

**Emotional intelligence as an influence on the  
practices of educational leaders.**

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## **Abstract**

Over the last few decades, the concept of emotional intelligence has gained popularity and is considered a vital attribute of effective leadership. School leaders' emotional intelligence skills are crucial to enhance students' achievements and ensure the well-being of a school as a learning community (Gray, 2009). This study analysed the influence emotional intelligence has on educational leaders' practices in two primary schools in Auckland, New Zealand. It aimed to examine ways in which school leaders define the concept of emotional intelligence and identify the importance of emotional intelligence skills related to leadership practices. This thesis explores how emotional intelligence influences the practices of educational leaders. A qualitative approach was employed and data were collected through interviews with six participants including two principals, two deputy principals, and two teachers. The research findings highlighted that leadership practices were linked to emotional intelligence in-situ as identified by the participants of this study. It also offered insights into the pressures and issues when undertaking effective leadership practices related to emotional intelligence.

The analysis of the data indicated that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on leadership practices. School leaders 'buy in' to emotional intelligence is profoundly dependent on context and its external and internal influences. Furthermore, leaders employ a wide range of skills for leadership practices to be successful and meaningful, and emotional intelligence is one skill set that may facilitate them in their endeavours to achieve effective leadership and meet the learning and teaching needs of students and teachers.

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed Sadia Kashif

Date 12/06/18



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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

Educational leaders today face ever-increasing pressures of uncertainty and complexity (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016). Haynes, Arafeh, and McDaniels (2015) note that “More than ever before, educational leaders are required and expected to create learning environments in which teachers are teaching more effectively, students are learning more efficiently and achievement levels among all students are at increasingly higher levels” (p.7). Educational leaders not only have to deal with challenges of cultural diversity, new technologies and social change, but, also, work towards enhancing students’ and teachers’ learning. This changing environment demands leaders be more self-aware, focused, motivating, collaborative and persuasive. Dealing with a wide range of ethnicities, age groups and people from different socioeconomic backgrounds means educational leaders need to have high levels of emotional intelligence and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for developing productive relationships (Cardno, 2012). B. Harris (2007) claims that to meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup>-century schools which include a shift to digital pedagogies, flexible learning environments and reviewing curriculum to develop new skills and competencies, means that “new ways of leading are needed that acknowledge leadership as primarily an emotional and not a rational activity” (p.172).

Emotional intelligence is basically a person’s ability to recognize and manage one’s own emotions and recognize different emotional states of others and respond appropriately to them (Goleman, 1998). Growing research in this field makes it evident that emotional intelligence may play a vital role in underpinning effective leadership (George, 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013; Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016). Higgs and Dulewicz (2016) propose that to build a sustainable, supportive and resilient way of working, there is a need for leaders to lead with emotional intelligence. The emotional task of the leader is a primal and most important act of leadership (Goleman et al., 2013). Daneshmand (2013) suggests that elevated levels of emotional intelligence are crucial for educational leaders to develop understandings of how to build productive schools that enable pedagogical achievement and emotional adaption of students and staff.

This small-scale study explores the perceptions of principals, deputy principals and teachers of two primary schools in Auckland, New Zealand about the concept of emotional intelligence and its perceived influence on the professional practices of educational leaders. This research study unpacks the practices of educational leaders linked to emotional intelligence as woven into the fabric of school context and culture. Moreover, it analyses the perceived relationship between different attributes of emotional intelligence skills and effective leadership practices associated with relationship building, collaboration, managing conflict, and diversity.

For the purpose of this study, the term educational leaders refer to school principals and middle leaders namely, deputy or associate principals. These middle leaders work alongside school principals to support teachers and students. They provide pedagogical and pastoral leadership and fulfill various administrative functions (Ministry of Education, 2017a). The role educational leaders play demands professional leadership that promotes school culture enhance of teaching and learning. They are expected to create environments which foster relationships and professional learning with all stakeholders (students, staff, and parents) in specific contexts. In addition to these responsibilities, they manage day-to-day operational tasks, professional communication and relationships with school community and practices amidst constantly changing external and internal demands. Educational leaders, faced with a mounting list of challenges and complexities, need emotional intelligence as well as leadership and management skills to succeed.

### **The New Zealand Education System**

In 1989, the New Zealand education system was decentralized and self-managing schools were introduced where each school operates as an autonomous institution and is provided with operational funds to cover running costs. This decentralized system allows school principals to work closely with Boards of Trustees (elected by local parents). In this devolved system, the decision-making shifts from Government to schools making principals and Boards responsible to set strategic direction and align resources with school goals and targets to improve the quality of education and develop partnerships with school communities. A school principal in this context is ultimately accountable for the effective implementation of practices related to both leadership and management of personnel, finance, property, health and safety, and the interpretation and delivery of the national curriculum (Harold, 1997).

Hodgen and Wylie (2005) suggest that the 1989 reforms in educational administration in New Zealand have increased principals' workloads in terms of managing resources, dealing with people and implementing change. Multiple leadership and management demands can be a source of tension for educational leaders in terms of managing time and establishing priorities. To support educational leaders to successfully meet the challenges, tensions and increased expectations of professional learning and leading, a conceptual model of *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008) was developed. This model highlighted four interconnected areas of practice aligned with educational leadership: culture; pedagogy; systems; and partnerships and networks. All these areas are inextricably connected to relationship building. Leading change and problem-solving are identified as key activities for educational leaders. Through emphasizing the importance of school contexts together with leadership dispositions, this framework has been used to inform national professional development programmes offered in New Zealand to both new and experienced school leaders in order to develop professional knowledge of teaching and learning. Recently the Ministry of Education (2017a) has implemented three new leadership support programmes: Leadership Advisors; Emerging Leaders; and Expert Partners. These programmes address the individual needs of leaders at all levels of the system and reflect a shift in the education system with the creation of the Education Council, Investing in Educational Success (IES) and the new leadership roles of Communities of Learning (CoL) - Kāhui Ako (Education Gazette, 2016, New Leadership Support).

Four core educational leadership qualities highlighted in *A model of educational leadership* (Ministry of Education, 2008) which are considered at the heart of effective leadership include: manaakitanga - leading with moral purpose; pono - having self - belief; ako - being a learner; and awhinatanga - guiding and supporting. These core educational leadership qualities are closely related to the competencies of emotional intelligence as they focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. According to Mead, Stevens, Third, Jackson, and Pfeifer (2005), the eight traditional principles of Maori leadership are to: manage and settle disputes to uphold the unity of groups; satisfy the needs of group members and ensure their growth; show courage to support the rights of community; lead the community to strengthen its economic base; possess a wider vision and knowledge; reflect on the value of moral purpose; successfully complete big projects; and be aware of the culture and traditions of people and the wider community. These principles value 'community' in providing a sense of service and stability. They highlight social interaction and

relationships which is at the core of effective leadership (Mead et al., 2005). Beatty (2009) posited that school leaders “who are humane, self-aware and open to new learning are more likely to be successful” (p.187) in creating a collaborative culture in schools. Further, she stated this correlation highlights the importance of learning and developing emotional intelligence skills to support leaders’ well-being, collaborative culture-building, and sustainable school success.

The rapidly changing demographics of schools in New Zealand reflects increasing diversity among school communities. As per statistics indicators in “*Attendance in New Zealand Schools, Term 2, 2016*” published by the Ministry of Education (2017b), ethnicity is a significant factor with regard to students attending school regularly. The percentages of Māori (54.7%) and Pasifika (57.2%) students attending school regularly are significantly lower than that of European/Pākehā (70.5%) and Asian (77.0%) students. Educational leaders are expected to serve students from numerous linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds with a range of experiences and needs. In diverse settings, school leaders need to have the personal and professional expertise to lead others through understanding and interpreting reason for action (Branson & Gross, 2014).

### **Leading with Emotional Intelligence**

Higgs and Dulewicz (2016) state that underpinning effective organisational performance requires leaders to emotionally engage people with their work aimed at achieving organisational goals. An exploratory report, *A Qualitative Exploration of a New Concept in Support of Good Educational Leadership--Emotional Intelligence*, conducted by Potter (2011) to identify the potential of emotional intelligence for educational leadership and training, suggests there is a substantial positive correlation between professionals and emotional intelligence skills. Malcolm and Paul (2003) conducted an exploratory study with a sample of 40 senior leaders working within the New Zealand public service and concluded that there is a direct relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership potential. The importance of leaders learning and developing emotional skills is also supported by King and Gardner (2006). Their New Zealand survey involved 157 professional staff. The report revealed that emotional intelligence plays a key role in managing one’s emotions in stressful situations.

There is enough evidence (Cherniss, 1998; Goleman, 1998; Gray, 2009) to suggest that leaders with high emotional intelligence may be more proficient in influencing, inspiring and motivating their staff. However, in the realm of educational contexts in New Zealand, there is a need to explore

the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective educational leadership. A report published by National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) in 2012 shows that a limited focus has been given to the development of emotional intelligence skills among educational leaders and, furthermore, highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in professional practice (Labby, Lunenburg, & Slate, 2012). The New Zealand findings related to the intrapersonal dimensions of leadership from the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP), identified that intrapersonal factors such as mental and intellectual well-being, resilience and self-reflection positively impact principals' behavior and promote sustained success over time (Petros & Notman, 2012).

A recent survey report on New Zealand primary school principals' occupational health and wellbeing indicates that principals experience high levels of emotional demands as compared to the general population, with the greatest source of stress being the sheer quantity of workload (Riley, 2017). The report confirms there is a need to explore emotional intelligence and the influence this has on educational leadership practices in New Zealand educational contexts. However, despite the popularity and importance of emotional intelligence, there are some disagreements about its construct and effectiveness in leadership practices. Consequently, there is a need to investigate the impact emotional intelligence has on the practices of educational leaders and review its implication for future practice and research.

### **Research Aims and Questions**

The purpose of this research is to investigate and gain understanding and knowledge of how emotional intelligence influences the practices of educational leaders in primary schools. This study aims to examine the ways in which the educational leaders define and understand the concept of emotional intelligence, identify the importance of perceived emotional intelligence skills, and examine the influence emotional intelligence has on the practices of educational leaders.

The aims of the study are:

- To examine the ways in which the educational leaders define and understand the concept of emotional intelligence;
- To identify the importance of perceived emotional intelligence skills for educational leaders; and

- To examine the ways in which emotional intelligence influence the practices of educational leaders.

This research study is guided by the following research questions:

- How do educational leaders define and understand the concept of emotional intelligence?
- What is the importance of perceived emotional intelligence skills for educational leaders?
- How does emotional intelligence influence the practices of educational leaders?

This research study gathered, organized, and interpreted information from participants about their perceptions of emotional intelligence as a concept which involves feelings and emotions and about its practical implications on practice. Ethics approval was sought before inviting the participants to contribute to this study (Appendix A). For this research, three participants were interviewed from each of two New Zealand primary schools. As this research is concerned with emotional intelligence and the influence of this on the practice of educational leaders, a principal, deputy principal and teacher from each school were interviewed. The different perceptions of the three participants were important to achieve triangulation of data.

### **Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study topic and outlines its significance in the research context. It presents the rationale underpinning the research aims and the research questions.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature. Aligned with the topic and with reference to the New Zealand context, managerial and leadership roles and practices are reviewed. The concept of emotional intelligence is examined in light of various theories and critiques. To conclude, the influence of emotional intelligence on the practices of educational leaders is analysed.

Chapter Three provides a rationale for employing a qualitative, interpretive methodology for this study. This is followed by explanations of data collection tools and recruitment procedures for selecting participants for this study. A description of the data analysis process follows and the chapter concludes with explanations of validity and ethical issues.

Chapter Four presents the findings aligned with the research questions. To begin, the context and culture of the two schools are discussed to develop a better understanding of leadership practices in-situ. Participants' perceptions of emotional intelligence and identified important perceived

emotional intelligence skills are discussed. Leadership practices connected to emotional intelligence are explored in relation to participants' perspectives. The chapter concludes by detailing the pressures and issues in relation to leadership practices linked with emotional intelligence.

The significance of the research findings is discussed in Chapter Five. Leadership practices informed by emotional intelligence are discussed in relation to each school's specific context. Additionally, the perceptions of participants linked to emotional intelligence and its important perceived skills are also discussed. Inherent here is the impact emotional intelligence has on the practices of educational leaders. Key pressures and tensions faced at the 'ground level' of practice are highlighted. The discussion of the findings is informed by the literature presented in Chapter Two of the thesis.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, presents the key conclusions. The limitations of the research are discussed and recommendations based on the findings are noted.



## **Chapter Two: Literature review**

### **Introduction**

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, school leaders are expected to create learning environments which not only foster both teachers' and students' learning but also raise the achievement levels for all students (Haynes et al., 2015). In this regard, understanding the concept of emotional intelligence and the influence this has on becoming a more effective leader becomes paramount for those in educational leadership positions (Greenockle, 2010).

This literature review is aimed at exploring how emotional intelligence influences the practices of educational leaders. This chapter is structured into four main parts. Aligned with the topic, educational leaders' role within the educational context in New Zealand is discussed first. The second part identifies areas of practice associated with leadership. Importance of emotional intelligence is explored in the next section. Finally, the influence emotional intelligence has on the professional practices of educational leaders is examined. A summary of points covered concludes the chapter.

### **Role of Educational Leaders**

Leadership has been identified as a form of social influence that brings people together to work towards a common goal (Chemers, 1997). Leadership is about providing direction and exerting influence in order to achieve goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). As Raelin (2016) suggests, leadership emerges out of practices focusing on moral, emotional and relational aspects rather than it being attributed to an individual labeled 'leader'. Fullan (2003) acknowledges that "effective leaders combine a strong sense of moral purpose, an understanding of the dynamics of change, and great emotional intelligence as they build relationships" (p. 93). Similarly, Branson and Gross (2014) define educational leadership as an essentially ethical professional activity which cannot be described without reference to moral purpose. They explain that educational leadership should focus on leading through internal perspectives aimed at enhancing meaningful shared goals which are worthwhile. Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer, and Bristol (2014) note educational practices can be summarized as an organized process of *saying*, *doing*, and *relating* that are undertaken in social sites and focused on well-being for all, not only the individual, but society as a whole.

