

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING: FROM THE SCHOOL LEADERS'  
PERSPECTIVE**

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation was designed to explore how selected principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence training program perceive whether the training has influenced their practice. While serving in various capacities as an educational professional, I have developed a strong appreciation for the significance of effective leadership in ensuring quality education is achieved. This dissertation is based on using emotional intelligence theoretically to explore the constructs of effective leadership, establish a model for understanding leadership, and create a program to support the systematic development of educational leaders.

This study uses a qualitative research design, employing interviews as the main data collection method. The research sample comprises ten participants (all principals are located in the small Caribbean Island of Jamaica). The approach employed by the researcher to analyze the data was the thematic analysis method, which identifies the common insights and themes exploring the participants' perception of the National College for Educational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence training module. The primary research question explored whether K-12 principals perceive emotional intelligence as useful for improving their leadership. The study's findings indicated that participants found the emotional intelligence training program valuable and believed it added value to the quality of their leadership. The principals that participated in the research reported specific behavioral changes attributable to their participation in the emotional intelligence training. The research presents a nuanced exploration of local principals and their perception of the emotional intelligence training they participated in. The study explores how emotional intelligence training adds value to their practice as educational leaders to effect educational transformation in their schools. The research also presents tangible recommendations for policymakers to improve the emotional intelligence training program.

## CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND

Educational reform has been on the agenda of progressive governments across the Caribbean for several decades. In their quest to improve the overall quality of education, regional governments have embarked on various strategies and approaches. However, the pace and effectiveness of educational reform have not always lived up to public expectations. In Jamaica, for instance, the most recent reform process has spanned well over a decade and has been administered by five Education Ministers across several election cycles. Fortunately, the transformation effort is a rare demonstration of local bipartisan action to tackle this critical aspect of national development. The most recent efforts at a collaborative approach were taken in October 2003 when the Government of Jamaica signed a joint parliamentary resolution to tackle the tremendous and complex task of transforming the Jamaican education system (Task Force on Educational Reform, 2004).

The task force focused on several key factors affecting the shared national vision for education, including the need to improve teaching and learning, teacher quality, limitations regarding critical resources, access to quality education, and student outcomes (Task Force on Educational Reform, 2004). Most importantly, significant attention was placed on the need to improve the capacity of the leaders within the education system.

One of the key aspects of the task force report on education focused on the need for accountability at all levels of the education system. The recommendations articulated a vision of leadership that was inclusive and fully centered on human development. It was noted that this required a fundamental change in the leadership of educational institutions as manifested in the policies and practices of K-12 principals. This new thrust emphasized the need for greater accountability by school administrators for students' outcomes, school ethos, and the general operation of schools in achieving their primary mandate (Task Force on Educational Reform,

2004). To support the achievement of these objectives, the Government established and allocated billions of dollars to a new entity, aptly named the Education System Transformation Programme (ESTP), to oversee the creation, rebranding, and restructuring of several executive agencies, programs, and projects of the Ministry of Education. One of the key goals of the transformation effort focused on pivotal policy and structural changes that sought to decentralize the administration of education through the development of independent entities/ agencies of the Ministry of Education. Each new agency was tasked with tackling various aspects of the transformation and modernization of the Jamaican education system.

One entity created to address the deficit in leadership capacity identified in the report was the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL). This new training arm of the Ministry of Education was tasked with developing leadership programs to improve the capacity of the principals within the island's schools to bring about the desired transformation. The initial program was designed to redress significant leadership deficiencies identified within the ranks of the senior administrators of the institutions. One critical area that the National Education Inspectorate singled out as needing immediate support was the capacity of school leaders, and in particular, principals, to engender a culture among staff and students that would lay the foundation for the transformative changes needed to raise standards (National Education Inspectorate, 2015) radically. The ability to motivate staff, foster a shared vision for school improvement, and build team synergy was critical. This is underscored by the former Principal of the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL), Dr. Maurice Smith when he noted in an interview that "many school administrators are qualified, but are not schooled to lead institutions" (Barnaby, 2015). To address these and other issues related to human resource management, the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) introduced a level two program in Human Resource Management that included a module in emotional intelligence.

While many of the principals were familiar with the term emotional intelligence, for many, it was the first training program they enrolled in that focused on the theory and practice of emotional intelligence within the realm of educational leadership. In particular, it examined it within the context of human resource management.

Emotional intelligence has generated immense interest in popular culture and leadership circles since its introduction in the late twentieth century. It has only recently, however, gained traction as an area of serious consideration and thought within the local educational leadership arena. Through the efforts of the National College for Educational Leadership, most of the island's principals have been exposed to emotional intelligence within human resource management. Since its meteoric rise to popularity within the last few decades, several schools of thought have emerged regarding emotional intelligence, each proffering a truly unique interpretation of the concept (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006). Daniel Goleman is largely credited with making emotional intelligence popular in one of his best-sellers: *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Through this book, the world has suddenly been introduced to emotional intelligence and its purported life-changing impact. In his book, Goleman (1998) made some remarkable claims about the ability of emotional intelligence to redefine leadership and the possibility that it may hold the key to unlocking personal and professional success. Other proponents (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003; Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Chabot & Carlsmith, 1997; Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; George, 2000; Miller, 1999; Perez, Petrides, & Furnham, 2005) claim that emotional intelligence can do everything from improving the general quality of personal relationships to career success. However, through the work of several early researchers, the concept of emotional intelligence quickly began to evolve into a theory aimed at understanding human behavior. It quickly became apparent that more work had to be done to validate the theory and ensure it could withstand scientific scrutiny. During these early years, several schools

of thought emerged regarding emotional intelligence, which is what this new concept was and its associated value to academic thought. The work done by other pioneers in the field, like Salovey et al. (1997), also set the theoretical framework for emotional intelligence as a theory for understanding leadership and promoting a greater appreciation for the role of emotions in our lives (Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Goleman, 1998).

Emotional intelligence has received almost celebrity-type status in the business world. The argument has been made that effective leaders demonstrate high emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004; Goleman, 1998; Singh, 2003). Research findings indicate that individuals with high emotional intelligence perform higher than their colleagues who score low (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003). A great deal of research on emotional intelligence is conducted within the field of business. Corporations are increasingly more aware of the importance of fostering emotional intelligence within the workplace (Goleman, 1998). However, emotional intelligence in educational circles has still not equaled the traction gained in the business world. Examining the literature indicates that studying emotional intelligence skills in school administration is still relatively uncharted territory. This is bewildering, considering that adequate data suggests that principals positively impact student achievement (Marzano & Walters, 2009; McNulty, 2005). In the view of some pundits, emotional intelligence may hold the key to meaningful educational reform across all levels of the education system (Bodine & Crawford, 1999; Elias & Arnold, 2006; Hargreaves, 1998; Ormesbee, 2000).

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Educational leaders require meaningful support in navigating the complex and multi-layered reality of managing an educational institution. It is widely accepted that purposeful training in human resource management is an important step in developing effective principals. Training programs like the National College for Educational Leadership's Emotional Intelligence



course are designed to target and address the need for capacity building in this regard. The module is focused on fostering the need for effective management of an educational institution's greatest assets, its people. The desire is to develop an effective program to foster greater management of schools and, by extension, improve students' learning outcomes. As such, the program's value is rooted in its impact on praxis. However, what has not been established is whether the program has met its goals. Specifically, do the K-12 principals who underwent the program perceive that the training has influenced their practice? If so, what was the impact? If not, what was missing in the program that made it ineffective?

This dissertation examined the existing literature on emotional intelligence (EI) and outlined the theoretical framework necessary to examine the topic and answer the research questions effectively. In addition, it situated the research within the broader construct of emotional intelligence's value to educational leaders in Jamaica and the resulting influence on their practice. This qualitative dissertation explored how the selected K-12 principals conceptualized and perceived whether the training influenced their practice. Hopefully, this research will stimulate continued dialogue into the value and effectiveness of emotional intelligence training within the context of local leadership development. In addition, it is hoped that the data collected in the study will provide policymakers, administrators, program planners, and other system leaders with valuable insight into improving training for principals.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study was designed to examine the perceptions of selected K-12 principals regarding whether the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence Training Programme had influenced their practice. According to Salovey and Mayer (2000), emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotions, and regulate emotion in self and others to achieve

specific goals. Emotional intelligence is not fixed for life but can be affected by training (Jordan et al., 2002). This provides the prospect of meaningful interventions aimed at strengthening and building the leadership capacity of school leaders by focusing on issues related to emotional intelligence.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study aimed to provide additional information to the extant literature on emotional intelligence (EI) by gaining valuable insight into a group of educational leaders' perception of an EI training program and its influence on their practice. Hopefully, this research will stimulate continued dialogue into the value and effectiveness of emotional intelligence training within the context of local leadership development. The study also generated data that may be used to guide revisions and improvements in the Human Resource module of the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) training program. In addition, the results of this study can initiate a meaningful conversation about the need to legitimize the voice of the principals to help shape further developments in the emotional intelligence training module. This will help improve the module's impact on equipping principals with the skillsets to be transformational leaders in their respective schools.

### **SCOPE**

The study examined the perceptions of a group of selected principals in Jamaica who participated in the National College for Educational Leadership's Human Resource Management: Emotional Intelligence training program. The participants were selected from across the island and included a mixture of rural and urban schools and secondary and primary institutions. The instruments used to collect data included individual interviews and a review of relevant documentation.

## **POSITIONALITY**

I believe my experiential background provided a strong platform to examine this topic. I previously served as a classroom teacher, head of department, vice principal, school inspector, education officer, lecturer, and principal. I believe that my experiences aided in minimizing bias as a researcher. I believe that my position did not interfere with the collection and analysis of data. It should be noted that the highest standards of professionalism were maintained throughout the research process.

## **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

*Emotional Intelligence:* Although there is a wide spectrum of definitions, for this study, emotional intelligence, according to Salovey and Mayer (1997), is the ability to “perceive, express, assimilate emotion into thought, understand, reason, regulate emotions in self and others” (p. 82).

*K-12 Principals:* The term ‘K-12 Principals’ is widely accepted to represent educational leaders – principals that manage schools between the education system's early childhood, primary, and secondary levels.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Research questions are incredibly valuable to the design process of a study. According to Maxwell (2005), they represent the core of the research design and are one of the most critical aspects of the design process, greatly impacting the research outcome. He further states that the research questions lay the foundation for the conceptual and theoretical frame and guide their development. The study will be guided by one key research question with additional questions designed to extend and elaborate the results. These research questions were intended to provide the contextual framework for the study. They impacted several key aspects of the study's design, including the approach used regarding the literature review, data collection, analysis,

interpretation, and findings (Creswell, 2009). The overarching research question for this study is as follows: Do K-12 principals perceive emotional intelligence as useful for improving their leadership? Among the secondary questions that this study was designed to answer are the following:

- How important is the emotional intelligence human resource training program in equipping school administrators to manage their institutions effectively?
- What are the opportunities in the National College for Educational Leadership training program for principals to recognize and understand their emotions as principals?
- To what extent has the emotional intelligence human resource training program affected their practice as an administrator?

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on the perception of principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence training program and whether they perceive the training has influenced their practice. It is worth noting that very little local research directly focuses on emotional intelligence. Consequently, much of the literature examined is from research gathered overseas, primarily in the United States of America. However, literature sourced from a few Asian societies was also referenced in the study. Nevertheless, I am conscious of the need to create a contextually appropriate link between the literature being reviewed and the unique local cultural setting of the research. I will carefully establish a contextual framework that creates a culturally relevant and authentic frame for exploring the extant literature.

The literature review will examine the extant literature related to the context of the study. This chapter will focus on the research findings of noted pioneers in emotional intelligence, such as Salovey, Mayer, and Caruso (2000), along with work done by Daniel Goleman (1998). The literature review will also survey work done by several noted scholars and researchers in other related fields, including educational psychology, leadership, intelligence, social and emotional learning, organizational theory, and management.

What is incredibly apparent is the complex role of K-12 principals in managing their institutions and the extent to which their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are called upon to assist in navigating the complex world of school management. The quality of management is directly linked to the quality of the relationship the principal can foster among employees. According to Dyer (2001), school leaders must understand the dynamics of building and maintaining effective and healthy relationships with colleagues. Dyer argues that principals must develop key emotional intelligence-related skills to facilitate such relationships. Their role as

stewards of the respective institutions requires a firm grasp of the dynamics of leadership and the nuances of influencing their staff while setting the organization positively.

