

Principals Leading with Emotional Intelligence to Foster a Positive School Culture and Climate:
An Opportunity to Increase Teacher Retention

by
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Principals Leading with Emotional Intelligence to Foster a Positive School Culture and Climate:
An Opportunity to Increase Teacher Retention

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Abstract

This quantitative, descriptive research study explores the role of emotional intelligence of principals in public schools in southwest Ohio and the role emotional intelligence plays in the retention of high-quality teachers. The research focuses on how principals' emotional intelligence correlates with their leadership effectiveness and teachers' job satisfaction. The study employs quantitative methodology. A two-part survey was completed by principals and assistant principals from various public schools in the region. Part one of the survey collected demographic information of the participants, their interest in future professional development in emotional intelligence, and their teacher retention rates. Part two of the survey included the 30 items of the TEIQue-SF, a measurement of trait emotional intelligence. Results indicate that higher levels of self-control among principals are positively associated with teacher retention. Results also reveal a relationship between gender and sociability. Data analysis also shows a strong interest among principals in further professional development in this area. The study concludes that enhancing principals' emotional intelligence through targeted training can improve teacher retention rates and foster a more positive school culture. These results have implications for university principal licensure programs and professional development programs offered by state organizations, counties, and district leaders.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, teacher retention, school leadership, professional development, public education, transformational leadership

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Chapter I

Introduction

Education serves as the cornerstone of a successful society, empowering individuals and advancing progress across all aspects of human life. A commitment to students receiving a high-quality education is vital to the 21st century economy and the success of society (Sutcher et al., 2016). Within the dynamic context of public schools, retention of high-quality teachers is paramount to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). Unfortunately, teacher retention has long been a major challenge for school leaders. Research from Ingersoll and Smith (2003) indicated a significant number of new teachers, approaching half, exited the profession within the first five years. Moreover, this challenge has only intensified with teacher retention becoming more difficult following the COVID-19 pandemic—educators working in K-12 schools are experiencing markedly higher rates of burnout than those working in other fields (Gallup, 2022). The National Education Association (NEA) (2022) reported that there are 567,000 fewer public-school educators than before the pandemic. As such, hiring and retaining high-quality teachers must be the most important consideration for school leaders (Metzger, 2022; Whitaker, 2020).

There are many threats to teacher retention that are outside the influence of principals, including salary, mandated testing, and lack of parental support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; García & Weiss, 2019c; Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). However, principals can positively impact teacher retention through their leadership. Sull et al. (2022) found that toxic culture is the greatest threat to employee retention. Conversely, companies that have established positive cultures experienced lower rates of attrition (Sull et al., 2022). Principals play a key role in teacher retention by establishing and maintaining a positive school climate and culture (Ford

et al., 2019). Creating a positive school culture includes promoting inclusivity, teacher autonomy, and a sense of collective efficacy, while also prioritizing safety and minimizing bureaucratic burdens (Becker & Grob, 2021).

While there are a variety of leadership styles that support establishing a positive school culture amidst the evolving demands and complexities of public education, emotional intelligence emerges as an essential competency that allows leaders to strengthen their leadership efficacy and nurture a conducive school environment. In fact, Goleman (1998) stated that a candidate's emotional intelligence may be a stronger indicator of future success than just intelligence and technical skills. In the context of school systems, Mahfouz et al. (2019) state that principals influence teachers' wellbeing and commitment through their social and emotional competencies. Emotional intelligence includes skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management that can be learned if a candidate does not already possess them (Goleman, 1998). However, despite recommending that school leaders receive emotional intelligence training, the social and emotional development of principals has not been a focus in most school districts (Mahfouz et al., 2019).

This study embarked on an exploration of emotional intelligence among principals within public schools in southwest Ohio through a review of the literature and quantitative analyses. Additionally, this research study examined relationships between demographic characteristics and levels of emotional intelligence and gauged principals' interest in future professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. The aim of the research study was to present nuanced insights with implications for educational practice related to professional development of principals and principal preparation programs to enhance their leadership and their retention of high-quality teachers.

Background of the Problem

Public education faces a multitude of challenges, with one of the most pressing issues being teacher retention. For two decades, research has reported that a significant number of teachers leave the profession, especially during the initial five years of their careers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This has a detrimental impact on student achievement and disrupts schools from providing a stable educational environment. While a myriad of factors contributes to teacher attrition, researchers argue that school leadership plays a critical role in retaining high-quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ford et al., 2019). Specifically, the emotional intelligence of principals has emerged as a key factor that influences teacher job satisfaction, well-being, and ultimately, retention (Floman et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022).

The repercussions of teacher attrition are extensive and negatively impact student learning. Ronfeldt et al. (2015) found that high teacher turnover decreased student achievement, particularly in mathematics and reading. Furthermore, frequent changes in teachers causes disruptions in classroom routines and relationships, diminishing the development of a positive learning environment (Ferguson, 2000). Additionally, schools with higher rates of teacher turnover are faced with increased costs associated with recruiting and hiring new teachers, thus limiting resources that would otherwise be available for other essential school programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

School leaders, particularly principals, play a critical role in shaping the culture of schools and influencing teacher satisfaction. Research suggests that effective leadership can allay some of the contributing factors of teacher attrition, such as high workloads, lack of support, and feelings of isolation (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Leaders who create and maintain a positive school climate built on the principles of collaboration, trust, and respect can

create a more supportive work environment for teachers (Ford et al., 2019). Fostering such a climate requires specific skills, including emotional intelligence, which has been identified as an essential competency of effective school leaders (Kin & Kareem, 2019; Kin et al., 2020).

Goleman (1998) stated that emotional intelligence is a term that refers to a set of abilities that enable people to understand, manage, and express their own emotions, and perceive, understand, and influence the emotions of others. Self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management are the four components of emotional intelligence (Petrides, 2001). Principals with high levels of emotional intelligence are effective in navigating difficult situations, maintaining composure in stressful situations, resolving conflict, and building positive relationships with stakeholders (Floman et al., 2024). These skills contribute to a more positive and supportive work environment, which in turn can motivate teachers to stay in the profession. Gómez-Leal et al. (2022) found a positive correlation between the emotional intelligence of school leaders and the well-being, job satisfaction, and retention of teachers.

Research has established the importance of emotional intelligence in school leadership; however, there is a gap in research on the specific levels of emotional intelligence among principals as well as their interest in professional development related to these skills. Prior research studies have focused on broader leadership styles or specific aspects of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness (Schiro, 2018). Furthermore, limited research has been conducted to explore the levels of emotional intelligence among principals in southwest Ohio. This lack of regional data impedes the development of targeted leadership development programs.

This research study aimed to address this gap in knowledge by investigating the emotional intelligence of principals in public schools located in southwest Ohio. By examining

the levels of emotional intelligence of the administrators in this region, research findings can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional intelligence of school leaders. Additionally, the study assessed the interest of these administrators in professional development opportunities focused on enhancing their leadership skills via their emotional intelligence. The resulting data can be used to design targeted professional development programs aimed at equipping school leaders with the competencies necessary to create a more positive and supportive school environment that fosters teacher retention.

Statement of the Problem

High-quality teachers are vital for student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). Lamentably, teacher retention has long been a challenge, and it has become a critical issue that demands immediate attention (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; NEA, 2022). There is a myriad of causes for teacher attrition, many of them outside of the control and influence of principals; however, principals can increase teacher retention by leading with emotional intelligence (Floman et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022).

Research demonstrates that the emotional intelligence of school leaders positively impacts teacher wellbeing, job satisfaction, and retention (Floman et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Moreover, the theory titled the proposed school leadership competency model for the era of Education 4.0 illustrates the requisite nature of emotional intelligence in all areas of school leadership (Kin et al., 2020). However, there is a dearth of research regarding the levels of emotional intelligence of public-school principals in southwest Ohio and their interest in professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership. Without this research district leaders and designers of principal preparation programs will remain limited to the knowledge of the need and interest in emotional intelligence training for principals.

Understanding the levels of emotional intelligence of principals will allow district leaders to hire more qualified candidates and provide professional development to improve their leaders' emotional intelligence. Additionally, this information will help principal preparation program designers to provide a more comprehensive program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive research study was to measure the levels of emotional intelligence of public-school principals and understand the relationship between participants' demographic characteristics and levels of emotional intelligence by analyzing data collected from a web-based survey. Additionally, this study aimed to understand the level of interest administrators have in future professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership. One can increase their emotional intelligence through training (Goleman, 1998). While principals can feel helpless in retaining high-quality teachers, leading with emotional intelligence allows principals to establish and maintain positive school cultures which can result in higher levels of teacher retention (Ford et al., 2019; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Mahfouz et al., 2019). This study supports principals, district leaders, and designers of principal preparation programs by providing information on principals' levels of emotional intelligence and their interest in further emotional intelligence training.

Research Questions

This research study was centered on three research questions that were designed to learn about principals' emotional intelligence and interest in professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. The research questions are:

1. To what degree are principals emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF?

2. Is there a statistical relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics?
3. What topics related to emotional intelligence are principals interested in learning more about to improve building climate and culture to increase teacher retention rates?

Methodology

This quantitative study aimed to understand the relationship between principals' levels of emotional intelligence and demographic characteristics as well as the degree of interest they have in professional development related to leading with emotional intelligence. The research study used a quantitative, descriptive survey with 42 questions to examine principals' emotional intelligence and demographics. Using convenience sampling, the survey instrument collected information from principals working in public schools in southwest Ohio during the 2024-25 school year. Ohio has a diverse range of school districts, such as urban, suburban, and rural areas, with both large and small schools serving various student populations. Additionally, school districts vary by socio-economic status and the ethnicity of its students. To capture this diversity, this research study carefully selected 16 districts as a representative sample. By collecting demographic data from survey participants, the researcher could analyze the results based on different groups, aiding in the generalizability of the study to a wider range of school districts. Convenience sampling is a valid approach in research studies with limited time and resources and for exploratory research (Field, 2018). Sampling bias and limited generalizability are potential limitations of convenience sampling (Field, 2018).

The survey was strictly voluntary and was distributed and completed using the web-based SurveyMonkey platform to protect confidentiality. The Montgomery County Educational Service Center (MCESC) distributed the electronic survey in order to verify that the participants were

principals or assistant principals in one of the 16 targeted districts. The survey did not ask for participants' names, email addresses, or other identifying information. The anonymous responses option in SurveyMonkey was turned on. Additionally, the data was securely stored with only the researcher having access.

The survey was comprised of two parts. The first part contained demographic questions written by the researcher. The second part of the survey contained 30 items from the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form (TEIQue-SF) to measure the levels of emotional intelligence of the respondents (Petrides, 2009a). The TEIQue-SF was modified by Petrides from the longer form that has 153 items. The goal of the shortened form was to produce a tool that can be used in research studies with a more limited time frame. Petrides carefully chose the 30 items included in the TEIQue-SF from the 153 items of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) to ensure broad coverage of the construct.

The study used a non-experimental approach that did not involve manipulating any conditions or giving treatment to a group (Field, 2018). Instead, it simply observed the relationship between the dependent variables (levels of emotional intelligence) and the independent variables (demographics of the participants) as they naturally existed. The survey items were designed to capture aspects of emotional intelligence and leadership that have been identified in the theoretical framework and previous research.

To understand the emotional intelligence scores and how they related to participant demographics, descriptive statistics were used to summarize and analyze the data. The descriptive statistics included univariate analysis of number, percentage, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. Additionally, inferential statistics were used to determine statistical significance, assess relationships among independent variables, and assess

study validity and reliability. The inferential statistics included confidence intervals, Shapiro-Wilk test, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and eta squared.

Following approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Youngstown State University (Appendix C), the survey was distributed to the targeted participants via an email sent by the MCESC. The demographic data collected was exported to an Excel spreadsheet. Additionally, the data collected from the 30 survey items measuring emotional intelligence was copied to an Excel spreadsheet and uploaded to the London Psychometric Laboratory (LPL) website, which scores the TEIQue-SF (Petrides & LPL, 2024). The scores were exported to an Excel spreadsheet. The organized data in the spreadsheets were imported into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for statistical analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze relationships between the participants' levels of emotional intelligence and demographic characteristics.

Significance of the Study

This study focused on emotional intelligence levels of principals, a critical yet under-researched area that impacts teacher retention. Understanding the levels of emotional intelligence and interest in professional development in leading with emotional intelligence provided valuable insights.

Emotional intelligence is the linchpin of effective leadership (Kin & Kareem, 2019; Kin et al., 2020). School leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence can foster positive school climates, which is a significant factor influencing teacher retention (Ford et al., 2019). Existing research highlights numerous threats to teacher retention, including salary, testing, and lack of support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; García & Weiss, 2019c; Gimbert & Kapa,

2022). However, studies suggest that leaders with strong emotional intelligence can mitigate these threats by creating positive environments that retain high-quality teachers.

While the importance of emotional intelligence is recognized, there is a gap in supporting its development among school leaders. Therefore, this study assessed current interest in professional development related to leading with emotional intelligence. Identifying this need can inform future initiatives and training programs for principals. By analyzing the relationship between emotional intelligence and interest in future professional development, this study contributes to strategies for boosting teacher retention. Administrators expressing high interest in developing their emotional intelligence to enhance school climate strengthens the case for targeted professional development programs.

The study included demographic characteristics in its analysis, allowing for wider generalizability of the findings. The correlation between emotional intelligence, professional development interest, and demographics allows the results to be applied to other regions for future studies, promoting a broader understanding of this critical issue.

This research can inform policy and practice. School districts may utilize the findings to assess the need for emotional intelligence professional development programs for principals. Identifying a strong interest could help justify budget allocations for such programs. Moreover, research findings can inform the development of targeted leadership training programs focused on emotional intelligence and leadership.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a passionate public-school educator who understands the importance of retaining high-quality teachers to support student achievement. She taught for 23 years before becoming a school administrator. As a teacher, the researcher worked with dozens of principals

with a wide array of skill sets. These experiences, coupled with her experience working as a building-level administrator, have raised her awareness of the importance of leadership and emotional intelligence. While she has been afforded a variety of and observed as other school leaders participated in professional development opportunities, she has noticed no discussion, training, or development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. This has confounded the researcher, as education is a people business. As such, the researcher was committed to studying the emotional intelligence of principals in southwest Ohio through the lens of a quantitative survey.

The researcher's role in this quantitative research study was to serve as an observer by collecting and analyzing data from a survey regarding the emotional intelligence of principals. The researcher distributed the web-based survey via email and scored the TEIQue-SF using the LPL scoring engine (Petrides & LPL, 2024). The researcher then imported the scores and demographic data into SPSS to analyze the data using descriptive and inferential statistics. Additionally, the researcher compiled and analyzed the data so that the research findings were not directly linked to individuals or school districts.

The researcher's own experiences with professional growth make her a stronger researcher; however, it was important that she remained objective throughout this study. She avoided letting her experiences as a teacher and building-level administrator influence how she analyzed the data from the study. The researcher reflected on her background and beliefs related to this research study. She acknowledges her personal belief that emotional intelligence is a requisite skill of effective leaders; however, she was committed to maintaining objectivity throughout the study. It was critical that the researcher remained open-minded and considered all

data when evaluating the research study hypotheses to reduce the effects of confirmation bias (Conjointly, 2020).

Additionally, the researcher used data collection and analysis tools that were suitable for the research study's questions (Conjointly, 2020). While the researcher does not have a direct relationship with any participant (the district where she worked was not included in the study), she has worked in the same county as the study participants. As such, it was critical that the researcher ensured data was collected with no identifiable information to protect the participants' confidentiality and privacy and to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. All principals in the selected districts were invited to participate in the study to reduce selection bias (Conjointly, 2020).

Definition of Terms

The following section provides the operational definitions of terms that were used throughout the study and are referenced throughout this dissertation.

Collective efficacy - Refers to the shared belief of educators within a given context that they can collectively influence student learning and achievement through their collective power (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Emotionality - A factor of emotional intelligence that reflects a wide-range of emotion-related skills, for example, perceiving and expressing emotions in a way that allows developing and sustaining close relationships with others. It incorporates the emotional intelligence factors of trait empathy, emotion perception, emotion expression, and relationships (Petrides, 2001; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020).

Emotional intelligence - Underlying personal characteristics not represented by cognitive intelligence that allows a person to understand his/her own feelings and

those of others, and then use that knowledge to make decisions and behave accordingly (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Gender identity - “Refers to a person’s deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person’s physiology or designated sex at birth” (World Health Organization, 2019, para. 3).

Global score - A total trait emotional intelligence score that combines scores from the four factors of emotionality, self-control, sociability, and wellbeing as well as the facets of adaptability and self-motivation (Petrides, 2001).

Principal - An individual who is licensed by the state board of education to serve as an assistant principal or principal in Ohio schools (Ohio Administrative Code, 2023). In this research study the term principal includes building principals and assistant principals working in public-schools in southwest Ohio during the 2024-25 school year.

Professional learning community - A group of educators who collaborate to improve their teaching practices, increase student achievement, and enhance student learning (DuFour, 2004).

School climate - Refers to the feeling or atmosphere of a school based on the perceptions and experiences of its stakeholders. School climate is interrelated with school culture (National School Climate Center, n.d.).

School community type - Grouping descriptors of a school district’s community as Rural, Small Town, Suburban, and Urban (Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, n.d.).

School culture - The values, beliefs, traditions, and practices that define a school and reflect the underlying assumptions about teaching and learning. While it is interrelated with school climate, school culture refers to the deeper personality of the school (Alliance for Education Solutions, n.d.).

Self-control - A factor of emotional intelligence that reflects regulation of external pressures and stress to maintain control over their urges and desires. It incorporates the emotional intelligence factors of emotion regulation, impulse control, and stress management (Petrides, 2001; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020).

Sociability - A factor of emotional intelligence that focuses on social relationships and social influence and how the individual interacts with others in different social contexts. It incorporates the emotional intelligence factors of emotion management, assertiveness, and social awareness (Petrides, 2001; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020).

Teacher attrition - A term used to describe teachers leaving the field of education (Taie & Lewis, 2023).

TEIQue-SF - A 30-item self-report measurement of trait emotional intelligence. It is based on the full form that has 153 items. It includes two items from each of the 15 facets of trait emotional intelligence. It can be used in research studies with limited experimental time. Using a 7-point Likert scale, it produces scores on the four trait emotional intelligence factors (well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability) and a global score (Petrides, 2001; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020).

Transformational leadership - An educational leadership style in which leaders inspire, motivate, and empower educators and students to achieve their full

potential and drive positive change by a shared purpose, encouragement, support, and consideration for individuals strengths and needs (Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012).

Wellbeing - A factor of emotional intelligence that reflects the level of one's sense of well-being, self-regard, happiness, positivity, and fulfillment extending from past achievements to future goals or expectations. It incorporates the emotional intelligence factors of trait happiness, trait optimism, and self-esteem (Petrides, 2001; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Quantitative research uses well-established methods to gather and analyze data and test hypotheses (Moroi, 2021). Yet, all researchers bring certain beliefs and assumptions to their research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ontology is defined as the study of the nature of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An ontological assumption of this research study was that emotional intelligence exists. Epistemology is concerned with how people come to know something and how people know the truth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An epistemological assumption of this study was that people's levels of emotional intelligence can be studied and measured and that doing so will be useful.