In the New Zealand education context, a principal of a school is ultimately accountable for effective implementation of management and leadership practices to develop a community of learners inclusive of students, staff, wider community and the Board for whom the key interest is to improve student learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2008). Cardno (2012) notes that educational leadership is a broad concept associated with leadership and management roles and responsibilities. Leadership is considered a visionary, creative, inspirational, and transformational activity whereas management is related to day-to-day administrative tasks (Gold, Thorpe, & Mumford, 2016). The literature confirms that educational leadership roles and practices focus on the accomplishment of both leadership and managerial tasks and responsibilities (Cardno, 2012).

Among various leadership and management responsibilities of educational leaders, managing school change is an important and complex task that school leaders are required to perform. In an effort to achieve the desired goals of the New Zealand curriculum related to students' learning and improving school-wide teaching, leaders are required to identify areas of change and focus on processes to successfully implement and sustain change (Ministry of Education, 2017a). Fullan and Quinn (2016) argue that leaders need insight into change process dynamics to manage the transition from current to future practices. These dynamics require leaders to set directional vision, foster cycles of innovation, build the capacity of staff and students to learn, provide opportunities for collaboration and communicate within and across the school to create cultures of trust and continuous school improvement. Emotional intelligence is considered an essential part of leadership and management specifically because it emphasizes team building and adaption to change (Goleman, 1998). Effective change management requires both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills exercised at all levels of interaction in a school community (Grobler & Conley, 2013). Although change can be mandated by government or policymakers and/or can occur in response to a school driven need, the responsibility for successfully implementing change directions lies with school leaders. The results of an investigatory study conducted by Grobler, Thakhordas, and Moloi (2017) that explored teachers' perception about the extent to which leadership utilizes emotional intelligence to manage mandated curriculum change, revealed that emotional intelligence consists of a range of fundamental skills such as self-regulation, self-motivation and interpersonal skills which enable school principals to facilitate change. Having appropriate change knowledge is crucial for leaders. Knowledge in itself is insufficient; performance, reflection and recreation of change processes will assist an organization and its

stakeholders to move forward (Fullan, 2009). To facilitate change, school leaders need to understand the range of emotional responses displayed by others during the change process (Ministry of Education, 2008). According to Hargreaves (2004), ambiguous motives aligned with implementation of mandated change may cause anxiety, insecurity and displays of resistance among teachers. Leaders who acknowledge this, understand the viewpoint of others, focus on creating emotional bonds and develop relationships are in a stronger position to adapt and embrace change (Fullan, 2014). Practices associated with the role of educational leaders are explored in the following section.

### **Leadership Practices**

According to Beatriz, Deborah, and Hunter (2008), school leadership can be improved through an understanding of practices. As mentioned by Raelin (2016), leadership is not attributed to an individual's personality traits but is a set of collective practices among people working together to achieve distinctive goals which emerge and unfold in the moment or over time while engaging in day-to-day experiences. For leadership practices to be meaningful, educational leaders must focus on building communities and culture which enhance teaching and learning. They also need to promote practices that develop and maintain effective relationships with all members of the school community. While referring to practices, Raelin (2016) asserts that leadership practices are "explicit efforts to build and maintain the community, which at times may require accommodation to nurture relations or confrontation to bring out disagreements" (p. 125). B. Harris (2007) notes that understanding interpersonal processes assists the development of emotional awareness that builds capacity to engage school communities in co-operative processes aimed at improving learning and teaching.

In the New Zealand education system with its highly devolved system of self-managing schools, the role of educational leaders is challenging and complex. School leaders faced with increased workload related to management and leadership roles claim they are unable to devote time to leading learning (Ogram & Youngs, 2014). In addition to eliminating the equity gap and embracing the unique diversity of school communities, school leaders are currently challenged to focus on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century pedagogies. The demands of enhancing 21<sup>st</sup> century attributes and skills entails an emphasis on digital pedagogies, working in flexible learning spaces and modification of the curriculum to develop new skills and competencies which enhance students'

and teachers' learning capacities (Benade, Gardner, Teschers, & Gibbons, 2014). With this in mind, Bennett (2002), identified five challenges that future school leaders face: establishing a common culture; the effective implication of strategic relationships; interpretation of moral education; emphasising emotional intelligence to enhance pedagogy; and managing student learning in the future. He further notes that school leaders need a set of five qualities to effectively meet challenges: passion for vision; personal values; effective relationships; conflict resolution; and the ability to harness the will of all stakeholders and partners. The Ministry of Education's model *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (2008) reflects on key skills and knowledge required by principals to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. This model identifies the following four areas of practice a school leader needs to work on to improve learning outcomes: establish effective teaching and learning environments; build communities; foster partnership networks within and beyond schools; and develop others as leaders. In terms of leadership practices, the model asserts the importance of interconnection of practice in areas of culture; pedagogy; systems; and networks bounded by relationships (Ministry of Education, 2008).

As mentioned by Branson and Gross (2014), educational leaders are responsible for the effective working of schools and are accountable for all involved in the school community including staff, students, and parents. As such, they must be clear of what they hope to achieve and what values they hope to promote and serve. By employing emotional intelligence skills, educational leaders can establish cultures that foster relationships with members of the school community to improve levels of students' achievements and teacher pedagogy. Gray (2009) highlighted that "emotionally intelligent leaders manage their organization's culture to reinforce important norms and values and to inspire teachers and students to achieve excellence" (p.2). Similarly, Goleman (2004) asserts that emotionally intelligent educational leaders, as part of their practice, create cultures of trust and respect, develop a common vision, motivate and encourage staff members and maintain a focus on high achievement. Leadership practices can be influenced by different factors including the individual's leadership style, the context of an organization and nature of goals being pursued (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Important aspects related to the leadership practices linked to emotional intelligence inherent in the literature focus on context and culture, leadership style, relationships and diversity. In the proceeding section, practices related to context and culture, leadership style, building relationships and diversity are explored further.

### ***Context and Culture***

In relation to leadership practices, “context is always important in education” (Branson & Gross, 2014, p. 41). Kemmis et al. (2014) claim that ‘practice architectures’ or ‘space of practice’ influence leadership practices. Further, practices do not exist in isolation but instead interconnect with other practices in specific sites in which they are undertaken. The context of each school requires principals and other leaders to possess essential leadership skills and understandings to establish and maintain environments suitable for teaching, learning, and building community. Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) also highlight the importance of context claiming that successful leaders are sensitive to context and apply contextually sensitive combinations of leadership practices in-situ. Since mid-2015, the drive for innovative learning approaches enacted within flexible learning spaces has evolved in New Zealand as an additional contextual factor. Bolstad, Gilbert, McDowall, Bull, Boyd, and Hipkins (2012) argue that to address the complex and uncertain situations of 21st century demands, an education system needs to develop students’ learning capacity to use knowledge in innovative ways within their context. This focus equips students with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and competencies including digital fluency, complex problem-solving skills and ability to work with others (Ministry of Education, 2017a). In terms of leadership, Osborne (2016) suggests that flexible learning environments make a difference and influence practices. Furthermore, he stated that spaces and practice are seen within the “wider educational ecosystem of practices, systems, and cultures, all working to ensure that every learner is provided with every opportunity to be an active participant in learning; to achieve highly; and to be celebrated for who they are” (p.7).

In the New Zealand educational context, schools are expected to reflect and incorporate cultural diversity and offer inclusive education for all students. The *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) allows schools the freedom of “scope, flexibility, and authority they need to design and shape their curriculum” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 37). The school’s vision and values need to align with the NZC’s values and principles, and also community values in development of curriculum for diverse learners. The following eight principles stated in NZC need alignment to school context inclusive of diversity: high expectations; inclusion; cultural diversity; Treaty of Waitangi; learning to learn; community engagement; coherence, and future focus. The principles are considered a foundation for curriculum modification, implementation and decision-making. The NZC, influenced by a socio-constructivist approach (Rata, 2012), suggests that ‘buy in’ to community

values and allegiance to NZC's vision, values, and principles impact leadership that advances responsive practices unique to individual school sites. This raises the question how does emotional intelligence skills enable school leaders to effectively implement these principles aligned with school vision and values to improve teaching and learning practices in diverse settings?

Educational leaders are required to develop cultures of collaboration and mutual understanding by being aware of teachers' emotions and feelings. Beatty (2009) emphasises that future school leaders who are not only emotionally self-aware but also mindful of teachers' emotions will be most suitable for initiating collaborative work in practice. The *New Zealand Curriculum framework* (Ministry of Education, 2007) advocates for the 'Teaching as Inquiry' (TAI) model which is said to improve achievements of students through a cyclical process which involves: identifying outcomes; developing strategies for improvement, monitoring progress and inquiring next steps for student learning. Teachers engage in TAI individually or in communities of practice (Timperley & Parr, 2004). Implementing the TAI model in schools necessitates leadership that focuses on building organizational cultures that are collaborative in their attempt to improve teaching and learning. In line with this, Cardno (2010) claims that educational leaders must be capable of making schools learning organizations where professional learning communities (PLCs) flourish. PLCs can be defined as a group of people who mutually share and examine their practices in reflective, inclusive, collaborative and learning-oriented ways to promote teaching effectiveness and student learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas, 2006). Zhang, Yuan, and Yu (2017) highlighting the barriers to the development of PLCs, suggest that the development of PLCs require smooth communication among school leaders and teachers to enhance mutual understanding and collaboration. The current educational context can influence leadership styles observable in practice.

### ***Leadership Styles***

The literature that explores leadership styles and the influence of this on practice is prolific. As Beatty (2009) notes, "The style of school leaders is profoundly influential" (p. 119). Day, Gu and Sammons (2016) stated that successful principals use elements of instructional, decentralized and transformational leadership styles and adapt leadership strategies according to their particular school contexts. To recognize the leadership styles of educational leaders it is important to understand their roles and responsibilities in context.

In the New Zealand context, school principals are expected to develop learning environments which are responsive to the educational and cultural needs of diverse learners (Sinnema, Ludlow, & Robinson, 2016). Educational leadership effectiveness: a Rasch analysis. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54(3), 305-339. doi:10.1108/JEA-12-2014-0140). Six leadership dimensions that enhance student outcomes are: establishing goals; resourcing strategic planning; designing; evaluating and coordinating the curriculum and teaching; leading professional learning; and ensuring existence of an orderly and supportive environment (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Anderson, Michlin and Mascal (2010) confirm that key roles in setting directions, developing and supporting people, redesigning the organization through building and nurturing collaboration and managing the instructional program are linked to instructional leadership. Blasé and Blasé (2000) note that instructional leadership style is influential in promoting learning environments. They identify effective instructional leaders as those who integrate collaboration, peer coaching, inquiry, collegiality and reflective discussion to promote professional learning among teachers. In the New Zealand context, this means instructional leaders plan, coordinate and evaluate their school's curriculum to ensure it is coherent, inclusive, responsive and aligned with the NZC document (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The emphasis on collaboration and teamwork supports decentralized and mainly transformational leadership styles as well.

The worldwide trend of greater student and teacher participation in education has brought increased demand for decentralized leadership styles in forms of distributed leadership and collaborative decision-making practices (Notman & Youngs, 2016). A. Harris (2004) suggests that school leaders who practice forms of distributed leadership correlate to “transformational leaders who build self-esteem, enhance professional competence and give their staff the confidence and responsibility to lead development and innovation” (p.16). Day et al. (2016) note transformational leadership emphasizes vision and inspiration and focuses on developing structures and cultures to foster teaching and learning. Setting directions, developing people and redesigning the organization are attributes of transformational leadership which positively relate to emotional intelligence and its skills.

Transformational leadership is associated with the ability to communicate a compelling vision, and to elicit a response from followers to ensure that they are emotionally motivated and

encouraged to achieve work expectations (Brown & Moshavi, 2005; Humphrey, 2002). Yammarino and Dubinsky (1994) explained transformational leadership as emotion-oriented with high levels of emotional awareness. The qualities of self-awareness, inspiring others, understanding emotions of staff, empathy, building trust, and confidence highly correlate with competencies of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998; Mayer, 1997). A Kenyan study conducted by Ayiro (2014, p. 42) that explored the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence revealed that “leaders need more than just technical and traditional managerial skills; they need well-honed transformational leadership competencies, which require having emotional intelligence”. Khan, Khan, Saeed, and Khan (2011) claim for service sectors in Pakistan there is a positive relation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. They note that leaders with elevated levels of interpersonal skills, empathy, and impulse-control positively impact the working environment and augment organizational outcomes.

### ***Building Relationships***

Building effective relationships is at the heart of leadership practices that are successful and meaningful. Robinson (2011) claims that the future success of schools is dependent on a leader’s ability to develop and maintain effective relationships within and beyond the school. This requires building collaborative work places and cultures to ensure school environments are learning oriented and focused on improvement (Beatriz et al., 2008). Robinson (2011) notes that the quality of educational leadership can make substantial differences in the attainment of success in student learning: “The more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater will be their influence on student outcomes” (p.15). Through the lens of Ngā Takohanga e Wha – *The Four Responsibilities of Leadership*, Tamati’s (2011) case study of an Early Childhood Centre, concurs that leadership is all about people and sharing the responsibility to build genuine collaborative relationships based on trust. Leaders must know the importance of building and sustaining good community relationships for improved learning of students and nurturing the culture of the school (Ministry of Education, 2008). By engaging in productive dialogue, leaders can build effective relationships with colleagues essential for resolving difficult problems and conflict management that may challenge the organization's effectiveness (Cardno, 2012).



Leaders need emotional intelligence to inspire, stimulate enthusiasm and ensure people's motivation and commitment (Goleman et al., 2013). Bennett (2002) supports the view that to effectively build relationships and tackle future challenges, leaders must possess certain qualities including personal values, effective relationships, conflict resolution skills, vision, and the ability to understand diverse groups of partners. He adds that "Emotional intelligence is the latest (ability), and pedagogical leaders have much to grapple with in devising new strategies for learning" (p.2). George (2000) indicates that leadership is an emotion-laden process and emotions play an important role in leading, therefore, emotional intelligence should be considered a vital component aimed at building effective relationships.

