curriculum, special education, English as a second language, library services and human resources. He currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools. In this position his primary responsibility is to supervise and support high school and middle school leadership.



Upon completion of the doctoral requirements, Mr. Strickland intends to continue supporting leaders to help them create the most effective educational environments for children.