Additionally, this study operated under the methodological assumption that the objective measurement and analysis of data in this quantitative study would constitute a valid manner of acquiring information. Another assumption of this study was that there is a relationship between higher levels of emotional intelligence and effective leadership (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Moreover, the researcher assumed that the respondents would answer truthfully. Finally, the researcher held an assumption that the knowledge regarding the relationship between emotional

intelligence and leadership could be useful in recruitment, selection, and development of school leaders (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). In addition to these assumptions, the research study's limitations are important to note.

As with all research, this study had limitations. A limitation of this study was its reliance on participants who volunteered to take the survey and met the requirements of working as a public-school principal in southwest Ohio during the 2024-25 school year. Distributing the survey electronically likely decreased the response rate (Daikeler et al., 2020). The survey tool was limited to measuring trait emotional intelligence and did not measure emotional intelligence ability. Additionally, a limitation of quantitative data is that it measures variables at one moment in time and is limited in the depth of data in comparison to qualitative data (Rahman, 2017). Finally, inferential statistics could only be applied to populations that resemble the sample tested in the research study (StatsCast, 2010). In addition to these limitations, this study also had delimitations.

Miles (2019) states that delimitations of a study are the constraints or defined scope that a researcher establishes for the research study. The researcher used three research questions to define the scope of this study. Another delimitation of the study is that the researcher targeted principals working in public-schools in southwest Ohio which may result in concerns of external validity. The researcher did not attempt to analyze the data for any demographic categories outside of the nine included in the survey.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation has five chapters. Chapter One includes the introduction, background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, overview of the methodology, significance of the study, role of the researcher, definition of terms, research

assumption, limitations, and delimitations, and the conclusion. Chapter Two contains an introduction, the theoretical framework for the study, a review of literature review research relevant to the study, and a summary. Chapter Three describes the methods used in the study, including the research questions, hypotheses, variables, details of the research design, role of the researcher, sample selection, participant selection, procedures, the instrument used, information about validity and reliability, how the data will be analyzed, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the study, relevant ethical considerations, and a summary. Chapter Four analyzes the data collected in detail. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings and recommendations for changes in practice and for further study.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to further the body of knowledge related to the emotional intelligence of principals. Investigating the emotional intelligence levels of these leaders and their interest in professional development related to emotional intelligence provided valuable insights that can inform practices in recruitment, selection, and professional development for school leaders. Moreover, the findings of this study can contribute to informing the development of university leadership licensure programs specifically designed to cultivate emotional intelligence skills in principals. By equipping leaders with these skills, the programs can contribute to a more positive school environment for both teachers and students. Additionally, school districts can utilize the research findings to assess the need for emotional intelligence development programs for their principals. Strong evidence of administrators' interest in such programs can provide justification for budget allocations for these initiatives. Overall, results of this study contribute to educational leadership practices.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

While there is much debate about what, when, and how public-school students should learn, it is widely accepted that learning is the primary function of schools. The effectiveness of various teaching strategies has also been a regular topic of discourse for decades. John Hattie's (2017) research on effect size reported 252 factors that influence student achievement including items in the six areas of the home, the student, the school, the curriculum, the teacher, and teaching practices. Although educators are not able to control all the factors that have an effect size larger than the average of 0.40, many of these factors are within their sphere of influence (Hattie, 2017). However, those strategies and resources require dedicated teachers to employ them. For decades it has been widely known that high-quality teachers are the most impactful school-related factor increasing student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Additionally, ensuring that all students receive a high-quality education is vital to the 21st century economy and the success of American society (Sutcher et al., 2016). Based on the understanding that competent teachers are essential to achieving the goal of increasing student achievement, it is a leading belief that attracting and retaining high-quality staff is the top priority for school administrators (Metzger, 2022). While there are many opinions regarding what should be at the top of a principal's priority list, great principals prioritize hiring and retaining great teachers (Whitaker, 2020). While attracting and retaining teachers has become significantly more challenging post COVID-19, it is not a new obstacle (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Researchers have studied causes of teacher attrition, including factors that contribute to and predict teacher attrition, degrees of variance in different contexts of teacher attrition, and what policies and practices can address teacher attrition. This literature review focuses on

contributing factors of teacher attrition, principal leadership styles, and the emotional intelligence capacities of principals that influence school climate and culture that in turn impacts teacher retention.

Theoretical Framework of Emotional Intelligence

Figure 1 demonstrates the School Leadership Competency Model for the era of Education 4.0 (Kin et al., 2020). The inner circle emphasizes the primary focus of school leaders, which is leading for learning. The researchers suggest that leaders should prioritize learning themselves before guiding others to also become motivated learners. Next, six additional requisite competencies for successful school leadership are shown. These include communication and ethics, collaboration, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving, digital dexterity, and entrepreneurial. Finally, the researchers illustrate the importance that leaders possess effective emotional intelligence.

Kin et al. (2020) state that emotional intelligence “is the basic competency that school leaders need to apply across the complete terrain of the organization” (p. 25). They argue that this model can be used in educational leadership preparation programs and postgraduate studies to promote successful educational leadership development (Kin & Kareem, 2019). Moreover, emotional intelligence competency in leadership results in employees feeling secure, supported, and emotionally stable in times of change (Mukhtar & Fook, 2020).

Figure 1

The School Leadership Competency Model for the Era of Education 4.0



Note. The outer ring of the model addresses emotional intelligence which is requisite in all areas of school leaders' work (Kin et al., 2020).

Causes and Impact of Teacher Attrition

Leaders with a high level of emotional intelligence recognize that emotional intelligence envelops all facets of a leader's competencies. The leadership approaches adopted by principals demonstrably influence the overall environment within the school. A positive school environment has many effects including influencing the complicated and vitally important challenge of retaining high-quality teachers.

Teacher Turnover Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

For decades, teacher attrition has been a prominent threat to the goal of increasing student achievement. Approximately 90% of teacher vacancies are due to teachers who have left the

profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 25% of first-year teachers suffered from burnout (Fitchett et al., 2018). Moreover, research from Ingersoll and Smith (2003) showed that 40% to 50% of new teachers leave within their first five years of teaching, demonstrating that the threat of teacher attrition does not disappear after the first year. Attrition rates are significantly higher in the United States, with nearly eight percent of educators leaving their jobs each year compared to other high-achieving places such as Ontario, Singapore, and Finland, where only three to four percent of teachers leave their positions annually (Sutcher et al., 2016). Furthermore, teacher demand has substantially increased following the Great Recession of 2008, while at the same time enrollment in teacher education programs saw a reduction of 35% between the years of 2009 and 2014 (Sutcher et al., 2016). Due to the staggering gap in these numbers, it is critical to understand why teachers choose to leave their positions. Researchers have identified several factors that contribute to teacher attrition.

Retaining teachers is a multi-pronged, multi-level matter and is the result of various and interdependent drivers including teacher preparation, induction, ongoing professional development, administrative support ensuring conditions support student learning, and salary (Becker & Grob, 2021; García & Weiss, 2019a). Retirement is an expected factor that results in teacher turnover, yet it accounts for less than one-third of turnovers in 48 of the 50 states (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Sutcher et al., 2016). Research also notes that teachers who obtained an alternative licensure are 25% more likely to leave their jobs than their peers who completed a traditional preparation program (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). When high-achieving teachers do not feel valued or important they are among the first to leave (Whitaker, 2020). Additionally, schools are more likely to experience challenges in

retaining special education, math, science, world language, and teachers of English learners (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Data in a study conducted by Lindsay (2021) demonstrated that the retention rates of teachers were higher when teachers had a smaller number of non-White students and students who experience economic disadvantages. Another study demonstrated that personal factors, such as job transfer of a spouse and caretaking of family members, influenced teacher attrition to a moderate extent (Santiago II et al., 2022). These findings demonstrate that teacher attrition is a significant threat to students' access to a high-quality education. In addition to these findings, there are also school-related factors that impact teacher attrition.

Some school-related factors such as limited professional training, class size, and an unhealthy climate impact teacher retention to a moderate extent (Santiago II et al., 2022). Dissatisfaction with mandated testing, pressures of accountability, and a lack of advancement opportunities also lead teachers to leave the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). García and Weiss (2019c) found that over 70% of teachers are frustrated by the lack of control or influence regarding the content, topics, and skills they teach. They also found that challenges of student poverty, students' lack of preparation, parental struggles regarding being involved with their children's educations, and being threatened and attacked caused teachers to leave or consider leaving the profession.

Furthermore, teachers who report they strongly disagree that their administration is supportive are more than twice as likely to change schools or leave education (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). A lack of support can include infrequent classroom visits, unreliable or unethical response to student and staff behaviors, failure to mediate tense parental interactions, insufficient instructional resources, scarcity of collaboration time, and shortage of

autonomy in the classroom (Scott, 2019). Failure to provide these supports can result in depersonalization that results in apathy, emotional exhaustion, and burnout, often leading to attrition (Scott, 2019). Schools also experience an increase in teacher turnover when there is a turnover within the leadership team (DeMatthews et al., 2022).

Salary is another institutional factor that can impact teacher attrition. Many mid-career teachers leave their schools for other schools due to the disparity in salaries among various districts, while others leave the profession completely due to the salary disparity between teaching and other professions that require college degrees (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). García and Weiss (2019b) found that when considering factors known to affect earnings such as education and experience, teachers' salaries are 21.4% lower than their peers who work in other fields. According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), a district's highest possible salary has more impact on reducing teacher attrition than beginning salary. Many hard-to-staff districts use financial incentives to attract and retain teachers. However, See et al. (2020) found that these are often ineffective unless they are large enough to offset the smaller salary the teacher would earn compared to other districts or other professions, especially in the areas of math and science. Additionally, they are often short-term strategies that are only effective during the window of time where a teacher would suffer a penalty for leaving.

Teacher Turnover Following the COVID-19 Pandemic

While teacher attrition was a serious threat to the goal of increasing student achievement in years prior to 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation. The pandemic quickly produced the Great Resignation of 2022, a term coined by Anthony Klotz to describe the mass exodus seen across all job sectors (Cohen, 2021). The Great Resignation resulted in more than 24 million Americans quitting their jobs. However, the Great Resignation did not impact every

organization equally. Attrition rates ranged from 2% to 30% within the private sector (Sull et al., 2022). Unfortunately, it also had a significant impact on the education profession.

According to the NEA (2022), there are 567,000 fewer public-school educators than prior to the pandemic. Additionally, it is reported that around 55% of teachers are more likely to leave their jobs or retire sooner than they had previously planned due to the pandemic, with Black and Hispanic educators being even more likely to leave (NEA, 2022). This is an increase of nearly 20% prior to the pandemic (Loewus, 2021). Eighty-four percent of teachers report that teaching is more stressful following the pandemic than it previously was (Loewus, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many people experiencing trauma and secondary trauma. It has been found that “Unresolved secondary trauma can manifest itself as compassion fatigue” (Hendershott & Hendershott, 2020, p. 3).

The symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout are similar (Hendershott & Hendershott, 2020). Gallup (2022) reported that those who work in K-12 education experience notably higher rates of burnout outpacing those who work full time in all other fields by 14%, including front-line COVID-19 employees. These teachers are 63% more likely to use sick leave and more than two and half times more likely to seek a new job. According to the research from Gallup (2022), the root causes of this burnout include being treated unfairly, a workload that is not manageable, a lack of clarity in work roles, a lack of communication and support from supervisors, and unreasonable time pressures and expectations. Teachers who leave their positions state a lack of support as the primary reason (Dampf, 2023). According to national data, more than 50% of teachers report feeling unsupported and a lack encouragement (García & Weiss, 2019c). While burnout and stress are significant factors that can lead to teacher attrition, there are also other factors.

Research from Sull et al. (2022) explored causes of employee turnover and reports that the strongest single predictor of attrition during the Great Resignation is toxic culture. On the other hand, they found that companies with reputations of healthy cultures experienced lower rates of attrition. In fact, Sull et al. (2022) found that toxic culture is such a strong predictor of employee turnover that it is 10 times more important than salary and benefits. Furthermore, employees who work in an organization with a toxic culture experienced greater stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and were 35% more likely to receive a diagnosis of a serious physical disease (Sull & Sull, 2022). Research found that failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, employees feeling disrespected, and unethical behaviors were the primary causes of toxic culture (Sull et al., 2022). Additionally, researchers found that culture and leadership are strongly connected. Whitaker (2020) state, “Culture is leadership and leadership is culture” (p. 149). The reality of workplaces after the Great Resignation that followed the COVID-19 pandemic clearly illustrates the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy, positive workplaces to retain high-quality employees.

Federal, State, and District Retention Strategies

Understanding what contributes to teacher turnover can lead to identifying strategies to address the situation. Many such strategies require additional resources and/or policy changes at the district, state, and/or federal level. Scott (2019) states that many of these efforts begin during teachers’ licensure programs. Pre-service teachers should be taught signs of burnout and how to protect against and address stress, including the use of mindfulness and other stress management skills (Scott, 2019). Intentional, effective onboarding support is another strategy that is important to address teacher attrition (Metzger, 2022). Miranda-Wolff (2022) state that there is a strong connection between high-quality onboarding programs and retention. As such, districts should

implement onboarding programs that have clear goals and structures (Miranda-Wolff, 2022). Teachers reported that increased salaries would encourage them to remain in their positions (NEA, 2022). Furthermore, providing robust, purposeful mentor support can help decrease teacher turnover (Hedrick, 2022). In addition to providing effective onboarding and mentoring, districts can reduce attrition by ensuring teachers have sufficient instructional resources (Lindsay, 2021). Teachers reported that they would be more likely to continue teaching if workplace conditions were improved by hiring additional teachers, support staff, counselors, psychologists, providing more mental health and behavioral supports for students, and decreasing paperwork and mandated testing (NEA, 2022). Overall, meaningful evaluation systems that provide useful feedback and opportunities for teacher leadership positively influence teacher retention (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

While these strategies can help retain high-quality teachers, they are predominantly outside the sphere of influence and control of principals. Administrative support has been found to be strongly correlated with teacher retention (Becker & Grob, 2021). It is important to note that school culture and ethos impact recruitment and retention, and principals have significant influence in this arena (See et al., 2020). Novitasari et al. (2020) found that employees are more innovative when leaders utilize the psychological capital skills of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency and authentic leadership. Being an inclusive, authentic leader who listens and develops a positive culture of trust and collaboration with a shared vision and a high level of collective and teacher self-efficacy can improve teacher retention (Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021). Simply put, there are “two ways to improve a school significantly: get better teachers or improve the teachers you already have” (Whitaker, 2020, p. 4). As such, it is critical to examine the various theories, styles, approaches, behaviors, and practices of leadership.

Principal Leadership

The leadership of a school principal has a significant impact on a school's culture. The notion of leadership dates to antiquity, and theories and frameworks of leadership are abundant (Marzano et al., 2005). The Ohio State Leadership Studies were carried out during the 1950s with the aim of exploring job performance and satisfaction resulting in the identification of task leadership and consideration leadership (Labby et al., 2012). Task leadership involved leaders concentrating on pinpointing the tasks that needed completion and aligning them with the organization's objectives. Conversely, consideration leadership emphasized the social and emotional facets of leadership, characterized by the leader's amicable and supportive actions toward their team members. (Labby et al., 2012).

Leadership is defined by personal traits, behaviors, relationships with followers, or the perceptions of others (Alblooshi et al., 2020). For example, Kouzes and Posner (2017) found that over 95% of direct reports state they are highly engaged when their leaders very frequently or almost always implement the five practices of “Model the way...Inspire a shared vision...Challenge the process...Enable others to act...Encourage the heart” (pp.12-13). These strategies support leaders in cultivating a team-oriented culture. Many experts have presented research on the topic of leadership. There is regular debate as to which leadership style or practice is the most effective. As leadership style is a predominant way that leaders self-identify, it is important to understand the primary leadership styles, components, and traits. Additionally, it is vital to identify which most impacts school climate and culture; therefore, improving teacher retention.

The quality of one's immediate supervisor is the top predictor of job satisfaction (Whitaker, 2020). When compared to ineffective principals, effective principals experience

higher retention of high-quality teachers and a lower retention rate of ineffective teachers, as these effective principals seek to improve the quality of teaching in their schools (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). When leaders make positive impacts on the school's culture and climate, an improvement in teachers' satisfaction, commitment, and retention is more likely (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). School culture is a term “used to describe the unique working conditions inside organisations and to distinguish one school from another” (Zahed et al., 2019, p. 140).

Principals' efforts to establish a supportive culture and build collective teacher efficacy reduces teacher burnout and increases teacher retention (Ford et al., 2019). As such, it is vital to examine topics that are central to establishing and maintaining a positive school culture and climate.

These include developing a shared vision, establishing trust, sharing instructional leadership promoting inclusivity, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy, while also providing a degree of autonomy, promoting safe working conditions, and shielding staff from bureaucracy (Becker & Grob, 2021). Great leaders understand that consistently effective leadership enhances the overall climate and culture within a school (Whitaker, 2020).

Northouse's Leadership Styles

Northouse (2021) provided an outline of the complex arena of leadership. He states that, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6). Northouse presented six approaches to examining leadership as well as leadership behaviors, skills, traits, and styles. Three of the six approaches of leadership presented by Northouse examine leadership from the point of view of the leader. The trait approach includes the major leadership traits of intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability, and the big five personality factors of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Other components of the trait approach to viewing

leadership include assessing a leader's strengths and emotional intelligence. The skills approach states that leaders require skills in the areas of technical, human, and conceptual skills as well as competencies of problem-solving, social judgment and social skills, and knowledge. The behavioral approach asserts that leadership actions are oriented regarding tasks and/or relationships.

The remaining three approaches of leadership presented by Northouse extend beyond solely the view of the leader. The situational approach explores the follower and the context of the situation. The four leadership styles associated with the situational approach are directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating (Northouse, 2021). Similarly, the path-goal theory describes leadership in terms of the four behaviors of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership. The final leadership theory, the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, examines the dyadic relationship of interactions between leaders and followers.

Northouse also described leadership in terms of leadership styles. Transformational leaders strive to use visionary leadership and charisma to create a connection that motivates followers to accomplish more than normal. Some practices demonstrated by transformational leaders include inspiring a collective vision, recognizing accomplishments, building trust, and encouraging creativity. Next, authentic leadership centers on the degree to which leadership is genuine. Authentic leaders are reflective and understanding of their values and choose to act based upon those values. Servant leadership is the third of Northouse's leadership styles. Servant leaders are good listeners who are moral, ethical, and empathetic, and they strive to serve the needs of and empower multiple stakeholders. Another leadership style is adaptive leadership. Not only do adaptive leaders adapt themselves, but they also encourage others to do so to confront challenges and changes more successfully. According to Northouse (2021), adaptive

leaders are able to “mobilize, motivate, organize, orient, and focus the attention of others to address and resolve changes that are central in their lives” (p. 287). The next leadership style presented by Northouse is inclusive leadership. Inclusive leaders strive to establish a sense of belonging and shared identity by inviting and appreciating the contributions of all members.