### ***Diversity***

An educational leader's role requires knowing and understanding what is valued by the community and then building relationships through effective communication to seize opportunities to work together to enhance student learning (Ministry of Education, 2008). It is important for leaders to build educationally powerful connections with families, community and policy leaders as this can be resourceful and influential on student achievements (Robinson, 2011). Beatty (2009) posited that leaders strong in the emotional meaning-making process are comfortable to identify and accept the diversity of perspectives that exist and consider this a rich resource instead of a threat.

The changing demographics in New Zealand schools confirms an increasingly diverse mix of students with a variety of cultural backgrounds and range of experiences and needs. School leaders need to have personal and professional abilities and skills to respond to challenges related to diversity (Ministry of Education, 2008). Increasing diversity of today's schools brings people with conflicting beliefs and practices together. To ensure existence of a safe learning environment, there is a need for school leaders to develop respectful and ethical principles and practices informed by beliefs of the society in which the school is located (Branson & Gross, 2014). Emotional intelligence skills such as social awareness and relational management enable leaders to build effective relationships with people belonging to diverse cultures. Successful leaders are always prepared to accept change as needed and able to see things from multiple perspectives (Dearborn, 2002). They need to be self-aware and also mindful of how their behavior is perceived by others. They need to be empathetic and good team members (Carmeli, 2003; Goleman, 1998). Other emotional intelligence skills considered important for successful practice linked to managing

challenges of diversity include effectively communicating one's own ideas and being open to others' point of view in an emotionally accepting manner (Carmeli, 2003; Caruso & Wolfe, 2001).

### **Importance of Emotional Intelligence**

Daneshmand (2013) believed that emotional intelligence is a multidimensional construct that correlates with a range of outcomes related to life quality in schools and notes these as vital for understanding how to build productive schools that foster academic success of students and enhance their emotional adaptation. Goleman (2004) asserts that there are direct ties between emotional intelligence and leader effectiveness. Higgs and Dulewicz (2016) emphasize that in today's context there is a need for leaders to lead with emotional intelligence comprising of dimensions such as conscientiousness and integrity. This section defines emotional intelligence, briefly considers its historical underpinnings, and discusses three models.

### ***What is Emotional Intelligence?***

Emotional intelligence is an ability to perceive and express emotions, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and reason with emotions, and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relation to others (McWilliam & Hatcher, 2007). Emotional intelligence (EI) is an ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and others in a way to make a positive difference in one's life and work (Hasson, 2014). Walton (2012) defines emotional intelligence as "an assortment of mental abilities and skills that can help you to successfully manage both yourself and the demands of working with others" (p.4). Daneshmand (2013) suggests that emotional intelligence is a multidimensional construct that correlates to a range of variables and outcomes related to life quality in schools. Emotional intelligence is not a new concept; it is important to begin by considering the historical development of this concept.

### ***Historical Perspective***

The roots of EI are deeply linked with the concept of social intelligence. Gardner (1983) first introduced the concept of multiple intelligences in his book *Frames of Mind*. In his book, he suggested that intrapersonal (the ability to understand and appreciate one's own feelings) and interpersonal (the capacity to understand others' feelings, intentions, and desires) intelligences were equally important as intelligence measured by IQ and other tests. Sternberg and Spear (1985)

suggested that compared to traditional intelligence models, practical intelligence (ability to solve problems) was considered a more accurate predictor of human success.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were early pioneers to coin the term ‘Emotional Intelligence’ and described it as “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p.189). According to them, it was important to identify the difference between the expression of emotions and the application of emotional intelligence in work and life. The concept of emotional intelligence gained popularity in the late twentieth century when Goleman (1998) published his book *Working with Emotional intelligence*. It was a groundbreaking book which highlighted the value of emotional intelligence in business and on an individual level. He argued that IQ and technical skills might be important but EI constitutes a more precise guarantee of success. He suggested that the core components of emotional intelligence are comprised of five emotional and social abilities: self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; and social skills. Goleman (1998) in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence* focuses on the importance of emotional intelligence skills in work performance. He defines emotional intelligence as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (p. 317).

### ***Emotional Intelligence Models***

Among various existing models underlying emotional intelligence, the three which gained most popularity include Bar-On and Parker (2000), Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, and Sitarenios (2003) and Goleman (1998). All three models were developed to provide an understanding of how an individual recognizes and manages emotions to improve his/her effectiveness. The models measure emotional intelligence based on emotional and social competencies.

Bar-On (1997), presented the term ‘Emotional Quotient (EQ)’. He developed the Emotional Quotient Inventory to measure and assess individuals’ emotional and social intelligence. In 2000, Bar-On presented a revised EI model comprising of 10 components: self-regard; emotional self-awareness; assertiveness; empathy; interpersonal relationship; stress tolerance; impulse control; reality testing; flexibility; and problem solving (cited in Neubauer & Freudenthaler, 2005).

The Salovey-Mayer model (Mayer, 1997) defines this concept as the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to facilitate thinking measured by an ability-based measure.

According to this model, EI is a collection of emotional abilities which can be divided into four dimensions including: perception of emotion; emotional facilitation; understanding emotions; and management of emotions. Each dimension represents different abilities: Perception; Appraisal; Expression of Emotions; Emotional Facilitation of Thinking; Understanding and Analysing Emotions; and Reflective Regulation of Emotions.

The Goleman model (1998) views emotional intelligence as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive managerial performance, measured by multi-rater assessment (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). An emotional competency is an ability to effectively and successfully express one's feelings or emotions. According to Boyatzis (2011) emotional, social and cognitive intelligence competencies are vital to predicting the effectiveness of leadership and can be developed. The model of emotional intelligence defined by Boyatzis et al. (2000) comprise four domains/clusters. Nested within each domain are twelve EI competencies as noted below:

1. *Self-Awareness* – Emotional self-awareness:

Self-awareness is the capacity to recognize a person's own feelings and to realize how his/her emotions affect other people's emotions and their actions or performance.

2. *Self-Management* – Emotional self-control, Adaptability, Achievement Orientation, Positive outlook:

Self-management is an ability to manage or regulate one's internal states, to control the disruptive emotions, to successfully handle change, to strive for excellence and to be optimistic towards the future.

3. *Social Awareness* – Empathy, Organisational awareness:

Social awareness is the ability to handle relationships and understanding others' emotions and concerns. It includes being sensitive to other people's perspectives and showing interest in their concerns. Moreover, it is also related to a group's feelings and relations.

4. *Relational Management* – Influence, Coach and Mentor, Conflict management, Team worker, Inspirational leader:

Relational management is a social skill of motivating and directing people towards the desirable responses. It includes identifying the need for development of others, inspiring and motivating them to succeed, resolving disagreements and problems and working

collectively with others in synergy towards achieving shared goals.

Effective educational leaders need to develop a balance of strengths across an array of emotional, social and cognitive intelligence competencies to excel in leadership practices (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017).

### ***Critique of Emotional Intelligence***

Although the concept of emotional intelligence is gaining in popularity, there are certain misapprehensions about its construct. Firstly, emotional intelligence is not about being sweet and pleasant all the time. In fact, these skills should enable a leader to effectively deliver the difficult messages by identifying others' needs in a sensitive manner. Secondly, emotional intelligence is not a carefree expression of emotions instead it is all about managing one's emotions and using them appropriately. Finally, emotional intelligence is not determined genetically. Unlike cognitive intelligence, it develops slowly with age and continuous learning (Gray, 2009). It is believed that there are genetic element traces but emotional intelligence can be further developed and nurtured through learning and training if effort and desire exist (Goleman, 2004).

Emotional intelligence is generally associated with positive capabilities, behavior, and outcomes. However, there is a possibility to relate it to the negative aspect referred to as the dark side of emotional intelligence (Bruke, 2006, cited in McCleskey, 2014). The dark side is associated with unethical and manipulative behavior of leaders for their personal interests. In order to explore this relationship further, Austin, Farrelly, Black, and Moore (2007) conducted a detailed study and found that there were no apparent correlations between emotional intelligence and manipulated performance.

The concept of emotional intelligence is open to criticism as far as the academic community is concerned. Armour (2012, p. 4) argues that emotional intelligence has been criticised by scholars for its lack of a clear definition or any empirical evidence to say that it is anything more than a combination of already known cognitive and personality factors. He emphasizes that cognitive factors cannot be separated from the emotional. McCleskey (2014) discussed various controversial areas of emotional intelligence such as a wide range of definitions and models related to emotional intelligence and its importance as a predictor of job performance. Despite such critique, emotional intelligence is considered an important aspect related to effective leadership practices in terms of developing a positive work environment and enhancing organisational outcomes.

Findings of researchers such as Carmeli (2003) indicate that emotional intelligence is a critical component of leadership skills and enhances positive work attitudes and task performance of senior managers in public settings. The exploratory study report about the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership potential conducted in New Zealand Public Service with a sample of 40 senior managers supported the connection between emotional intelligence and leadership (Malcolm & Paul, 2003). The meta-analysis report by O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (2011) also confirmed a positive and significant link between emotional intelligence and job performance. For example, employing emotional intelligence skills enables leaders to influence and motivate staff and establish a culture of well-being. Benjamin, Melissa, Zena, and Con (2001) note that emotional intelligence correlates with several components of leadership particularly the way effective leaders monitor and respond to subordinates and how they make them feel at work.

### **Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Educational Leaders' Practices**

There is large scale evidence that suggests that direct or indirect influence of educational leadership significantly impacts student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). According to Goleman (2001), leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence have greater impact on raising performance compared to leaders with low levels of emotional intelligence.

Leadership is seen as encompassing frequent social interaction and George (2000) claims that emotionally intelligent leaders are able to promote efficiency at various levels in the organization. A leader's emotional state and actions directly affect people's feelings and consequently their performance; in other words, leaders' ability to shape the emotional conditions in situations can deeply influence performance (Humphrey, 2002). Emotionally intelligent leaders are self-aware and able to manage their own and other's emotions. Emotions can be positive or negative and can challenge leadership abilities, therefore it is important for leaders to "manage their mood and emotions in self and others" (George, 2000, p. 1027). This facilitates leaders to develop cultures of open communication and understanding where emotions can be safely expressed without fear of humiliation and abandonment (B. Harris, 2007). In light of such claims, emotional intelligence aligns well with transformational leadership styles which allows leaders to intervene in staff emotions and make use of positive influences to impact positive staff emotions (Erez, Misangyi, Johnson, LePine, & Halverson, 2008). Emotionally intelligent leaders can help people develop

special emotional bonds which connect them together and assist them in staying focused even during times of change and uncertainty (Goleman et al., 2013). In fact, this emotional connection makes the work leaders do meaningful for everyone in an organisation.

Gray (2009) states that educational leaders' emotional skills are pivotal to collaborative efforts that enhance students' learning and the well-being of school communities. Robinson (2011) agrees that the quality of educational leadership practice can make substantial differences; "The more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater will be their influence on student outcomes" (p.15). Cherniss (1998) suggests that educational leaders need to be emotionally intelligent to build positive working relationships with others. He further identified four critical competencies essential for effective educational leadership: self-assurance; ability to control emotions; a skill of influencing others; and capability of constructing effective relationships.

The exploratory report by Potter (2011) identifies that there is a substantial connection between professional and emotional intelligence skills. The influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders' practice needs to be taken seriously in light of a recent survey report on New Zealand primary school principals' occupational health and wellbeing (Riley, 2017). This report notes that principals are experiencing high levels of emotional demands as compared to the general population and the greatest source of stress is the sheer quantity of workload. School leaders experience a whole range of emotions in their work and an essential part of their role is to respond to their own emotions as well as other's emotions (Crawford, 2009). Both interpersonal and intrapersonal emotional demands can be perceived as stressful by the principals. Hasson (2014) mentioned that emotional intelligence is vital to think clearly and creatively; it not only helps to manage stress and challenges confidently but is also important when relating to others. These skills also guide leaders to build enthusiasm among staff, support and motivate them to reduce stress and ultimately improve overall organisational morale.

Discussing exemplary leadership practices, Litchka (2016) suggests that successful leaders learn from the past, are self-aware, value themselves in terms of strengths and beliefs, adapt to rapidly changing environments, influence and challenge others, and inspire and motivate others to succeed. All these skills correlate with emotional intelligence making the concept significant and important. As mentioned by Goleman et al. (2013), emotional well-being of the leader is

fundamental and “Because emotions are so frequently repressed or regulated in the workplace, leaders need opportunities to make authentic contact with their own core emotional fabric and to examine how they are using emotions to achieve organizational and personal goals” (Fambrough & Kaye Hart, 2008, p. 753).

## **Conclusion**

The importance of emotional intelligence is evident through a large body of research. The literature reviewed in this chapter supports the idea that effective educational leadership practices are essential for teachers’ and students’ learning. Through learning and developing emotional intelligence skills, educational leaders can equip themselves to face uncertainty and challenges in an environment that is complex, fluid and changing. They learn how to deal with their emotions and those of others in the workplace. In the words of Fullan (1998), “The emotionally intelligent leader also helps teachers, students, parents, and others create an environment of support, one in which people see problems not as weaknesses but as issues to be solved” (p.4). Chapter Three presents the methodology framework employed for this qualitative study.



## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This research was concerned with exploring the influence of emotional intelligence on the professional practices of educational leaders in primary schools. The overarching aim of this research was to examine the perceptions of emotional intelligence among educational leaders, identify perceived important emotional intelligence skills, and analyse the influence emotional intelligence has on educational leaders' practices. This chapter provides the rationale and justification for adopting a qualitative methodological approach for this research study. It identifies methods for collecting data, outlines participants' selection procedures and provides a description of the data analysis process. Issues of reliability and validity are also considered and the chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations related to the study.

### **Methodology**

Ontologically, emotional intelligence is considered an ability, non-cognitive skill, capability or competence. Although many studies describe emotional intelligence as a personal factor associated with competency (Goleman, 1998; Mayer et al., 2003), the phenomenon in terms of importance on the practice of educational leaders is still in its developmental stage creating curiosity, enthusiasm, debate and new opportunities for research. The purpose of this study was to examine educational leaders' perceptions of emotional intelligence and the way it influences practice. As a result, the focus is on participants sharing their experiences, perceptions, and understandings related to the topic.