An interesting aspect of leadership, particularly in school leadership, is what Chermis (1998) characterizes as the dynamic shift in how leaders engage their workers. The twenty-first-century leader must rely on building consensus and less on formal authority to achieve institutional goals. This twenty-first-century paradigm shift in leadership places greater value on school principals' interpersonal and intra-personal skills and how these are leveraged in managing the human resource challenges their institutions face. The old leadership model hinged on positionality and inherent authority is a rapidly fading relic of the past. Today's leaders must be coaches, mediators, negotiators, mentors, team builders, and network facilitators. All of these skills seem to rely on emotional intelligence. Therefore, their understanding and application of emotional intelligence is not important merely as an exercise in theory but must inform practice. According to Wang and Lin (2020), the psychological climate within a school mediates the relationship between the emotional intelligence of teachers and their work engagement. They emphasize the critical role of school principals in fostering a positive psychological climate. By enhancing their emotional intelligence, principals can create an environment that supports teachers' emotional and professional needs, increasing their engagement and effectiveness in their roles.

Many factors contribute to effective schools; however, earlier research suggests that it begins with effective leadership. Emotional intelligence is brought into sharp focus when assessing an effective leader's characteristics. Researchers have long argued that academic success is not a reliable predictor of possible success as a leader (Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Goleman, 1995). Educational leaders face a myriad of high-stress and overlapping layers of complex tasks that stretch the limits of their emotional capacities. Beyond that, they are

challenged with the task of managing change in institutions that have been built around established traditions and ways of doing things. To compound matters, principals must balance various stakeholders' concerns and relevant issues and create an inclusive vision that reflects a collective view. The overarching concept of emotional intelligence as an element of quality leadership provides a contemporary lens through which to view the improvement of educational leadership.

It is worth noting that several researchers have identified striking similarities between leadership in business and education, taking into account the dynamic forces at play between opportunities for success and the invariable challenges encountered while attempting to achieve the organization's respective missions (Fullan, 2001; Guy, 1994; Hall et al., 1984; Senge et al., 2000; Wheatley, 1999). Guy (1994) posits that the fundamental ingredients that make corporate CEOs and school leaders effective are virtually the same. According to Bennis (1991), effective leadership, irrespective of the nature of the organization or institution, is predicated on some key principles. These range from managing abstract meaning to making dreams clear, establishing a link between the 'vision' of the organization and engaging stakeholders to achieve said vision, and developing and managing trust. According to Maxwell (2007), leadership is fundamentally about developing and managing relationships to achieve goals. In essence, it harnesses the relational aspects of human resource management, focusing on the significance of emotional intelligence as a construct to act as a problem-solving agent in pursuit of professional or organizational goals (Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Mayer et al., 2000). This underscores the salient commonality within the leadership field, from commanding troops on a battlefield to leading a Fortune 500 company or even an educational institution. According to Bennis (1991)

In organizations with effective leaders, empowerment is most evident in four themes: (a) People must feel significant; (b) Learning and competence matter – no failures – learn from mistakes; (c) People must feel like a part of a community – a team; (4) Must make work exciting. (Bennis, 1991, p.15)

### **Theoretical Perspective**

A key aspect of the conceptual framework covered in the literature review is the theoretical perspectives that will frame the exploration of the topic. According to Maxwell (2005), this refers to “a set of concepts and the proposed relationships among these, a structure that is intended to represent or model something about the world” (p. 42); in this instance, the phenomena being explored. Consequently, the literature review will examine emotional intelligence and various intelligence theories, ranging from Thorndike’s social intelligence theory to Zohar’s spiritual intelligence theory. I thought including the transformational leadership theory in the theoretical framework was relevant.

### **Intelligence**

Intelligence can be loosely defined as some degree of abstract reasoning; conceptually, it is usually used to predict an individual’s likelihood of success on a given task, generally in academia (Salovey et al., 2000). A broader, more comprehensive, useful perspective is to view intelligence as encompassing a wide constellation of intellectual and personality traits as a likely indicator of future success (Sternberg, 2002). This perspective reflects the generally held view that it is the aggregate cognitive capacity of a person to deal effectively with the challenges encountered in their environment (Salovey et al., 2000; Wechesler, 1944). Sternberg (2002) posits that intelligence is much more expansive a construct than can be measured in the standard intelligence quotient assessment. He further theorizes that intelligence has four ability domains: analytical, practical, creative, and memory.

### **Emotional Intelligence**



Emotional intelligence, according to Salovey and Mayer (1997), is the ability to “perceive, express, assimilate emotion into thought, understand, reason and regulate emotions in self and others” (p. 82). Even more significant is emotional intelligence as a problem-solving agent (Cooper & Sawaf, 1996; Mayer et al., 2000). According to Zhou and Kallio (2003), emotions result in a deeper and more intense quality of cognitive interaction, a view also held by Gardner (1998) and Goleman (1995). Zhou and Kallio (2003) further state that emotional skills, primarily the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, are essential to human interaction.

Goleman (1995) espouses that emotional intelligence is the capability to motivate oneself, even in the face of great anxiety and frustration. He further explains that it enables us to regulate and channel our impulses, control our mood, empathize, and foster hope. The definition presented by Goleman is classified as a mixed model as it examines a wide constellation of psychological anomalies and patterns. Goleman has extended the boundaries of the theory as outlined by Mayer and Salovey (1997); hence, the theory becomes more general in its appeal and application. He also describes a number of the psychological attributes that are essential to lead a learning organization effectively.

A meaningful deconstruction of the term is key to understanding the concept of emotional intelligence and its application in institutional leadership. Emotion is characterized as one of three (3) tiers of mental operations; the other two are cognition and motivation (Izard, 1993; Mayer et al., 1997; Perez et al., 2005). These three (3) components operate on a hierarchical structure: motivation being the most primitive, emotion being found higher up, and finally, cognition.

Within the human psyche, motivation exists as the most primitive of the three (and will be discussed in greater detail). Emotions arise concerning physiological states and include drives such as hunger, thirst, the need to feel accepted, the desire to socialize, and the need to indulge in

sexual desires. Research has indicated that much of our lives are spent maintaining, acting on, or carrying out behaviors predicated on motivational dynamics that operate virtually unconsciously to the typical human being (LeDoux, 1989; Maslow, 2012; Ryan, 2012).

Emotions constitute the second tier of this hierarchy. Emotions are internal responses to the external environment; for instance, fear emerges as a response to real or perceived danger. Emotions spawn a series of behavioral responses, such as a fight or flight response. Finally, cognition permits the individual to learn and engage in problem-solving to solve situational challenges, including memory (Salovey et al., 2000). Cognition is “ongoing and involves flexible, intentional information processing based on learning and memory” (p. 83).

As postulated by Salovey et al. (1997), emotional intelligence makes no clear distinction between the three components but presents them in a seamlessly integrated concept. This complex overlapping and integration of motivation, emotion, and cognition as a perspective on personality functioning creates a context for a practical understanding of emotional intelligence (Smith, 2011). Research indicates constant overlapping between these three facets (Salovey et al., 2000). This interaction between motivation and emotion and emotion and cognition has particular educational merit.

However, within the past decade, a salient divergence in the definition of emotional intelligence has occurred on two fronts: operationalization and terminology. This divergence creates two distinct approaches, one that assumes a traditional scientific framework and the other that takes a case study approach. Nevertheless, there exist three widely accepted models: (a) Ability model, (b) Trait model, and (c) Mixed model (Elias et al., 2007; Salovey & Mayer, 1997).

The ability-based model, posited by Salovey and Mayer (1997), attempts to define emotional intelligence using the established framework and criteria of existing intelligence.

Salovey and Mayer (2000) postulated that individuals differ in their ability to process emotional information and assimilate it into a wider cognition. According to Sternberg (2000), the ability-based model presents emotional intelligence as the capacity to use emotions to construct understanding and navigate the social world. This capability is then made evident in certain adaptive observable behaviors. It is also interesting to note the rival view purported by Petrides et al. (2007), which examines emotional intelligence as a wide collection of emotional self-perceptions that constitute the lower levels of the personality hierarchy.

According to Petride et al. (2007), the trait emotional intelligence model is based on the five-factor model of personality, which considers emotional intelligence a personality trait. Petrides and Furnham's (2000) research establishes emotional intelligence as a trait within personality instead of a standalone construct. As noted earlier, this gives rise to considerable divergence in testing approaches for emotional intelligence ability and trait models. Other researchers underscore the value of incorporating emotional intelligence competencies into leadership skills to become a good and effective leader. This stresses the significance of investigating leadership traits, such as emotional intelligence (Joseph et al., 2015)

However, for this dissertation, I focused on using the ability model and its related definitions and design to establish the basic conceptual framework for the study. This is important in framing the discussion and approach needed to support any meaningful understanding of emotional intelligence within the context of this research.

### **Social Intelligence**

Understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and social intelligence is important in any meaningful study of leadership. The idea that effective leaders can leverage social skills to impact their colleagues is not new. The first academic inquiry into a leadership-based social intelligence construct was based on the work of Columbia University psychologist

Edward Thorndike in the 1920s. Thorndike (2002) inadvertently laid the foundation for developing one of the key components of emotional intelligence – interpersonal competence or social intelligence. Thorndike (2002) characterized social intelligence as how individuals develop and manage social interactions. Consequently, emotional intelligence includes a social intelligence construct or a set of interpersonal competencies that offer a more relationship-based lens through which to examine leadership (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

Social intelligence may be broadly defined as the skills of human relationships (Cherniss, 1988; Goleman, 2006; Wawra, 2009).

Our emotional responses are contextually anchored in social meaning; that is, we have learned cultural messages about the meaning of social transactions, relationships, and even our self-definitions. Emotional competence is inseparable from cultural context. Our biological evolution has also endowed us to be emotional, but our embeddedness in relationships with others provides the diversity in emotional experience, the challenges to emotional coping, and the immensely rich ways in which we communicate our emotional experience to others. Thus, our relationships influence our emotions, and our emotions reciprocally influence our relationships. (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997, p. 38)

Thorndike's early work attempted to situate social intelligence within the broader construct of intelligence (Brannick et al., 2009; Goleman et al., 2002). According to Joseph and Lakshmi (2010), social intelligence was expanded to denote someone's knowledge of the social world. According to Goleman (2006): "People with high social intelligence are popular, team players, good listeners, and understand how to navigate and get along with everyone they encounter. They lead confidently by utilizing superb interpersonal skills, as they know how to personally perceive others and connect with them" (Johnson, 2017, p. 22). Researchers in the field have widely accepted and incorporated some manifestation of the construct of social intelligence into the domains and general theory of emotional intelligence as previously discussed (Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Elias et al., 2007; Goleman, 1998; Salovey et al., 2000; Salovey & Mayor, 1990; Salovey & Sluyter, 1997).

The emerging field of social neuroscience has provided exciting new insights into emotional intelligence and leadership by studying brain activity when we interact with each other. The power of technology and advancements in neuroscience have opened an entirely new dimension to understanding effective leadership. According to Goleman and Boyatzis (2008), “A potent way of becoming a better leader is to find authentic contexts to learn the social behavior that reinforces the brain’s social circuitry. Leading effectively is, in other words, less about mastering situations - or even social skill sets, than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in the people whose cooperation and support you need” (p.2). The development of emotional intelligence has been broadly grounded in theories of individual psychology (Conte, 2005; Petrides et al., 2007; Salovey et al., 2000; Sternberg, 2002). The relationship between effective leadership and facilitating powerful social circuitry between the leader and the followers has resulted in several researchers expanding emotional intelligence’s role to be more relationship-based than previously thought.

### **Multiple Intelligences**

Howard Gardner’s widely respected theory of multiple intelligences provides a useful theoretical frame to expand our exploration of intelligence further while grounding our understanding of emotional intelligence. Gardner was driven by the belief that our culture has focused on verbal logical thinking – those abilities generally measured with the typical intelligence test or standardized test (Armstrong, 1999). This has resulted in neglecting other abilities and other manifestations of intelligence. Gardner purported at least seven abilities worthy of being validated as intelligence.

I do not think elaborating extensively on the nuances of the seven intelligences theorized by Gardner (2006) is necessary. I will provide an overview of Gardner’s seven primary intelligences and then focus on those closely related to this research, including (a) linguistic

intelligence, which refers to individuals who excel in tasks that require written or spoken words. Such individuals tend to be able to harness the power of words to great effect to persuade, argue, write, instruct, debate, or entertain. (b) Logical-mathematical intelligence references abilities associated with numbers and logic. Traits of logical-mathematically inclined individuals involve the ability to reason, sequence, create hypotheses, look for conceptual regularities, and think about cause and effect; (c) Spatial intelligence involves thinking in images and pictures and the ability to transform, re-create, and perceive in the visual-spatial world. Such individuals typically excel at drawing, painting, and photography. They can orient themselves in a three-dimensional space or accurately represent three-dimensional/ two-dimensional space in a graphic form; (d) Musical intelligence is the capacity to perceive, discern, appreciate, interpret, and produce melodies and rhythms, and (e) Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence refers to the intelligence of the physical self. It involves but is not limited to the artful manipulation and control of one's body movements, athleticism, good tactile sensitivity, and precise articulation of limbs.