Finally, Northouse discusses the Hill Model for team leadership. The premise of this model is that a leader’s mission is to monitor and support the team so that it is effective. This may require a leader to take internal actions such as goal focusing, providing training, upholding standards, managing conflict, coaching, and collaborating. The specifics of a situation may also require a leader using this model to take external actions such as sharing information, networking, assessing, and advocating for the team and/or initiative. The components of the Hill Model for team leadership are more commonly known as shared or distributed leadership.

Fullan’s Leadership Components

Upon recognizing that educational leadership is changing for a variety of reasons, Fullan (2020) states that leaders must be more dynamic, interactive, and flexible than ever before. He believes that leaders must be experts at learning in context, combining their previous knowledge with learning from others in a given context, for example, an organization or school. Secondly, Fullan states that leaders use joint determination to work closely with others. He also states that leaders must create a culture of accountability in which the members of the school collaboratively focus on continuous improvement and efficacy. Finally, Fullan asserted that leaders must be system players working both within the specific school and as a part of the larger systems of the district and state. In conclusion, Fullan (2020) states, “One overall way to think about leadership is that the job of the leader is to develop collaborative cultures and leadership of others to the point where the leader become dispensable” (p. 4).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty's Plan for Effective School Leadership

In their meta-analysis, Marzano et al. (2005) identified 21 responsibilities that characterize the job of an effective school leader. These include affirmation, change agent, contingent rewards, communication, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, monitoring/evaluating, optimizer, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness, and visibility. Furthermore, they suggested five steps for leaders to create an action plan. The five steps inform leaders to “develop a strong school leadership team...distribute some responsibilities throughout the leadership team....select the right work...identify the order of magnitude implied by the selected work...[and] match the management style to the order of magnitude of the change initiative” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 98). These steps require leaders to be competent and effective in the arenas of the 21 responsibilities. By doing so, leaders can make positive changes to improve their schools and, potentially, the world.

Scouller's Leadership Development

Acknowledging the difficulty of providing a concise, useful, and complete definition of leadership, Scouller (2016) asserted the following:

Leadership is the process of addressing four dimensions simultaneously: setting a motivating purpose that inspires people to combine and work towards willingly, paying attention to the means, pace and quality of progress towards the aim, and upholding group unity and individual effectiveness. (p. 31)

He suggested that the four dimensions of leadership included in his definition are interdependent rather than separate, and that leadership is a process that includes a series of choices and actions.

Scouller's (2016) leadership model demonstrated leadership in three levels: personal, private, and public. He explained that personal leadership, the most inner part of his model, addresses a leader's psychological, moral, and technical development, and explains how these impact the leader's presence and behavior. Scouller outlined three elements of personal leadership, the first of which is self-awareness. Additionally, Scouller provided reflective questions that leaders can use to become more aware of their attitudes (such as self-esteem) and behaviors. He presented six techniques to help leaders grow their self-mastery, the second of the three elements of personal leadership. Those techniques include mindfulness meditation, self-enquiry, 4R, mental rehearsal and affirmation, knowing values, and personal mission-vision statement. Scouller states that the purpose of the 4R technique is to help leaders free themselves "from residual unwanted automatic thinking-feeling-behavioural patterns (habits)" by working through the four steps of register, reframe, refocus, and reaffirm (p. 285). Additionally, he urged leaders to develop effective empathy skills.

In addition to the level of personal leadership, Scouller (2016) also states that the levels of private and public leadership are important. The private level of leadership refers to how a leader interacts with and responds to individual members of the group. He presented 14 private leadership behaviors and a self-assessment exercise that leaders can use to reflect on their public leadership. The public level of leadership refers to the actions a leader takes in group settings. Scouller demonstrated 34 public leadership behaviors and a self-assessment exercise. Additionally, he urged leaders to invest in the work of self-mastery in order to better serve others.

Instructional Leadership

While applicable and relevant, the leadership models presented by Northouse (2021), Fullan (2020), Marzano et al. (2005), and Scouller (2016) are not specific to the unique demands of school leadership compared to instructional leadership. While instructional leadership first emerged in the 1980s, its importance has been highlighted in the last few decades (Skaalvik, 2020). Ma and Marion (2021) found that instructional leaders are both change agents and enablers who foster a school environment that drives teachers to be successful in teaching. Liu et al. (2021) state that instructional leadership is positively associated with teachers' levels of job satisfaction and directly associated with teacher self-efficacy to a significant degree. Additionally, they believe that principals should build a culture that is collaborative and supportive to increase teacher self-efficacy. According to Robinson (2011), instructional leadership has an effect size of .42, while transformational leadership has an effect size of .11. She states that the five leadership dimensions of instructional leadership are: (a) establishing goals and expectations, (b) strategic resourcing, (c) planning, coordinating, and evaluating curriculum and teaching, (d) promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and (e) ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. Additionally, Robinson states that there are three leadership capabilities: integrating educational knowledge into practice, solving complex problems, and building relational trust. When these leadership dimensions and capabilities are combined, they yield high quality teaching and learning. Furthermore, research from Zahed et al. (2019) demonstrated that instructional leadership had an effect size of .90 on school culture and .89 on psychological empowerment (competence, autonomy, impact, and meaningfulness).

Cansoy et al. (2022) found that instructional leadership can notably predict collective teacher efficacy, which in turn increases teacher commitment, motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and success. Moreover, principals' employment of instructional leadership increases teacher retention through their implementation of collective efficacy and high standards of a shared vision (Qadach et al., 2020; Zahed et al., 2019). Additionally, research found that principals with higher levels of self-efficacy related to instructional leadership are more likely to experience lower levels of exhaustion, higher levels of engagement, and are more likely to be motivated to remain in their positions (Anselmus Dami et al., 2022; Skaalvik, 2020). Furthermore, Kin and Kareem (2019) detailed the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is being experienced throughout the world. They state that Education 4.0 is required to properly prepare students for these new demands such as actively applying knowledge and collaborative problem solving in place of more rote learning of facts and procedures. They added that school leaders must be effective instructional leaders to ensure students receive the requisite education of the new global economy. Regardless of the leadership style, there are common components that are required to establish a positive school culture to increase teacher retention.

Characteristics of Effective Leadership

To be successful instructional leaders, school leaders must possess key characteristics. These include inclusivity, trust, collaboration, shared vision, autonomy, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy. These characteristics form a cohesive framework for fostering a positive school culture. By cultivating an inclusive environment built on trust, school leaders empower teachers to collaborate effectively towards the shared vision. Granting autonomy fosters self-efficacy and the belief in one's own capabilities, which in turn contributes to the team's collective efficacy in achieving a common goal. Examining these characteristics together

will provide an understanding of how school leaders can establish positive school cultures to increase teacher retention.

Inclusivity

Miranda-Wolff (2022) explained how inclusive leaders can diminish attrition, stating, “Retention is about anticipating employee needs, especially the needs of those most likely to experience exclusion and face discrimination. Good leaders have an open-door policy; great leaders walk the halls” (p. 141). According to Kim (2019), White teachers are less likely to leave their jobs. Stanley (2021) found that arresting social justice efforts such as holding lower standards for Black students and a lack of administrator presence in their classrooms contribute to increased insecurity in Black female teachers and contribute to their choice to leave their jobs. It is critical that principals recognize they are the main support person especially for novice teachers and thus must anticipate and provide for their needs (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Principals must be intentional in anticipating who needs additional support, including beginning teachers and those who have transitioned to another grade level or content area (Reitman & Dunnick Karge, 2019).

According to Cwiklinski (2020), inconsistent classroom visits is a common criticism of principals. It is critical that principals actively build relationships to increase teachers’ sense of belonging by checking in with staff members and giving them encouragement via notes, emails, and phone calls (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). This can also be done by “checking in before checking on” (Miranda-Wolff, 2022, p. 148). It is also important to note that teachers feel more valued when they feel principals listen to them, as such, leaders need to develop empathetic listening skills, including the stages of sensing, processing, and then responding (Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021). A sense of belonging requires learning; therefore, principals must create a learning

community (Miranda-Wolff, 2022). In order to reap the benefits of the digital age, leaders must create a personal learning network and encourage all staff members to do so as well (Sheninger, 2019). These strategies all build a culture of inclusivity.

Shared leadership is another way that school leaders can cultivate a culture of inclusivity. Martí et al. (2021) state that leaders hold the keys to creating inclusive environments, and those who create inclusive school cultures do so by replacing previous leadership models of hierarchical and vertical relationships with shared or distributed leadership. Distributed leadership has been found to have a positive impact on teacher collaboration, collegiality, and motivation to contribute to educational change (Amels et al., 2020). Conversely, teachers are more likely to leave the profession when they lack influence which is a central component of shared leadership (Urlick, 2020). Sanchez et al. (2022) found that it is important that principals promote teacher leadership of experienced teachers and that such shared leadership is a basic function for success. Furthermore, they state that shared leadership contributes to empowering teachers which has a positive impact on school culture.

Additionally, Bell et al. (2011) presented 11 tenants of shared leadership. Those include principals being as knowledgeable as possible about shared leadership, laying a solid foundation for shared leadership, knowing when to share decision-making and when not to share, building a bridge from positional leadership to shared leadership, defining teacher leadership within the school culture, establishing protocols for shared leadership, practicing shared leadership and asking for feedback, understanding that shared leadership does not mean the principal is not involved, ensuring the members of the shared leadership group represents various stakeholders, understanding shared leadership is not always about having a meeting, and evaluating the team's

progress. Furthermore, Bell et al. (2011) cautioned that shared leadership is time consuming, intense work and must be a priority to be successful.

Trust and Collaboration

Establishing and maintaining relationships founded on cooperation and trust is also critical for a positive school culture (Kalkan et al., 2020). Educators have a need for a workplace that is emotionally safe (Hendershott & Hendershott, 2020). School leaders must understand that people are not the best asset of the school, but rather the only asset; thus, organizational trust is essential (Leithwood et al., 2010). In fact, Evers-Gerdes and Siegle (2021) share the belief that trust lies at the very core of factors related to teacher working conditions. According to Scallon et al. (2021), low-turnover schools have a culture of honest communication with staff and community stakeholders. Trust building facets include benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). High expectations, clear administrative goals, and meaningful participation in decision making contribute to a supportive, caring culture (Mullen et al., 2021). The perception that leaders do not treat all employees equally can be problematic for leaders (Wright, 2021). Unreliable responses in handling student behaviors are a common complaint teachers have with administration (Cwiklinski, 2020). In fact, Kim (2019) found that poor student behavior management has the strongest association with turnover of early-career teachers. Betrayal can lead to revenge, which both create obstacles to maintaining a trusting culture (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Additionally, low trust results in low collegiality, which influences working conditions and ultimately impacts teacher retention (Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021). Holding one-on-one meetings with teachers to listen to their ideas, wishes, and concerns is an effective strategy for building trust (Becker & Grob, 2021). In conclusion, trustworthy leaders promote the sense of efficacy among teachers (Ma & Marion, 2021).

Tschannen-Moran (2014) state, “Trust is a multifaceted construct, meaning that many elements operating simultaneously is what drive the overall level of trust” (p. 19). Moreover, establishing trust is complex. Tschannen-Moran explained this complex idea of trust. She states that trust is not a feeling, but rather a judgment; therefore, school leaders must be cognizant of how trust is developed and what factors can aid and threaten its growth. People tend to extend provisional trust when meeting someone new, and teachers tend to experience a sense of interdependence due to the shared purpose of education. This period of impression making is followed by a deeper exploration in a trial commitment period where trust can begin to take root by each person indicating their willingness to accept personal risk; each person should demonstrate that they will not exploit the vulnerability of the others and be able to predict how the other is likely to behave in a situation. To cope with the stress and demands of changing expectations and increased accountability pressures, teachers need trust from their colleagues and school leaders. As teachers have greater feelings of vulnerability, they seem to be more cognizant of the trust assessments of their leaders to the extent that even small gestures have a significant impact on the relationship. Tschannen-Moran explained that school leaders can establish trust by attending to the five functions of instructional leadership: visioning, modeling, coaching, and mediating. Finally, she states that trustworthy leaders prioritize the culture of trust ahead of their own needs, resulting in a productive school.

Shared Vision

In addition to establishing a culture of cooperation and trust, principals must recognize the power of establishing a shared vision (Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021). Co-creation of social norms reduces the chances that an organization will experience a toxic culture (Sull & Sull, 2022). Teacher retention rates are higher when principals emphasize instructional leadership by

leading in the creation of shared norms related to high-quality instruction (Cwiklinski, 2020; Redding et al., 2019). Leaders in schools with low turnover clearly communicate the shared vision regarding high-quality teaching by explaining the reasons for policies and decisions and demonstrate commitment to putting students first (Scallion et al., 2021).

Autonomy

Hendershott and Hendershott (2020) argue that educators want autonomy. However, levels of autonomy are lower in education than in almost all other professions yet is strongly associated with job satisfaction and retention (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Providing teacher autonomy including encouraging and supporting their efforts to try new things has a positive impact on teacher retention (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Furthermore, autonomy is found to be important in feelings of motivation and professionalism (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Teachers report that principal support of their classroom activities also contributes to their decision to remain in the jobs (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). Additionally, principals should recognize the value in providing autonomy in the establishment of professional learning goals (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Schools with low turnover commonly provide teachers with autonomy and recognize them as knowledgeable contributors (Scallion et al., 2021).

Self-Efficacy

Cultivating teacher self-efficacy is also effective in the fight against teacher turnover (Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021). This can be accomplished in part by ensuring all teachers are a part of a collaborative team. Beginning teachers could be paired with more experienced teachers to collaborate with and observe (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Principals can positively influence teachers' perceptions of competence by ensuring they have strong pedagogical knowledge and plentiful professional learning opportunities (Reitman & Dunnick Karge, 2019). Moreover,

leaders must develop teachers' self-efficacy and can do so by speaking positively about teaching and learning (Bell et al., 2011). Providing timely feedback and positive recognition can also increase teachers' self-efficacy and improve retention (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). Teachers who demonstrate resilience demonstrate higher levels of self-efficacy and are more likely to remain in their teaching jobs (Mullen et al., 2021). As such, principals should promote resiliency strategies such as "critical thinking, problem-solving, help-seeking, induction, coaching, collaboration, self-regulation, relationship management, PD, PLCs, rejuvenation, and culture building" (Mullen et al., 2021, p. 15).

Collective Efficacy

Together with self-efficacy, it is critical that principals nurture a school culture of collective efficacy so that teachers are motivated to be a part of the success stories (Metzger, 2022). Collective efficacy has many of the same sources of development as self-efficacy (Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021). Collective efficacy has an incredibly high impact on student achievement with an effect size of 1.57 (Hattie, 2017). Additionally, collective efficacy can reduce teacher turnover (Ford et al., 2019). Evers-Gerdes and Siegle (2021) described building collective efficacy as building a campfire which starts with separate pieces of wood until the fire spreads throughout them all. The fire can be lit by asking who we are instead of each individual focusing solely on themselves. They added that collective efficacy can be built by creating shared or distributed leadership. A positive school climate promotes collective efficacy; therefore, resulting in teachers taking responsibility for problem solving (Cansoy et al., 2022).

Principal Preparation Programs

Those who aspire to become school leaders are required to participate in a university preparation program. Such programs have been widely criticized for many years. Mendels

(2016) reported data from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, The School Superintendents Association, the American Institutes for Research, and the University Council for Educational Administration that show that many university-based principal preparation programs are failing to adequately prepare principals. As the world changes, schools need to change to ensure students are prepared for tomorrow. This includes providing a more future-focused curriculum and ensuring students are happy, safe (physically and emotionally), well-balanced, and flexible to be successful and contribute to a world with increasing diversity, mobility, and complexity (Munby, 2020). While the challenges and demands that principals face have evolved, support systems for beginning principals remain unchanged (Young, 2019).

The central role of today's principal is being an instructional leader; however, traditional university preparation programs fail to provide meaningful, immersive experiences, resulting in a lack of self-efficacy of participants (Pannell & Sergi-McBrayer, 2020). Hayes and Irby (2020) reported that some principal candidates lack a strong understanding of pedagogy, yet principal preparation programs do not teach pedagogical knowledge. They added that an adult learning theory course is critical to ensure principals know how to develop and coach teachers as this is a key component of being an instructional leader.

According to the Education Commission of the States (2017), 47 states require that principal license candidates have some type of educational work experience, and 45 states require a minimum of a master's degree. In their updated report, the Education Commission of the States (2023) added that 47 states, including Ohio, have adopted leadership standards: 39 states require candidates to participate in an internship or other similar practical experience (Ohio requires a minimum of 50 hours), Ohio and at least 15 other states provide an alternative

certification pathway, and eight states (not including Ohio) do not have specific requirements for candidates to be certified to be an Assistant Principal.

Research from Drake et al. (2023) examined principal candidates' development during their full-time internship. During the full-time internship candidates were mentored by the building principal and an executive coach who was a former administrator. This experience allowed the candidates to progress from observing to engaging in activities such as student discipline, conducting classroom walkthroughs, and leading professional learning communities and professional development sessions. Drake et al. (2023) found that the daily interactions the candidates had with individual stakeholders had the most meaningful impact. Additionally, they found that while candidates reported feeling unprepared and overwhelmed at times, the opportunity afforded to them to reflect jointly and individually helped boost their confidence. The full-time internship provided candidates with the experience of applying the training they had received in their principal preparation courses and allowed them to intentionally reflect on leadership.

Chen and Guo (2018) found that principals' emotional intelligence and instructional leadership influences teachers' instructional strategies. As such, they recommended that principal preparation programs include building leaders' emotional intelligence in the areas of self-emotional appraisal, appraisal of other's emotions, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. Furthermore, they found that emotional intelligence should be included in educational leadership standards because principals who employ emotional intelligence create cultures and conditions in which teachers succeed. Kin and Kareem (2019) suggest that the school leadership competency model for the era of Education 4.0 should be presented in educational leadership courses offered by universities.

Principal Coaching, Mentoring, and Professional Development

Hayes and Burkett (2021) state that following the university preparation program, it is commonplace for principals to have to seek out additional leadership development. Others may benefit from leadership training opportunities that include generic, formal leadership education, hiring consultants to provide workplace trainings, and sending leaders to specialized workshops (Sørensen et al., 2023). Davis et al. (2020) reported that state policies other than in Oregon do not prioritize principal professional development. They found a significant lack of commitment to the implementation of individualized principal professional development, collaboration between principals, opportunities for reflection, and mentorship programs.

In addition to ongoing professional development, principals can also benefit from coaching or mentoring. Teachers' confidence and resolve for their work is positively related to principal efficacy beliefs for instructional leadership (Goddard et al., 2020). As such, Goddard et al. (2020) suggested that universities and school districts provide training and development to mentor principals in their development of instructional leadership. Coaching usually centers around a narrow focus and is specific to one's context of place and time. Conversely, mentoring refers to a two-way professional relationship in which both people contribute and benefit from one another through mutual influence, growth, and learning (Hayes, 2019). Effective mentoring provides on-the-job professional development and support helping principals fulfill the many expectations and responsibilities of their positions (Young, 2019). Hayes (2019) reported that long-term mentoring of a minimum of two years is one of the notable ways to support novice principals to be strong instructional leaders by combining opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and learning.