Davidson and Tolich (2003) describe epistemology as "the theory of knowledge. The branch of philosophy that deals with how we know what we know" (p. 25). In this research, the creation of knowledge is dependent on participants sharing their perception and experiences with the researcher. The epistemological position adopted supports the belief that "there are no facts in the world which are not in some sense socially produced or dependent on conventions agreed in society" (Briggs, Coleman, & Morrison, 2012, p. 119). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) propose that this position focuses on understanding ways in which individuals perceive the world and construct their own social reality based on their experiences. The interpretive paradigm in which the study is positioned emphasises "the inductive understanding of how people create meaning in their social world" (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 26). Merriam and Tisdell (2016)

suggest that the interpretive approach “assumes that reality is socially constructed; that is, there is not a single, observable reality” (p. 23). This research explored perceptions and shared meaning of participants (principals, deputy principals, and teachers) in context to develop insights about how educational leaders define and understand the concept of emotional intelligence, the importance of perceived emotional intelligence skills and the influence they have on the practice of educational leaders.

Adopting a qualitative approach was considered most appropriate for this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that qualitative research is an interpretive activity to understand “the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and experiences they have in the world” (p.28). This research gathered, organised and interpreted information from participants about their perceptions of emotional intelligence as a concept which involves feelings and emotions. It also examined the implications emotional intelligence has on practice, based on personal experiences of participants. Newby (2010) confirms that qualitative research seeks to understand how people experience their lives, give meanings to their feelings and provides insight into why things happen as they do. A qualitative approach is flexible, purposeful and suitable for a small-scale study such as this. The approach allowed the researcher to exercise flexibility of data collection in natural settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016); that is, exploration of the construct (emotional intelligence) in two school settings. Creswell (2014) considers qualitative research as the best approach “if a concept or a phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it” (p. 20). Lichtman (2006) refers to qualitative research as an “umbrella term - in which a researcher gathers, organizes and interprets information with his or her ears as filters” (p.22). Through in-depth interviews, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of emotional intelligence as perceived by participants and analyse its influence on practice.

The questions that guided the study are:

- Q1. How do educational leaders define and understand the concept of emotional intelligence?
- Q2. What is the importance of perceived emotional intelligence skills for educational leaders?
- Q3. How does emotional intelligence influence the practice of educational leaders?

## **Semi-structured Interviews**

For this small-scale qualitative study, a semi-structured interview method was used to gain an informed picture of participants' perceptions and views. As suggested by Wellington (2015), semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to probe "participant's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings, and perspectives" (p. 137). Wellington (2015) adds that the most vital feature of the semi-structured interview is the flexibility it allows the interviewer when it comes to deciding on a range and order of questions within a framework. Bryman (2012) claims questioning allows the interviewers to gather information from participants in ways they perceive their social world and that there is a flexibility in the way data collection is conducted. In this study, preparing and using a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B) not only allowed the researcher to focus on what was relevant and important to emotional intelligence but, also, assisted in probing participants' views and perceptions to get in-depth and informed insights on skills and the influence of emotional intelligence on practice. Being flexible in terms of order and sequencing of questioning helped participants develop ideas and elaborate on topics of interest. According to Cohen et al. (2011), "the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi- sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard" (p. 409). While conducting the interviews, the researcher exercised flexibility in the use of the guide to not only ask questions but, also, probe for the elaboration of complex and deeper issues related to the topic.

The interview format employed was informed by principles of appreciative inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strength-based methodology designed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. In this particular study, the researcher acknowledged that an investigation of emotional intelligence and the skills participants considered important for effective leadership practices suited an appreciative inquiry stance. Appreciative inquiry:

concentrates on exploring ideas that people have about what is valuable in what they do and then tries to work out ways in which this can be built on—the emphasis is firmly on appreciating the activities and responses of people, rather than concentrating on their problems. (Reed, 2007, p.2).

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) elaborate that appreciative inquiry "involves the art and practice of asking unconditionally positive questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend,

anticipate, and heighten positive potential” (p.15). A semi-structured interview method informed by principles of appreciative inquiry was considered a most effective fit because it aimed at examining ways in which the educational leaders define and understand the concept of emotional intelligence; assisted with identifying the importance of perceived emotional intelligence skills; and facilitated examining ways in which emotional intelligence influences the practice of educational leaders. Semi-structured interviews, as a data collection tool, intended to explore practices in school settings linked to emotional intelligence that are working well, analysing why they are working well and what contributes to doing more of it.

Before conducting the interviews, all necessary preliminaries that are considered ethically important (Wellington, 2015) were addressed. This included informing participants about the research, seeking participants’ permission to conduct and record individual interviews, and providing assurance of confidentiality and minimization of harm. The interview guide was prepared carefully ensuring all the questions were phrased in meaningful ways so that they made sense to participants and were unambiguous (Appendix B). All questions were crafted to adhere to the principles of appreciative inquiry and were aligned with underpinning research questions. Probing was used sensibly and sensitively to obtain more explicit or extensive responses from participants or to clarify any ambiguities. Wellington (2015) considers probing a valuable tool in case of open-ended questions. The researcher ensured that interviews were conducted in a non-judgmental, sensitive manner to avoid personal bias.

It was important to ensure interviews were limited to an hour to avoid fatigue and overtiredness on the part of participants. All the interviews were conducted in a location determined by participants and where conversations and recording of data would unlikely be heard by others. At the end of the interview, participants were asked whether there were other issues or comments they would like to discuss or elaborate upon as sometimes these sorts of questions bring forth crucial information related to the study. Participants were thanked for their contribution and a koha was offered in recognition of their sharing of knowledge and experience with the researcher.

Bryman (2012) notes that “qualitative researchers are frequently interested not just on what people say but also in the way they say it” (p. 482). The decision was made, therefore, to audio-record and personally transcribe the interviews. Although the process was time-consuming and required good equipment, it offered the following advantages:

- It allowed a thorough and repeated examination of what the participant said;
- It preserved the actual and natural language of an interview;
- It allowed the researcher to be more focused and observant; and
- It engendered researcher reflection on her contribution to the interview process (Bryman, 2012).

The recording and transcribing of the interviews facilitated the researcher in developing a clearer picture of the data collected, the development of key themes, and identification of similarities and differences among perspectives of different participants. As stated by Wellington (2015), “careful recording and processing of interview records can enhance and encourage respondent validation” (p. 153). Interview transcripts were returned to participants for checks and amendments prior to analyzing the data. The participants confirmed that no amendments were required.

### **Recruitment of Schools/ Participants.**

Sampling is important for a researcher to decide which people are best suited for a study as representative of a wider group (Cohen et al., 2011). In terms of this research and to answer the research questions, gaining in-depth information about participants’ perception and experience of emotional intelligence was considered important. Purposeful sampling was utilized to select schools in line with the aims of this study. Patton (1990) states that “The purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (p.169). A non-probability sample comprising of both purposive and convenience sampling methods was used for school/participants’ selection. The selection process was purposive in nature because it involved “using or making a contact with a specific purpose in mind” (Wellington, 2015, p. 117), and participants were selected for their formal roles and expertise. The school principals who were acknowledged as demonstrating highly relational leadership practices aligned with emotional intelligence were selected to be involved in this study. Convenience sampling was also employed as it helped the researcher gain easy access to schools and participants. Wellington (2015) supports sample selection based on convenience sampling in terms of location because of ease of access to potential participants.

The selection of primary schools for this study focused on respective principals who had been identified through professional networks of the supervisor and mentor as demonstrating highly relational leadership practices. Criteria for school selection included:

- Primary schools highlighted by professional networks of the supervisor and mentor where principals demonstrate highly relational leadership practices and who may be interested in participating in the study of emotional intelligence; and
- State-funded primary schools in the central or west Auckland areas.

The study required that from each primary school, three participants were selected - the principal, a deputy principal, and a teacher. The different perceptions of participants were important to ensure trustworthiness of data gathered in relation to the topic. In total six participants were required for the research. Selection of participants was based on the following criteria:

- Identified principals who had been acknowledged through professional networks of the supervisor and mentor as demonstrating highly relational leadership practices aligned with the concept of emotional intelligence;
- Principals and deputy principals who had work experience of at least three years in the same school;
- Teachers who had at least three years of work experience in the same school and;
- As only one deputy principal and one teacher were required for this study, the first person to respond to the invitation from each school was selected to participate.

The selection process commenced with the researcher obtaining a list of eight suitable primary schools. Through searching various websites and online *Education Review Office* (ERO) reports, key information about these schools was collected which confirmed that the leadership of these schools exhibited practices related to emotional intelligence. These included: working collaboratively and collegially, supporting team activity and connecting positively with community groups. Information related to the eight primary schools is shown in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1: Key Information About Eight Schools*

<b>School type</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Decile</b>	<b>Ethnicity (approximate percentages)</b>
Contributing (Year 1-6)	Male	10	NZ European 70 Māori 10
Contributing (Year 1-6)	Female	2	Indian 20 Samoan 15 Māori 15

Full primary (Year 1-8)	Male	10	NZ European 50 Māori 18
Full primary (Year 1-8)	Male	9	NZ European 58 Pasifika 12
Contributing (Year 1-6)	Female	8	NZ European 36
Contributing (Year 1-6)	Female	3	Pākehā 28 Māori 20 Samoan 15
Contributing (Year 1-6)	Male	2	Indian 25 Māori 24 Samoan 17
Contributing (Year 1-6)	Female	7	NZ European 40 Chinese 15

After discussion with the supervisor, four schools from the original list of eight schools were selected by the researcher to contact initially based on sampling procedures outlined earlier. Invitations were sent to principals of all four schools requesting participation in the study. Principals from two schools who were the first to confirm their willingness to participate were approached by the researcher. Table 3.2 presents specific contextual information related to the two participating schools.

*Table 3.2: Information About Selected Schools*

Name	Type	context	Decile	Ethnicity (approximate percentages)
School A	Full primary	Innovative learning environment	10	European/ Pākehā 50 Māori 18 Korean,British,Others 30
School B	Full primary	Inclusive learning environment	9	European/Pākehā 62 Pacific 12 Chinese,Asian,Others 26

The principals of both schools were contacted through an email (Appendix C) introducing the researcher and the research project. The email included two participant information sheets (principal-Appendix D and deputy principal-Appendix E) and a flyer (Appendix F) which explained the nature of the study. Principals were requested to email the respective participant information sheet to their deputy principals so that they could be informed of the study and indicate their willingness to participate. Principals and deputy principals were invited to contact the researcher directly if they were interested in participating. Once the principals indicated their agreement, the researcher sought their permission to visit the school to brief the teachers about nature of the research at a staff meeting and place the flyer and teacher information sheet (Appendix G) on the staff notice board inviting teacher participation. As the study required only one deputy principal and teacher participant, the first respondents to indicate a willingness to participate were selected. All participants made direct contact with the researcher through details provided in the information sheet.

The process for gaining entry to schools and securing participant consent took two weeks; one week for principals and deputy principal to understand the scope and nature of the research and indicate willingness to participate, and another week for teachers to consider participation. The principals gave consent by signing their consent form (Appendix I) and granting the researcher permission to access teachers to explain the parameters of the study and their involvement in it (Appendix H). All participants gave their consent by signing the consent forms (Appendix I) in writing. Participants who were willing to be involved in the project were asked to sign two copies of consent forms prior to the interview, one for themselves and one for the researcher to retain. The reason for not giving the consent forms in advance was that participants might forget to sign or bring them to the interview.

Participation in this research was voluntary; that is, participants could withdraw from the study at any time with an option of removing or allowing the use of data belonging to them. However, once the findings had been produced, removal of data were not possible.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is described as “an integral part of the whole research” (Wellington, 2015, p. 260). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) consider data analysis as “a process of making sense out of data (which) involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and the



researcher has seen or read” (p. 202). The purpose of employing a qualitative data analysis process was to find answers to the research questions by understanding, interpreting and analysing data collected through the interviews. For this reason, a thematic analysis approach was considered most appropriate. As Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012, p.11) state, thematic analysis is “most useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within the textual data set” generated from in-depth interviews.

Reading and re-reading the transcripts repeatedly to clearly understand the meaning and patterns embedded in the data was the first step in the data analysis process. A descriptive reading of the interviews transcripts and making comments/notes in the margin allowed the researcher to familiarize herself with the data. A list of notes and comments was prepared using different colour codes to identify emerging themes (Appendix J). Open coding was undertaken by carefully reading the notations and comments, and codes were generated by identifying potentially relevant data chunks aligned with the research questions. After the initial coding, analytical coding was undertaken by re-reading notes, comments and open codes and by grouping those that seemed to go together to form themes/categories. As the data analysis proceeded, a master list derived from different sets of data was constructed and this reflected emerging themes/categories across all data sets. Through constant revising and searching through the data for relevant information, a refined scheme of themes/categories was derived (Appendix K). Finally, a consolidated sheet was prepared to represent identified themes and coded data across all transcripts (Appendix L). The findings were deduced manually through careful interrogation, integration, interpretation, and comparison of the data.

## **Validity**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that in qualitative research, issues of validity and reliability can be achieved by carefully considering the research study’s conceptualization especially the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, interpreted and the findings are presented.

Validity refers to the concept where a researcher accurately describes what is intended to be described (Briggs et al., 2012). Wellington (2015) states that “Validity refers to the degree to which a method, a test or a research tool actually measures what it is supposed to measure” (p.42). As per Merriam and Tisdell’s (2016) views on establishing authenticity and trustworthiness in a

qualitative study such as this, accurately presenting worldviews and realities of people consistent with philosophical assumptions underlying the paradigm is important for validity.

Construct validity is considered crucial for effective research. Cohen et al. (2011) state that “in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness, and scope of the data achieved” (p. 179). It is important that a researcher is faithful when reporting the findings and evidence is checked accurately. This research is aligned with the interpretive paradigm using qualitative research methods. The semi-structured interviews underpinned by principles of appreciative inquiry were considered appropriate to address the specific research questions, as this study was not intended to critique the practices but to explore and discover positive strategies aligned with emotional intelligence.

Internal validity relates to how the research findings accurately match reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is further stated that in a qualitative study, the primary source of data collection and analysis are human beings, therefore interpretations of reality are retrieved through observations and interviews. To ensure internal validity, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and the interview schedule was carefully formulated to align with principles of appreciative inquiry. The researcher tried to establish sufficient rapport with participants through social interaction to gain authentic data and sort out any ambiguities or lack of clarity in the data collected (Wellington, 2015). To reduce the risk of researcher bias, the transcribed interviews were returned to respective participants for confirmation and amendments. In addition, in the process of analyzing the data, the researcher had repeated conversations with her supervisor to confirm that participants’ views had been accurately coded into themes/categories as represented in the findings.