Gardner (2006) outlined the sixth and seventh intelligences are most closely interrelated with emotional intelligence, namely interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Armstrong (1999) explained

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand and work with other people. In particular, it requires a capacity to perceive and be responsive to the moods, temperaments, intentions, and desires of others—an administrator of a large corporation. An interpersonally intelligent individual may be very compassionate and socially responsible like Mahatma Gandhi or manipulative and cunning like Machiavelli. (Armstrong, 1999, p. 11)

People with high interpersonal intelligence can view the world from other people's perspectives (empathy) while simultaneously perceiving and processing the emotional state of others to harness that information to influence their behavior. Interpersonal intelligence is a manifested trait among effective leaders. According to Maxwell (2007), "The very essence of all

power to influence others lies in getting the other person to participate” (p.19). Individuals who demonstrate strong interpersonal traits can establish strong relationships and networks among their colleagues and individuals within their sphere of influence. The core capacity of individuals who excel at this intelligence is to create fine distinctions in other individuals' intentions, motivations, moods, feelings, and thoughts.

According to Gardner (2006), social primates are naturally required within their social structures to demonstrate complex decision-making calculations to balance reward versus punishment dilemmas. In essence, we must consider the consequences of our behavior and determine the possible behavior of others to gauge risk versus reward, all within an overwhelmingly complex and dynamic environment with multiple variables that may influence the other individual's behavior and skew the outcome. According to Eisenberg and Fabes (1992), individual distinctions in emotional intensity and internal management capacities “play a pivotal role in a variety of aspects of social functioning” (p. 130). As Gardner (2006) rightly noted, “only an organism with highly developed cognitive skills can make do in such a context” (Armstrong, 1999, p. 111).

Finally, it should be noted that intrapersonal intelligence, or the intelligence of the inner self, is on the opposite end of the spectrum. Gardner (1983) states that intrapersonal intelligence, or what many refer to as ‘our consciousness,’ is a central conceptual feature of all models of emotional intelligence. According to Salovey and Mayor (1993), the core capacity present and at work regarding intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to effectively access one's feelings, label, process, and draw upon them to direct action in self and others. Effective leaders are more likely to be more open to the positive and negative aspects of internal experiences. Such awareness often leads to effectively regulating emotions within themselves and others, emphasizing the

metaprocess in accessing one's feelings. Gardner's (1983) intrapersonal intelligence, or the intelligence of the inner self, may be characterized as

In its most primitive form, intrapersonal intelligence amounts to little more than the capacity to distinguish a feeling of pleasure from pain ....At its most advanced level, intrapersonal knowledge allows one to detect and symbolize complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings (p.239).

Gardner's (1983) conceptualization of intrapersonal intelligence carefully "discriminates between many different kinds of inner emotional states and use self-understanding to enrich and guide oneself" (Armstrong, 1999, p. 11) toward achieving specific goals while ensuring emotional and mental equilibrium. Armstrong (1999) further explains the various components of intrapersonal intelligence

The capacity to experience a wide range of emotions, deeply with vigor, excitement, and spontaneity. He also posits that one strong trait of individuals who excel in this intelligence is the ability to soothe and manage painful feelings in oneself, the wherewithal to make and stick to commitments in work and relationships, and with the capacity for creativity and deep intimacy. (p.131)

Gardner (2006) notes that such individuals can demonstrate high introspection and often appreciate self-talk, meditation, solitude, contemplation, or other forms of reflection and soul-searching. It has been observed that people who are characterized as demonstrating great capacity in intrapersonal intelligence may often be considered fiercely independent, highly goal-directed, and intensely self-disciplined and creative (Salovey & Mayor, 1990). Salovey and Sluyter (1997) outlined that individuals who excelled at intrapersonal intelligence could leverage that internal regulatory capacity to enhance social relationships.

Emotional regulatory capacities play a pivotal role in various aspects of social functioning. In potentially emotional situations, individual differences in emotional reactivity (often considered a temperamental or personality trait) undoubtedly influence the degree of emotional response. Moreover, the ways individuals experience, express and cope with feelings would be expected to influence the quality of associated behavior, as well as long-term outcomes such as the quality of social relationships. (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997, p. 130)



## **Spiritual Intelligence**

Jamaica is a democratic country that provides equal opportunity for all citizens regardless of religious affiliation. I have decided to include spiritual intelligence, a strong theme in the Jamaican education system. It is noteworthy to mention that many K-12 institutions on the island were established and are administered in some part by religious organizations. However, I hasten to underscore that this study draws a clear distinction between religion and spirituality, although the former is a subset of the latter. Houston (2002) characterizes religion as a specific way and spirituality as a general way of connecting with a higher cause. Consequently, spirituality and religion will be treated as separate constructs for this study.

According to Sorvaag (2007), spirituality may be defined as the “Eternal human yearning to be connected with something larger than one’s own ego” (Palmer, 2003, p. 376). He further posits that spiritualism is the universe’s way of connecting human beings with their essence while connecting our humanity with that of the rest of humanity, from our families to our friends, communities, and co-workers. Sorvaag outlines how spirituality connects us with nature's rich and sometimes tragic tapestry and the world’s history (Palmer, 1999). Connecting with our humanity requires a conscious or unconscious link to our innate sense of spirituality, “It thus represents a universal human capacity to stand outside of one’s immediate existence and view life from a broader, more integrated whole. To varying degrees, we increasingly realize that our lives have a larger meaning and purpose” (Sorvaag, 2007).

Many effective K-12 principals frame the stewardship of their respective institutions through an ethic of care rooted in what one may characterize as a deep sense of spiritual intelligence (Houston, 2002). Effective educational leaders often derive meaning from the complicated dilemmas and conflicts encountered in their roles by respecting human dignity,

focusing on human capacity, and developing individual and social purpose for students, colleagues, and society (Kessler, 2000; Keyes et al., 1999; Palmer, 1999; Sorvaag, 2007).

This framework makes a greater appreciation of the need for emotional connectedness to self and the group apparent. This is also how the apparent linkages between spiritual and emotional intelligence can be critiqued. Both constructs emphasize the need for the leader to find meaning, wholeness, inner potential, and interconnections with others (Houston, 2002). It is argued that effective and ethical principals are governed and directed by behaviors that are rooted in a strong sense of spirituality grounded in the following principles and values: recognizing the dignity of all individuals, validating the personal struggle of each member of the school family, merging the personal (human element) and professional (demands), a fundamental appreciation of the reality that individuals are doing the best they know how irrespective of the output, developing and sharing the big vision and critically listening (Keyes et al., 1999).

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that religion and spirituality are different, although religion is a function of spirituality. Researchers in the field of leadership have identified strong lineages between spirituality and emotional intelligence as manifested by effective leaders in various organizations. Both theories share many characteristics grounded in an authentic need to connect with oneself and others. The similarities are striking and provide a useful lens to analyze effective leaders as they seek to develop the human potential of their students, staff, parents, and the community within which they work.

### **Transformational Leadership**

According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a leadership approach that focuses on motivating individuals towards achieving a common goal while increasing “the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20). Transformational leaders promote strong human interaction

and cooperation that unearths the best in others. It inspires the demonstration of such values as social justice, care, and empathy. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) also note that transformational leadership seeks to develop leadership capacity in the group while promoting the concept of service to others. Howell and Avolio (1999) state that transformational leadership is characterized by four (4) key components: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Transformational leaders are authentically transformational when they increase awareness of what is right, good, important, and beautiful, when they help to elevate followers' needs for achievement and self-actualization, when they foster in followers higher moral maturity, and when they move followers to go beyond their self-interests for the good of their group, organization or society. (Bass, 1998, p. 171)

A survey of the extant literature concerning transformational leadership shows a growing interest among scholars regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Research seems to imply that emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for transformational leadership (Abrahams, 2000; George, 2000, 2003; Goleman, 1998b; Harms & Crede, 2010; Kupers & Weibler, 2006; Miller, 1999; Senge et al., 2000).

Researchers have identified that transformational leaders possess the ability to recognize emotions in others while being able to effectively manifest and control their emotions to positively engage stakeholders to achieve a positive outcome for their organization (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Harms & Crede, 2010; George, 2000). Barling et al. (2000) posit a strong alignment between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. According to Naznin (2013), transformational leaders' capacity to leverage their self-awareness and that of those they lead underscores the compatibility of both theories.

Self-awareness facilitates transformational leadership, enabling leaders to go beyond the average sense of purpose and meaning (Sosik & Megarian, 1999, cited in Harms & Crede, 2010, p.7). More precisely, when leaders can understand their own emotions and those of others, they

know well how to be emotionally close and supportive to their followers, enhance their trust, motivation, and commitment, and act as role models to them. Second, leaders with high emotional intelligence would be ideally placed to realize the extent to which followers are experiencing various emotional states. George (2000), cited in Harms and Crede (2010, p. 7), argues that transformational leaders can use emotional appeals to acquire inspirational motivation. Indeed, the accurate recognition of the emotions of others is critical to a leader's capability to inspire and build relationships (Carney & Harrigan, 2003, cited in Wang & Huang, 2009, p. 382). Thus, effective leaders generally harness their followers' emotions as inspirational motivation. They also possess the ability to understand followers' needs and interact accordingly.

In conclusion, it may be posited that emotional intelligence is positively associated with transformational leadership. According to Barbuto and Burbach (2006), a positive relationship exists between the key components of emotional intelligence and the domains of transformational leadership. There is a divergence between the two leadership constructs; while transformational leadership requires adherence to professional, moral, and ethical standards, emotional intelligence does not.

According to noted researchers in the field, transformational leaders must be emotionally intelligent to effectively engage stakeholders, including employees, to bring about meaningful organizational success (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; George, 2003; Goleman, 1998a; Harms & Crede, 2010; Kupers & Weibler, 2006).

### **Summary and Context for the Research**

The literature review provides a theoretical framework supported by existing literature related to the topic. Chapter 2 examines the background and theory of emotional intelligence and other related theories. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) introduced a level two program in Human Resource Management that

included a module in emotional intelligence. Although this training program was developed and implemented through an extensive examination of the literature on emotional intelligence, no data has been collected on whether this program has been effective. The major purpose of this dissertation is to fill that gap in the literature.

### CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### Overview

I adopted a constructivist paradigm to guide the development of the dissertation. Paradigms are useful in helping to situate the research among the body of existing work while helping to frame the theoretical perspectives and guide the researcher's selection of the requisite research design, methodology, and approaches in the development of the dissertation. This approach creates a lens through which the researcher may interpret the evolution of the research, resulting in rich, insightful, and socially impactful qualitative work (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109, table 6.1). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), "the users of this paradigm are oriented to the production of the reconstructed orientation of the social world... constructivism connects to action and praxis" (p. 92). The study used a qualitative design method. This method was selected because of the value of qualitative methodology in examining experiential-based phenomena such as emotional intelligence through the perception of the individuals' professional experiences. Qualitative research is "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, a focus on individual meaning and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

Qualitative research methods were used to describe and unpack the participants' professional experiences about leadership within the context of emotional intelligence. The participants engaged in a virtual interview utilizing the Zoom video conferencing platform to facilitate a critical examination of their perceptions of emotional intelligence as a theory towards understanding effective leadership and the extent to which their participation in the National College for Educational Leadership's Effective Principals' program had, in their opinion, influenced or not influenced their practice. In essence, the study investigated whether the target group of educational leaders was influenced by the theoretical construct of emotional intelligence

as presented in the Effective Principals' Human Resource: Emotional Intelligence training module. The qualitative design method was selected for this study because it was deemed to provide valuable insight and rich contextual data into the varying experiences of the participants. This section discusses the research design detailing the proposed participants, my position as a researcher, data collection strategy, and analysis methods.

According to Mack et al. (2005), "The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue" (p. 109). Their description best epitomizes and validates the inherent value of selecting the qualitative method for this research. While the quantitative method was considered, after careful assessment, it was decided that gaining insight into the participants' experiences' nuances was more valuable than collecting data that could be generalized to the broader population.

### **Phenomenology**

Merriam (2009) posits that phenomenology is a philosophy and methodology used to study people's conscious experiences of their life-world. According to Merriam (2009), phenomenology concerns how individuals conceptualize, perceive, experience, process, and understand different aspects of a phenomenon. This research required participants to describe and unpack their leadership experiences, particularly focusing on how they perceived the emotional intelligence training module received through the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) impacted that leadership. Phenomenology is "well suited to studying affective, emotional and human experiences" (Merriam, p. 26), making it particularly suitable for this study.

As stated by Mack (2010), a phenomenologist advocates the "need to consider human beings' subjective interpretations, their perceptions of the world as our starting point in understanding social phenomena" (Ernest, 1994, p. 25). According to Creswell (2009), this

approach involves studying a few subjects to probe and explore the examined subject to unearth meaningful insight. The focus is to carefully unpack, make sense of, and document the essence of meanings and experiences. The phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection for this approach.