Approximately 25% of principals turnover each year (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). The effectiveness of principals improves during their fifth year, but the majority leave prior to that with around 50% leaving by the end of their third year (Superville, 2022). Principal turnover has a negative effect on school performance; thus, limiting principal turnover should be a top priority (Bartanen et al., 2019; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Staffing shortages are a contributing factor of principal turnover (National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2020). Ongoing support and development are crucial throughout the first few years of school leadership (Kappler-Hewitt et al., 2020). Principals who participate in preparation programs that combine rigorous and relevant coursework with year-long, full-time internship experiences are better prepared to become effective leaders (Hayes & Irby, 2020; Pannell & Sergi-McBrayer, 2020).

Districts should provide professional learning and coaching to principals regarding the importance of and strategies related to promoting positive teaching satisfaction (Scallon et al., 2021). However, Rubin et al. (2020) found that the vast majority of school districts have neglected providing principals with the support needed to strengthen their instructional leadership skills (Rubin et al., 2020). Levin (2021) reported that while nearly all principals desire additional professional development, 75% of principals cite a lack of time and 36% a lack of money as obstacles in professional development. For coaching to be successful, it must be clear that it is not linked to evaluation, aligned with district goals and structures, and implemented in a systematic way that allocates sufficient time (Pierce et al., 2019). It is also critical that district leaders provide principals with professional learning regarding how their leadership practices, especially related to communicating and leading with a shared vision, impacts building culture and teacher retention (Baptiste, 2019). Scouller (2016) found four inner issues when working with leaders, which include:

... unhelpful or vague beliefs about leadership and/or a leader's purpose that make it more difficult for leaders to be successful... unhelpful or vague beliefs about leadership and/or a leader's purpose that make it more difficult for leaders to be successful... confusion around how to grow themselves as leaders, which hinders development, knowledge and behavioral skills gaps... self-image fears. (p. 25)

Leadership development should include learning in principals' individual contexts, regular, constructive feedback on their leadership practice, exposure to superb leadership in outside contexts, access to high-quality learning resources, and time to reflect and discuss leadership practices with colleagues (Munby, 2020). Leadership academies that stem from a partnership between the school district and a university provide participants with needed leadership development for mid-career principles (Hayes & Burkett, 2021).

Hayes and Burkett (2021) state that assistant principals are vital in the creation of a principal pipeline and are a group of school leaders who also benefit from additional coaching and training. Yet, there is little done to develop them as principals following their university preparatory program (Hayes & Burkett, 2021). Hayes and Burkett share the belief that the following themes are essential to develop leadership skills of assistant principals: "(a) addressing leadership strengths and constraints, (b) enhancing communication skills, and (c) addressing specific professional learning needs" (pp. 511-512). In their research, Hayes and Burkett found that when mid-career assistant principals participated in leadership development programs that involved coaching, principals gained self-confidence in their instructional leadership and reported that the coaching was a crucial component to their learning. Specifically, the leaders reported higher confidence in communicating with teachers to improve instruction.

One such leadership development is the Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI) which includes activities such as pre-service preparation, selective recruitment, and on-the-job evaluation and support (Gates et al., 2019). The PPI reduces turnover with participating principals being 7.8% more likely to remain in their schools for three years. Skaalvik (2020) found that principals with high levels of self-efficacy regarding instructional leadership experienced less emotional exhaustion, higher rates of engagement, and were less likely to quit. Moreover, Gates et al. (2019) found increased teacher positivity of school climate and teacher retention when principals participated in the PPI. Additionally, Tingle et al. (2019) found that growing independent leadership development programs can provide mentoring and training lacking in many principal preparation programs.

Rubin et al. (2020) state that school leaders struggle to find time for instructional leadership due to the frequent demands of putting out fires. They recommended principal supervisors employ the following four routines to promote the development of instructional leadership: “classroom walkthroughs, coaching, principal evaluation and feedback, and supervisor-facilitated principal professional learning communities” (p. 46). Additionally, Rubin et al. emphasized that openness and vulnerability are required in coaching. Principals must understand that growing teachers is a core understanding in being an instructional leader (Hayes & Irby, 2020). There are programs designed to help principals focus on being instructional leaders and growing teachers.

The School Administrator Management (SAM) process is administered by the National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP). According to the NSIP (2023), SAM is a professional development process that helps change principals’ focus from management tasks to instructional leadership. The process includes identifying a first responder to manage school issues; this

concept reduces principals, who should be engaging in instructional leadership activities, being interrupted by school management tasks. It also includes using a calendar to detail instructional leadership activities with teachers. Goldring et al. (2020) reported that the SAM process helps principals manage their time which results in 71% of principals spending more time as instructional leaders. They also reported that this leads to improved feedback being given to teachers. Additionally, the SAM process positively impacted school culture by principals promoting the importance of instruction and being more visible. Goldring et al. found that the SAM process also led to an increase in the principal's credibility. In short, the intentional time management program assists principals in increasing time spent engaging in instructional leadership activities.

There are several tools designed to develop principals' instructional leadership skills, since instructional leadership attracts effective teachers (M. Rutherford, personal communication, August 30, 2023). In his logic model for instructional leadership, Rutherford presents six key ideas: life is busy with short interactions; leverage what matters; teaching matters most; attract talent; provide feedback and coaching; culture attracts and retains high-quality staff. Moreover, Rutherford states that with effective coaching, a novice teacher can instruct and be as effective as a five-year veteran teacher after only two years. This is because coaching releases talents the teacher brings to the school that may not be released without coaching (M. Rutherford, personal communication, October 11, 2023).

Rutherford (n.d.) presents seven tools that instructional leaders can use to develop teachers and teaching. Those tools are: (a) 30 Second Feedback, (b) Craft Conversations, (c) Key Lesson Planning, (d) Talent Development Coaching, (e) Next Level Coaching, (f) Team Coaching, and (g) Teaching Studies. Rutherford found that when these tools are implemented,

they enable leaders to develop teachers and establish a culture that attracts and retains high-quality teachers. Additionally, Rutherford (2013) found that 23 themes that instructional leaders should look for in classroom visits. Using the seven tools and the 23 themes allows principals to provide coaching and feedback to recognize instructional effectiveness, grow teachers, and establish a positive school culture.

Emotional Intelligence

While the concept of emotional intelligence had been contemplated for decades, Salovey and Mayer (1990) first used the phrase emotional intelligence and defined it as the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). Salovey and Mayer outlined the five domains of emotional intelligence, which are self-awareness, managing emotions, motivation, empathy, and handling relationships. A few years later, Goleman (1995) popularized the term emotional intelligence and the notion that emotionally intelligent leaders are the ones who set the emotional tone of a workplace; therefore, driving the performance of its employees. Goleman's (1998) expanded framework consists of emotional intelligence that includes the core abilities of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. He believes that emotional intelligence competency is the best predictor of which intelligent, skilled candidate is most likely to be successful. Furthermore, he argues that these skills can be learned due to the neuroplasticity of the brain. Additionally, emotional intelligence is essential for leaders to be effective leaders who are adept in using a variety of leadership styles "have the very best climate and business performance...and the most effective leaders switch flexibly among the leadership styles as needed" (Goleman, 2011, p. 56). Leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence are aware of the impact they have on others and adjust their style to meet the needs

of others to get the best results (Goleman, 2011). Furthermore, leaders have more power to sway others' emotions than anyone else in an organization (Goleman et al., 2013). According to Goleman et al., "If people's emotions are pushed toward the range of enthusiasm, performance can soar; if people are driven toward rancor and anxiety, they will be thrown off stride" (p. 5). Moreover, supporters of emotional intelligence contended that it could hold greater significance than cognitive intelligence when it comes to influencing success in leadership roles (Goleman, 1995).

The values, mindsets, and behaviors of school leaders influence the school culture and climate (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Mahfouz et al. (2019) found that the social and emotional competencies of principals also influence teachers' well-being and commitment, stating, "Awareness and understanding of one's emotions may support leaders' efforts to develop self-understanding and to strengthen relationships with others, which contribute to growth and improved communication" (p. 6). As such, they recommended receiving training on mindfulness practices and emotional intelligence training. While it is commonly understood that school principals experience substantial job-related stress, little attention has been paid to the social and emotional development of principals (Mahfouz et al., 2019). The work of school leaders is dynamic in nature and requires that leaders have strong interpersonal skills and recognize when they need to serve as protectors from bureaucracy and external pressures (Becker & Grob, 2021). Emotions play a role in every leadership decision (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). The non-stop nature of school leadership requires emotionally intelligent leaders who are aware of their own emotions and able to manage them while also attending to the emotions of others such as helping teachers to reframe unwanted emotions (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). They added that such emotional intelligence practices of school leaders promote job satisfaction and teacher self-

efficacy. Emotional intelligence is found to align with transformational, instructional, and servant leadership styles (Chen & Guo, 2018; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Miao et al., 2021). Great principals are self-aware and understand how others perceive them (Whitaker, 2020).

Henkel et al. (2019) believe that it is important that leaders are adept at using more than one leadership style to best address specific situations. Principals need to know their teachers, provide the appropriate leadership, and address the various psychological needs of teachers to increase teacher retention by recognizing that some need a higher level of autonomy while others need more frequent supportive interactions and development (Ford et al., 2019). Female teachers are more likely to be aware of a leader's emotional competence (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). This is critical, as 73.9% of Ohio teachers are female (Ohio Department of Education, 2023).

Self-knowledge and self-awareness are vital leadership skills (Henkel et al., 2019). Additionally, leaders who understand emotions are able to recognize the types of relationships that are needed to lead teachers (Chen & Guo, 2018). Gómez-Leal et al. (2022) state that self-awareness, self-management, and empathy are noteworthy emotional intelligence competencies. They add that principals who have high levels of emotional intelligence also have strong interpersonal skills such as communication, influence, and the ability to build a culture of trust. Further, leaders who demonstrate a high level of communication and collaboration skills are better equipped to connect with teachers (Singh & Townsley, 2020). Additionally, Görgens-Ekermans and Roux (2021) found that there is a hierarchical nature of emotional intelligence development. They share the belief that self-awareness strongly affects social awareness and self-management, with both affect relationship management. Furthermore, Görgens-Ekermans and Roux state that organizations should aim to actively develop leaders who have emotional intelligence competency to establish effective relationships and healthy workplace cultures. They

recommend social awareness as the first competency to be focused on developing, as it is the foundation for the development of other emotional intelligence skills.

Rupprecht et al. (2019) found that workplace mindfulness training is effective in developing leaders' emotional intelligence. Leaders in the study participated in the "Working Mind" program in which they learned formal and informal meditation practices. They also learned about the neurobiology of stress and emotions and the body's attention systems. The researchers found that mindfulness practices result in enhanced levels of leaders' self-awareness and emotional regulation. Leaders reported that they were more able to manage distractions, resulting in them being more successful in single tasking rather than multitasking. This allowed leaders to relate to others more effectively by implementing mindful listening skills. Additionally, leaders reported that they increased their self-observations, detached from negative emotions, and were aware of how their emotions affected others. As a result, the leaders applied new emotional regulation strategies, and were less reactive, less judgmental, more empathetic, more accepting of change, and more focused on solutions.

Patti and Stern (2023) underline the importance of emotional intelligence capacities. They found that emotional intelligence helps build resilience. They state, "Self-awareness is foundational to leading a healthy, happy, fulfilling personal and professional life" (p. 55). Additionally, Patti and Stern found that leaders who are self-aware are reflective and are capable of reflecting on their own and other's emotions that initiate behaviors. They argue that self-awareness is particularly important in times of crisis. Additionally, they state that leaders who are competent in external self-awareness (understanding how other people view them) are more skilled in social awareness; this includes showing empathy and understanding the perspectives of others. Patti and Stern found that self-management combined with self-awareness is essential to

building healthy relationships. They state that this training should begin in preservice programs, extend into the practice of assistance principles, and continue into the principalship and beyond. As such, they have developed the STAR Factor coaching model for the development of emotional intelligence skills. It consists of:

...trust building and exploration of one's personal and professional vision, [emotional intelligence] behavioral competency assessment and feedback, identification of gap areas for development, assessment and feedback on conflict style, bias awareness and intervention strategies, goal setting anchored in emotional and social skill development, and planning how to move learning systemwide. (p. 176)

Patti and Stern (2023) reported that leaders who participate in the STAR training benefit in several ways. Participants reported an increase in self-reflection and self-awareness. They also reported improved self-management, including better understanding their emotional triggers and how to help themselves during times of significant stress by using strategies such as visualization, reframing, self-talk, and breathing. These strategies led participants to be more self-confident and shift their leadership styles to better support others and build more positive relationships. Patti and Stern provide outline and resources used in a four-credit hour course taught at Hunter College of the City of New York for those who wish to weave emotional intelligence development into their programs.

Measures of Emotional Intelligence

As the importance of emotional intelligence in the field of leadership gained support the topic of how to measure it was explored. Researchers have distinguished between two fundamentally distinct models of emotional intelligence: ability-based and trait-based. Ability-based emotional intelligence is characterized as a cognitive skill, most effectively assessed

through tests that have clear correct and incorrect responses (Mayer et al., 2008). Trait-based emotional intelligence is defined as “A constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies that can be assessed through self-rated questionnaires and rating scales” (Petrides et al., 2010, p. 137).

Emotional intelligence can be assessed through three distinct methods: self-reporting, utilizing informant feedback to gauge how others perceive an individual, and ability or performance measures (Mayer et al., 2000). There are several prevalent self-report assessments. First, Bar-On (1997) developed a scientifically validated self-reporting assessment tool for emotional intelligence, the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), which enables the evaluation of individuals' abilities to handle everyday challenges and predict personal and professional success (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). Bar-On (1997) identified five distinct areas of emotional intelligence in his 133-item inventory: adaptability, general mood, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, and stress management (Mirsky, 1997). In 1996, Multi-Health Systems became the first company to release an instrument of this nature (Labby et al., 2012). Another self-report assessment tool, the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SREIT) is a 33-item measure of Salovey and Mayer's original theory of emotional intelligence (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). Building upon Goleman's concept of emotional intelligence, the Work Profile Questionnaire Emotional Intelligence Version (WPQei) is an 84-item self-report measure (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). Additionally, consisting of 20 scenarios, the Levels of Emotional Self Awareness Scale (LEAS) is a self-report measure theorized by Lane and Schwartz (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). Next, Wong's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WEIS) consists of 20 scenario items and 20 ability pair items (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). Finally, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a 153-item self-report measure theorized by Petrides (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). Petrides (2009a)

later modified the TEIQue to produce a 30-item tool known as the TEIQue-SF that can be used in research studies with more limited time.

Numerous leadership models are presented in principal preparation programs and professional development sessions. Additionally, school leaders possess a variety of leadership characteristics. As Kin and Kareem (2019) state, emotional intelligence is requisite in all areas of school leadership. Emotional intelligence is especially important for leaders to successfully establish and maintain positive school cultures to retain high-quality teachers (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Mahfouz et al., 2019; Sull et al., 2022).

Summary

Teacher retention is critical in increasing student achievement. There is a plethora of threats to teacher retention, many of which are outside the sphere of influence of principals. Creating a positive building culture and climate increases teacher satisfaction, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy, which increases teacher retention. Establishing and maintaining trust is essential for positive culture and climate. School leadership competency in the area of emotional intelligence is essential for establishing and maintaining a positive culture and climate regardless of a transformational, instructional, or servant leadership style. Development of these emotional intelligence skills is lacking in many principal preparation programs, but leaders can grow in these areas with support such as coaching, mentoring, and mindfulness practices. If leaders are not gifted with emotional intelligence skills such as self-awareness, they must work to develop them (Whitaker, 2020). Understanding the emotional intelligence of principals can aid future studies that explore the link between principal leadership and teacher retention. This could also have implications for principal training programs, as well as the recruitment, assignment, and ongoing professional development of principals. This research aimed to address the gap in

studies concerning teacher retention and the emotional intelligence of principals by employing a self-assessment tool for trait emotional intelligence.

Chapter III

Methodology

This quantitative study aimed to explore the emotional intelligence of principals. This study also sought to identify any differences based on demographic factors including job title, years of experience in their current role, building grade level, community type, gender, years of experience teaching before becoming an administrator, current age, and previous professional learning related to emotional intelligence as well as the level of interest in additional professional learning regarding leadership and emotional intelligence. This research study took place in public schools in southwest Ohio.

This research study was a quantitative, non-experimental survey study using descriptive research. The survey that was used in this study consisted of two parts (Appendix A). The first part was demographic questions written by the author. The second part was the items from the TEIQue-SF to measure emotional intelligence (Petrides, 2009a). The survey was sent to all principals working in the participating public-school districts in the fall of 2024. The survey was sent via email by the MCEC to target the principals working in the 16 targeted districts and was strictly voluntary. The survey was delivered via a link from SurveyMonkey, a confidential online survey platform, in the email. The survey items related to emotional intelligence were scored using the scoring engine on the London Psychometric Laboratory (LPL) website. Those scores and the demographic data collected were then imported to SPSS for analysis. This methodology chapter identifies and explains the research questions, method, role of the researcher, participants, procedures and instrument, data collection, and data analysis of this research study. Finally, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and ethical considerations are discussed. The study was guided by the research questions.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer three research questions related to emotional intelligence of principals. The research questions are as follows:

1. To what degree are principals emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF?
2. Is there a statistical relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics?
3. What topics related to emotional intelligence are principals interested in learning more about to improve building climate and culture to increase teacher retention rates?

Research Hypotheses

Based upon the research questions, the research hypotheses for this study were:

- Research Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence scores of principals vary across the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score.
- Null Hypothesis 1: There is no statistical difference in the emotional intelligence of principals in the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, or global score.
- Research Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence scores of principals vary by demographic factors such as their job title, years of experience in their current position, years of experience as a teacher prior to becoming an administrator, gender, age, the grade levels of buildings, school community type, and their prior professional development regarding leading with emotional intelligence.
- Null Hypothesis 2: There is no statistical difference in the emotional intelligence of principals based on the demographic factors of their job title, years of experience in their current position, years of experience as a teacher prior to becoming an administrator,

gender, age, the grade levels of buildings, school community type, or their prior professional development regarding leading with emotional intelligence.

- Research Hypothesis 3: More than half of respondents are interested in professional development topics related to leading with emotional intelligence.
- Null Hypothesis 3: Less than or equal to half of respondents are interested in professional development topics related to emotional intelligence and leadership.

Method

The purpose of a research study's design is to structure the research and demonstrate how its parts work together to address the research questions (Trochim et al., 2016). This goal of this study was to determine the level of emotional intelligence of principals, how it differed based on demographics, and what topics participants were interested in future professional development related to leading with emotional intelligence. The first section of the survey sought to collect demographic information of the respondents and the schools in which they work. The second section of the survey sought to collect information related to the emotional intelligence of the respondents using the TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2009a). The researcher used securely to store the collected data in password-protected electronic files and destroy the collected data after the completion of the research study. Trochim et al. (2016) state that variables play a crucial role in research studies. As such, this study incorporated independent and dependent variables.

Variables

This research study included dependent and independent variables. The dependent variables in this study were the continuous data related to the level of emotional intelligence of principals. Based on the 30 items of the TEIQue-SF, the scoring engine on the LPL website

provided scores for each respondent in the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score. These scores ranged from 1.0 to 7.0.