External validity refers to the generalization of the results to a wider population and in a qualitative study, this is interpreted in terms of credibility and transferability (Cohen et al., 2011). This research study presents participants’ perceptions related to the importance of emotional intelligence skills and the influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders’ practices in two primary schools. The findings from this small-scale study are not easily generalized to a wider population. Having said this, however, the findings may be of interest to others who can decide on the extent to which these findings could be applied to their school contexts.

Reliability refers to the extent to which the research can be replicated to produce the same outcome (Wellington, 2015). As this is a qualitative study based on human perceptions and behaviour in unique school settings, it is quite impossible to replicate the same results. The argument posed in this qualitative study is that, “if the findings of a study are consistent with the data presented, the study can be considered dependable” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 252). This research study establishes credibility by gathering dependable data through multiple sources of data collection and ensures the data collected is consistent with participants’ perception of reality.

### ***Triangulation***

Triangulation is considered a useful means for improving the validity of a study when you are trying to make sense of the data. Triangulation is the way of determining the accuracy of information by comparing multiple sources of evidence (Briggs et al., 2012). It is related to use of multiple methods or multiple sources to confirm emerging findings. In this research, triangulation was gained through multiple sources of data; that is, the data were collected from principals, deputy principals and teachers. For example, a principal’s understanding about emotional intelligence and the influence this has on practices can be reflected and confirmed through the views of other staff members - deputy principals’ or teachers’ perceptions of emotionally intelligent leadership practices.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research required ethics approval as the study involved interacting with participants to examine ways in which emotional intelligence influences the practice of educational leaders. The researcher was aware of the importance of ethical issues related to, for example, gaining informed consent, minimization of harm, avoidance of deceit, respect for privacy and agreed that “ethical concerns should be at the forefront of any research project and should continue through to the write-up and dissemination stages” (Wellington, 2015, p. 4). Briggs et al. (2012) note that such “rules are intended to help keep participants safe from harm, build trust with participants and ensure trustworthy outcomes from the research which will benefit society” (p. 103).

Before commencing the research, ethics approval was sought from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee to confirm that all the ethical principles would be strictly followed (Appendix A). Once approval was granted, school principals were approached to participate in the research. As signaled earlier, an email including participant information sheets and a flyer was

sent to respective school principals who were identified by professional networks as educational leaders demonstrating highly relational leadership practices aligned with emotional intelligence. Principals were requested to forward respective participant information to their deputy principals through emails. Once agreement of school principals was gained, permission was sought to approach teachers for briefing them about nature of the study and inviting them to participate. Interested participants were asked to directly contact the researcher and first respondents (deputy principals/teachers) to indicate their willingness to participate were selected. Participation selection criteria were mentioned in the flyer and the information sheets. Participation in the study was voluntary and only participants who were willing to be involved in the project were asked to give written consent by signing the consent forms prior to interviews taking place.

To avoid deceit, participants were fully informed about all aspects of the research study. All participants were provided with information sheets. The information sheet described the purpose and methodology of the study and detailed the amount of participant involvement in the research. The researcher's contact details were available so they could directly contact her if they had queries or required clarification about the research. Independently contacting the researcher secures the confidentiality of participants in their decision to be involved, or not, in the research project.

To minimize harm, the indicative interview questions were compiled carefully by avoiding questions outside the scope of the study. The interview questions were informed by principles of appreciative inquiry. Participants' rights were maintained at all times throughout this research. Interviews were conducted in an appropriate location where conversation and recording of data was unlikely to be heard by others. The interviews were transcribed manually and were sent back to participants to check if changes or amendments were needed before proceeding with the data analysis phase of the research.

Confidentiality and privacy were maintained at all the times throughout the research. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities. Participants were provided with an option for their names to be disclosed in the findings if they wished. All personal details were deleted to confirm confidentiality and privacy and the data was stored in an office at Auckland University of Technology and consent forms were stored with the supervisor.

Commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi was demonstrated by honoring the cultural background of the participants and by establishing a respectful and trustworthy environment

throughout the study. In relation to the interviews, an appropriate atmosphere was established for participants to feel secure and talk freely. The researcher's experience of working in a wider variety of educational contexts enabled her to demonstrate strong degrees of empathy and respect to all participants involved in the study. She was able to build a good rapport with participants by being polite and respectful at all times. The participants were greatly thanked for sharing their time and knowledge and offered a small Koha as a sign of gratitude. A two-page summary of the findings was provided at the end of the study to participants who requested feedback on conclusion of the project.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has explained how the research was conducted. To understand the influence of emotional intelligence on the leadership practices of primary school educational leaders, an interpretive paradigm was used. An interpretive approach provides insights into how people make sense of their world and experiences. This chapter explained and justified aspects related to sampling procedures, practicalities of entry, use of semi-structured interviews for data collection, data analysis and ethics. Information presented is embedded in theory which helps facilitate an understanding of how the methodology was structured and the research was undertaken. A discussion of validity and reliability aligned with a qualitative approach is also presented. Chapter Four presents the findings.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings from the six semi-structured interviews to examine participants' perception of the influence emotional intelligence has on the practices of educational leaders in two New Zealand primary schools. A brief overview of the research participants is provided followed by presentation of the data. The findings drawn from the data analysis process have been organized in sections aligned with the research questions. An overview of school context and culture is presented initially. Next, data related to the first research question that seeks answers to educational leaders' understanding of emotional intelligence are presented. This is followed by presentation of data associated with the second research question which seeks to identify the perceived importance attributed to emotional intelligence skills by educational leaders. Data connected to leadership practices and influence of emotional intelligence on practices of educational leaders are presented in the proceeding section with notifiable links to the third research question. The final section presents data on pressures in practices related to emotional intelligence.

To safeguard the identity of participants, pseudonyms 'A' and 'B' have been used to represent the two primary schools selected for the study. The participants (principals, deputy principals, and teachers) from each school were assigned specific codes. PA and PB represent the principals in Schools A and B respectively. Similarly, DPA and DPB represent the deputy principals and TA and TB the teachers. All perspectives and experiences contribute to the richness of data related to the influence of emotional intelligence on practices of educational leaders.

### **Overview of Schools' Context and Culture**

To understand educational leaders' practices, it is important to gain knowledge about the school context as practices do not occur in a vacuum but are embedded in-situ (Kemmis et al., 2014). The findings related to context and culture of both Schools (A and B) are presented in this section. Data emerging from participants' responses revealed that practices of both principals were aligned with their respective school's vision and values.

### ***School A***

School A's inclusive and innovative learning environment is captured by its vision statement which focuses on innovation through engaging and inspiring its learners enabling them to achieve their personal and academic goals. Keywords noted in the vision are: innovate, engage and inspire learners. The school values collaboration, building relationships, innovative practices and personalized learning. Describing the school context, PA spoke about the effectiveness of an innovative learning approach with flexible learning spaces to enhance practices connected with the school's vision and values. According to PA, *there are opportunities for us to discuss talk and grow [staff] understanding ... we look for solutions to things if there is an issue or we look for different ways of approaching things.*

DPA confirmed the effect of context on practices of educational leaders. She mentioned that *Because this is de-privatized. You [leaders] have a lot ability and access to people, to engage in conversations, conduct informal observations and provide feedback.* With reference to the de-privatized context, DPA believed that such a context promotes a collegial climate of encouragement and support by breaking down *certain barriers, so we work a lot closer together and I feel there is more synergy amongst the team.*

DPA also noted that in such an environment there is a possibility that sometimes teachers feel a bit stressed because of the de-privatized setting and reducing stress levels could be overcome by effective coaching and development of close relationships. TA said that in order to work efficiently in this environment one has to build capacity to work competently and collaboratively. TA added *this space isn't for everybody.*

A culture of a school reflects the social expectations and can be recognized by understanding "the way people do things around here" (Deal & Kennedy, 1984, p. 4). In a de-privatized environment, the practice PA emphasizes is one of coaching staff to develop a positive school culture which endorses the school's vision and its values. Coaching is explained by PA as *we have a one-on-one with me where I sit down with every staff member once a week and we talk about practice and learning. ... or else designing professional learning for staff on individual [and] group basis.* PA strongly advocated supporting his staff and growing their ability to lead.

DPA agreed that it was important to coach people through modeling practice of being open and vulnerable. She stated *we defray in the way that's going to encourage people rather than have them switching off because it's too much, it's about knowing everyone as an individual.*

The culture of reflective and supportive practices was also endorsed by TA: *we are very lucky at our school [as] we get one-on-one time with our principal each week or fortnight depending on how new you are and whether you need support... he can challenge me, ... make me think differently about what I am doing ... and just give us some time just for talk about anything that's going on. Yeah, which is really good.*

Apart from highlighting the importance of collaboration and personalized learning, PA and DPA emphasized building effective relationships as being invaluable to enhancing leadership practices. PA noted *I consider my staff, my class, and I need to know them as learners so if know them as learners so I can impact on them. So, it's about building a relationship.* DPA claims *I think it is fundamental, ... having good relations with your colleagues.*

TA acknowledged that school leadership beliefs and norms of behavior are in alignment with school values. She stated *I think it's about relationships you develop. If our leadership team is asking questions and showing interest in our lives outside of school then you will come to recognize the culture and what they value, what they consider important.*

### ***School B***

School B's vision is to respect diversity by accepting and valuing different cultures in the community and to develop learners who are confident, curious and connected to each other. The values that underpin this vision are: respect for diversity; inquiry; celebrating who we are; and discovering the nation's heritage. PB describes school B as *a school where people ... with diversity are accepted.* All participants from this school confirm leadership practices are inclusive and responsive. PB noted that they focus on understanding people and try to figure out the cause and impact of behaviours.

Along with a respect for diversity, the school emphasizes inquiry-based learning and teaching. It provides opportunities to develop curious learners and promotes celebrating identity. With respect to valuing diversity, DPB talked about different festivals and language weeks arranged by the staff to celebrate various cultures. She stated that promoting diversity is a part of the school's



philosophy as it helped children to *inquire and talk about it .... and it gives children a chance [to know] who are from these cultures [and] to be the expert and they can talk about it and feel proud of ... their culture*. TB notes that the school context and culture are aligned with its vision. Acknowledging that school leaders valued diversity, the comment made was, *in a school like this, we deal with the vast number of people ... a diversity of ... cultures, a diversity of learning staff, diversity of pedagogical approaches...[and] accepting of all of those, all of that diverse range of people that they work with* is important.

All participants interviewed claimed that a culture of open communication, trust, and support symbolized this school. PB believes in empowering staff members and fosters open communication throughout the school. PB commented *I don't need to make everything going on here and tell people to do... stuff ... people should act as responsible ... empowered people*. Further, *I think they have autonomy in their jobs and they can influence the school*. DPB reiterated, *parents, staff, and children, ... can freely come and talk to me and they do*. TB stated *I don't think there are any teachers in this school that would hesitate to say what they feel to [PB] or make a suggestion*. Elaborating further on the culture of open communication extended to students TB mentioned, *PB [principal] made this place where children do feel ownership, and they feel they can go to the office it's a way of life*.

Involving parents in supporting their children's learning was also mentioned as a significant component of the school's culture. PB talked about promoting learning activities where the parents played an active role in developing their children's understanding of the impact of their attitudes on others.

### **Leadership Style and Perception of the Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

In this section, data related to leadership styles of educational leaders and perceptions of emotional intelligence are presented. Data associated with teachers' understandings about essential aspects of leadership which impact leadership style are also presented. Findings in this section are connected to the first research question which seeks answers to educational leaders' perceptions about the notion of emotional intelligence.

### ***Leadership Style***

It was important to understand the leadership styles of both principals and deputy principals before noting their perception of emotional intelligence. The leadership style of an educational leader can affect the overall performance of an organisation and is likely to be based on a leader's moral and ethical values (Branson & Gross, 2014). Values influence the thinking of school leaders and give meaning to their professional practices (Patti & Tobin, 2006).

The data presented sheds light on the leadership styles of both the principal and deputy principals as educational leaders and draws on teachers' views by way of endorsement on important aspects of leadership.