Analysis of a phenomenological study is an ongoing process in which the researcher examines the information provided by participants to validate the meaning. In addition, the researcher should be conscious of implicit bias that may exist to ensure all data are treated equally. This method also includes organizing the data into themes to analyze. Finally, the explorative nature of this approach requires the researcher to be open to varying views when analyzing a wide cross-section of possible perspectives (Creswell, 2009).

### **Participants and Sites**

Ten (10) participants were selected using purposive sampling (Creswell, 2009). All the participants were principals of either primary or secondary schools in Jamaica that had completed the National College for Educational Leadership - Effective Principal Programme: Human Resource Management - Emotional Intelligence module. The selected principals had led schools in rural and urban areas for at least two years and had been permanently appointed to their respective posts. The participants varied in age, gender, professional experience, and academic qualifications. Since the interviews were conducted within the context of the post-COVID-19 pandemic, I decided that all interviews could be conducted through Zoom to capitalize on the broad-based acceptance of video conferencing technology as a suitable means of facilitating meetings or, in this case, an interview for research purposes. In addition, since the participants came from different parts of Jamaica, video conferencing made it easier to facilitate the interviews with all the participants. The use of video conferencing also improved the level of convenience in scheduling and carrying out the interviews. I first contacted participants via



phone to seek their approval to participate in the research. Once an oral confirmation of interest was received, a confirmation via email was requested from the participants to confirm the same. A copy of the consent form was sent to each participant via email before the interview to provide adequate time for them to review and raise queries if necessary. The participants were required to verbally confirm their willingness to participate in the study before the start of the interview. Due to unstable internet connections, the audio feed was disrupted briefly; the wait was minimal in all cases, and the interview continued as scheduled once the internet connection stabilized. In addition, in a few cases, there were difficulties with the bandwidth, which resulted in the interview being conducted without a stable video feed.

### **Data Collection**

Creswell (2009) says that purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of individuals deemed by the researcher to be valuable in gaining useful insights into the researched topic. Purposive sampling was used to select the ten (10) principals participating in the study. The data collection method primarily consisted of a series of qualitative interviews facilitated via a video call using the Zoom video conferencing platform with the participants and involved structured questions that were primarily open-ended in nature; however, I strategically used unstructured follow-up questions (Appendix A) to probe some of the concepts being examined.

### **Data Analysis**

Jones et al. (2006) state that qualitative data analysis requires keen attention to detail. It involves working with data intimately, collating, organizing, and distilling complex concepts into manageable units. This process can be time-consuming, requiring the identification of repetitive themes, coding, synthesizing, and investigating patterns while piecing together a narrative that provides useful insights into the area under study. This research method explores the perspectives, insights, experiences, beliefs, and personal views on the topic (Fraenkel & Wallen,

2006). The desire to obtain detailed insights into understanding emotional intelligence's role in effective school leadership prompted using interviews as the primary data collection tool.

Due to the rich nature of the verbatim responses that emerged from the main data collection method, a systematic analysis system was used. Krippendorff (2003) noted the value of utilizing content analysis as a research technique for systematically analyzing raw data. To code my data, I first divided it into content units. The analysis process commenced at the beginning of the data collection period and throughout the research. Creswell (2009) recommends engaging in coding and analysis as soon as possible to preserve the interview's authenticity.

### **Ethical Issues in the Study**

Great care was taken to secure all confidential documentation related to data collection effectively. Participants were provided with a written statement in the form of a letter outlining the steps to protect their anonymity. No attempt was made to conceal the study's nature and the data's intended purpose. The collected data are stored in the manner set out in the permission, privacy, and disclosure document. Additionally, the cover letter that accompanied the data collection instruments explicitly stated that the data collected were for research use only. After the interviews, the video conferencing recordings were downloaded onto a password-protected portable solid-state state drive. The interview notes were placed in a sealed envelope for temporary storage and transportation before being coded, collated, and recorded. They will be stored in a lockable drawer for five years before destruction. Great care was taken to protect the identity of the participants. Thus, an alphanumeric coding system was used to ensure that the names and identities of the principals who participated in the study were protected and would remain anonymous. While demographic data were gathered, no information about the individual's name, school, or address was required. To the extent allowed by law, I limited the

viewing of personal information to people who have to review it. I indicated to the interviewees that I cannot promise complete secrecy. I also informed the interviewees that the IRB, Temple University, and other representatives of these organizations may inspect and copy their information.

All files were downloaded on a password-protected solid-state drive to secure the electronic data and stored in a private lockable drawer. Each participant was assigned an alphanumeric pseudonym in the transcripts to protect their identity and was not referred to by that name in the study's final report. Legal names and any personally identifying or sensitive information were kept separate from the data in the study. The interviewees were informed that their choice to participate in the study would remain confidential. Their real identity will not be shared with other participants or published in the final report. Results from this study, using alphanumeric pseudonyms only, were reviewed with the primary investigator.

Adhering to established ethical protocols for conducting educational research of this scope, the necessary national approvals were secured from the educational directorates and relevant agencies. The principals of the participating schools were individually contacted, and all indicated their willingness to participate in the research. To the extent allowed by law, I limited the viewing of the information to people who have to review it. I informed the interviewees that I could not promise complete secrecy. The IRB, Temple University, and other representatives of these organizations have the right to inspect or copy information shared.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I am currently not employed by any of the institutions from which the data were collected, nor am I personally related to or engaged in any business, nor do I have any close personal or other ties with any of the participants in the study. I am a principal of a secondary all-male school in rural Jamaica.

### Research Question Alignment with Interview Items

I think it necessary to present a matrix that outlines how the interview questions will serve to answer the primary and secondary research questions. According to Creswell (2009), interview items should be thoughtfully composed and serve to answer the research questions. The alignment of interview items with the research questions is designed to ensure the analysis of the data generated from the participants' responses and yield useful data to answer the research questions. See Table 3.1 below detailing research question alignment with interview items:

1. How important is the emotional intelligence human resource training program in equipping school administrators to manage their institutions effectively?
2. What are the opportunities in the National College for Educational Leadership training program for principals to recognize and understand their emotions as principals?
3. To what extent has the emotional intelligence human resource training program affected their practice as an administrator?

**Table 3.1**

### Research Question Alignment with Interview Items

#	Research Questions	Interview Items
1.	How important is the emotional intelligence human resource training program in equipping school administrators to manage their institutions effectively?	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16

2.		What are the opportunities in the National College for Educational Leadership training program for principals to recognize and understand their emotions as principals?	11, 19,
3		To what extent has the emotional intelligence human resource training program affected their practice as an administrator?	4,18,
4		Do K-12 principals perceive emotional intelligence as useful for improving their leadership?	17,

## CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Introduction

This study examines how selected K-12 principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL)– Human Resource Training module in Emotional Intelligence for school leaders and how the training has influenced their practice. It should be noted that very little local research is dedicated to examining the topic under review. Consequently, I desire this research to add to the existing literature on emotional intelligence, leadership, and training related to both fields. This exploratory research sought to examine and understand the nuances of the selected principal’s perception of the NCEL Emotional Intelligence program and how it influenced their practice. This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the participants in the study.

This chapter presents the results of this investigation, along with an analysis of the data collected. This chapter is organized into segments, each addressing the following areas: presentation of demographic data related to the K-12 principals participating in the study, response summary, data analysis, and summary of results.

This study had ten participants, representing approximately ten percent of the principals enrolled in the program since its inception. It should be noted that the purpose of this study is not to derive any patterns from the small sample or seek to represent the larger cohort of principals. The intent was to carefully examine the participants’ perceptions and explore their associated experiences of the NCEL emotional intelligence training. In addition, the principals who participated shared their perceptions of how the training impacted their leadership practice. While all participants agreed to participate and consented to participate in the study, many struggled to find the time within their busy schedules to do the interviews. This presented significant challenges in keeping to the initially established interview schedule.

Despite the challenges, all the participants provided detailed responses that facilitated a deep and nuanced examination of the research topic. Three of the initial participants selected for the study failed to make themselves available after repeated efforts to schedule interviews. This required me to make alternate arrangements to select new participants after discussions with my research supervisor. When contacted to participate in the study, one particular principal appeared to be very suspicious of the purpose of the study and questioned why he was included. After a lengthy discussion, he said he did not want to participate in the research. The data collected throughout the study were analyzed to create a meaningful description and exploration of the research topic. After reviewing approximately 778 minutes of audio and video recordings of the interviews from principals who participated in the study, a rich narrative emerged that included unique personal stories intertwined with endearing professional experiences that helped to frame and contextualize the participant's perception of the value of emotional intelligence and the training program offered by NCEL.

### **Participants**

The study subjects volunteered to participate in the research from a cohort of approximately 1009 principals in K-12 public schools in Jamaica at both the primary and secondary levels. An analysis of the demographic data of the sample indicated that when organized by sex – three were women and seven were male. The average years of experience in education was 14.5, while the average years in principalship was 8.5. All participants had completed a master's degree.



The study subjects volunteered to participate in the research from a cohort of 1009 primary and secondary public schools across the island. While they were fairly evenly distributed by school type, the sample was 70% male. Half of the research participants had been in education for 16 to 25 years, and the remaining three participants (30%) had been educators for over 25 years. The interviewees were experienced principals, with 80% having been in that position for six or more years. The schools were distributed across rural and urban schools; 60% of the participants were from rural schools, and 40% were from urban schools. It should be noted that the numeral '1' was used to designate female participants, and the numeral '2' was used to designate male participants. See Table 4.1 for details:



**Table 4.1***Distribution of Interviewees' Characteristics/Demographic Data*

Interviewee	Gender	School Level	Location	Education		Years in Education			Years as a Principal		
				BA/BS/BEEd	Masters	0 - 15	16 - 25	26+	0 - 5	6 - 10	11+
A2	M	S	Rural	Yes	Yes		X		X		
B1	F	P	Rural	Yes	Yes		X				X
C2	M	S	Rural	Yes	Yes			X		X	
D2	M	S	Rural	Yes	Yes		X			X	
E1	F	P	Rural	Yes	Yes		X				X
F2	M	P	Urban	Yes	Yes		X				X
G2	M	P	Rural	Yes	Yes		X			X	
H2	M	S	Urban	Yes	Yes			X			X
I2	M	S	Urban	Yes	Yes	X			X		
J1	F	S	Urban	Yes	Yes			X			X

Key: Gender – M/Male F/Female; School Level – S/Secondary P/Primary

Based on their perception of emotional intelligence, I asked the participants to indicate whether or not they considered it a useful theoretical construct for ‘managing emotions in self.’ I used the semantic differential scale. The semantic differential scale gave me and the participants a more nuanced method of assessing and recording perceptions through direct comparisons along a numerical scale ranging from 1 (useful) to 7 (useless). These data are presented in Table 4.2. The highest frequency of responses indicated that most participants perceived that emotional intelligence was useful in managing emotions in themselves or in self-regulation of their emotions. Most participants selected the numerical value of ‘1’ on the scale, indicating the highest possible perception of emotional intelligence as a useful theoretical concept in managing their emotions.

Respondent A2 remarked, “As a leader, you have to have full control of your emotions and to a significant degree your control of emotions in controlling others and situations...hence

your emotions as a leader, emotional management, the ability to manage one’s emotions is pivotal to effective leadership”. It may be worth noting that all the female respondents indicated that they found the concept of emotional intelligence very useful in managing emotions in self, ascribing a numerical value of ‘1’. It is instructive to note that 60% of respondents selected ‘1’ on the semantic differential scale, representing the highest numerical value assigned to measuring their perception of the usefulness of emotional intelligence as a theoretical construct for managing emotions in themselves. The remaining 40% of respondents selected ‘2’ on the semantic differential scale, representing the second highest numerical value assigned for measuring the usefulness of emotional intelligence as a useful construct for managing oneself.

**Table 4.2**

*Semantic Differential Scale: Managing Emotions in Self*

	Managing Emotions in Self Semantic Differential Scale						
	USEFUL						USELESS
<b>Interviewees</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A2	X						
B1	X						
C2		X					
D2		X					
E1	X						
F2	X						
G2		X					
H2	X						
I2		X					
J1	X						
<b>FREQUENCY</b>	6	4					

Based on their perception of emotional intelligence, I then asked all the participants to indicate whether or not they considered it a useful theoretical construct for ‘managing emotions in others.’ I used the semantic differential scale. It should be noted that the semantic differential scale provided the participants with a more nuanced method of assessing and recording

perceptions through direct comparisons along a numerical scale ranging from '1' (useful) to '7' (useless). These data are presented in Table 4.3. The highest frequency in responses indicated most participants perceived that emotional intelligence was somewhat useful in managing emotions in self or was most useful in self-regulation of their emotions. The highest number of participants selected the numerical value of '3' on the scale, indicating that 50% of interviewees' perception of emotional intelligence as a useful theoretical concept in managing emotions in others was somewhat useful just above the halfway point – '4' - between useful and useless.