The independent variables in this research study consisted of categorical data. The first independent variable was job title, which was nominal data with two categories (Assistant Principal, Principal). The second independent variable was years of experience in their current position, which was ordinal data with eight categories (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-8, 9-11, 12 or more years). The third independent variable was years of experience as a teacher prior to becoming an administrator, which was ordinal data with five categories (3-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 25 or more years). The fourth independent variable was gender, which was nominal data with three categories (male, female, nonbinary). The fifth independent variable was age, which was ordinal data with six categories (25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66-75, 76 or older). The sixth independent variable was the grade levels of buildings, which was nominal data with three categories (primary/elementary, middle/junior high, high school). The seventh independent variable was school community type, which was nominal data with three categories (rural, suburban, urban). The eighth independent variable was whether the respondents had prior professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership, which was nominal data with two categories (yes, no). The final independent variable was their teacher retention rate from the 2023-24 school year to the 2024-25 school year.

Role of Researcher

The researcher has worked in education for 28 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in education, a master's degree in education, and a master's degree in educational leadership. She taught for 23 years before becoming an administrator. She understands the important role that teachers play in student achievement and the critical nature of retaining high-quality teachers.

The researcher discovered the many threats to teacher retention that were outlined in the literature review. Retaining teachers involves addressing multiple facets and levels, influenced by a variety of interconnected factors (Becker & Grob, 2021; García & Weiss, 2019a). Threats to teacher retention include salary disparity, lack of support, increased mandates and pressures of accountability, and toxic culture (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dampf, 2023; Sull et al., 2022). After identifying a gap in the research, the researcher chose to focus the study on the emotional intelligence of building leaders to explore any differences in emotional intelligence based on demographics and to determine the interest principals have in future professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership.

The researcher's role in this research study was limited in scope. The researcher did not have a direct relationship with any participants that could have created a conflict of interest or bias. The researcher has potential biases related to this research due to her 23 years of teaching experience and her current role as a building-level administrator. However, in this study, the researcher's role was to identify a gap in the research, design the research study, collect data, analyze data, and present the findings in a nonbiased manner. The researcher defined the research questions, wrote the survey items related to the participants' demographics, selected the TEIQue-SF to measure emotional intelligence, selected the appropriate quantitative approach for data collection and analysis, and chose the sampling strategy. The researcher used knowledge presented in the literature review to create the survey instrument. After creating the survey instrument the researcher collected the data, scored the emotional intelligence items using the scoring engine on the LPL website, analyzed all the collected data using statistics software (SPSS), and looked for trends in data as it related to the research questions. Trends identified in the data are discussed in Chapter Five.

Participants

This research examined the perceived emotional intelligence of principals. The study's sample population consisted of school administrators from public school districts in Ohio. Ohio is divided into 611 traditional public-school systems (Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, 2025). Non-random purposive sampling was used to select participants for the target population (Trochim et al., 2016). To be included, participants in this study were required to be fully licensed and employed full time as a public-school principal during the 2024-25 school year. All principals working in the 16 districts serviced by the Montgomery County Educational Service Center were contacted to participate in the study except one district due to the researcher's employment in that district. That district was excluded from the targeted population to maintain an ethical research study and to avoid any potential conflict of interest. No other participants were excluded for any reason. The purposeful selection of these 16 districts provided a sample of various public-school sizes and types, including large, small, rural, suburban, and urban schools within a close geographical area. Additionally, the selection of these schools provided for the inclusion of schools with different socio-economic and ethnic demographics. Demographic questions were also included in the survey to allow for the segmentation of results based on different demographic factors; therefore, enhancing the study's applicability to broader populations. Additionally, this study ensured that there was voluntary participation in the research, informed consent was granted, and confidentiality was protected to adhere to ethical principles and conduct in line with APA's ethical standards.

Procedures and Instrument

The instrument that was used in this research study was a two-part survey distributed electronically via a SurveyMonkey link. The first part of the survey collected demographic data

from the respondents including: job title, length of time in current position, grade levels of the school, community type, gender, years of teaching experience, age, previous professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership, and interest in future professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership. The researcher created these items to identify any relationships that potentially existed between levels of emotional intelligence that may have existed based and various demographic factors.

The second part of the survey included 30 items from the short form of the TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2009a) and used a seven-point Likert scale. The TEIQue-SF required participants to respond to each item by selecting a number from one (completely disagree) to seven (completely agree) that best reflected their level of agreement or disagreement. Fifteen of the items needed to be reverse scored. The TEIQue-SF items were scored using the scoring engine on the LPL website. Scoring of the TEIQue-SF yielded scores for the components of the dependent variable: well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score. Six of the items were used to calculate the well-being score and six of the items were used to calculate the self-control score. Additionally, six of the items were used to calculate the sociability score. Eight of the items were used to calculate the emotionality score. All 30 items were used to calculate the global score. Permission to use the TEIQue-SF for academic research purposes was granted on the Psychometric Laboratory website.

Validity

Petrides (2009a) modified the TEIQue-SF from the longer form which has 153 items in order to produce a tool that can be used in research studies with more limited time. The 30 items were carefully selected to ensure there is broad coverage of the construct (Petrides, 2009a). Laborde et al. (2016) found that the TEIQue-SF and the TEIQue have concurrent validity.

O'Connor et al. (2017) investigated the validity of the TEIQue-SF. Their confirmatory factor analysis state the TEIQue-SF is an “excellent fit to the theoretically expected four factor structure” (Laborde et al., 2016, p. 234) and thus has construct validity. Furthermore, research by Benson et al. (2014) validated the construct validity of the TEIQue-SF in the context of educational leadership. Additionally, the TEIQue-SF has incremental validity of trait emotional intelligence when measured using a self-report construct (Siegling et al., 2015).

To increase the internal validity, the researcher carefully considered the study design, sample size, validity of instrumentation, and the method of data analysis. Response rate is a vital component of survey design research. In order to achieve a 60% response rate, it was necessary that 120 of the 199 of the targeted population provided responses (Rogers, 2023). Another method of increasing internal validity involves using a sample size that aligns with Fowler's (1988) recommendations for achieving a 95% confidence level. In order to have a confidence level of 95% with a 5% error rate, it was necessary that 132 of the 199 principals in the target population provided responses (Rogers, 2023). A greater survey response rate would increase the external validity to the sample and would ensure broader inclusivity of the demographic variables relevant to the study. An electronic survey was used to improve the response rate (Trochim et al., 2016). Statistical analyses were conducted with SPSS software to determine the presence of any significant relationships. To address the conclusion validity of Type 1 error, the value of .05 was used as the level of significance (Trochim et al., 2016).

Reliability

Considering reliability is important in research. Trochim (n.d.-b) states that “a measure is considered reliable if it would give us the same result over and over again” (para. 2). Cooper and Petrides (2010) believe that the TEIQue-SF is a reliable instrument that has internal consistency

and reliability in quickly assessing trait emotional intelligence. Deniz et al. (2013) found that the TEIQue-SF is reliable, citing that it has an internal consistency score of .81 and a test-retest score of .86, both of which are higher than the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70. To reduce measurement error, the researcher piloted the survey and collected feedback about the instructions (Trochim, n.d.-a). The researcher also entered the data twice to verify its accuracy (Trochim, n.d.-a).

Data Collection

The data for this research study was collected via a survey. Survey research is an important measurement within the field of applied social research (Trochim et al., 2016). The survey was administered electronically to building principals. The web-based survey was electronically administered and included an introductory message explaining the study. A web link was used to disseminate the survey via a link embedded in the email. The survey link redirected participants to the secure online survey hosted at SurveyMonkey. The privacy practices were explained on the survey's introduction page to ensure participants felt at ease taking part in the research study. Privacy practices included that the survey would not collect personal information, and responses were kept on a password protected site. The survey began with the Informed Consent Form (Appendix A) embedded within the survey. Next, there was a qualifying question to ensure the participants were fully licensed and employed full-time as principals. Subsequently, there were 10 demographic questions followed by the 30 items from the TEIQue-SF. The survey took approximately seven minutes to complete. The survey was sent to all members of the targeted population at the same time. A reminder email was sent one week following the first email to strive for a 60% response rate. The participants of the target population had two weeks to complete the survey. The researcher received CITI Certification in social and behavioral research (Appendix B). The data collection was approved by the

Youngstown State University IRB (Appendix C) and all IRB policies and guidelines were followed. The quantitative data from the survey provided data that could be statistically analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data for this research study was collected via the secure website SurveyMonkey, a well-established and reputable platform. The SurveyMonkey platform allowed the researcher to easily share a link to the survey via email and allowed the respondent ease in accessing the survey. Ease of participation was important to increase the response rate, and in turn, increase the validity of the data collected. Additionally, it ensured a high level of anonymity and provided confidential storage of the collected data. Demographic and emotional intelligence data were collected. The categorical demographic data included job title, length of time in current position, grade level of the school, community type, gender, number of years of previous teaching experience, age, whether the participants participated in professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership, and topics of future professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership in which the participants were interested. The demographic data was exported from SurveyMonkey to Excel Spreadsheet 1. The emotional intelligence data was continuous and presented five computed scores of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and a global score for each respondent. The 30 items related to emotional intelligence were copied to Excel Spreadsheet 2 and uploaded to the LPL website to be scored (Petrides & LPL, 2024). The five computed scores for each respondent were exported to Excel Spreadsheet 3, along with the demographic data, and then imported to SPSS for statistical analysis.

Descriptive statistics are foundational in quantitative research, as they are able to present quantitative descriptions in practical, sensible form (Trochim et al., 2016). Therefore, descriptive

statistics were run to provide a concise summary of the research study data related to the emotional intelligence scores of the participants and to analyze the distribution of their emotional intelligence scores based on their reported demographic characteristics in the areas of: job title, length of time in current position, grade levels of the school, community type, gender, years of teaching experience, age, previous professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership, and interest in future professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership. These descriptive statistics included univariate analysis of number, percentage, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. Analysis of these descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to summarize the data, identify patterns or trends in the data, assess variability of the data, analyze the normality of the data, compare the data between groups, and detect any outliers or anomalies of the data (Trochim et al., 2016). Skewness and kurtosis analyses were used to determine acceptable ranges and tenability based on distribution guidelines of $|2.0|$ and $|5.0|$ for skewness and kurtosis (Field, 2018).

Inferential statistics were run to determine what inferences could be made to generalize the data from the sample to a larger population (StatsCast, 2010). Inferential statistics assists researchers in generalizing findings, determining statistical significance, assessing relationships among independent variables, and assessing study validity and reliability. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used to assess whether the variances of the groups were statistically significantly different from each other. Confidence intervals were run to determine if the data estimated the true value. A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to analyze if the data was normally distributed. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference among the groups of the independent variables. The significance level of $p < .05$ was used to analyze the results, as it is the most commonly used and

standardized level in social science research (Quantitative Specialists, 2017). This significance level is considered to be useful in balancing type I and type II errors and allows for consistency and comparability to other research studies. Finally, eta squared was conducted to analyze effect sizes.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

In any study, researchers and audiences may encounter flaws or limitations in the research. It is crucial for researchers to recognize and disclose any limitations to clarify the study's purpose and scope for the audience (Miles, 2019). When researchers share details about the limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of their study, audiences can better assess the study's credibility and use the findings to guide future research (Miles, 2019). In this section, the study's delimitations, limitations, and research assumptions is thoroughly addressed.

Delimitations

Delimitations of a study refer to the constraints or defined scope that a researcher establishes for their study (Miles, 2019). This study focused on the following research questions:

1. To what degree are principals emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF?
2. Is there a statistical relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics?
3. What topics related to emotional intelligence are principals interested in learning more about to improve building climate and culture to increase teacher retention rates?

The researcher identified principals working in schools in southwest Ohio during the fall of 2024. Principals working in the school district where the researcher is employed have been excluded from this study. External validity concerns arose due to the study's focus on a particular geographical area and inclusion solely of public-school districts in the sample; however, the

purposive sampling method was employed to mitigate these concerns. Despite the limited geographic scope, a diverse range of schools were included to address external validity issues. Additionally, demographic data on participating school districts and principals enable generalizability to other districts in Ohio. However, a study using convenience sampling and online survey distribution may not have a representative sample of all subgroups. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses were protected to address the potential limitation of subject bias and its threat to validity. The research tool was created and limited to nine demographic items and 30 Likert-scale emotional intelligence items. The study also did not attempt to analyze the data for demographic categories outside of the nine included in the survey. The study was focused on principals as defined in Chapter One. Other populations are outside the scope of this research study.

Limitations

The methodology of this study was a quantitative non-experimental survey. The survey was distributed via email, as the researcher had limited access to the study participants. Distributing a survey via email rather than the researcher being face-to-face with the participants may have affected the response rate. Daikeler et al. (2020) found that web surveys yield 12 percent lower response rates than other methods. Moreover, as the TEIQue-SF is a self-report measure of trait emotional intelligence, the researcher did not attempt to measure emotional intelligence ability. Quantitative data was also limited in its measure of variables at a moment in time (Rahman, 2017). Additionally, survey research has limitations in the depth of data when compared to qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups (Rahman, 2017). Finally, a limitation of this research study was that inferential statistics could only be applied to populations that resembled the sample tested in a research study (StatsCast, 2010).

Assumptions

An ontological assumption of this research was that emotional intelligence exists. Further, an epistemological assumption of this research was that the levels of emotional intelligence that people have can be studied and measured. A methodological assumption of this research study was that the objective measurement and analysis of the data from the close-ended survey would produce a highly acceptable approach to acquiring valid knowledge. Additionally, there was an assumption that emotional intelligence could be measured and quantified. There was also an assumption that there is a relationship between higher levels of emotional intelligence and effective leadership (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Furthermore, there was an assumption that leaders who possess emotional intelligence competency are successful in establishing cultures in which others are motivated to dedicate themselves to a vision and exert additional effort in their duties (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). Another underlying assumption of this study was that the respondents would answer truthfully. To encourage honest responses, the researcher did not collect identifiable information to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Finally, there was an assumption that the knowledge on the nature of the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership can be useful in recruitment, selection, and development of leaders (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

The Belmont Report's Common Rule (1979) mandates that research involving human subjects must respect individuals, guarantee no harm to participants, and ensure fairness. This study's research design was structured in accordance with the principles and standards set forth by The Belmont Report (1979) and the IRB of Youngstown State University, ensuring ethical integrity in the research process. No research was conducted until IRB approval was granted.

Informed Consent was obtained from all participants. The notice of Informed Consent followed U.S. federal guidelines, as outlined by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008). All participants were over the age of 18 and did not demonstrate any impaired mental capacity as determined by the titles they hold in the workplace, thus were deemed qualified to participate in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Collected data was kept securely during the duration of the study. In order to minimize future risks related to confidentiality all recorded materials will be erased within five years following final approval of the research committee. The school district where the researcher is currently employed was excluded from the target sample. Additionally, choosing a survey tool to accurately assess emotional intelligence was a crucial ethical choice to ensure the research yielded valid data. TEIQue-SF has been found to be a credible, valid, and reliable instrument for scholarly research (Petrides, 2009a).

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive study was to document the level of emotional intelligence of principals. The researcher identified three research questions and associated alternative hypotheses as well as the dependent and independent variables of the study. A survey was conducted to collect data regarding the emotional intelligence of principals. The school district where the researcher is currently employed was excluded from the study. Each participant completed the TEIQue-SF and provided demographic information that assisted the researcher in analysis. This research aimed to address existing gaps in the literature on emotional intelligence and principals' leadership by conducting descriptive and inferential data analyses of the data collected. The data analysis is discussed in Chapter Four.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental survey research study was to measure the levels of emotional intelligence of public-school principals in southwest Ohio and understand the relationship between participants' demographic characteristics and levels of emotional intelligence by analyzing data collected from a web-based survey. This study also aimed to understand the level of interest administrators have in future professional learning related to emotional intelligence and leadership. Scholarly literature indicates that the emotional intelligence of school leaders positively impacts teacher wellbeing, job satisfaction, and retention, and thus is a requisite skill that impacts all areas of leadership (Floman et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Kin et al., 2020). The emotional intelligence of principals was examined with regards to job title, length of time in current position, grade levels of the building where they work, community type, gender, years of teaching experience prior to becoming an administrator, age, and previous professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. Utilizing survey research is a suitable and common methodology within the field of applied social research (Trochim et al., 2016). Additionally, a non-experimental design was appropriate to employ as the researcher did not manipulate any conditions, but instead described an attribute, emotional intelligence, which was not manipulated (Field, 2018).

This study provided descriptive data that can be used in future studies regarding the relationship of emotional intelligence and school leadership. Additionally, this chapter presents findings related to the TEIQue-SF and the demographic data collected. The research findings address the following questions about emotional intelligence and principal leadership:

RQ1. To what degree are principals emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF?

H_1 : Emotional intelligence scores of principals vary across the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score.

H_0 : There is no difference in the mean emotional intelligence scores of principals in the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, or global score.

RQ2. Is there a statistical relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics?

H_1 : Emotional intelligence scores of principals vary by demographic factors such as their job title, years of experience in their current position, years of experience as a teacher prior to becoming an administrator, gender, age, the grade levels of buildings, school community type, and their prior professional development regarding leading with emotional intelligence.

H_0 : There is no statistical difference in the emotional intelligence of principals based on the demographic factors of their job title, years of experience in their current position, years of experience as a teacher prior to becoming an administrator, gender, age, the grade levels of buildings, school community type, or their prior professional development regarding leading with emotional intelligence.

RQ3. What topics related to emotional intelligence are principals interested in learning more about?

H_1 : Respondents are interested in professional development topics related to leading with emotional intelligence.

H₀: Respondents are not interested in professional development topics related to emotional intelligence and leadership.

By answering these questions, the researcher aimed to shed light on the complex relationship between emotional intelligence and principal leadership. This research contributes to a better understanding of the potential risks and benefits of school leadership and inform strategies for promoting emotional intelligence among principals.

Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive survey design. Quantitative research uses measurable, numerical relationships to obtain results, and it is often viewed as more accurate than qualitative research, which focuses on non-numerical data (Mohajan, 2020). Quantitative methods such as surveys provide reliable and objective data by quantifying “attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables” (Mohajan, 2020, p. 52). This allows researchers to generalize results from a larger sample population by generating numerical data (Mohajan, 2020). Quantitative research methodology was appropriate for this study since it uses well-established methods to gather and analyze data and test hypotheses (Moroi, 2021). Additionally, the convenience sampling of principals in southwest Ohio used in this research study is a valid approach in research studies with limited time and resources and for exploratory research (Field, 2018). All principals working in districts serviced by the Montgomery County Educational Service Center (MCESC) were invited to participate in the study with the exception of one district due to the researcher’s employment in that district. Principals from that district were excluded from the targeted population to maintain an ethical research study. The purposeful selection of these 16 districts in or near Montgomery County,

Ohio provided a sample of a variety of public-school sizes and types. This sample is an accurate representation of the larger population.