The respective school context and collaborative ways of decision-making suggested that both PA and PB practice transformational leadership styles within the framework of distributed practice. When describing his leadership style, PA stated, *I would hope its inclusive. .... I would hope it's about .... supporting others to lead, not just me. .... It's there... to support them [staff] in terms of them growing their ability to do that.* PB described his leadership style as not about being a micromanager but more involved with empowering people to make decisions. *I think it uses a variety of styles you know like, sometimes you consult.... Sometimes you have to empower others to... take a lead. Sometimes you have to make decisions.*

The leadership styles of both deputy principals focused on building relationships. DPA described her style as people-oriented and DPB notes she likes to lead in a collegial way. DPA replied *I think everyone has unique qualities and characteristics so I like to get the best out of people and support them and their role to be the best of that they can possibly be so that drives me.* DPB stated *I don't expect other people to do things that I wouldn't do myself. ... and I think, in a collegial way so I believe about not leading from the front but leading beside.*

The teachers of both schools claimed their school leaders believed that having a clear vision has an impact on leadership style. TA notes that leaders should have an ability to lead the team in the right direction. TB stated important characteristics of leadership included having a clear vision about the goals to achieve, ability to communicate effectively, being a skillful listener and ability to make sensible and timely decisions. In addition to these attributes TB mentioned, *I think they [school leaders] need to be ... open and ...flexible.* With reference to professional development, TA notes, *setting expectations for what we need to complete but also providing professional*

*development specific to each individual's need. TB expressed that leaders need to clearly communicate and share the strategic ideas with staff that they work with so... to bring them along on the journey as well.*

### ***Perceptions of Emotional Intelligence***

Both the principals described their perception of emotional intelligence in quite different ways. PA linked emotional intelligence to thinking preference. Referring to Herrmann's brain model, which asserts that learning styles are based on the functions controlled by four quadrants of the brain: Analytical; Practical; Experimental; and Relational (Herrmann, 2000), PA explained that the Herrmann's brain model is used in their school to identify the mindset of each staff member. According to the Herrmann's brain model, he expressed his strengths were predominantly in the analytical, organizational, creative and relational brain quadrants. The relational quadrant relates to feelings, emotions and interpersonal abilities. However, the demands of his role as principal meant that he couldn't just focus on relational aspects: *I find that in my role I have got to understand why things have to happen and I have to create a solution about how they might have happened and then make them happen and I suppose we struggle more with in terms of emotional intelligence as allowing for other people to be ...emotional about things. A little bit impatient about it.*

PB described emotional intelligence as a social skill. Social skills are used to communicate and interact with others and are linked to interpersonal skills. He stated *I suppose emotional intelligence for me is... picking up on those ... social skills that you can pick up, that you can ..., enable people on side .... because actually at the end of the day schools are... about people. So... people are very complex so you need to have to be aware of emotional intelligence. You need to have some emotional intelligence to better pick that up.*

Both deputy principals defined emotional intelligence in more definitive terms and said that the concept relates to understanding different perspectives of people. DPA notes *I think that emotional intelligence is really .... understanding yourself firstly as a person... know what makes you tick, it's about the ability to be able to relate well to others to be empathetic, to understand them.* DPB defines emotional intelligence as *it means your ability to empathize and understand the other people's point of view and look upon their emotions and ... and an ability to read other people's emotion and deal with them appropriately in an empathetic way.*

Describing the concept of emotional intelligence, both TA and TB expressed that having self-awareness and empathy towards others is crucial for educational leaders. TA stated, *talking about emotional intelligence I understand that to be ... understanding yourself but also understanding your staff and ... being considerate of people's feeling ..., that learning a level of challenge that required as well.* Similarly, TB commented, *they have to understand themselves first and then understand... what all of those diverse people bring to the job.*

### **Important Emotional Intelligence Skills**

Data presented in this section corresponds to the second research question which seeks to identify important emotional intelligence skills that a school leader needs to have. Participants highlighted various interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as significant. All participants acknowledged understanding different people and their perspectives as being the most important skill. In this respect, both principals identified skills related to self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and relational management as significant. PA highlighted that it is important to be self-aware and adaptable in order to have a better understanding of staff and develop relationships. PA stated, *I suppose they [educational leaders] need to possess a range ... or be aware of themselves so they can apply them when needed to different staff so if you think, it's about the relationship, I know my staff. I need to be able to relate to different staff in different ways, it's not one soul it's for all.*

PB said, *I think they [educational leaders] need to have to be able to influence people, I think they need to be able to ... also help people ... enabling them. They have to have compassion ... and all of those human traits... forgiveness, ... be kind, .... tolerance, understanding ... you will always have an understanding ... yeah! I think these are the one you need to have.* In addition, PB also emphasized self-awareness and self-regulation as essential components of emotional intelligence.

Both deputy principals focused on social and relational management competencies. DPA believed understanding different people was important to develop relationships. She stated, *I guess .... Understanding, that people are different and they gonna have different cultural identities, different belief systems, different values. I think it's really important, that you need to be able to be non-judgmental and to be able to ... hold other people's different perspectives ... from an interest point, not a judgmental point. So, the purpose is being able to relate well to others.*

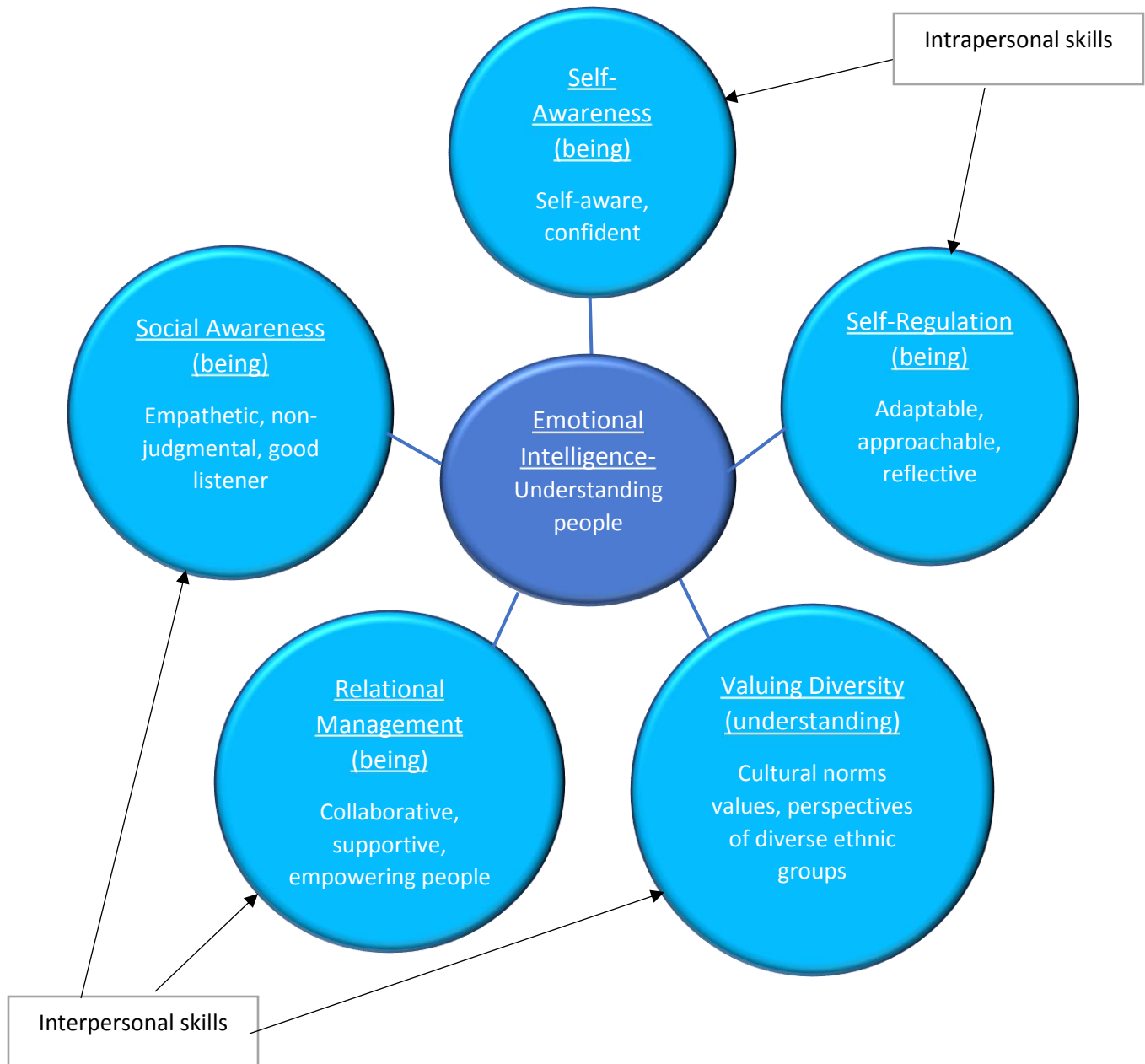
DPB believed the ability to empathize with others is one of the most important skills that educational leaders need to have. Further, she explained, *the ability to empathize with staff ... in particular, I think the staff hold everything together so... being able to understand and be aware of how the staff is feeling uh... it's really important because then you can adjust the way that you are ... reacting or... or acting towards them.*

Teachers from both the schools agreed that a leader needs to be an empathetic and skillful listener. TA said, *to have empathy. They [leaders] got to be good listeners, ... quite good at collaborating, reflecting on themselves as well as each other.*

TB expressed, *the listening and the being open.... So, if they [leaders] are a skillful listener if they are approachable if they have empathy.*

All participants agreed that understanding people is a core skill of emotional intelligence. They identified skills related to the four main competencies of emotional intelligence as: self-awareness; self-regulation; social awareness; and relational management. In addition to these skills, both the principals and deputy principals identified that valuing diversity is also an important skill for educational leaders. Understanding varying needs and perspectives of different ethnicities and being aware of diverse cultural norms and values were described as an essential aspect of emotional intelligence practices. Figure 4.1 shows the consolidated picture of emotional intelligence skills highlighted as essential by participants in both Schools A and B. Figure 4.1 shows that social awareness and relationship building interpersonal skills such as empathy, collaboration and empowering people are considered significant capabilities for educational leaders to practice emotional intelligence. The intrapersonal skills of being self-aware, flexible, reflective and approachable are also mentioned by participants. Valuing diversity has been recognized as a vital skill that has not been highlighted in the earlier models of emotional intelligence. The data revealed that at the heart of all the perceived skills is understanding people who leaders engage with as part of daily practice.

Figure 4.1: Important Emotional Intelligence skill identified by the participants.



## **Leadership Practices as an Emotional Intelligent Leader**

This section presents data gathered from interviews related to leadership practices linked with emotional intelligence. This aligns with the third research question which seeks to identify the influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders' practices within their respective school context.

Before exploring educational leaders' practices, it is essential to understand their roles and responsibilities. As explained in Chapter One, principals and deputy principals are considered educational leaders with formal leadership roles and responsibilities. In this study school principals agreed that their role and responsibilities included both management and leadership duties. Practices related to management responsibilities, for example, included undertaking administrative tasks concerned with policy construction and implementation, and documentation completion to meet Ministry of Education legislative requirements such as roll returns. Practices related to leadership tasks involved ensuring professional development of staff, strategic planning for school improvement, and refining the curriculum as per the school's vision and values. PA expressed that he found his leadership responsibilities more exciting compared to his managerial responsibilities. He described his leadership role to include growing the capacity of his staff in terms of their professional practices through coaching, designing professional learning programmes and looking into research for further improvement of practices. PB believed that effective communication was pivotal for a school leader. His responsibilities included focusing attention on enhancing learning for both staff and students. Strategically planning for further improvement was also an integral part of his role. PB expressed that most of his leadership practices revolved around people which meant meeting with others in the school community and dealing with issues related to staff, parents, students, and community members.

DPA commented that her role is about supporting staff members, reviewing practices for student well-being and monitoring and tracking academic progress. DPA expressed, *my day to day business really is about supporting staff and their needs... it's also about ... reviewing current practices, systems, and structures across the school and seeing how they are impacting on student's well-being and academic progress etc.*

DPB stated that her role involved administrative tasks such as accounting for school-wide literacy achievements and dealing with children's behavioural issues, *I do quite a lot of administrative*

*work around enrolment ... I also organize timetables and rosters, ... I work with teachers, I also look after the literacy across the whole school ... and I deal with children's behavior issues or pastoral care as well so that's what mostly I do.*

When asked about practices involving being an emotionally intelligent leader, all participants agreed that understanding people and their needs is pivotal for leaders. PA's focus on personalized learning is facilitated through understanding the impact he has on others. He noted *it is really about learning on the job and understanding the importance of relationships to... staff and students as individuals...most important aspect of that are... knowing what, how you impact on that person, whether it's a child or a teacher, and the way you speak to them, the way you interact.* Further, he stated *so I consider my staff, my class, and I need to know them as learners so if know them as learners so I can impact on them.*

PB highlighted self-management and social awareness skills. Being an emotionally intelligent leader, he puts into practice skills such as, ... *trying to be calm, ... listening... giving people the time when they needed ... so, it's at times I [PB] am understanding.* However, PB noted being emotionally intelligent is demanding and sometimes it is very hard to exhibit emotional intelligence in his role.

Both deputy principals commented that being emotionally intelligent meant they made an effort to relate to people/staff members on a personal level to develop trust and relationships. DPA noted *it takes time to build up trust and to really get to know someone. I find relating to them personally is then going to lead to being able to have professional, robust professional conversations.* DPB confirmed that being able to reach and understand people are essential skills for leaders. She commented *you actually have to understand people in order to lead them.* Further, she stated *I make sure that I have contact with staff.... ensuring that I talk to them also about what's happening in their classroom... taking an interest, so that they have seen that I am interested and aware of what's happening with them'.* DPB highlighted the importance of leaders' understanding and being adaptable. She said an emotionally intelligent leader is able to understand others' frames of thinking and then responding accordingly.

TA claimed it is essential for an emotionally intelligent leader to be empathetic, a good listener, collaborative and reflective. She asserted that leaders' awareness about staff is important for the professional development of staff. She said being an emotionally intelligent leader, one should be



aware of, *what triggers me, what makes me tick, ... what's gonna help support me and what times I need to ... just be given the freedom to fly and at what points I need someone to step in and help me.* TA believed that for leaders to develop empathy and understanding is fundamental, *the more they are involved ... and asking questions and showing interest in me as a staff member ... the more I think that grows.*

TB also highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills, *I think, part of a leader's role with the support is sometimes just listening to teachers,* she elaborated .... *I think ... that there are many other things that happen in a teacher's life outside of school so the leadership needs to have empathy and allow time for people to deal with things they need to deal with.* TB acknowledged that the principal is very understanding and empathetic. *I think [PB] is very empathetic around there, he understands that teachers have a life and sometimes this still needed maintaining.*

Core leadership practices linked to emotional intelligence which emerged from data are presented below. They include building relationships, engagement in collaborative decision-making, managing conflict/sensitive issues and valuing diversity. To conclude this section, thoughts on the influence of emotional intelligence on leadership practice are presented.

### ***Building Relationships***

Participants' noted that a core leadership practice vital for leadership is building relationships. School A's principal believes in building relationships based on honesty and open communication. PA said honest, open and non-judgmental conversations are important to develop trust and build effective relationships, *So, staff hopefully see me as someone they can come and talk to and know they won't be judged on that.* PA considers his staff as students and learners and for him it is most important to grow their professional abilities.

All participants at School B agreed that communication is a key to building effective relationships. PB believed understanding different perspectives of people, listening to them and giving them time which they needed is essential for developing relationships. He commented *I like to make communication free throughout the school.*

In terms of developing effective relationships with parents, DPA mentioned that when communicating with parents she considered herself on the same level as the parents. She stated, *I purposefully appear in a [parents'] hat so I can relate to them [parents] and understand where*

*they are coming from as well. DPB said I think the main skills are being friendly and approachable and ..... make the communication all the time.* She shared an example of a school event where she made an effort to involve parents in conversation. She believed positive conversations led to developing effective relationships.