Interestingly, the participants' responses ranged from a numerical value of '1' to '4', indicating that all participants found the theoretical concept of emotional intelligence useful to some degree in managing emotions in others. It is also instructive to note that 50% of respondents selected '3' on the semantic differential scale, representing the lowest numerical value assigned to measure the respondent's perception of the usefulness of emotional intelligence as a theoretical construct for managing emotions in others. The remaining 50% of participants were distributed across the following numerical values on the semantic differential scale of '1', '2', and '4'. It should be noted that 20% of respondents selected the numerical value of '1' (representing a strong perception that emotional intelligence was indeed useful in managing emotions in others). In comparison, another 20% perceived the value of emotional intelligence as a useful construct for managing emotions in others as measured by the semantic differential scale. A further 10% of participants selected '2' as their response. It is also worth noting that no participant perceived emotional intelligence as a useless construct in managing emotions in others.

**Table 4.3***Semantic Differential Scale: Managing Emotions in Others*

			Data	Item 1a	Managing Emotions in Others Semantic Differential Scale		
	USEFUL						USELESS
<b>Interviewees</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A2			X				
B1	X						
C2			X				
D2			X				
E1			X				
F2	X						
G2		X					
H2			X				
I2				X			
J1				X			
<b>FREQUENCY</b>	2	1	5	2			

During the interview, the participants were asked to examine the list shared regarding The Emotional Intelligence concepts of the training (according to the MOEYI -NCEL Emotional Intelligence Module), then select what they perceived as the five most important concepts and then rank them from most important to least important (One being the highest rank, five being the lowest). They were then asked to discuss why they ranked the respective component as the number one (1) as the most important component. Of the 20 components of the MOEY's intelligence concepts, all but one participant (#9) selected EIC1 – 'Demonstrates self-awareness and confidence, accurately assess one's strengths and weaknesses' as one of the five most important concepts presented in the module, followed by EIC4 (seven participants) 'Demonstrates strong relationship management ability to build positive relationships and influence others.', and EIC3 'Demonstrates a sense of social awareness, i.e., ability to empathize, understand divergent points of views and interact effectively with others.' It should be noted that none of the respondents selected EIC6 'Possesses a sense of personal responsibility (locus of

control),’ EIC7 ‘Rewards or punishes subordinates (Authoritarianism),’ EIC9 ‘Effectively manages workplace behavior,’ EIC14 ‘Bases judgments primarily on feelings in an attempt to maintain organizational harmony.’ See Table 4.4 for label descriptions and Figure 4.1 for further details.

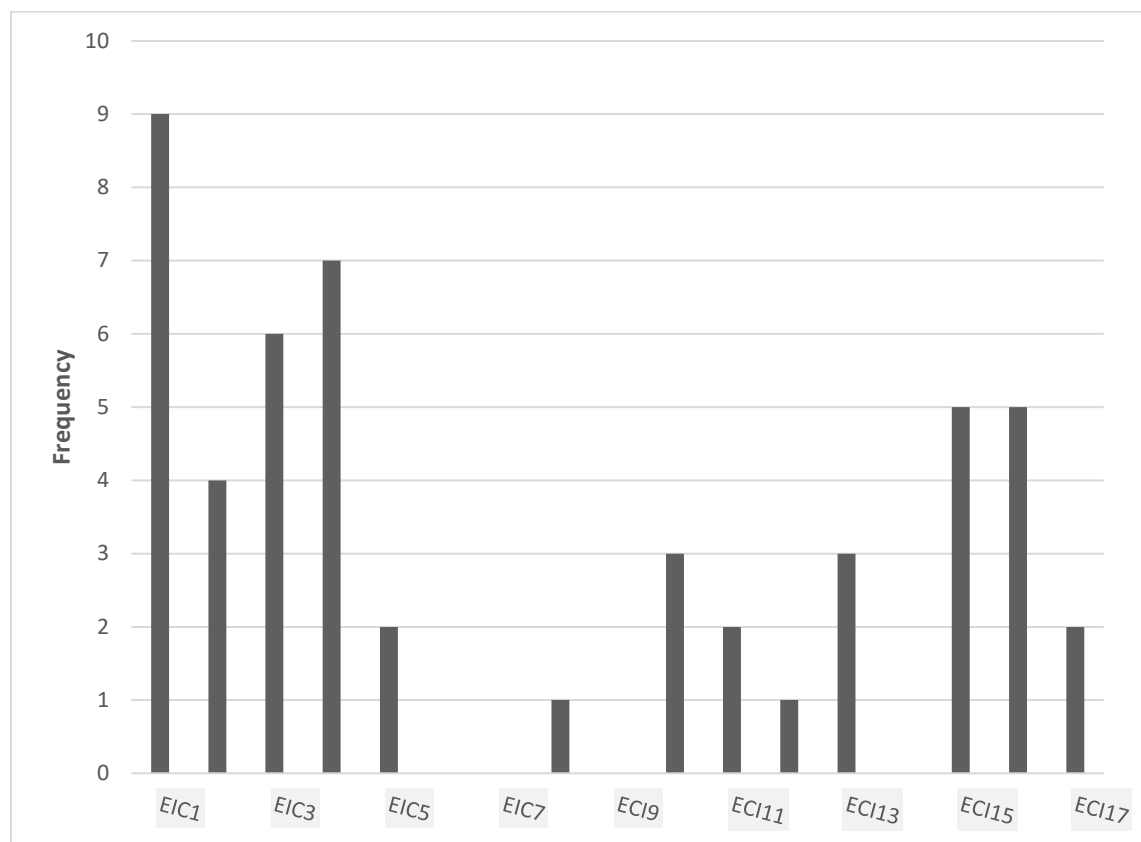
**Table 4.4**

*MOEY Emotional Intelligence Concepts*

EIC1	Demonstrates self-awareness and confidence and accurately assesses one’s strengths and weaknesses.
EIC2	Demonstrates self-management ability to control disruptive emotions and balance one’s moods, e.g., anxiety, fear often optimistic in outlook
EIC3	Demonstrates a sense of social awareness, i.e., ability to empathize, understand divergent points of view, and interact effectively with others
EIC4	Demonstrates strong relationship management ability to build positive relationships and influence others.
EIC5	Facilitates positive organizational attitudes
EIC6	Possesses a sense of personal responsibility (locus of control)
EIC7	Rewards or punishes subordinates (Authoritarianism)
EIC8	Effectively manages workplace behavior.
EIC9	Effectively manages workplace behavior.
EIC10	Creates an environment that facilitates a wide spectrum of problem-solving styles
EIC11	Creates an environment that facilitates a wide spectrum of problem-solving styles
EIC12	Demonstrates ability to formulate decisions is that directed primarily by intuition
EIC13	Bases judgments on analysis using reason & logic rather than personal values or emotions (Thinking)
EIC14	Bases judgments primarily on feelings in an attempt to maintain organizational harmony.
EIC15	Effectively evaluates personality traits and leverages them to optimize interaction with an employee.
EIC16	Demonstrates the ability to effectively identify and select team members with the cognitive & physical abilities to ensure organizational goals are achieved
EIC17	Effectively manages personalities within the team.

**Figure 4.1**

*MOEY Emotional Intelligence Concepts*



During the interview, I asked the participants to examine the selected leadership skill sets outlined in the NCEL training module and identify the five most important skill sets for an effective principal. These skill sets are presented in Table 4.5. They were further asked to carefully rank their selection from most important to least important (One being the highest rank, five being the lowest). These data are presented in Appendix II: Item 3. I then asked them why they ranked the respective skill set as the number one (1) most important skill set. Of the 20 components of the MOEY's intelligence concepts, all respondents selected 'Perseverance' (10) as one of the five most important concepts presented in the module, followed distantly by 'Effective Communicator' (6), and 'Growth Mindset' (5). LS10 had the highest frequency among respondents because of its selection as the most important leadership skill set. LS1's

‘Growth Mindset’ and LS2’s ‘Resilience’ had the second highest selection rate and were the most important leadership skill sets.

It should be noted that none of the interviewees selected ‘Patience’ or ‘Stress management’ as an important concept in the module. See Table 4.5 for label descriptions and Figure 4.2 for further details.

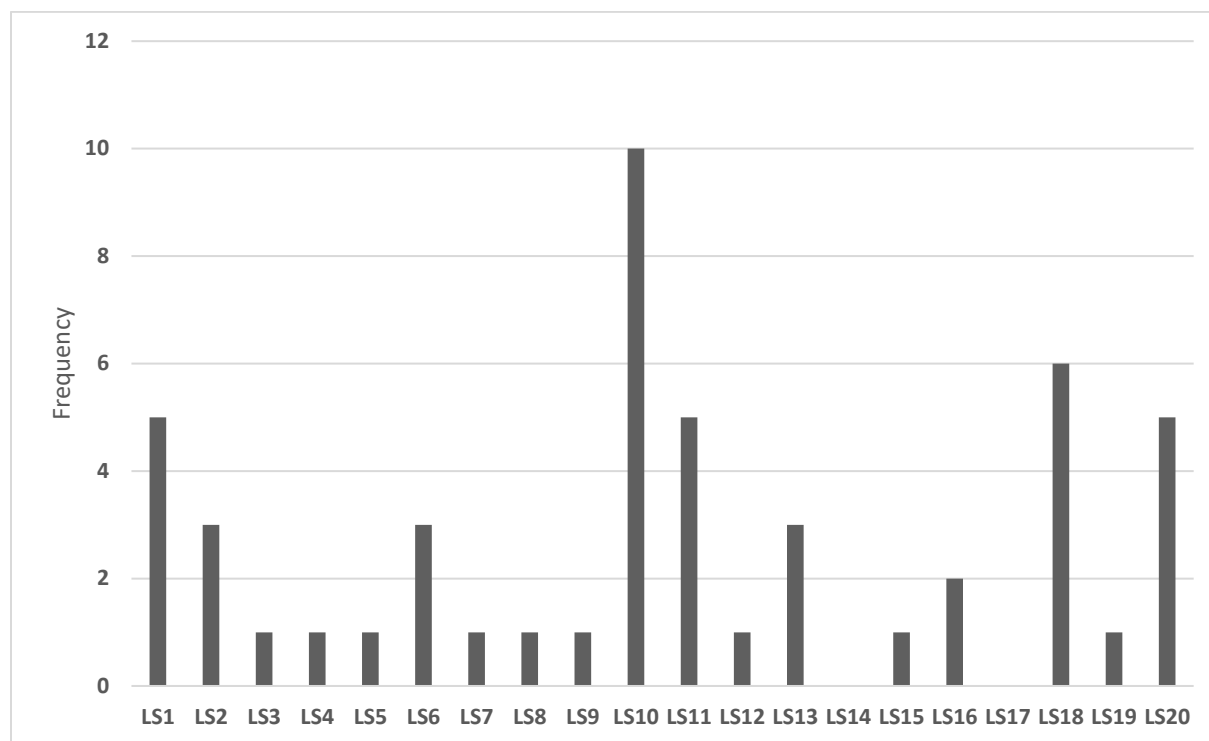
**Table 4.5**

*List of Leadership Skills*

<b>Growth Mindset</b>	LS1
<b>Resilience</b>	LS2
<b>Good interpersonal skills</b>	LS3
<b>Handling workplace politics</b>	LS4
<b>Self-awareness</b>	LS5
<b>Persistence</b>	LS6
<b>Coaching</b>	LS7
<b>Persuasive</b>	LS8
<b>Emotional Regulation</b>	LS9
<b>Perseverance</b>	LS10
<b>Mentorship</b>	LS11
<b>Change management</b>	LS12
<b>Self Confidence</b>	LS13
<b>Patience</b>	LS14
<b>Good Presentation Skills</b>	LS15
<b>Negotiator</b>	LS16
<b>Stress Management</b>	LS17
<b>Effective Communicator</b>	LS18
<b>Self-Promotion</b>	LS19
<b>Influential</b>	LS20

**Figure 4.2**

## List of Leadership Skills



During the interview, I asked the participants to examine the list shared related to whether or not the emotional intelligence program influenced any observable behavioral changes in how they interact with their employees. If yes, they were asked to use the list of words shared with them and select the five most accurate descriptions that best characterize the behavioral changes they observed in how they interact with their employees (Appendix II: Item 4). However, participants were not required to rank or discuss the respective selections. Of the 20 possible descriptors detailing perceived behavioral changes, 50% of respondents (5) selected PIE1 'People express themselves openly and respectfully without fear of retribution as one of the five most important concepts presented in the module, followed by PIE12 'Encouraging flexibility in decision making and embracing change' (4), PIE15 'Allow space for employees to



talk about their needs and desires concerning their work' (4) and PIE18 'Creating healthy opportunities to get to know your staff' (4) as an important concept in the module. Only four participants selected PIE11 'Active listening in meetings is practiced,' PIE13 'Developing trust, through the promotion of autonomy in decision making related to your employees' work activities,' PIE14 'Demonstrate trust and respect for team members' and PIE20 'Fostering cooperation and teamwork.' See Table 4.6 for label descriptions and Figure 4.3 for further details.