The survey instrument was a combination of an established instrument and newly created questions. The researcher created the item related to respondents' consent to participate. The researcher also created the qualifying question to ensure that respondents were fully licensed and employed full-time as a public-school principal. Any respondent that answered no to either of those questions was excluded from the study. Additionally, the researcher created 10 items regarding respondents' demographics, previous experience with and future interest in professional development on emotional intelligence, and retention rate of their school building from the 2023-2024 school year to the 2024-2025 school year. The remaining 30 items were the TEIQue-SF items (Petrides, 2009a). The instrument was piloted to ensure all items were clear. Through the collection of demographic data from respondents, the researcher was able to analyze the results based on different groups, aiding in the generalizability of the study to a wider range of school districts.

Findings

Data collection for this research study began after receiving approval from the Youngstown State University's Internal Review Board and adhered to its conditions. The voluntary, anonymous, online survey was delivered to 199 building principals. Data was collected via SurveyMonkey, a secure, online platform.

Response rate is an important component of survey design research. Of the 199 surveys distributed, 39 were returned fully completed and all 39 were deemed valid for analysis. According to Fowler's sample size, 132 responses were needed at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error (Rogers, 2023). A response rate equal to or greater than 60% was sought to

strengthen the generalizability of the findings to the broader population (Rogers, 2023). The survey, conducted over a four-week period, yielded a response rate of 20%. This was despite two follow-up reminder emails being sent to encourage participation. The issue of low response rates is a difficult problem in survey research that can impact the validity and reliability of the research study results (Trochim et al., 2016). Low response rates may also introduce bias in a research study (Sivo et al., 2006). Factors like fatigue, privacy, complexity, poor wording, and irrelevance can negatively impact survey responses (Conjointly, 2020). Nonresponse error due to lack of interest or time to participate is a potential bias resulting in some people not being represented in the sample (Sivo et al., 2006). As such, the low response rate (20%) significantly limits the generalizability of the findings. Low response rate can also lead to low power and inaccurate effect size estimation (Sivo et al., 2006).

Emotional intelligence scores of principals were documented using the TEIQue-SF instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to report on the distribution of the demographic characteristics. Additionally, inferential statistics (ANOVA, eta squared, Shapiro-Wilk test, confidence intervals, and Levene's test) were utilized to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the emotional intelligence of principals and their demographic characteristics.

Response Summary

The population for this research study was assistant principals and principals in southwest Ohio. The researcher used non-random, purposive sampling to select the sample population. The target population were assistant principals and principals working in a public-school supported by the MCESC. The MCESC supports 17 school districts. One was excluded due to the researcher's employment there. There were 199 participants identified. The MCESC emailed

those participants a voluntary, online survey. After giving consent and acknowledging that they were fully licensed and fully employed administrators, the participants were directed to answer the demographic questions and the 30 TEIQue-SF emotional intelligence items. Of the 199 participants, 41 responded. Each agreed to participate and each signified that they were fully licensed and fully employed as an administrator. Two of the respondents did not answer all the questions, leaving 39 completed surveys for a response rate of 20%. This response rate falls short of the 60% desired and may affect the study's generalizability (Rogers, 2023).

Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Information

Descriptive statistics are critical in quantitative research, as they ensure the research presents quantitative descriptions in a practical, sensible form (Trochim et al., 2016). Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown of the participants including their current position, gender and age. Of the 39 participants, 12 (30.8%) are assistant principals and 27 (69.2%) are principals. Regarding the gender of the respondents, 21 (53.8%) are female and 18 (46.2%) are male. Finally, regarding the participants' age, one respondent (2.6%) is between 25 and 35 years old, 12 (30.8%) are between 36 and 45 years old, 21 (53.8%) are between 46 and 55 years old, four (10.3%) are between 56 and 65 years old, and one (2.6%) is between 66 and 75 years old.

Table 1*Descriptive Analysis of Current Position, Gender, and Age*

Variable	n	%
Current Position		
Assistant Principal	12	30.8
Principal	27	69.2
Gender		
Female	21	53.8
Male	18	46.2
Age		
25-35	1	2.6
36-45	12	30.8
46-55	21	53.8
56-65	4	10.3
66-75	1	2.6

Note. Based on a sample of $n = 39$ the largest reported position is principals, the largest reported gender is female, and the largest reported age group is 46-55.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the demographic information regarding the participants' experiences including the length of time they have been in their current position, the number of years they were a teacher prior to becoming an administrator, and their prior professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. Regarding the length of time in their current positions, 17 (43.6%) have worked in their current role for five or less years while 22 (56.4%) have worked in their current role for six or more years. Regarding teaching experience prior to becoming an administrator, two (5.1%) taught for 0 to 5 years, 15 (38.5%) taught for 6 to 10 years, 10 (25.6%) taught for 11 to 15 years, seven (17.9%) taught for 16 to 20 years, and five (12.8%) taught for 21 or more years. Finally, 25 (64.1%) of respondents indicated

that they have had previous professional development regarding leading with emotional intelligence while 14 (35.9%) indicated they have not.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Experiences

Variable	n	%
Years in Current Position		
1	3	7.7
2	4	10.3
3	6	15.4
4	2	5.1
5	2	5.1
6-8	6	15.4
9-11	4	10.3
12 or more	12	30.8
Years of Teaching Experience		
0-5	2	5.1
6-10	15	38.5
11-15	10	25.6
16-20	7	17.9
21 or more	5	12.8
Previous PD on EQ		
Yes	25	64.1
No	14	35.9

Note. Based on a sample of $n = 39$ those with 12 or more years in their current position represent the largest group, those who taught for 6 to 10 years represent the largest group, and those who have participated in previous professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership

represent the largest group. Data demonstrating that the majority of the respondents are experienced school leaders is significant.

Table 3 shows the breakdown of school-related demographic information including the grade level of the building and the community type of the school. Eighteen (46.2%) work in a primary or elementary school, 10 (25.6%) work in a middle school or junior high, and 11 (28.2%) work in a high school. Twenty-one participants (53.8%) work in a school in a suburban community, nine (23.1%) work in a school in a rural community, and nine (23.1%) work in a school in an urban community.

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of School-Related Demographics

Variable	n	%
School's Grade Level		
Primary/Elementary	18	46.2
Middle School/Junior High	10	25.6
High	11	28.2
School's Community Type		
Rural	9	23.1
Suburban	21	53.8
Urban	9	23.1

Note. Primary/Elementary schools represent the largest grade level and suburban communities represent the largest community type. This aligns with national data that the ratio of elementary schools to high schools is 3.16 to 1 (MDR Education, 2024).

Research Question One

Research Question One asks, to what degree are principals emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF? In addition to the demographic questions participants also

responded to the TEIQue-SF items. These items were used to generate five emotional intelligence scores: global score, well-being score, self-control score, emotionality score, and sociability score. Table 4 shows the mean, standard deviation, skewness Z score, kurtosis Z score, Shapiro-Wilk significance, and the lower and upper bound 95% confidence intervals for each of the five scores. The Z scores indicate that the data is normally distributed (Aryadoust, 2020). Additionally, the Shapiro-Wilk test (used in small samples to decide if the sample fits a normal distribution) found no statistical significance indicating that the data is normally distributed (Field, 2018; Grande, 2015). The sample means for all five emotional intelligence scores fall between the lower bound and upper bound 95% confidence intervals. This is important as it indicates that there is a 95% probability that the true population value lies within that range of the scores of this sample (Field, 2018). These findings support the hypothesis that emotional intelligence scores of principals working in southwest Ohio schools vary across the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score. Null Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Scores

EQ Score	Mean	Sd	Z_{Skewness}	Z_{Kurtosis}	Shapiro-Wilk Sig.	95% Confidence Lower Bound	95% Confidence Upper Bound
Global Score	5.59	.48	.857	-.543	.459	5.4302	5.7424
Well-being	6.15	.64	-1.584	.230	.079	5.9378	6.3528
Self-control	5.31	.70	-.402	-.090	.261	5.0840	5.5399
Emotionality	5.53	.65	-1.029	.337	.678	5.3182	5.7395
Sociability	5.06	.71	1.195	-1.087	.055	4.8333	5.2949

Note. The Z scores for skewness and kurtosis and the Shapiro-Wilk significance show that the data are normally distributed.

To assess the homogeneity of variance, Levene's test was conducted (Quantitative Specialists, 2014). Levene's test is used to assess whether the variances of two or more groups are equal and is required for ANOVA tests. Table 5 shows the results of Levene's test.

Table 5

Levene's Significance Levels of Emotional Intelligence and Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	Global Score	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
Current Position	.630	.627	.416	.422	.908
Experience in Current Position	.150	.063	.242	.005	.086
Grade Levels of School	.496	.579	.143	.071	.378
Community Type	.090	.515	.914	.008	.022
Gender	.456	.837	.561	.433	.130
Teaching Experience	.468	.236	.242	.258	.729
Age	.900	.181	.935	.766	.153
Previous PD on EQ	.146	.075	.777	.284	.198
Retention Rate	.124	.097	.813	.245	.574

Note. The variances of all groups except for community type and sociability and experience in current position and emotionality are equal.

Research Question Two

Research Question Two asks, is there a statistical relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics?

ANOVA. As the data is normally distributed and assumptions are met for homogeneity of variance with the exception of community type and sociability as well as experience in current position and emotionality, ANOVA analyses are appropriate. ANOVA tests are used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of two or more groups of data (Field, 2018). Both ANOVA and multiple regression analysis are appropriate for categorical independent variables. ANOVA was deemed a more appropriate analysis for the study's research questions that explore if there are statistically significant differences in the average values of the dependent variable across the different categories of the independent variable. As the focus of the analysis was on comparing groups rather than examining relationships and making predictions, ANOVA analysis was regarded to be a more appropriate choice than multiple regression analysis. At the commonly accepted significance level of $p < .05$, a statistically significant relationship was found between gender and sociability scores (Quantitative Specialists, 2017). Furthermore, a statistical significance is found when analyzing teacher retention rates and the emotional intelligence score of self-control. Table 6 shows the significance levels from the ANOVAs.

Table 6*ANOVA Significance Levels of Emotional Intelligence and Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic Characteristic	Global Score	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
Current Position	.125	.452	.154	.480	.352
Experience in Current Position	.949	.967	.590	.710	.967
Grade Levels of School	.638	.876	.972	.596	.694
Community Type	.131	.744	.404	.128	.295
Gender	.204	.425	.982	.195	.049
Teaching Experience	.201	.158	.666	.153	.155
Age	.267	.188	.733	.415	.405
Previous PD on EQ	.378	.123	.889	.420	.841
Retention Rates	.401	.647	.009	.741	.480

Note. A statistically significant relationship was found between teacher retention rates and self-control scores in emotional intelligence. These relationships are further discussed in Chapter Five.

Effect Size. After identifying statistically significant relationships using ANOVA, eta squared values were calculated to assess the effect size and practical significance of these findings (Field, 2018). Eta squared is used in ANOVA to measure effect size, indicating the proportion of variance in the dependent variable attributable to the independent variable (Shaker, 2023). A value of <0.01 is negligible, <0.06 is small, <0.14 is medium, and >0.14 is large (Shaker, 2023). Table 7 shows the eta squared for the five dependent variables and the nine independent variables.

Table 7*Eta Squared Values of ANOVA*

Demographic Characteristic	Global Score	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
Current Position	.062	.015	.054	.014	.023
Experience in Current Position	.063	.054	.154	.128	.054
Grade Levels of School	.025	.007	.002	.028	.020
Community Type	.107	.016	.049	.108	.066
Gender	.043	.017	.000	.045	.100
Teaching Experience	.157	.172	.066	.174	.173
Age	.138	.161	.056	.106	.108
Previous PD on EQ	.021	.063	.001	.018	.001
Retention Rates	.079	.046	.279	.035	.067

Note. A small, medium, or large effect size is noted for 40 of the 45 values. This is discussed further in Chapter Five.

The effect sizes for the independent variable years of teaching experience should be noted. A large effect size is found for the four emotional intelligence scores of global score, well-being, emotionality, and sociability and a medium effect size for the fifth (self-control). The highest mean scores for global score (5.92), well-being (6.60), and sociability (5.67) were found in those with 16 to 20 years of teaching experience. The highest mean score for self-control was found in those with 11-15 years of teaching experience. The highest mean score for emotionality was found in those with 21 or more years of teaching experience. Hiring implications for these findings are discussed in Chapter Five.

Tukey's HSD. Teacher retention rates were categorized into four groups: 0-79%, 80-89%, 90-95%, and 96-100%. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey's HSD revealed a significant difference between the group reporting teacher retention rates of 0-79% and the group reporting teacher retention rates of 90-95%, ($p = .006$). Specifically, participants reporting teacher retention rates of 90-95% ($M = 5.71$, $SD = .62$) demonstrated significantly higher self-control scores than those reporting teacher retention rates of 0-79% ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .73$). There were no other significant differences between the groups.

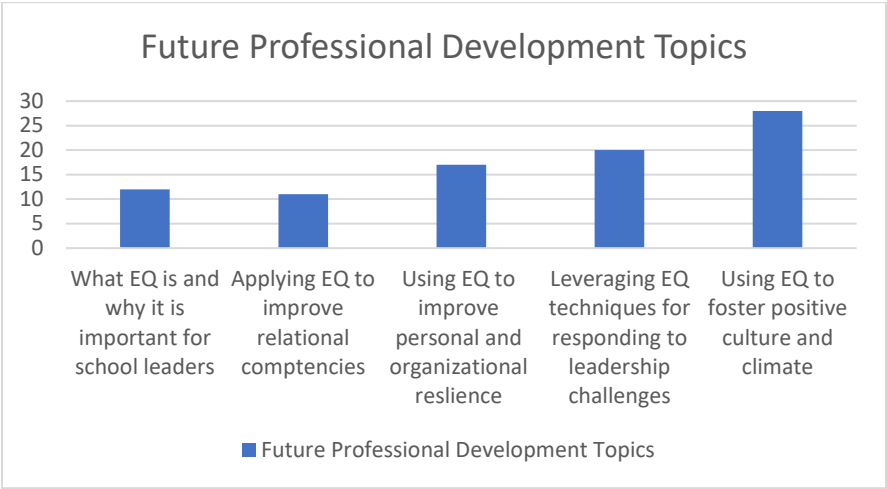
The data confirms that Null Hypothesis 2 is rejected. The alternative hypothesis that emotional intelligence scores principals working in southwest Ohio schools vary by demographic factors such as their job title, years of experience in their current position, years of experience as a teacher prior to becoming an administrator, gender, age, the grade levels of buildings, school community type, and their prior professional development regarding leading with emotional intelligence is accepted.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three asks, what topics related to emotional intelligence are principals interested in learning more about? Thirty-five of the 39 participants expressed interest in future professional development focused on emotional intelligence and leadership. As such, Null Hypothesis 3 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis that more than half of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are interested in professional development on leading with emotional intelligence and leadership is accepted. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the topics in which they are interested.

Figure 2

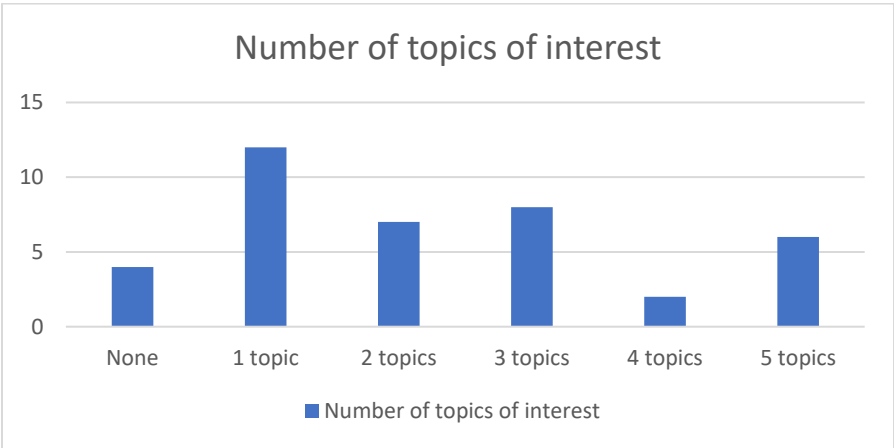
Topics of Interest for Future Professional Development on Emotional Intelligence



Note. Using emotional intelligence to foster a positive school culture and climate represented the largest interest regarding future professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership. In addition to identifying specific topics of interest, the data also reveal the number of topics participants were willing to explore, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Number of Topics of Interest for Future Professional Development on Emotional Intelligence



Note: The most frequent response is that the participants are interested in one of the five topics related to emotional intelligence and leadership.

Interpretation of Findings

For Research Question One, respondents' mean scores ranged from 5.06 (sociability) to 6.15 (well-being), with self-control, emotionality, and global scores falling in between. The results of the analysis indicate that the null hypothesis should be rejected. There is sufficient evidence to support the alternative hypothesis that the emotional intelligence scores of principals vary across the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score. These findings align with other research findings that mean scores of the five emotional intelligence scores vary with individuals possessing unique profiles of emotional intelligence strengths and weaknesses (Alkhayr et al., 2022; Barrios, 2016; Furnham et al., 2021; Goleman, 1995; Mvududu, 2020). Furthermore, the data shows that there is opportunity for growth in all categories of emotional intelligence. Researchers believe that emotional intelligence can be developed through motivation, extended practice, and feedback (Goleman, 1998; Lopez, 2024; Patti & Stern, 2023).

Relating to Research Question Two, the ANOVA analyses indicate that there is a statistical significance found between retention rates and self-control (.009) and between gender and sociability (.049) (Table 6). Additionally, the eta squared values indicate a small, medium, or large effect size is noted for 40 of the 45 values (Table 7). The results of the analysis indicate that the null hypothesis for the second research question should be rejected. There is sufficient evidence to support the alternative hypothesis that emotional intelligence scores of principals vary by demographic factors. These findings indicate the essentialness of professional development being personalized (Davis et al., 2020).

Further, these findings align with scholarly literature regarding gender and sociability facets such as emotion management, assertiveness, and social awareness (Christov-Moore et al.,

2014; Fernández-Abascal, & Martín-Díaz, 2019; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Goleman, 1995; Kitsios et al., 2022; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Patti and Stern (2023) define social awareness as “the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others” (p. 106). Furthermore, they state that leaders’ social awareness determines the level of trust that others have, the relationships they form, and the culture of their schools/districts (Patti & Stern, 2023). This finding may be a result of societal double standards regarding gender and behavior rather than innate or developed ability (Christov-Moore et al., 2014).

These findings also align with scholarly literature regarding self-control and employee retention. For example, while the absence of self-control is more often observed than its presence, self-control can be observed (Goleman, 1998). Remaining calm and composed during stressful interactions and situations, effective communication, and successful time management are ways that self-control can be observed (Goleman, 1998). Leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to establish trusting relationships and a positive work environment which positively impact employees’ job satisfaction and retention (Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 2004; Lam & O’Higgins, 2012; Lee et al., 2022; Sundheim, 2013). Self-control, as a component of emotional intelligence, has been shown to play a critical role in employee retention (Kooker et al., 2007).