In terms of building relationships with staff, DPA commented *I think it is fundamental to having ... good relations with your colleagues.* She expressed acting with integrity, being honest and owning your mistakes as skills needed to develop effective relationships with staff members. In terms of developing effective relationships with staff, DPB ensures that she communicates with them at a personal level and shows awareness of their needs and personal requirements. Emphasizing open communication, she means *parents, staff, and children, ...can freely come and talk to me and they do.*

Related to students as learners, DPA commented *when we think about the education system we sometimes forget that these are little people and humans and... families and ... our job is to support and encourage rather than to judge and put them in a box.* Similar views were expressed by DPB. She believed as a school leader it is pivotal to have the emotional intelligence to effectively relate to children. She said, *if you don't if you are unable to relate to children and have that empathy and ability to reach them and understand how they are feeling then you shouldn't be in education.*

TA expressed communication is vital for developing effective relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. She noted that if leaders were *able to communicate with us or develop relationships with us, getting to know us by asking questions figuring out who we are in terms of.... mindset but also in our practice as a teacher, ...[then] we can better work together because they would be able to provide a challenge where I need it and provide support where I need it.*

In regard to building relationships with students and parents, TA commented *I think for kids getting to know kids...., spending time with them being in the classroom with them, doing things outside with them .... Just experiencing things with them.... And then getting parents involved is also important.* She expressed that parents could be communicated through emails, online school systems, school newsletters or meetings but they need to feel connected and involved.

TB believes that a child is the center of all relationships and all concerned should focus on that and should be on the same page in terms of fostering a child's development. In terms of leadership practices, she commented *enabling the situation that allows teachers to build relationships with the students and with the students' whanau and with other teachers in the school... and then with the leadership of the school so that everybody is on the same page about what is the best for this particular child.*

### ***Collaborative decision-making***

Both schools' principals confirmed that they saw themselves as practicing collaborative decision-making as part of distributed practice in their schools. All staff engage in levels of decision-making. By involving staff in the decision-making process, school leaders are able to understand people's different perspectives. School leaders noted it makes staff feel valued which reduces the risk of resistance to change and develops a shared sense of responsibility for future decision-making.

Explaining collaborative decision-making practices in his school, PA mentioned that they have five levels of collaboration and staff are well aware of these levels. The decisions at level five are made by the principal only and most of this includes signing important Ministry of Education documents related to legislation and managing school resources. Level four mainly administrative decisions involve the school leadership team consisting of the principal and deputy principals. Staff are involved at level three system wide decision making but the final decision is delegated to the principal. At level two whole staff are encouraged to provide various options on curriculum development and delivery and the final decision is made through consensus. And at level one decisions are related to classroom practices where staff autonomously make decisions on curriculum delivery as per class and student need. PA stated, *sometimes there are still decisions that I have to make... and only I can make.* He felt that his leadership practice ensures that staff have a voice in decisions and it helps to reduce the level of unhappiness school-wide.

At School B, different groups like curriculum, professional learning, and other groups are involved in decision-making. Although PB noted that different groups are involved in decision-making, he reiterated that decisions made by the Board have to be followed. He added, *so yes, there is collaborative decision-making in different fields but sometimes... at the end of the day, it's going to be my decision anyway so I need to feel comfortable that it's the right thing to do.*

Describing the process of collaborative decision-making, DPA notes that it provides an opportunity to understand *people's different viewpoints and ways of seeing the world and to be able to .... find a way to not necessarily agree with each other but to be able to understand each other*. DPB confirmed that initially a new idea is discussed among senior staff and then, *sometimes, quite often it goes to the whole staff and so we find out what they are feeling and what they would like to do and then feed it back and then feed it back again*.

TA confirmed that they are involved in decisions, not related to management but issues related to school and classroom practices. She said *when it is applicable to our students in our classes... yeah, then we are very much involved in decision-making*. TB acknowledged that the staff is involved in decision-making. Explaining the collaborative decision-making process, she stated *there is senior leadership team.... And then there are lots of other groups in the school there is curriculum leaders, there are professional learning groups together which are made up of all sort of different people .... And all of those groups are involved in decision-making*. Further, *I don't think there would be many people who don't feel they are involved*.

### ***Managing Conflict/Sensitive Issues***

Discussing practices of school leaders related to engaging staff while communicating on topics of a sensitive nature, all participants agreed that conversations involving conflict should be done privately. Principals of both schools employ different processes to manage conflict and deal with sensitive issues as per their school context and culture.

In School A, PA noted *it's always done privately. ... doesn't matter who the person is*. PA stated, *I need to be able to relate to different staff in different ways*. He explained that, if any staff member displays high degrees of emotions then he will approach him/her in a different way compared to someone who likes things in black and white.

PA talked about his '*super formula*', to reduce unhappiness. Recalling an incident, by way of an example, PA mentioned previously that the majority of staff were involved in an interview process for a new teacher. However, as staff numbers increased it was not appropriate to involve all in the interview process. PA noted *we had those conversations and... being really clear about why we do, what we do and how that might make people feel and then get feedback on that was just [one way to ensure] staff were aware of who were going to be involved*.

The principal of School B puts in extra effort and care prior to engaging staff in sensitive conversations so as not to offend. PB recalled an incident where he had to talk to a teacher about her performance and it was a particularly sensitive conversation. He said *I thought about it for like two days. I write it and then I send it to someone else to look at it just to check ... I had got it right.*

DPA commented that engaging staff in sensitive conversations means leaders need to have organizational awareness and empathy. She stated, *I think honestly and authentically, yet with tact is important and being sensitive to them.* Giving an example DPA mentioned that recently one staff member, as a joke, labelled a folder on a shared document in an inappropriate way and that would have had professional impact on wider staff, *so...I approached the staff member by addressing her in a way of saying look, ... I don't believe your intent was bad, I think you probably have a bit of a joke but have you considered how other people might have seen it.*

DPB believed that sensitive conversations should be done in private and it is important to listen to the other person's point of view. She said, *if it is going to be something sensitive that I think is going to be upsetting for them[staff] I will plan the things that I am going to talk to them about and also sometimes, not every time but sometimes I'll talk to [PB] and we go through what I am gonna say what I am gonna ask ... so that we can look at the different scenarios of how it might go.*

TA expressed if leaders understand their staff and are sensitive it would help in situations where difficult conversations are necessary. Further, she stated, *I think that needs to be in a one-on-one situation and I think only the people involved, directly involved should be included in that conversation.*

TB mentioned that it is important for leaders to build relationships and develop a culture of open communication for handling sensitive issues. She believed that it is essential to gather all the relevant information prior to involving staff in conversations. She said *I think they [leaders] need to gather information before they launch into what they think.*

### ***Valuing Diversity***

Valuing diversity was identified as a core practice for effective leadership. Discussing the skills that enhance working with different cultures, all participants from both schools agreed that understanding other ethnicities' cultural values is crucial to develop effective relationships and

create cultures of open communication. According to PA, cultural changes bring along many positive challenges. He acknowledged *I suppose challenges are around that when... if you take our school, for example, a number of students here who don't speak English*. Communicating with students and parents who speak a different language is proving challenging. However, PA is confident that by understanding the cultural values of newly arriving students and parents of different ethnicities, he would be able to develop effective relationships and make them feel comfortable as a part of the community.

PB emphasizes accepting diversity and gaining knowledge about different cultures. He commented *if other people do it in a different way, and that can be really uncomfortable, but that's okay it's alright to feel uncomfortable because the other cultures could feel the way I am feeling in their situation*. PB believed that valuing diversity is a part of exercising empathy and understanding of others. Highlighting the significance of communication and having an awareness about different cultures he notes, *I don't have a problem with people speaking in other languages in my office because... as long as they came to me and communicate to me in English*. In terms of accepting diversity, PB acknowledged, *we look for the cause of the behavior, not the behavior - we tried to go behind and understand people*.

In terms of staff diversity, PA commented *its reasonably European staff* and PB said although they don't have much diversity they *do try and have people that try and reflect our community [students and parents]*.

DPA identified that in order to effectively deal with diversity two things are needed. First to have an understanding of different cultural norms and values and secondly, to provide opportunities for people belonging to diverse cultures to communicate. These practices would help leaders develop awareness of who is involved and what they value.

DPB noted that she accepted *having an awareness of [different cultures] is something I probably need to work on*. Discussing diversity among students, DPB stated that at their school they ensure that students belonging to different cultures feel that their culture is valued and for this purpose they organize different activities and festivals to celebrate culture.

TA commented that if school leaders communicate with people belonging to different cultures and show interest in their lives, *then [leaders] will come to recognize the culture and, what they value,*

*what they consider important and then from there, you find that people have strengths, in areas that they can help lead within the school.* In this regard, TA quotes a recent incident at their school when an Indian mother organised the ‘Diwali’ festival. TA mentioned *that was great because I wouldn’t have known if I didn’t get to know them, you know and talked to them and asked questions about them in their lives.*

TB stated that accepting and understanding diversity brings a wealth of experience and adds to the richness of a school. She noted *first, employ people from a different culture and then recognise what they bring, ... leaders need to be skilled enough to allow those people ... of any culture ... to share as much of that as they can.* She expressed her concerns about not having many staff belonging to different cultures. She commented *I think we do all we can to say, we do value all these cultures but we are still one culture teachers.* Emphasizing the importance of having staff belonging to different cultures, TB mentioned that *the connections are vitally important.* Giving an example, she stated there is a Samoan teacher in their school who is the most favourite teacher of a Samoan girl just because she is Samoan.

### ***Thoughts on the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership Practices***

All participants in this study believed that emotional intelligence positively influences the practices of educational leaders. Both principals commented that it is not mandatory for educational leaders but it facilitates effective practices with respect to gaining a better understanding of staff, empowering staff to grow, creating an environment for positive interactions and developing awareness of diversity. PA stated, *I don’t think it’s the only thing to consider but it’s something you should consider as you work alongside other people because it helps you understand where they are coming from.* PB noted, *I don’t think you need to have it but it helps enable the school, it’s better to have it than if you don’t.*

Discussing the positive influence of emotional intelligence on practice, PA commented that emotional intelligence helps a leader to have a better understanding of his staff and he would be able to approach and impact them in a better and positive way. Talking about the influence of emotional intelligence he stated, *I think it brings a positive spin uh ... if you use it the right way. If you use it to form and grow.* PB believed that emotional intelligence positively influences the development of an environment of open communication and positive interactions. He considered emotional intelligence as a strength and believes it is beneficial for society.

Both deputy principals ranked emotional intelligence higher than principals in significance. DPA commented *I think that you have to have high emotional intelligence to be a leader, without that, you can't lead people*. She expressed that at a leadership level, understanding people and giving them autonomy and freedom to be themselves is important. DPB also agreed that emotional intelligence would have a positive effect on leadership style and thus impact leadership practice. Emotionally intelligent leaders *deal with them [people] appropriately and those people feel valued and comfortable*. She further stated that if people feel secure they will be creative and take risks which will then enhance their confidence and professional growth.

Both teachers approved that if a leader is emotionally intelligent he/she will be able to better understand staff members' needs and provide support and challenge accordingly. It will help staff grow their capacity and contribute to school success. Talking about emotionally intelligent leaders, TA stated, *they [leaders] are going to be able to challenge and support each of us as we need and if each of us is challenged and supported the schools is going to benefit from that*.

While discussing the influence of emotional intelligence, TB shared her past experience of working with a leader who she did not consider as emotionally intelligent although he was good at administrative tasks. She expressed, *I simply didn't feel like I could go into his office ... and suggest something*. She recalled it as an awful experience because she believed the behavior or attitude of a school leader influences everyone involved in the school. She commented that if a leader is emotionally intelligent, *you do grow because... you are encouraged to take risks and encouraged to try things and if it goes wrong you learn from that and you go on again so that is how you grow*.

### **Pressures in Practices Related to Emotional Intelligence**

It was reflected in the data that practicing emotional intelligence is not very easy for school leaders. Principals of both schools agreed that they are facing certain challenges or pressures which can be seen as hindrances to effectively implementing practices linked with emotional intelligence. For example, diversity is proving challenging for both principals. According to PA, diversity brings lots of challenges and the language barrier is proving to be a challenge for effective communication, *it's becoming more and more Chinese and Korean, and so they arrive with no English and their parents have no English and so building a sense of culture with them is proving challenging until we can communicate*. PB noted that if other people do things in a different way



that can be uncomfortable. He said *as a principal I do feel uncomfortable in some situations* but consider it a part of developing understanding and awareness about people from other cultures.

PA noted that at times it is difficult for him to display emotional intelligence in his practice due to other huge role demands which include both managerial and leadership responsibilities. He commented *I suppose we struggle more with in terms of emotional intelligence as allowing for other people to be emotional about things*. PB also mentioned his concerns that it is not always possible for him to exhibit emotional intelligence because of *huge pressures* on him as a school leader and it affects his performance. He said: *the ability to have that time to think clearly and to exhibit emotional intelligence doesn't always happen and so that impacts on my ability to exhibit those skills*.

Commenting on the educational system of New Zealand, both principals agreed that there is more to be done in drawing attention to emotional intelligence than just assessing the learning of students. PA believed in developing students as a whole person. He commented *you need to consider more than just learning areas. So, we break the key competencies down into disposition areas which we believe are really important*. PA noted that their school has modified the curriculum according to the values and dispositions which they believe are really important for the holistic development of students. He further stated *we help the kids identify areas within which they might need to grow or be challenged and seek goals so they can grow themselves as a whole person rather than just a mathematician*.

Similarly, PB expressed that in our society we search for people with high levels of soft skills (interpersonal skills) wanted in our institutions but our education system does not promote this kind of learning. He remarked, *what we have is an education system that doesn't measure that, it measures reading writing and maths so you have got, ... a system measuring the wrong things, which are easy to measure*. Further, he gave an example of emotionally intelligent leaders that had left their job because they were not satisfied with the system. He noted these school leaders are, *not retiring[but] just saying 'I can't-do this anymore' because the system is not enabling*.