**Table 4.6**

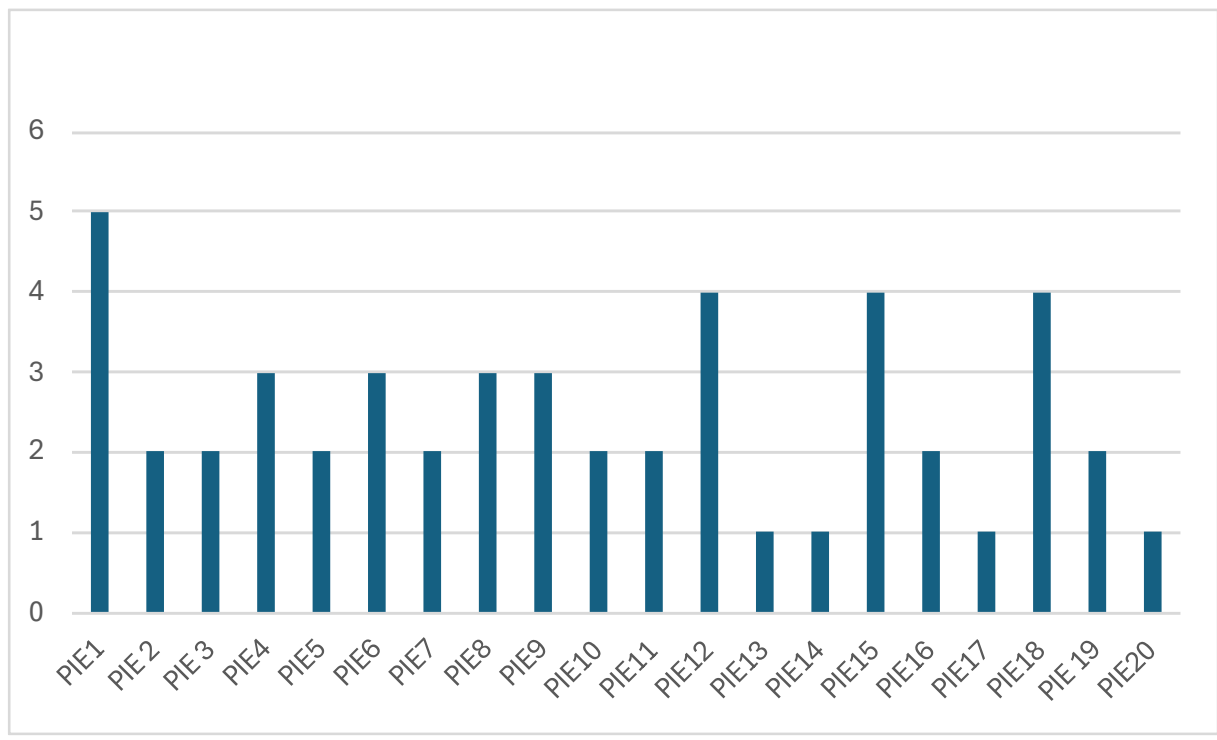
*List of Descriptions of Perceived Observable Interactions with Employees since Completing the Emotional Intelligence Module.*

PIE1	People express themselves openly and respectfully without fear of retribution.
PIE2	Promoting resilience when new initiatives are introduced
PIE3	Create a focus on employee development.
PIE4	Being an includer, seeking to get everyone involved in achieving organizational goals
PIE5	Demonstrate a sense of optimism and foster cooperation and trust.
PIE6	Freedom of creativity is celebrated and consistent.
PIE7	Generating and maintaining enthusiasm, confidence
PIE8	Reinforce and reward positive attitudes.
PIE9	Compromise during conflict
PIE10	Facilitating active listening and gathering opposing opinions.
PIE11	Active listening in meetings is practiced.
PIE12	Encouraging flexibility in decision-making and embracing change

PIE13	Developing trust through the promotion of autonomy in decision-making related to your employees' work activities
PIE14	Demonstrate trust and respect for team members.
PIE15	Allow employees to talk about their needs and desires concerning their work.
PIE 16	Will demonstrate compassion when dealing with employees
PIE17	Instilling in others knowledge and appreciation of the importance of positive behaviors
PIE18	Creating healthy opportunities to get to know your staff
PIE19	Being an encourager/ motivator
PIE20	Fostering cooperation and teamwork

**Figure 4.3**

*List of Descriptions of Perceived Observable Interactions with Employees Since Completing the Emotional Intelligence Module.*



The overarching research question for this study is as follows: Do K-12 principals perceive emotional intelligence as useful for improving their leadership? Among the secondary questions that this study was designed to answer are the following: (a) How important is the emotional intelligence human resource training program in equipping school administrators to manage their institutions effectively? (b) What are the opportunities in the National College for Educational Leadership training program for principals to recognize and understand their emotions as principals? And (c) To what extent has the emotional intelligence human resource training program affected their practice as an administrator?

### **Research Questions**

Each sub-questions will be addressed to structure this section of Chapter 4.

- Do K-12 principals perceive emotional intelligence as useful for improving their leadership?

As mentioned, this is the overarching question this dissertation intended to answer. I was keen to examine the participants' perceptions concerning how the training program improved their leadership practice within their respective institutions. One participant noted that the training was valuable for understanding and engaging with her staff, parents, and students. Participants were asked to reflect on their leadership practice and identify specific behavioral changes they attribute to their participation in the emotional intelligence training program. Participant I2 indicated that the program helped him better understand his emotions, how they impacted others, and how they could be leveraged in improving this leadership practice. He stated, "I have to manage my own emotions and then help those I lead to manage their emotions. I also have to be careful what I do...it helps me to gauge what I say and how I say, what I say."

It should be noted that the research design depended on interviews and a series of self-report instruments to gather data and provide insights into the experiences and perceptions of the participants in the study. Item 5 required participants to reflect on their practice since

participating in the training and then identify specific descriptions of perceived interactions with employees from the list presented in Item 5. After analyzing the interviewees' responses to 20 possible descriptors detailing possible interactions observed between themselves and their employees. The analysis revealed that descriptor one (PIE 1) had the highest frequency. When participants were asked if the emotional intelligence program influenced any behavioral changes in how they interacted with their employees, 50% of respondents believed that their staff is now more open to expressing themselves openly and respectfully without fear of retribution. This is a significant behavioral change that was recorded.

When asked to select from the list of descriptors shared with them the five most accurate descriptions that best characterize the behavioral changes they have observed in how they interact with their employees, 40% of interviewees selected descriptors 12, 15, and 18. Descriptor 12 or PIE12 outlined leaders' role in encouraging flexibility in decision-making and embracing change. In contrast, descriptor 15 or PIE15 underscored the importance of giving space to employees to talk about their needs and desires concerning their work. Also, descriptor 18 or PIE18 focused on creating healthy opportunities to get to know their staff. Based on the assessment made by the participants, the training program was effective in helping them to improve their interactions with their staff in meaningful ways.

On the opposite side of the equation, only 10% of participants selected the following descriptors: PIE20, PIE14, PIE 13 and PIE 11. PIE 20 focused on fostering cooperation and teamwork. PIE14 outlines the need to demonstrate trust and respect for team members. PIE 13 concerns developing trust through promoting autonomy in decision-making related to your employees' work activities. Only 10 % of respondents selected active listening in meetings as an observable behavior that was now being practiced.

When participants were asked if they believed the program was useful in improving their leadership practice, all responded favorably. One respondent replied, "...I believe that the program helped to prepare me for managing my staff." Another participant reflected on the program, and in his view, it "...helped students in the course understand their emotions, the course did that, it also assisted us in understanding the extent to which our emotions can affect our decision making, the extent to which our management of emotions can affect attitudes and actions of subordinates" When asked if they would recommend the Emotional Intelligence Training program to a colleague, all participants in the study positively affirmed a willingness to recommend the program to a colleague. One participant indicated that she believed it should be done by teachers and not just principals. Another participant also confirmed that he believed the program would be valuable to both teachers and principals; however, he added that in his experience, everyone is born with the latent ability to become a leader with traits to influence others and believes the training program is a great way of helping educational practitioners across the spectrum of the sector to develop their skills and become more effective and impactful.

- How important is the emotional intelligence human resource training program in equipping school administrators to manage their institutions effectively?

All participants agreed that the emotional intelligence human resource training program offered by NCEL provided a highly useful set of skills and knowledge for ensuring principals were equipped to manage their schools effectively. According to one male respondent, "The course was very useful." Most participants in the study perceived emotional intelligence as a useful tool in managing their emotional state, especially considering the wide cross-section of stakeholders with which they interact. One participant indicated, "As principals, we are required to interact with a wide cross-section of stakeholders within the school eco-system, often

demonstrating empathy while inspiring those around us to achieve their goals within a dynamic environment.” Nevertheless, there was a clear variation of opinions on the degree of effectiveness of emotional intelligence training effectiveness in supporting principals to aid their stakeholders in managing their emotions. Some participants believed that the training was very valuable but stressed the training’s real value was the ability to apply the concepts taught to their practice as leaders. One participant indicated that. “...it is not only important to do the training but to embrace what we were exposed to and apply to our practice.” All participants were enthusiastic about doing the emotional intelligence training program and had high expectations for the training opportunity.

The overwhelming majority of participants believed their expectations of the program were met. One participant also indicated that the program had impacted his practice by being able to apply the competencies learned, “...it is not just a construct for managing self.” he believed the training personally impacted his leadership. The participant cited the value of self-regulation of his emotions, using self-awareness relationship management. Some participants believed the concepts shared were transferable in other spheres of their lives. The value of real-life application of the concepts taught was commendable. According to one participant, “I benefitted from the course... I understood how I could help others be aware of their emotions and how it influenced behavior.” Several interviewees expressed the value of the emotional intelligence training, which prompted them to be more reflective and introspective in their practice and personal life. According to one participant in the emotional intelligence course, “We need to know what our strengths and weaknesses are and truly be aware of who we are as individuals.” A male respondent also indicated, “...emotional intelligence better helps us to understand ourselves...”

When asked what their key takeaway from the program was, all participants eagerly shared positive sentiments referencing the program's role in equipping them with insights, perspectives, and skillsets to make them more effective school leaders. A male participant in the study remarked, "Emotional intelligence training is so important, especially as we operate in such an uncertain time...emotional intelligence helps you to maintain that relationship we need with others, and by others, I mean our stakeholders." One respondent indicated that his key takeaways were: "being more resilient, the value of demonstrating and leveraging flexibility with stakeholders, while also gaining a more fulsome understand of the role of emotions in organizational dynamics."

- What are the opportunities in the National College for Educational Leadership training program for principals to recognize and understand their emotions as principals?

Most participants referenced the opportunity the emotional training program presented for them to recognize and better understand their emotions. As referenced by one female respondent, "It (emotional intelligence training) has helped me as a leader." A male respondent remarked, "Being a part of the emotional intelligence program was a valuable supplement to my leadership experiences." It should also be noted that some participants believed the NCEL emotional intelligence training program did not go far enough or provide enough opportunities to explore and understand their emotions as leaders. According to one female respondent about Controlling Emotions in Others, "...I would have wanted to have contextual scenarios in how to use or apply the concept." Yet another female respondent remarked, "There is a greater need to focus more on the application." There was a general belief among participants that the duration of the program did not provide an adequate timeframe to adequately explore the nuances of the program, particularly exploration of the concept of emotions, particularly their own. A male participant believed that "...more time should have been provided in light of the unfamiliarity

with the content.” He indicated that most members in his training group had heard of emotional intelligence; however, “...no one had actually done any training in the area of emotional intelligence.” Hence, his belief that greater effort should have been placed on meticulously engaging with the subject matter more nuancedly. This was perceived as important to improve the experience and learning opportunities. one female participant opined, “I believe giving more time will improve the training experience.”

Most participants were concerned about the lack of time allocated to the emotional intelligence module. One female respondent said, “I don’t think the time was adequate.” Several respondents indicated that, at times, it felt too compressed. One male interviewee remarked, “Too much was being shared in too short a timeframe with insufficient time to internalize and adapt what was shared.” In addition, a few participants were also concerned that the program lacked adequate methodology to assist principals in transferring and adapting the theory of emotional intelligence into tangible actions that principals could take. “There is a lack of depth in providing details,” argued one male participant. Yet another participant expressed frustration that although she thought the training was valuable, the methodology used by the designers of the module and facilitator should seek to “make it more applicable during the training ...practice application of the concept during the training.” A few participants believed the program should have been more in-depth. One female interviewee said, “...case studies could have been used to provide greater context and depth of learning”.