Regarding Research Question Three, nearly 90% of respondents indicated that they are interested in future professional development regarding emotional intelligence and leadership (Figure 3). Moreover, more than half of the respondents indicated that they are interested in two or more topics related to emotional intelligence and leadership (Figure 3). Additionally, respondents collectively indicated interest in all five potential professional development topics with the topic of using emotional intelligence to foster a positive school culture and climate

being the most popular (Figure 2). There is sufficient evidence to support the alternative hypothesis that respondents are interested in professional development topics related to leading with emotional intelligence. This finding aligns with scholarly literature regarding interest and demand for emotional intelligence professional development. While there is little research outlining what specific professional development topics related to emotional intelligence employees are interested in, The World Economic Forum (2023) found that qualities associated with emotional intelligence are a high priority will continue to be so in the near future. As a result, more companies and organizations are offering emotional intelligence development (Kotsou et al., 2019).

Summary

Chapter Four presented the resulting data from this quantitative, non-experimental survey research study. Public-school principals and assistant principals in Ohio were the targeted population and the sample was drawn from southwest Ohio. There were 199 surveys distributed to principals and assistant principals in this area with 39 returned with valid responses. Thus, the response rate was approximately 20%. Participants were asked to respond to nine demographic questions, select topics of interest for future professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership, and respond to the 30 items of the TEIQue-SF.

The first research question sought to document the degree to which principals are emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF. The findings show that mean scores of emotional intelligence are: 5.59 for global score, 6.15 for well-being, 5.31 for self-control, 5.53 for emotionality, and 5.06 for sociability. These are all above the theoretical mean of 3.5 (London Psychometric Laboratory, 2022). The results indicate that participants' emotional intelligence scores exceeded the theoretical mean of 3.5 across all categories.

The second research question sought to document any statistical relationships between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics. The demographic characteristics include current position, years in current position, grade levels of the school, community type of the school's community, gender, years of teaching experience, age, if the participants have had previous professional development on emotional intelligence, and the staff retention rate from the 2023-24 to the 2024-25 school years. Descriptive statistics were run to analyze these groups. Demographically, the majority of respondents were principals, female, aged 46-55, with 6-10 years of teaching experience prior to becoming administrators. Most worked in suburban primary/elementary schools and had prior professional development on emotional intelligence. Finally, the largest group had a retention rate between 90% and 95%.

The third research question sought to identify topics related to emotional intelligence that principals are interested in learning more about. Approximately 90% of respondents indicated that they are interested in one or more topics. More than half the respondents indicated their interest in two or more topics. The most common topic of interest was using emotional intelligence to improve building climate and culture.

The data were found to be normally distributed and all but two categories meet the standards for homogeneity of variance. Inferential statistics were run on the data to compare the differences between the demographic groups. The ANOVA showed a significance of 0.049 of gender and sociability and a highly significant effect of self-control on teacher retention ($p = 0.009$). The eta squared revealed 19 small, 14 medium, and 7 large effect sizes. Due to the small sample size, there is a concern of a Type I error in this study. Chapter Five will delve into the implications of these findings, explore limitations such as the small sample size, and provide recommendations for future research and practical applications in educational leadership.

Chapter V

Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

It has long been understood that high-quality teachers are vital for student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). Unfortunately, teacher retention has become a critical issue demanding immediate attention (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; NEA, 2022). While there are many causes of teacher attrition, principals can increase teacher retention by leading with emotional intelligence (Floman et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). This is because leaders' emotional intelligence impacts teacher wellbeing, job satisfaction, and retention by establishing and maintaining a positive school culture (Floman et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). As such, the proposed school leadership competency model for the era of Education 4.0 illustrates the requisite nature of emotional intelligence in all areas of school leadership (Kin et al., 2020). The purpose of this research study was to measure the levels of emotional intelligence of public-school principals in southwest Ohio, a region that mirrors broader national trends in educational leadership. Moreover, the study sought to address a gap in knowledge by investigating the emotional intelligence of principals in public schools located in southwest Ohio, their interest in future professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership, and the relationship between their levels of emotional intelligence and teacher retention as well as the relationship between participants' demographic characteristics and their levels of emotional intelligence. The focus on principals in southwest Ohio provides a specific regional context that can offer insights into how these findings might be generalizable to other regions with similar demographic and educational profiles. The findings of this research study have practical implications for leadership training, hiring practices, and educational policy as emotional intelligence is essential for effective leadership as higher levels of organizational trust

are developed by emotionally intelligent principals (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Hsieh et al., 2024). Emotional intelligence includes skills that can be learned (Goleman, 1998).

The study sought to answer the following three research questions:

RQ1. To what degree are principals emotionally intelligent as measured by the TEIQue-SF?

RQ2. Is there a statistical relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic characteristics?

RQ3. What topics related to emotional intelligence are principals interested in learning more about improving building climate and culture to increase teacher retention rates?

Relating to the research questions, the research hypotheses for this study are:

- Principals' emotional intelligence scores are hypothesized to vary across the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score, with the null hypothesis stating no statistical difference exists across these categories.
- Principals' emotional intelligence scores are hypothesized to vary based on demographic factors including job title, years of experience in their current position, prior teaching experience, age, grade levels of buildings, school community type, and prior professional development in leading with emotional intelligence, while the null hypothesis states no statistical difference exists based on these demographic factors.
- It is hypothesized that more than half of respondents are interested in professional development related to leading with emotional intelligence, with the null hypothesis stating that half or fewer are interested.

Descriptive and inferential statistical tests were conducted to examine the relationship between independent (demographic questions) and dependent variables (levels of emotional

intelligence). This chapter discusses the findings of those tests, conclusions drawn from the data, limitations of the findings, implications for leadership, and suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

The general population for this research study was principals and assistant principals in Ohio public-schools. The convenience sampling method involved surveying 199 public-school principals in southwest Ohio, with 39 completed surveys received resulting in a response rate of approximately 20%. There were two additional respondents who started the survey but did not finish. The reasons why some did not participate in the survey may include a lack of time especially given that the start of the school year is a busy time and concerns that the survey was not truly anonymous despite the survey not collecting any identifiable information. The response rate and the relatively small sample size may affect the generalizability of the results; however, the findings still offer valuable insights. The sample's composition, including variables such as community type, principals' age, grade levels of school, job title, years in current position, and years of teaching experience may have influenced the results, particularly since these variables did not show statistical significance. This lack of significance could imply that these variables do not have a strong impact on the emotional intelligence of principals or that other factors play a more critical role.

The first part of the survey collected demographic information about the respondents as well as potential topics of professional development that they were interested in, and the teacher retention rate in their building from the 2023-2024 school year to the 2024-2025 school year. Descriptive analysis indicated that the majority of respondents were principals, female, aged 46-55, with 6-10 years of teaching experience prior to becoming administrators who worked in suburban primary/elementary schools and had prior professional development on emotional

intelligence (Table 8). Finally, the largest group had a retention rate between 90% and 95%. These demographic factors could influence the results in several ways. For instance, the predominance of female respondents might reflect trends or challenges within female educational leadership. The age range and previous teaching experience suggest a wealth of practical knowledge, which may bias the responses towards more experienced perspectives. Additionally, the focus on suburban, primary schools could skew findings toward specific challenges or resources relative to that setting, potentially overlooking challenges faced by urban or rural schools. Prior training in emotional intelligence might indicate a predisposition towards valuing certain professional development topics, affecting the overall interest areas reported in the survey. Finally, the high retention rates could influence perceptions and attitudes toward teacher retention strategies, possibly highlighting best practices already in place within these schools.

Table 8*Descriptive Analysis of Survey Respondents*

Variable	Response	%
Job Title	Principal	69.2
Gender	Female	53.8
Age	46-55	53.8
Years in Current Position	12 or more	30.8
Years of Teaching Experience	6-10	38.5
Previous PD on Emotional Intelligence	Yes	64.1
School's Grade Levels	Primary/Elementary	46.2
Community Type	Suburban	53.8
Retention Rate	90-95%	35.9

Note. Approximately two-thirds of respondents were principals and had previous professional development on emotional intelligence.

The second part of the survey consisted of the 30 items from the TEIQue-SF, a self-rating measurement of trait emotional intelligence. Single, complete tests like the TEIQue-SF are stronger predictors of trait emotional intelligence (O'Connor et al., 2017). The TEIQue-SF uses a scale ranging from 1 = Completely Disagree up to 7 = Completely Agree. Descriptive statistics indicated that the emotional intelligence scores of the respondents vary across the categories of well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, and global score resulting in the rejection of Null Hypothesis 1 (Table 9).

Table 9*Descriptive Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Mean Scores*

EQ Score	Mean
Global Score	5.59
Well-being	6.15
Self-control	5.31
Emotionality	5.53
Sociability	5.06

Note. Emotional intelligence means scores vary from 5.06 to 6.15.

Inferential statistical analyses conducted included Levene's test which assessed whether the variances of two or more groups are equal as this is required for ANOVA. Results indicated that the variances of all groups except for community type and sociability and experience in current position and emotionality were equal (Table 5). An ANOVA was then conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the means of two or more groups of data. A statistically significant relationship was found between gender and sociability (.049). A statistically significant relationship was also found between teacher retention and self-control (.009). As such, Null Hypothesis 2 is rejected. These results imply that higher levels of self-control among principals can lead to increased teacher retention, which in turn can enhance the stability and effectiveness of the school.

After identifying statistically significant relationships using ANOVA, eta squared values were calculated to assess the effect size and practical significance of the findings. Forty of the 45 values were noted as having a small, medium, or large effect size (Table 7). A large effect size was observed between the dependent variable self-control and the independent variable retention rates (.279). A medium effect size was observed between the dependent variable sociability and

the independent variable gender (.100). These results suggest practical implications for school leaders.

Research data also indicated that Null Hypothesis 3 is rejected as 90% of respondents indicated interest in future professional development regarding emotional intelligence and leadership. Respondents indicated they are most interested in professional development in using emotional intelligence to foster a positive school culture and climate (Figure 1).

The practical implications of this study are profound. Higher levels of self-control in principals are associated with better retention rates among teachers. This suggests that principals who exhibit strong self-control can create a more stable and supportive work environment, which is crucial for retaining high-quality teachers. Understanding and developing self-control can, therefore, be a key focus in leadership training programs. When forming teams, organizations could consider the potential impact of gender composition on team dynamics and ensure a balance of social styles to maximize team effectiveness. Additionally, the findings can raise awareness of potential gender differences in sociability, promoting greater understanding and sensitivity in interpersonal interactions and leadership styles. Finally, state organizations, counties, and district leaders can reference the study's findings to promote offering high-interest professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership.

This research study addressed a gap in knowledge by investigating the emotional intelligence of principals in public schools located in southwest Ohio and their interest in future professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership. The findings of this research study have practical implications for leadership training, hiring practices, and educational policy as emotional intelligence is essential for effective leadership as higher levels of organizational trust are developed by emotionally intelligence principals (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Hsieh et al.,

2024). Emotional intelligence includes skills that can be learned (Goleman, 1998). In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in school leadership and provides a foundation for further research and professional development in this area.

Conclusions

Research Question One

After completing the survey's demographic questions, respondents completed the TEIQue-SF, a measurement of trait emotional intelligence. This instrument was appropriate to use as it is a self-report measurement of trait emotional intelligence. Statistical analyses confirmed the alternative hypothesis related to Research Question One that emotional intelligence scores of principals vary across the categories of global score, well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability. The mean scores were as follows: global score was 5.59, well-being was 6.15, self-control was 5.31, emotionality was 5.53, and sociability was 5.06. These findings indicate that principals' levels of emotional intelligence vary in the different areas rather than being the same across the five areas. The varying emotional intelligence scores across the five areas may influence principals' leadership styles or effectiveness. Principals with higher well-being might create more positive school environments, while those with higher self-control could manage stress and communicate more effectively. Additionally, the connection between self-control and teacher retention provides actionable insights for districts or professional development programs. By fostering principals' self-control, districts may improve teacher retention rates, thereby ensuring a more stable and motivated teaching workforce. These findings align with existing literature outlining the importance of trust, collaboration, and effective communication in establishing a positive school culture and the relationship between these leadership characteristics and teacher retention (Baptiste, 2019; Evers-Gerdes & Siegle, 2021;

Hendershott & Hendershott, 2020; Kalkan et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2010; Scallon et al., 2021; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). These findings lead to the insights from Research Question Two, where the demographic factors and their impact on emotional intelligence scores were explored.

Research Question Two

Using the data collected from the TEIQue-SF items, statistical analyses confirmed the alternative hypothesis related to Research Question Two that emotional scores of principals vary across the demographic categories. Specifically, the study found a statistically significant relationship between self-control and teacher retention. These results support the idea of the importance of principals' development of emotional intelligence as an opportunity to retain high-quality teachers. The connection between emotional intelligence and teacher retention highlights the broader importance of fostering self-control and emotional awareness in school leadership (Goleman, 2011; Goleman et al., 2013; Hayes & Burkett, 2021; Mahfouz et al., 2019; Patti & Stern, 2023). This insight further emphasizes the need for professional development, as highlighted in Research Question Three's findings.

Research Question Three

In part one of the survey, respondents indicated their interest in future professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. Ninety percent indicated interest in such future training. This data confirmed the alternative hypothesis related to Research Question Three that more than half of the respondents were interested in professional development topics related to leading with emotional intelligence. Data indicated that using emotional intelligence to foster a positive school culture and climate is the area of most interest. These results support the idea that university principal preparation programs, state organizations, counties, and specific

districts should provide professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership. These findings align with existing literature regarding the need for revisions to university principal preparation programs and professional development offerings (Hayes & Burkett, 2021; Pannell & Sergi-McBrayer, 2020). Given these findings, it is recommended that universities and districts integrate comprehensive professional development programs focusing on specific aspects of emotional intelligence (Kin & Kareem, 2019). These programs should emphasize key components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills.

Emphasizing self-awareness can help principals recognize their emotional states and understand how these emotions influence their thoughts and behavior (Henkel et al., 2019; Whitaker, 2020). Training on self-regulation can equip them with strategies to manage stress, control impulses, and navigate challenging situations with composure (Floman et al., 2024; Mahfouz et al., 2019). Developing empathy can enable school leaders to understand and share the feelings of their staff and students, thereby strengthening relationships and building a supportive school community (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Patti & Stern, 2023; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Scouller, 2016). Lastly, enhancing social skills can improve communication, conflict resolution, and team collaboration, which are essential for effective leadership (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

To implement these training initiatives effectively, a multi-faceted approach is recommended (Sørensen et al., 2023). This could include workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions led by experts in emotional intelligence and leadership (Goddard et al., 2020). Incorporating real-life scenarios can provide practical applications of the concepts learned. Additionally, ongoing support through coaching and mentoring can ensure that principals continue to develop their emotional intelligence skills over time (Hayes, 2019; Young, 2019).

Online modules and resources can also be made available to allow for flexible and accessible learning opportunities. By investing in these targeted professional development programs, universities and districts can cultivate emotionally intelligent leaders who are better equipped to create positive school cultures, retain high-quality teachers, and ultimately enhance the educational experience for all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the interconnected findings from the three research questions collectively underscore the vital importance of emotional intelligence in educational leadership. Principals' emotional intelligence not only varies across different dimensions but also significantly impacts their leadership styles, overall school climate, and teacher retention rates (Chen & Guo, 2018; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Miao et al., 2021). The strong interest in professional development related to emotional intelligence further highlights the need for targeted training programs to enhance principals' self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. By prioritizing these aspects, universities and districts can cultivate leaders who are adept at fostering positive school environments, supporting teacher retention, and ultimately advancing the educational experiences of both staff and students. These insights reaffirm the necessity for continuous investment in the emotional development of school leaders to achieve sustained educational excellence (Patti & Stern, 2023).

Discussion

This discussion is focused on the impact that emotional intelligence has on leadership, school climate, and teacher retention. The data from this research study support the notion that emotional intelligence scores (global score, well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability) vary. The median score for a 7-point Likert scale is 3.5. The mean scores were all above 3.5 but vary from 5.06 to 6.15. The mean global score was 5.59. The mean well-being

score was 6.15. The mean self-control score was 5.31. The mean emotionality score was 5.53.

The mean sociability score was 5.06. These findings align with existing literature that state that each person possesses a unique profile of emotional intelligence with strengths and weaknesses that differ from other people (Alkhayr et al., 2022; Barrios, 2016; Frias et al., 2021; Furnham et al., 2021; Goleman, 1995; Mvududu, 2020). While each person is different, it is important to consider that emotional intelligence can be learned (Goleman, 1998). With a growth mindset, leaders can strengthen their overall emotional intelligence. It is recommended that facilitators of trainings on emotional intelligence be presented from a growth mindset that encourages participants to lean into their strengths while working to improve upon weaker areas.

Self-Control and Teacher Retention

Additionally, analysis of the nine independent variables and the five dependent variables revealed a statistical significance between teacher retention rates and self-control and a large effect size was found. The mean scores for self-control ranged from 4.57 for those who reported a teacher retention rate lower than 80% to 5.71 for those who reported a teacher retention rate between 90 and 95%. This finding aligns with previous research. Anderson (2019) found that leaders' self-control is found to be the most important predictor of teachers' perception of positive school climate, stating, "a school leader contributes to a positive school climate by nourishing trusting and caring relationships and practicing empathetic social interactions" (Anderson, 2019, p. 40). This finding highlights the criticalness and urgency of universal availability of and participation in professional development related to emotional intelligence and leadership for current principals and university principal preparation/licensure programs, as emotional intelligence is found to be one way that principals can positively impact building culture and teacher retention. This finding has an impact on leadership training both in university

principal preparation programs and in professional development offerings offered by the state, counties, and school districts for those currently working as principals. It is recommended that universities include emotional intelligence training in their principal preparation programs. Additionally, this finding has significant implications for hiring practices. It is recommended that district leaders strive to hire principals who possess a high level of emotional intelligence specifically in the area of self-control.

Years of Teaching Experience

The data also revealed a large effect size for the dependent variable of years of teaching experience for the four emotional intelligence scores of global score (.157), well-being (.172), emotionality (.174), and sociability (.173). A medium effect size was found for years of teaching experience and self-control (.066). While there is a gap in the research regarding the optimal number of years one should teach before becoming a principal, these findings suggest important hiring implications for principal positions. Specifically, hiring practices might benefit from considering candidates with substantial teaching experience (more than 15 years). This experience may impact their effectiveness in leadership roles. These insights highlight the necessity for districts to reflect on the teaching experience of potential principals during their hiring processes.

Gender and Sociability

The data also revealed a statistical significance between gender and sociability and a medium effect size. The mean sociability of females was 5.27 while the mean sociability score for males was 4.82. This finding relates to existing literature. Mainly, sociability is among traits that teachers stated to promote their overall level of organizational commitment (Todd, 2022). Additionally, females have been found to have higher scores of emotional intelligence traits such

as sociability (Benson et al., 2014). Traits such as sociability are also found to influence one's default leadership style (Phipps & Prieto, 2011; Schreyer et al., 2021). These traits collectively influence leadership styles and outcomes.

Transformational Leadership

Furthermore, emotional intelligence is needed for transformational leadership (Benson et al., 2014; Frias et al., 2021). As a result, it should be no surprise that women have been found to engage in transformational leadership more often than men (Eagly et al., 1992). High levels of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership are associated with employee empowerment, wellbeing at work, and job satisfaction (Frias et al., 2021). Furthermore, emotional intelligence training has been deemed the most effective method for improving leaders' emotional intelligence and transformational leadership as it provides participants with tools to be successful and encourages them to use them in their work environments (Frias et al., 2021). This finding has implications for leadership training as it highlights the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence skills such as sociability. It is recommended that district leaders reflect upon the type of leadership needed in principals and consider this as they hire new principals and provide professional development for those currently serving as principals.

Professional Development

The research study also revealed a remarkable degree of interest in professional development on emotional intelligence and leadership. Ninety percent of respondents indicated their interest. Most respondents were interested in learning how to use emotional intelligence to foster a positive school culture and climate. Existing research has found such professional development to be effective. Additionally, research has found that principals require professional

learning experiences that enable them to create and maintain collaborative working environments to retain high-quality teachers (Berry et al., 2021). Increased job satisfaction, improved staff satisfaction, enhanced workload management abilities, and reduced turnover have been found to be long term outcomes of emotional intelligence training (Frias et al., 2021).

This finding also has implications for district leaders and regional ESCs. Districts that provide personalized, differentiated learning for teachers should extend the same opportunities to principals. Additionally, professional development opportunities should connect to both principals' experiences and their work context. This professional development could be offered via workshops in the summer utilizing experiential learning techniques, such as role-playing, simulations, and group projects, to help current principals practice and develop their emotional intelligence skills. Subsequently, on the job coaching could be provided to increase the relevance of the learning. For example, the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators could include this coaching in the Administrator Mentoring Program (OASSA, n.d.). Targeted professional programs such as the University of Cincinnati's OLi4 could incorporate emotional intelligence training (Ohio Inclusive Instructional Leadership, 2024).

Additionally, this finding has implications for university principal preparation/licensure programs. These programs could offer stand-alone courses on emotional intelligence covering topics like self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Programs could also embed emotional intelligence learning in other courses. For example, communication courses can emphasize active listening and empathetic communication, while leadership courses can focus on the role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership. The findings of this research study support the study's theoretical framework, School Leadership Competency Model for the era of

Education 4.0, that emotional intelligence is a requisite leadership skill that enhances all others (Kin et al., 2020).

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership

Overall, these findings align with previous research regarding leadership styles and the importance of emotional intelligence in school leadership. By employing transformational leadership, school leaders inspire a collective vision, recognize accomplishments, build trust, and encourage creativity (Northouse, 2021). By creating and maintaining a positive school climate built on collaboration, trust, and respect, school leaders can create a more supportive work environment for teachers (Ford et al., 2019). Research has shown that emotional intelligence aligns with transformational leadership (Chen & Guo, 2018; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Miao et al., 2021). Understanding and managing one's own emotions while at the same time influencing the emotions of others requires emotional intelligence (Frias et al., 2021). Emotional intelligence is a requisite skill for fostering such a school culture and climate, thus is an essential leadership skill (Kin & Kareem, 2019; Kin et al., 2020). Research has found that organizations benefit from implementing activities that promote the development of emotional intelligence and the use of transformational leadership (Frias et al., 2021). Findings from this research study also indicate the importance of professional development being personalized (Davis et al., 2020; Fairman et al., 2022). Moreover, accounting for principals' prior experiences and relating professional development to the school district's context and the principals' practices allows the training to be better interpreted and more effective (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Future educational leaders must recognize, embrace, and internalize the evolving roles of school leadership. As public education is a rapidly and constantly changing environment, the primary function of principals is to provide stability and direction, acting as a consistent point of reference and guidance for staff

who may be experiencing confusion and uncertainty (Brauckmann et al., 2023). As a result, personalized professional development anchored in one's context is critically important (Brauckmann et al., 2023). These findings highlight the importance of offering professional development opportunities related to emotional intelligence and leadership with implications for university principal preparation programs, state organizations, counties, and school district leaders. These findings are particularly relevant to addressing teacher burnout and the needs of rural, suburban, and urban school settings.

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence in Rural, Suburban, and Urban Schools

Emotional intelligence, especially self-control, can play a crucial role in mitigating burnout by helping school leaders create supportive environments. In rural schools where resources are limited and teachers may feel isolated, emotional intelligence training can foster a sense of community and support. In suburban settings where schools deal with diverse populations, emotional intelligence can help leaders promote inclusiveness and understanding. Urban schools, with their high student-teacher ratios and unique challenges, benefit from principals with high emotional intelligence, fostering a positive school climate that reduces burnout and improves retention. Overall, emphasizing emotional intelligence in leadership training is essential for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by educators. This approach can create more resilient, supportive environments that enhance teacher retention and improve student outcomes across all school settings.

Emotional Intelligence in Context

Specific examples illustrate how gender, sociability, and transformational leadership manifest in practice. For instance, female principals often excel in transformational leadership roles due to their higher sociability scores. Consider a female principal who prioritizes open communication and collaboration among her staff. By fostering an environment where teachers

feel heard and valued, she can inspire a collective vision and motivate her team to strive for excellence. This approach not only enhances job satisfaction but also leads to innovative teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

Similarly, a study by Phipps and Prieto (2011) highlights that sociable leaders are more likely to engage in transformational leadership behaviors such as mentoring, supporting, and developing their followers. This is evident in the case of a school leader who regularly holds team-building activities and professional development sessions aimed at enhancing teachers' skills and fostering a sense of community. Such practices not only boost morale but also create a more cohesive and effective teaching staff, ultimately benefiting the students.

The finding that self-control had the largest effect size is particularly significant for principals in practice. Self-control in leadership is crucial for maintaining a positive school climate. For example, a principal with strong self-control can effectively manage stress and remain composed during crises, which sets a calm tone for the entire school. This ability to stay level-headed is essential in making thoughtful decisions that prioritize the well-being of both staff and students.

Moreover, principals who exhibit high levels of self-control are better equipped to handle conflicts and difficult conversations. They are able to listen empathetically, consider different perspectives, and respond in a way that de-escalates tension and promotes resolution. This not only helps in maintaining a harmonious school environment but also models constructive behavior for teachers and students alike. In practice, high self-control enables principals to implement consistent and fair disciplinary measures, create structured and predictable school routines, and establish clear expectations for both teachers and students. This consistency is key in building trust and respect within the school community, which is foundational for a positive

school climate. Given these points, it becomes clear why self-control is such a crucial component of effective leadership. By integrating emotional intelligence training that emphasizes self-control, principals can develop the resilience needed to navigate the complexities of their role. This, in turn, supports teacher retention and fosters an environment where both teachers and students can thrive.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This research study was conducted with several underlying assumptions, limitations, and delimitations that should be acknowledged.

Assumptions

One key assumption was that the respondents would provide honest and accurate responses to the TEIQue-SF self-report questionnaire and the demographic questions. This assumption is necessary because the integrity of self-reported data relies heavily on the truthfulness and self-awareness of the participants (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007). Without this assumption, the validity of the data collected would be compromised, leading to unreliable results.

Another assumption was that the emotional intelligence scores obtained from the TEIQue-SF accurately reflect the participants' true levels of emotional intelligence (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020). This assumption is reasonable because the TEIQue-SF is a widely recognized and validated tool for measuring emotional intelligence. Assuming its accuracy is essential for ensuring that the study's findings are based on reliable measurements.

Additionally, it was assumed that participants had a sufficient level of experience and knowledge relevant to their roles as principals. This assumption is necessary because the study focuses on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. If

participants lacked the requisite experience or knowledge their responses might not accurately reflect the dynamics being studied.

Furthermore, the study assumed that the external environment and situational contexts, such as the time of year or current events, would not significantly impact the participants' responses. This assumption is crucial because it allows for the interpretation of the data within a relatively stable context, minimizing external variables that could distort the study's findings.

Lastly, an assumption was made that the TEIQue-SF captures a stable aspect of emotional intelligence that does not fluctuate significantly over short periods. This is necessary because the study uses a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. Without this assumption, the study would need to account for potential variations in emotional intelligence, complicating the analysis and interpretation of the results. In addition to these assumptions, this research study also has limitations.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. While convenience sampling is often employed due to it giving researchers quick and inexpensive access to a sample, it can weaken a study's external validity (Trochim et al., 2016). External validity indicates how well study results from a sample can be applied to larger or different groups of people (Findley et al., 2021). Generalizability emphasizes how well results from a study can be applied within the same population (Findley et al., 2021). In this research study, the sample size was small, and the response rate was low, which is also a threat to external validity and limits the generalizability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Trochim et al., 2016). Due to the study's low response rate, this study's external validity is compromised. Non-response bias could mean that the data only represents those who chose to participate, potentially differing significantly from non-respondents, thus limiting the

generalizability of findings. The lower the response rate, the more likely a survey's results are to have sampling bias (*How Response Rates Can Affect the Outcome of a Study and What to Do About It - TASO*, 2024). Additionally, while self-report measures are a common tool in research, their use can introduce response bias, as participants' responses may not be accurate (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007). This may be due to social desirability bias or lack of self-awareness (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007; Trochim et al., 2016). This can also be due to situational contexts such as one's current mood and the context in which one completes a survey (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007).

Another methodological constraint in this research study is the potential bias in data collection methods. For example, the reliance on self-report surveys could introduce biases related to respondents' perceptions and willingness to disclose truthful information. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to observe changes over time, which could provide a more dynamic understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership.

Regarding data analysis techniques, certain statistical methods employed in the study may have inherent constraints. For instance, the use of correlational analysis does not imply causation. Additionally, external factors could influence the observed relationships. Moreover, the interpretation of data could be affected by external factors such as the specific timeframe of data collection or the unique contexts of the participating principals' schools. The survey used in this study also captures a snapshot in time, and thus it cannot account for changes in emotional intelligence over time (Bryman, 2019). Finally, the study focused on public-school principals within the specific geographic area of southwest Ohio, which may not reflect the experiences of principals in different regions or educational contexts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021).

Delimitations

The scope of this study was intentionally delimited to focus on principals and their emotional intelligence in relation to leadership, school climate, and teacher retention. This study did not explore other potential factors that could influence these variables, such as external socioeconomic conditions or specific school policies (Yin, 2018). The study also employed the TEIQue-SF as the sole measurement instrument for emotional intelligence, excluding other potential tools that might offer different insights or perspectives (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2020).

Acknowledging the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this research study provides a clearer understanding of the context and constraints that shaped the research. This awareness allows for a more cautious and nuanced interpretation of the findings.

Study Conclusions

Overall, emphasizing emotional intelligence in leadership training is essential for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by educators. This approach can create more resilient, supportive environments that enhance teacher retention and improve student outcomes across all school settings. In conclusion, the research underscores the critical role emotional intelligence, particularly self-control and sociability, plays in effective school leadership. Transformational leadership, intertwined with emotional intelligence, fosters a positive school climate that supports teacher retention and student success. Personalized professional development that is tailored to principals' experiences and contexts enhances the practical application of these skills. Emphasizing emotional intelligence in leadership training addresses the diverse challenges across rural, suburban, and urban schools by creating supportive environments that mitigate burnout and promote inclusivity. Ultimately, the integration of

emotional intelligence into leadership practices is essential for cultivating resilient school communities where both educators and students can thrive.

Suggestions for Future Research

Taking into consideration the limitations of this research study, future research should consider further exploration of the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership to delve deeper into the research questions. Expanding the geographic scope beyond southwest Ohio could provide a broader understanding of how emotional intelligence impacts principals across different educational contexts. Additionally, a larger and more diverse sample could address the concerns of Type I error and enhance the generalizability of the findings. While research has found that the average online survey response rate in the field of education is approximately 44%, the response rate for this study was only 20% (Wu et al., 2022). The low response rate impacts the external validity of the study (Shiyab et al., 2023). Pre-potential participants could yield a higher response rate (Wu et al., 2022). Furthermore, expanding outreach strategies could increase the response rate. Using phone surveys as an alternative method to accompany online surveys could yield a higher response rate (Wu et al., 2022). Additionally, remunerations, multiple recruitment methods, and adding a personal touch are found to improve response rates (Shiyab et al., 2023). While there is no completely calm time in a principal's job, conducting research outside of the beginning of the school year may increase the response rate (*How Response Rates Can Affect the Outcome of a Study and What to Do About It - TASO*, 2024).

Additionally, longitudinal studies are recommended to examine changes in emotional intelligence over time and how these changes influence leadership effectiveness, school climate, and teacher retention (Bryman, 2019). Moreover, a mixed-methods, qualitative, or experimental

research design could provide a more nuanced understanding of emotional intelligence and leadership and principals interest in future professional development (Trochim et al., 2016). Incorporating multiple measurement instruments for emotional intelligence, rather than relying solely on the TEIQue-SF, could offer different insights and perspectives. Comparing the results obtained from various tools could help validate the findings and uncover nuances that a single instrument might miss.

Another area for future research involves exploring other potential factors that may influence the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership outcomes. There were only two areas in which statistical significance was found in this research study. Additional research could be conducted to explore other areas where no significance was found as well as other areas not included in this research study such as external socioeconomic conditions, specific school policies, and cultural differences. These could be examined to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variables at play. Moreover, future research could further investigate the effect sizes found between years of teaching experience and levels of emotional intelligence, as this information could have implications for hiring practices of principals.

Lastly, future research could investigate professional development designed to enhance the emotional intelligence of school principals. Experimental studies that test the effectiveness of targeted professional development programs or coaching interventions could provide valuable insights into how emotional intelligence can be cultivated and its subsequent impact on school leadership. Future research might also explore how emotional intelligence relates to principal retention and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership among public-school principals in southwest Ohio. Despite its limitations, the research study highlights the potential impact of emotional intelligence on school climate and teacher retention. The findings suggest that principals with higher levels of emotional intelligence may be more effective in their leadership roles, fostering a positive school environment and retaining teachers. The findings also suggest that there is a relationship between gender and sociability. These findings may influence district leaders' hiring practices. The findings may also guide state organizations, university principal preparation programs, counties, and school districts decisions regarding providing training and coaching related to emotional intelligence. Professional development programs such as Inspiring Leadership Through Emotional Intelligence, STAR Factor Coaching, and Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Training should be strongly considered.

It is important to recognize that this research study contributes to a broader understanding of emotional intelligence within the context of educational leadership. The recommendations for future research outlined above underscore the need for a broader and more diverse investigation into this topic. By expanding the geographic scope, incorporating longitudinal and mixed methods designs, and exploring additional influencing factors, future researchers can expand on the findings of this study.

Ultimately, enhancing the emotional intelligence of school principals through targeted professional development and coaching interventions holds promise for improving leadership effectiveness and overall school performance. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the role of emotional intelligence in shaping successful school leaders will likely become

increasingly critical. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge in this area and serves as a motivation for further exploration and practical application in the field of educational leadership.

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Appendix A

Leading with Emotional Intelligence Survey

Leading with Emotional Intelligence Survey

CONSENT

Participant's Rights

- I have been given an opportunity to read the informed consent.
- I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about this study.
- I have been given enough time to consider whether or not I wish to participate.
- I have read and understand the terms and conditions and agree to take part in this research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may stop participation at any time without penalty.
- By completing and submitting this survey, I consent to participate in this study.

* 1. Do you agree to participate in this research study?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 2. Are you fully licensed and employed full-time as a public-school principal or assistant principal?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. What is your current job title?

☐ Assistant Principal

☐ Principal

4. Counting the 2024-25 school year, how long have you been in this position?

☐ 1 year

☐ 2 years

☐ 3 years

☐ 4 years

☐ 5 years

☐ 6-8 years

☐ 9-11 years

☐ 12 or more years

5. What grade levels does your building serve?

☐ Primary/Elementary

☐ Middle/Junior High

☐ High School

☐ Other

6. The school district where you work is considered

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Urban

7. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Nonbinary

8. How many years were you a teacher before becoming an administrator?

- ☐ 0-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21 or more

9. What is your current age?

- ☐ 25-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66-75
- ☐ 76 or older

10. Have you participated in professional learning/development related to emotional intelligence and leadership?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. I am interested in future professional development related to (Choose all that apply.)

- ☐ What emotional intelligence is and why it's important for school leaders
- ☐ Applying emotional intelligence to improve relational competencies
- ☐ Using emotional intelligence to improve personal and organizational resilience
- ☐ Leveraging emotional intelligent leadership techniques for responding to leadership challenges
- ☐ Using emotional intelligence to foster a positive school climate and culture

12. What percentage of teachers at your school were retained from the 2023-24 to the 2024-25 school year?

13. For the following, please answer each statement below by choosing the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from "Completely Disagree" (number 1) to "Completely Agree" (number 7).

Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me.

[illegible]

14. I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint.

[illegible]

15. On the whole, I'm a highly motivated person.

[illegible]

16. I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions.

[illegible]

17. I generally don't find life enjoyable.

[illegible]

18. I can deal effectively with people.

[illegible]

19. I tend to change my mind frequently.

[illegible]

20. Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling.

[illegible]

21. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

[illegible]

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

29. I'm normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

30. I normally find it difficult to keep myself motivated.

[illegible]

31. I'm usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

32. On the whole, I'm pleased with my life.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

33. I would describe myself as a good negotiator.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

34. I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

35. I often pause and think about my feelings.

Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely Agree 7

36. I believe I'm full of personal strengths.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. I don't seem to have any power at all over other people's feelings.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. I find it difficult to bond well even with those close to me.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. Generally, I'm able to adapt to new environments.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. Others admire me for being relaxed.

Completely Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Completely Agree 7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leading with Emotional Intelligence Survey

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study!

Appendix B**CITI Course Certificate**

Completion Date 17-Mar-2023

Expiration Date 17-Mar-2026

Record ID 54909225

This is to certify that:

Amanda Epperson

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher

(Curriculum Group)

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher

(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course

(Stage)

Not valid for renewal of
certification through CME.

Under requirements set by:

Youngstown State University

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US

www.citiprogram.orgVerify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?we7edc708-19f5-4b95-b68b-61d78ceacd3b-54909225

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letter



Aug 13, 2024 11:20:55 AM EDT

Jane Beese
Teacher Ed and Leadership St

Re: Exempt - Initial - 2025-9 Principals Leading with Emotional Intelligence to Foster a Positive School Culture and Climate: An Opportunity to Increase Teacher Retention

Dear Dr. Jane Beese:

Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Board has rendered the decision below for Principals Leading with Emotional Intelligence to Foster a Positive School Culture and Climate: An Opportunity to Increase Teacher Retention

Decision: Exempt

Selected Category: Category 2.(j). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

Findings:

Dear Investigator,

Your research project "Principles Leading with Emotional Intelligence to Foster a Positive School Culture in Climate: An Opportunity to Increase Teacher Retention" (protocol #2025-9) aims to examine principals and assistant principals in 16 districts

within the Montgomery County Educational Service Center in southwest Ohio to inquire about leadership characteristics within the profession. Data will be collected through SurveyMonkey and support to recruit has been made in a letter from the superintendent of MCESC.

The research project meets the definition of exempt research. You may begin the investigation immediately. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to report immediately to the YSU IRB any deviations from the protocol and/or any adverse events that occur. If data collection exceeds beyond one year, please resubmit an extension with YSU-IRB prior to the deadline.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Daniel J. Keown

Designated IRB Reviewer

Youngstown State University

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Board