According to many interviewees, more time was needed for activities that created opportunities for reflection and assessment of emotional intelligence. A female participant further indicated that the opportunity was not provided to be able to do a deep dive into their conceptualization of emotional intelligence and how it aligned with their practice. She said, “Much of that aspect of deep learning was not realized.” Another participant’s critique of the



program centered on this very point. One male participant indicated, “I believe the content was good, but the time allotted was too short, and so the sessions felt rushed, leaving some principals feeling overwhelmed due to the volume of information being shared over a short period.” Yet another male participant expressed the sentiments that, “the program could have created more opportunities to explore the dynamics associated with emotional intelligence and leadership.” This respondent suggested that “...an additional ten hours” should be allocated to the program, creating greater opportunities to engage with the critical content.

However, only one male participant believed that the time was adequate and that adequate opportunities were provided to recognize and understand the concept of emotional intelligence in themselves as school leaders and those they lead. He opined, “The time was adequate in my estimation.” This perspective contrasted sharply with the other nine participants, who all opined that additional time was needed to deliver the content and effectively get the best learning outcomes. As summed up by a female respondent, “If more time were given to the module, it would be more effective.” Nine participants consistently referenced the need to increase the time allocation when asked what could be done to improve the emotional intelligence training program. One male respondent opined that “...more time needs to be extended to have a lasting impact on the principals” enrolled in the program. Yet another male participant remarked, “We would have done better with more time to examine this all-important matter of emotional intelligence. So, more time could have been scheduled for this course”. He further went on to recommend that 10 additional hours would have been appreciated, “...a few more hours would have allowed for more open-ended discussions, we would be able to continue the narrative, we would be able to do more research on the matter...to explore the issues, to explore the dynamics of emotional intelligence in one’s self and others.”

There was a universal consensus that the facilitators were knowledgeable and insightful. They did a commendable job in helping participants understand the program's value and application in helping them become more effective school leaders. One respondent believed the "...facilitator was very knowledgeable."

- To what extent has the emotional intelligence human resource training program affected their practice as an administrator?

Another key aspect examined in the research was how the emotional intelligence training program influenced participants' practices and contributed to how they approached managing the human relations component of the job. I examined the experiences of the participants as reported. I looked at how they applied various program elements to manage their emotions and stakeholders to achieve effectiveness and efficiency within their schools. The study aimed to gain useful insights and knowledge regarding the factors present in the role of the school leader and how to use them to make a change throughout the school. These factors are individual and social, involving a nuanced and dynamic interaction between the principal and key stakeholders. The research provided arguable unique insights into the experiences of each principal who participated in the study and how the emotional intelligence training program impacted their practice, especially against the backdrop of the different cultural circumstances they navigate within their respective institutions.

I was keen to examine the participants' perceptions concerning how the training program improved their leadership practice within their respective institutions. One female participant said, "I was able to identify contexts in which emotional intelligence could be applied." Participant A2 indicated that it prompted him to develop a mentorship program to help staff manage the anxiety associated with the job and engage in self-development. He remarked, "... the emotional intelligence program influenced my teacher mentorship program". One participant

noted that she found the training "...very valuable, not just for understanding and engaging with my staff but also my parents and students". Participants were asked to reflect on their leadership practice since participating in the NCEL EI training program and identify specific behavioral changes they attribute to their participation in the emotional intelligence training program.

Respondent A2 opined, "...through emotional intelligence, if you have a matter to discuss with a particular person, by just being able to sense and understand their emotional state, you are now better able to find the right time to have certain discussions, the right time to make certain requests...emotional intelligence has been useful in informing when I choose to engage with staff." The research design depended on self-report instruments to gather data and provide insights. Item 5 required participants to reflect on their practice since participating in the training and then identify specific descriptions of perceived interactions with employees from the list presented in Item 5. The interviewees were asked to analyze the 20 possible descriptors detailing interactions observed between themselves and their employees. The analysis revealed that descriptor one (PIE 1) had the highest frequency. When participants were asked if the emotional intelligence program influenced any behavioral changes in how they interacted with their employees, 50% of respondents believed that their staff is now more open to expressing themselves openly and respectfully without fear of retribution. This is a significant behavioral change that was recorded.

When asked to select from the list of descriptors shared with them the five most accurate descriptions that best characterize the behavioral changes they have observed in how they interact with their employees, 40% of interviewees selected descriptors 12, 15, and 18.

Descriptor 12 or PIE12 outlined leaders' role in encouraging flexibility in decision-making and embracing change. In contrast, descriptor 15 or PIE15 underscored the importance of giving space to employees to talk about their needs and desires concerning their work. Also, descriptor

18 or PIE18 focused on creating healthy opportunities to get to know their staff. Based on the assessment made by the participants, the training program was effective in helping them to improve their interactions with their staff in meaningful ways.

On the opposite side of the equation, only 10% of participants selected the following descriptors: PIE20, PIE14, PIE 13 and PIE 11. PIE 20, which was focused on fostering cooperation and teamwork. PIE14 outlines the need to demonstrate trust and respect for team members. PIE 13 involves developing trust through promoting autonomy in decision-making related to your employees' work activities. Only 10 % of respondents selected active listening in meetings as an observable behavior that was now being practiced.

When participants were asked if they believed the program was useful in improving their leadership practice, all responded favorably. One respondent replied, "...I believe that the program helped to prepare me for managing my staff." One respondent, A2, remarked that it helped him "...understand my emotions, the course did that, it also assisted how emotions can affect my decision making."

When asked if they would recommend the Emotional Intelligence Training program to a colleague, all participants in the study positively affirmed a willingness to recommend the program to a colleague. One participant indicated that she believed it should be done by teachers and not just principals. Another participant confirmed that the program would be valuable to teachers and principals. However, he added that in his experience, everyone is born with the latent ability to become a leader, with traits to influence others, and he believes the training program is a great way of helping educational practitioners across the spectrum of the sector to develop their skills and become more effective and impactful. Respondent H2 opined, "I think this training should be included in a teachers' college program, whether mandatory or elective."

He said, “If we put it in the teachers’ college program, then the individuals who are coming out as teachers will be better practitioners, understanding self and how to relate to others.”

- Do K-12 principals perceive emotional intelligence as useful for improving their leadership?

As mentioned, this is the overarching question this dissertation intended to answer. I was keen to examine the participants' perceptions concerning how the training program improved their leadership practice within their respective institutions. One participant noted that the training was valuable for understanding and engaging with her staff, parents, and students. Participants were asked to reflect on their leadership practice and identify specific behavioral changes they attribute to their participation in the emotional intelligence training program. Participant I2 indicated that the program helped him better understand his emotions, how they impacted others, and how they could be leveraged in improving this leadership practice. He stated, “I have to manage my own emotions, and then I have to help those I lead manage their emotions. I also have to be careful what I do...it helps me to gauge what I say and how I say, what I say.”

It should be noted that the research design depended on interviews and a series of self-report instruments to gather data and provide insights into the experiences and perceptions of the participants in the study. Item 5 required participants to reflect on their practice since participating in the training and then identify specific descriptions of perceived interactions with employees from the list presented in Item 5. After analyzing the interviewees’ responses to 20 possible descriptors detailing possible interactions observed between themselves and their employees. The analysis revealed that descriptor one (PIE 1) had the highest frequency. When participants were asked if the emotional intelligence program influenced any behavioral changes in how they interacted with their employees, 50% of respondents believed that their staff is now

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Training program to a colleague, all participants in the study positively affirmed a willingness to recommend the program to a colleague. One participant indicated that she believed it should be done by teachers and not just principals. Another participant also confirmed that he believed the program would be valuable to both teachers and principals; however, he added that in his experience, everyone is born with the latent ability to become a leader with traits to influence others and believes the training program is a great way of helping educational practitioners across the spectrum of the sector to develop their skills and become more effective and impactful.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The study examined the perception of selected K-12 principals in the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) – Human Resource Training module in Emotional Intelligence for school administrators and how the training has influenced their practice. This research was designed to add to the limited local research available. Consequently, I desire this research to add to the existing literature on emotional intelligence, leadership, and training related to both fields. This exploratory research sought to examine and understand the nuances of the selected principal's perception of the NCEL Emotional Intelligence program and how it influenced their practice. This chapter presents the results, limitations, policy recommendations, conclusion, and insights for future studies. I acknowledge the inherent limitations of the study and have examined each of the considerations mentioned above. Recognizing the limitations as outlined ensures a comprehensive understanding of the research context. It reassures those interested in reviewing the study that critical thought was put into its design and how the research was conducted.

### Limitations

The study was conceptualized and designed as qualitative research with an intended small sample size focusing on the value of exploring the unique experiences of each of the selected participants and their perceptions of the emotional intelligence training program. The limited sample size is, however, one limitation of the research as it affects any possibility of using the findings to generalize to a wider population as it focuses on the perception and the experiences of the small group of K-12 principals and would not adequately represent the entire population of principals within the island.



Contamination is possible as these principals share many of the same social and professional circles, increasing the likelihood of them talking among themselves. Although the possibility of contamination exists, it is unlikely. In addition, self-selection bias was deemed a possibility; this could have been a small issue. Individuals were allowed to decide whether to participate in the study or not.

The study depended primarily on self-report methodology and thus relied on the participants' honesty and understanding in responding to the questions during the interview process. This underscores the limitations of depending on subjective self-report data gathered during the interview process with limited objective data sources to verify the authenticity of the data presented and mitigate against self-report bias. Self-report instruments can be influenced by social desirability bias depending on the participants' underestimation or overestimation of their perceived interactions, competencies, or impact on how the emotional intelligence training has influenced their practice.

Contextual variability is a limitation, as the context within which each participant practiced their leadership varied, as detailed in Chapters 3 and 4. Not only was there significant variation in the location and research sites, for instance, the parishes, but there were also differences in the school type and size. There were also variations in the years of service in education and years of experience in principalship. These and other differences could create significant contextual variability influencing the research findings. Further, principals' perceptions of the value of emotional intelligence training may vary due to different contexts arising from cultural differences in institutions and regions. This variability may influence the perception of the principal based on the differing educational environments.

## **Future Research**

There is also the opportunity for further research that may be extended to other areas, such as human social services. A more robust study may be warranted to explore and better analyze the subject under review. The study provides a good foundation to design a follow-up study that examines the research topic within the context of a larger quantitative research project. In addition, it would be interesting to include in any future study related to the topic an opportunity for principals' emotional intelligence levels to be assessed using the Mayor-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) emotional intelligence assessment instrument.

Furthering the study of the teacher's perspective on the value of the emotional intelligence training program for K-12 principals offered through the Ministry of Education and Youth's National College for Educational Leadership program would add an interesting dimension to the discussion. Some human management practitioners emphasize the need for 360-degree appraisals of leaders that incorporate several perspectives on the role and performance of leaders in executing their respective roles, including but not limited to the views of their employees. The existing body of literature on the topic would benefit tremendously from further exploration of the teachers' perspectives that are led by the principals being studied. It would be valuable to see, hear, and examine their insights, experiences, and opinions on their leaders and juxtapose them against the data gathered from the principals' insights, experiences, and opinions. This would provide a richer, more nuanced, and more granular examination of the topic while offering more meaningful insight into the phenomenon under review.

It is further believed that any future research should explore how the emotional intelligence training program impacts leadership quality, including organizational culture and student outcomes. This is particularly significant in an era when education in many jurisdictions, including Jamaica, is experiencing high teacher shortages. Many of these shortages are linked to

teacher dissatisfaction with their conditions of service, toxic institutional culture, and low morale. Further research could be conducted on how the quality of principalship as practiced can be improved or significantly improved through meaningful training in emotional intelligence. This would promote improved teacher well-being while assisting teachers in better managing the stress associated with the job and possibly lead to higher retention rates of academic staff.

While cross-sectional studies provide valuable insights into the phenomenon or topic being examined, it is equally valuable to consider the long-term results or impact of training conducted in emotional intelligence by the National College in Educational Leadership and examine the participants' experience over an extended time using longitudinal research methods. This would provide a good opportunity to identify and track changes in the respective principals' practice quality, resulting outcomes, and unearthing patterns and themes for further investigation and research. In addition, it provides the scope to inform targeted interventions to support the continuous development of the principals and their institutions and improve the K12 principals' emotional intelligence training program. Another critical area that could be beneficial to examine in future research projects is combining the subjective self-report data garnered through the interview process with other objective data sources to mitigate against self-report bias.

It may also be valuable to embark on a future study to examine emotional intelligence training and its impact from the perspective of teachers. This could be designed as a qualitative study with a broader sample size to generalize the research findings.

### **Policy Implications and Recommendations**

The study provides keen insights to drive policy development related to school leaders' training and capacity development. The study's findings are consistent with the body of research that broadly makes a case for developing and expanding training opportunities for principals and other school leaders to develop their emotional intelligence quotient. The impact of emotional

intelligence has been identified as a valuable skill set in creating a meaningful impact on school operations while enhancing student outcomes.

Significant research in leadership highlights the positive implications of leveraging emotional intelligence training to improve leaders' efficacy. This requires a greater policy push toward ensuring adequate training opportunities for principals and other school leaders to develop the requisite emotional intelligence competencies to manage their institutions effectively. Emotional intelligence training equips leaders with the skillsets to better navigate the challenges they will encounter in managing their human capital and fostering an enabling environment that optimizes the growth and development of the school community members (Goleman, 1995). Where there are failures to strategically evaluate and provide training and capacity-building opportunities for school leaders to appreciate the role emotions play in effectively leading an organization, there is usually a series of undesirable or suboptimal outcomes (George, 2000).

The study also underscores the value of enhancing training opportunities by ensuring that the training process is ongoing. Therefore, the focus should not be only on a one-off academic activity aligned with the need to achieve certification in the HR module as part of the NCEL principal program. Policymakers should view emotional intelligence as a useful theoretical construct that can greatly aid leaders in understanding the nuances of interpersonal and intrapersonal management, which, when effectively applied, can optimize the operation of school communities. Thus, a training plan should emerge that will form a broader, more purpose-driven approach to provide ongoing training opportunities that will support school leaders in applying the theory of emotional intelligence to improve the school's emotional climate as a critical step in driving school-wide transformation.

Emotional intelligence training opportunities present a useful medium within which school leaders, teachers, and other educational practitioners may acquire useful skillsets and knowledge to foster improved student interactions. There needs to be a sustained effort and additional funding to ensure students are also guided in developing emotional intelligence literacy. Through emotional intelligence training, principals and teachers can create a more supportive and empathetic climate to enhance student learning and develop more emotionally resilient pupils. I recommend the Ministry of Education increase programming to focus on policy development in social and emotional learning and emotional intelligence.

The research highlights the value of emotional intelligence training in enhancing leadership quality and its impact on improving school operations. Policymakers must carefully consider the net impact of integrating emotional intelligence within the Ministry of Education's strategic policy thrust from a macro level. This would require careful consideration regarding expanded National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) funding. There is a need for fiscal arrangements to provide the requisite funding support required to operationalize this critical training program. It should be seen as a medium to long-term investment in the sector's human capital with a strong likelihood of providing valuable returns on the investment made. Policymakers are urged to invest in the individuals charged with leading and operationalizing the policy directives of the Ministry of Education at the local level. The previous recommendations highlight the need for ongoing training of school leaders, increasing the duration of the training to provide greater depth of understanding, and increasing opportunities for training. These recommendations will require additional resource allocation to implement.

This investigation revealed the need for more time to be allotted to the continued training of principals in the National College for Education Leadership – Emotional training program. The data yielded significant insights into the need for case studies to be integrated into the

training module's methodology. In addition, there was a general view that the module should be reviewed and amended to provide the opportunity for exploring the content in greater depth.

### **Summary**

According to research, emotional intelligence impacts principals' leadership practice and organizational culture. The insights from this research project have major implications for policymakers at the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY) in developing training opportunities to support further development of school leaders' leadership skill sets. The National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) stands to benefit tremendously from the findings of the research. The study puts forward several key recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of facilitating the Human Relations (HR) - Emotional Intelligence training program. The information presented in the study can also help school boards as they seek to support principals in identifying and participating in effective training programs to strengthen their leadership capacity and meet the dynamic demands of managing a K12 educational institution. In addition, there is a medium to long-term need to implement a training program for teachers presently in service and training, thereby equipping educators across the system with greater knowledge and appreciation of emotional intelligence and its role in fostering more effective school communities.

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## APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### Interview Schedule

Protocol #: 28317

Archival #:

Site: Virtual (Zoom platform)

Interviewer: Mark Smith

Transcriber: Mark Smith

Typist: Mark Smith

Date:

Start:

End:

### Research Topic:

Exploring how selected K-12 principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership's (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence Training Programme perceive how the training has influenced their practice.

### Respondent

A secondary school principal participated and completed the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence module as part of the Effective Principals' Programme.

### Location

The respondent's office or any other room at the school provides an appropriate level of privacy.

### Introduction

Good day. How are you doing? Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this research. The topic of the study is the perception of principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership Emotional Intelligence training program and its impact on their practice.

I must advise you that anything discussed during this interview will be treated in a highly confidential manner. You may refer to the consent form previously emailed for further details or seek clarity on any matter related to the study if you so desire. Thank you for completing and returning the consent form by email before the interview. This interview should take approximately 45 minutes. I hope this is OK with you.

**Questions:**

1. I would like you to tell me about your professional background and years of service as an educator. Also, please tell me what led you into the field of education. When did you complete the NCEL program?

2. Please share the reason/s for your career choice with me.

3. What factors influenced your choice to become a principal?

*I want to ensure that we cover all important information.*

4. In recent years, emotional intelligence has become a buzzword, especially in leadership circles. Some scholars focus more on emotional self-management, while other researchers focus on emotional intelligence as a construct for managing emotions in others. Using the semantic differential scale I just shared with you. Please indicate your perception of the usefulness of emotional intelligence as a leadership construct within the context of your practice as situated within these two widely held scholarly positions (Appendix II: Item 1 - Semantic Differential Scale A - **Self-Management** and Item 2 - Semantic Differential Scale B -**Managing Emotions in Others**).

5. What were your professional expectations of the emotional intelligence training program, and were these expectations fulfilled? How?

6. What are three (3) key takeaways from the NCEL Emotional Intelligence training module?

7. Give two (2) specific examples of issues you have encountered in the day-to-day operation of your school and whether the training received in emotional intelligence assisted you in managing the same.
8. Examine the list shared regarding The Emotional Intelligence concepts of the training (according to the MOEYI -NCEL Emotional Intelligence Module), then select what you perceive as the five most important concepts and rank them from most important to least important (One being the highest rank, five being the lowest). Why did you rank this component as the number one (1) most important component?
9. Has the emotional intelligence training received through NCEL aided you in fostering healthy interpersonal relationships among your employees? If so, could you share an artifact that you consider evidence of your practical application of concepts derived from the training?
10. Do you think knowledge of emotional intelligence impacts your performance as a team leader?
11. In your opinion, was the duration of the training program adequate? Please elaborate on your answer.
12. How effective do you think the lecturer facilitated the module?
13. In your opinion, how valuable was the information that was shared with you?
14. Could you examine the list provided and identify the 5 most important skills for an effective principal? Then, rank them by your selection from most important to least important (One being the highest rank, five being the lowest). Appendix II: Item 3
15. Would you recommend this module to a colleague?
16. Has the emotional intelligence program influenced any behavioral changes in how you interact with your employees? If yes, use the list of words shared with you to select the five most



accurate descriptions that best characterize the behavioral changes you have observed in interacting with your employees (Appendix II: Item 4).

17. Why do you think the program developers thought it important to include EI in the HR training program?

18. Has the emotional intelligence program influenced any behavioral changes in how you interact with your employees? If yes, use the list of words shared with you to select the five most accurate descriptions that best characterize the behavioral changes you have observed in interacting with your employees (Appendix II: Item 4).

18. What could be done to make the program better?

### **Conclusion**

The interview gave me unique insights into your perception of the emotional intelligence training program. However, I want to ensure that I have provided you an opportunity to share insights that you believe would be of value to this research or that you believe are important to you.

I greatly value your insight and opinion in this process. I would like to know if you believe there are any concepts, ideas, or issues I should have examined through my questioning that I did not manage to include in our interview. If so, would you like to raise them with me now?

Once again, thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and taking time out of your busy schedule to facilitate it. Have a good day.

## APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW QUESTION #4

### Interview Schedule, Question 4:

#### Item 1: Semantic Differential Scale A - Managing Emotions in Self

Useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Useless
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#### Item 2: Semantic Differential Scale B - Managing Emotions in Others

Useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Useless
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### Interview Schedule, Question 13:

#### Item 3: Emotional Intelligence Concepts (according to the MOEYI – NCEL Emotional Intelligence Module)

EIC1	Demonstrates self-awareness and confidence and accurately assesses one's strengths and weaknesses.	EIC10	Creates an environment that facilitates a wide spectrum of problem-solving styles
EIC2	Demonstrates self-management ability to control disruptive emotions and balance one's moods, e.g., anxiety, fear often optimistic in outlook	EIC11	Works well with facts and data. Good at gathering data (sensation)
EIC3	Demonstrates a sense of social awareness, i.e., ability to empathize, understand	EIC12	Demonstrates ability to formulate decisions is that directed primarily by intuition

	divergent points of view, and interact effectively with others		
EIC4	Demonstrates strong relationship management ability to build positive relationships and influence others.	EIC13	Bases judgments on analysis using reason & logic rather than personal values or emotions (Thinking)
EIC5	Facilitates positive organizational attitudes	EIC14	Bases judgments primarily on feelings in an attempt to maintain organizational harmony.
EIC6	Possesses a sense of personal responsibility (locus of control)	EIC15	Effectively evaluates personality traits and leverages them to optimize interaction with employees.
EIC7	Rewards or punishes subordinates (Authoritarianism)	EIC16	Demonstrates the ability to effectively identify and select team members with the cognitive & physical abilities to ensure organizational goals are achieved
EIC8	Effectively manages workplace behavior	EIC17	Effectively manages personalities within the team
EIC9	Is willing to do whatever is necessary to meet desired outcomes, believing that the ends justify the means		

#### Interview Schedule, Question 14:

#### Item 4: List of Leadership Skills

<b>Growth Mindset</b>	<b>Resilience</b>	<b>Good interpersonal skills</b>	<b>Handling workplace politics</b>
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<b>Self-awareness</b>	<b>Persistence</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Persuasive</b>
<b>Emotional Regulation</b>	<b>Perseverance</b>	<b>Mentorship</b>	<b>Change management</b>
<b>Self Confidence</b>	<b>Patience</b>	<b>Good Presentation Skills</b>	<b>Negotiator</b>
<b>Stress Management</b>	<b>Effective Communicator</b>	<b>Self-Promotion</b>	<b>Influential</b>

### Interview Schedule, Question 15:

#### Item 5: List of Descriptions of Perceived Interactions with Employees:

People express themselves openly and respectfully without fear of retribution	Freedom of creativity is celebrated and consistent	Active listening in meetings is practiced	Will demonstrate compassion when dealing with employees
Promoting resilience when new initiatives are introduced	Generating and maintaining enthusiasm, confidence	Encouraging flexibility in decision-making and embracing change	Instilling in others knowledge and appreciation of the importance of positive behaviors
Create a focus on employee development.	Reinforce and reward positive attitudes.	Developing trust through the promotion of autonomy in decision-making related to your employees' work activities	Creating healthy opportunities to get to know your staff
Being an include, seeking to get everyone involved in achieving organizational goals.	Compromise during conflict	Demonstrate trust and respect for team members	Being an encourager/motivator
Demonstrate a sense of optimism as well as fostering cooperation and trust	Facilitating active listening and gathering opposing opinions.	Allow employees to talk about their needs and desires concerning their work.	Fostering cooperation and teamwork

## APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW)

### Interview Schedule (Follow-up Interview)

Protocol #: 28317

Archival #:

Site: Virtual (Zoom platform)

Interviewer: Mark Smith

Transcriber: Mark Smith

Typist: Mark Smith

Date:

Start:

End:

### Research Topic:

Exploring how selected K-12 principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership's (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence Training Programme perceive how the training has influenced their practice.

### Respondent

A secondary school principal who participated and completed the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) Emotional Intelligence module as part of the Effective Principals' Programme.

### Location

The interview will be conducted remotely using the Zoom web conferencing platform.

### Introduction

Good day. How are you doing? Thank you for agreeing to meet with me again for this follow-up interview. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this research. To clarify, the purpose of the follow-up interview is to provide you with an opportunity to review the information collected from the interview previously facilitated and clarify any misrepresentation of the ideas you may have shared or provide further clarity where necessary. The intent is to

ensure a high degree of accuracy of the data collected. As a reminder, the topic of the study is the perception of K-12 principals enrolled in the National College for Educational Leadership Emotional Intelligence training program and the extent to which the training has influenced their practice.

I must advise you that anything discussed during this interview will be treated in a highly confidential manner. This follow-up interview should take approximately 15-20 minutes. I hope this is OK with you.

**Questions:**

1. Were you satisfied with how the interview was previously conducted?
2. Did you review the transcript from the interview facilitated on Day/Month/Year?
3. Are you satisfied with the accuracy of your remarks and how they were recorded?

*I want to ensure that we cover all important information.*

4. We will now review the responses given item by item just for confirmation. If at any point you do not agree with how your response was recorded or represented, please indicate so we can review it.
5. Are you satisfied with the amendments made (if made) or accept that the responses shared accurately represent your views?

**Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to facilitate this follow-up interview and share your insights and opinions. The interview gave me unique insights into your perception of the emotional intelligence training program. This follow-up interview allowed you to review the transcript and confirm your opinions were accurately represented. Once again, I thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Have a good day.