Discussing different cultures, TB showed her concern about having more teachers belonging to different cultures reflecting students' ethnicity. She said that teachers *make the children say that their culture is best valued....* but although we claim that we value different cultures *we are still one culture teachers*.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews. The results are organized into sections aligned with the three research questions. Initially, data related to schools' context and culture were presented to develop an understanding of educational leaders' practices in-situ. The data revealed that all participants agreed that emotional intelligence positively influences the practices of educational leaders. Although participants defined their perceptions about the concept of emotional intelligence in different ways, they collectively agreed that understanding people is essential for practicing as an emotionally intelligent leader. Important leadership practices linked with emotional intelligence were identified as: building relationships; collaborative decision-making; managing conflict/sensitive issues; and valuing diversity. An emotionally intelligent leader builds a positive school culture through understanding the school community (students, staff, and parents) and then responds appropriately. School leaders are facing pressures that could detract them from successful implementation of practices linked to emotional intelligence. The next chapter, Chapter Five, presents a discussion of the findings.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings**

### **Introduction**

The chapter presents the discussion of findings informed by the interview data and literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The chapter begins by discussing participants' perceptions of the concept emotional intelligence relevant to context. This is followed by a discussion on important perceived emotional intelligence skills identified by participants. The influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders' practices is analysed in the next section. Finally, challenges related to practices aligned with emotional intelligence are discussed.

### **Perception of Emotional Intelligence Related to Context**

Evidence from both the findings and literature confirms that leadership practices do not occur in a vacuum. In this study participants' perceptions of emotional intelligence arise in relation to their specific school context. The role of educational leaders is challenging in a landscape that is rapidly changing. Higgs and Dulewicz, (2016) confirm that educational leaders are facing complex pressures and challenges related to operational, management and leadership responsibilities and educational leaders' dispositions linked to emotional intelligence skills are necessary to build resilience. Success in the role may be partly due to their style of leadership (for example, transformational leadership) but can also be due to practices initiated and sustained by leaders themselves.

Of significance in the study is that the findings show that school context imposes demands of ways of being and leading. The context is complex and school leaders are faced with multiple external and internal responsibilities to various stakeholder groups. External accountabilities refer to the policies and legislations initiated by government such as mandated change and reforms in the education system by the Ministry of Education. Whereas internal responsibilities focus on improving teaching and learning, modifying curriculum according to students' learning needs, providing opportunities to staff for professional and personalized learning and developing sustainable relationships with the school community.

In this study, both schools vary in terms of size, location and culture so the role demands on each educational leader are unique. The use of emotional intelligence skills in terms of practice is profoundly dependent on context and its external and internal influences.

In this study, school context is an “umbrella term” used to encompass a school’s values, vision, practices, and culture. Schools with two different contexts were selected for this study. Findings from the interviews revealed that leadership practices of school leaders are in line with their respective school contexts. As mentioned by Kemmis et al. (2014) practices do not occur in isolation but are embedded in a specific setting.

School A featured an innovative learning environment with a vision that emphasized to: innovate; engage; and inspire. The school values are in line with this vision and PA provides opportunities for staff to engage in personalized learning and promotes a culture of collaboration, support, and encouragement. The Ministry of Education (2017a) note that innovative learning environments encourage the practices of collaboration and inquiry, both for learners and teachers. These provide opportunities for teachers to adjust their teaching style according to the needs of diverse learners. Leadership practices of collaboration, reflection and shared inquiry in such environments leads to more robust conversations, collaborative work and future-focused learning.

School B has a traditional, inclusive environment. The school leaders promote values and vision related to respecting diversity, inquiry-based teaching and learning, and celebrating identity. PB encourages a culture of open communication and collaboration which facilitates the implementation of teaching as inquiry model in professional learning communities. Zhang, Yuan, and Yu (2017) support the notion that smooth communication among leaders and teachers promotes collaboration while engaging in professional learning communities. Leadership at School B focuses on accepting and valuing diversity. Leadership practices of being respectful and empathetic enable leaders to develop learning environments that enhance a culture of happiness and well-being. Branson and Gross (2014) suggested that by developing respectful and ethical principles, leaders can create a safe-learning atmosphere for all involved in the community.

The socio-cultural demands of context mean leadership style is an evolving work-related concept. Aligned with emotional intelligence, the findings revealed that the leadership style of school leaders falls mainly within the transformational leadership category. Attributes of transformational leadership include self-management, having clear vision, being inspirational and adaptable, having

the ability to tackle challenges and make difficult decisions and knowing and developing people. A. Harris (2004) notes that transformational leadership allows leaders to enhance staff professional competence and provides them with the confidence and responsibility to lead and innovate. Findings from this study suggest that both principals, as transformational leaders, inspire and motivate their staff to achieve high outcomes and develop leadership capacity. Although school leaders are functioning mainly in transformational leadership modes, they have to continually adjust, reflect and develop styles informed by emotional intelligence in line with contextual demands which are dissimilar. This suggests that only having a transformational leadership style is not adequate to be an emotionally intelligent leader or that practicing emotional intelligence discounts other leadership styles. Findings confirmed that both school leaders exercise sole leadership at times because they see themselves responsible for certain managerial level decisions. They use a blend of leadership styles to address the demands of context. Emotional intelligence enables leaders to display flexibility and adopt, for example, decentralized styles to meet situational requirements. PA focuses on increasing staff professional ability to lead and PB believes in empowering people through delegating responsibilities.

Principals of both schools display situational awareness of context. They actively promote the vision and values that underpin their schools' philosophical leanings. At the same time, they realise they must be good role models, form strong leadership teams, generate collaborative cultures and focus on enhancing teaching and learning. Their practices link to their perception of emotional intelligence. As Greenockle (2010) notes, understanding the concept of emotional intelligence is important for educational leaders to create environments which foster teaching and learning.

Each participant described the concept of emotional intelligence as per his/her perception and experience. Principals of both schools define emotional intelligence in a broader perspective, traceable to context and creation of practice more in line with operational aspects of leadership and supportive of each school's vision and values. PA related emotional intelligence to the relational thinking preference of Herrmann's (2000) brain model with a focus on interpersonal, sensitive and emotional capabilities. PB described it as a social skill which is used to interact and communicate with others. Deputy principals and teachers define emotional intelligence more in keeping with what the literature states and this reflects the way they view their roles and responsibilities which, for example, includes pastoral care. The perceptions of deputy principals

and teachers of both schools were closer to Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence - an ability to understand one's own emotions and emotions of others and then to deal with them appropriately and accordingly (Goleman, 1998). The following tables, Table 5.1 and 5.2, depict key findings concerned with educational leaders' perception of emotional intelligence relevant to contexts of School A and B. They highlight that in order to understand leaders' perception of emotional intelligence, it is important to understand the school's context. The first column of each table presents key features of school context. The next column presents each school's visions and values aligned with context. Together the school's context, vision and values reflect the culture of the school and the arrows in the table shows this correlation. As Deal and Kennedy (1984) note that a culture represents "the way people do things around here" (p.4), and the leadership style of educational leaders reflects this. Leadership style influences thinking of leaders and gives meaning to leadership practices. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and highlight, in tabular form, each school leaders' style of leadership before portraying their perception about the concept of emotional intelligence.

Table 5.1: School A: Perception of Emotional Intelligence Relevant to Context

School A

Context – key features	Vision and Values	Leadership style of educational leaders	Perception of emotional intelligence relevant to context
-Innovative learning environment enacted within flexible learning spaces. -Collaborative ways of working -Use of Herrmann’s brain model as underpinning philosophical ideology -Changing demographics	-Vision is to innovate, engage, inspire learners. Values: -Working collaboratively, -Building relationships -Facilitating personalised learning.	<b>Principal:</b> Following are the attributes of leadership style in line with the transformational leadership category: -Inclusive -Supportive -Coach – in terms of growing staff ability to lead -Adaptable - Impacting others -Successfully implementing change	<b>Principal:</b> -Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are important. -Relates emotional intelligence to Herrmann’s brain model’s relational quadrant. -The literature notes that emotional intelligence is a combination of skills and abilities which assists in successfully managing both yourself and the needs of working with others (Walton, 2012)
		<b>Deputy Principal:</b> -People oriented -Collegial -Developing others -Supportive	<b>Deputy Principal:</b> -Focuses on pastoral care -Understanding one’s self -Relating well to others -Being empathetic
			<b>Teacher:</b> -Understanding oneself -Understanding the mindset of others

Table 5.2: School B: Perception of Emotional Intelligence Relevant to Context

School B

Context – key features	Vision and Values	Leadership style of educational leaders	Perception of emotional intelligence relevant to context
-Traditional Inclusive environment. -Inquiry-based teaching and learning -Accepting diversity -Open communication -Changing demographics	-Vision is to value diversity, develop curious, confident and connected learners. Values: -Respecting diversity - Inquiry -Celebrating who we are	<b>Principal:</b> Attributes falls within the transformational leadership category: -Empowers others -Consultative -Inclusive -Collaborative decision-making -Supportive -Having a clear vision -Self-regulation	<b>Principal:</b> -Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are important. -Focus on social skills related to interaction and communication with others.
		<b>Deputy Principal:</b> -Focus on building relationships -Collegial -Empathetic	<b>Deputy Principal:</b> -Understanding different perspectives of others -Being empathetic
			<b>Teacher:</b> -Self-aware -Understanding others -Being considerate of others' emotions



### **Perceived Emotional Intelligence Skills in Context**

Participants highlighted interpersonal skills (for example, communication and interaction with others) and intrapersonal skills (for example, communication with self, understanding one's own mind) they considered vital for educational leadership. Preedy, Wise, and Bennett (2012) note that emotional intelligence offers a combination of useful skills such as interpersonal and intrapersonal, from which individuals can select and appropriately apply according to specific contexts and situations. Goleman et al. (2013) state that great leaders work with emotional intelligence built on four fundamental competencies: self-awareness; self-regulation; social awareness; and relational management. School leaders of both the schools were aware of these competencies and identified them as important skills. The findings suggest that both principals are confident and aware of their strengths and limitations. They have a clear vision of what they want to achieve for the betterment of students and staff amidst challenges of context. As B. Harris (2007, p. 51) notes that "If leaders are to pursue what is in the best interest of the school and community rather than what is in the best interest of personal identity and ambition, then self-awareness and self-knowledge are the foundations underpinning their work".

School leaders of both schools were regarded as adaptive, responsive practitioners who possess positive expectations and work to achieve standards of excellence through being reliable and developing collective community trust. PA has an ability to successfully handle change and strives for excellence by being optimistic in achieving future goals. PB believes that self-regulation is crucial for school leaders as the role of principal demands great responsibility, commitment, and accountability. He claimed that school leaders need to be capable of effectively managing their internal emotional states and disruptive feelings.

All participants highlighted the importance of intrapersonal and social skills for educational leaders. There was a consensus that empathy in relation to understanding people is at the heart of emotional intelligence. Empathy refers to awareness of other peoples' feelings. Branson and Gross (2014) note that "empathetic leaders are generally effective because they promote trusting relationships within organizations and so are more likely to win the trust of others" (p.115). The findings from this study suggest that deputy principals of both schools are empathetic and possess higher levels of social awareness and relational skills because in their role as middle leaders they are in frequent contact with staff and students. Both deputy principals acknowledged that they

make a deliberate effort to communicate with staff on a regular basis and show empathy and interest which leads to building collegial relationships.

Social awareness is about sensing other people's feelings and understanding the values and culture within the organisation (Boyatzis, 2011). The school leaders of both schools promote a culture of open communication. Teachers and students can freely approach them whenever required. PA's ability to be non-judgmental and a skillful listener fosters an environment where emotions can be freely expressed without any fear of humiliation. Similarly, PB exhibits the skill of being a good listener and is kind, calm and open to different perspectives. All these skills lead to effective communication and relationship building. Greenockle (2010) reported that emotionally intelligent leaders in mentoring roles are sympathetic listeners and use constructive statements to provide guidance to staff in achieving their goals. Teachers confirmed that in their school they are provided with opportunities to freely talk and discuss issues related to professional learning with principals and deputy principals.

Findings of the study revealed that with respect to the New Zealand context where schools are getting more and more diverse, leaders are empathetic towards students and staff belonging to different cultures and make them feel a valued part of the community. In this study an important perceived skill which has been identified concerns 'valuing diversity'. School leaders recognize the importance of increasing awareness of diversity and acknowledge the importance of becoming familiar with different ethnicities' cultural norms and values. PA confirms that students' ethnicity is getting more diverse as more Chinese and Korean students are enrolled in the school. Whereas PB stated that the number of Pasifika and Asian students is increasing in School B. Educational leaders of both schools respect diversity and make an effort to understand others' perspectives. Literature presents several models of emotional intelligence composed of various and interrelated components (for example Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Goleman, 1998; Mayer et al., 2003). However, valuing diversity is not explicitly stated and as per the findings, valuing diversity has been identified as an important component of emotional intelligence which represents the ability to understand emotions of people according to their different culture and beliefs. Branson and Gross (2014, p. 116) identified that "different cultures attach a different level of importance to the same type of emotions". In some cultures, people value certain emotions and feelings more strongly as compared to other societies. Both deputy principals recognize that it is crucial for educational

leaders to have awareness about different cultural norms and values. Table 5.3 presents key emotional intelligence skills educational leaders acknowledged as important in terms of context.

*Table 5.3: Key Emotional Intelligence Skills Identified In-situ*

<b>Leadership (Principals and Deputy principals)</b>	<b>Self-Awareness (Intrapersonal)</b>	<b>Self-Regulation (Intrapersonal)</b>	<b>Social Awareness (Interpersonal)</b>	<b>Relational management (Interpersonal)</b>	<b>Valuing Diversity (Interpersonal)</b>
<b>School A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Self-aware (having a clear vision)</li> <li>-Confidence (being aware of strengths and areas that need improvement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Adaptability (being responsive to new learning in flexible environments)</li> <li>-Being reliable</li> <li>-Optimistic (having a positive outlook &amp; expectations)</li> <li>-Initiate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Empathetic (understanding others to establish trust)</li> <li>-Being non-judgmental</li> <li>-Skillful listener</li> <li>-Having organizational awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having impact on others</li> <li>-Promoting collaboration</li> <li>-Coach (growing capacity of staff to lead)</li> <li>-Managing conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Understanding cultural values and norms</li> <li>-Communicating with diverse ethnicities</li> <li>- Displaying respect and empathy</li> </ul>
<b>School B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Self-aware (having a clear vision)</li> <li>-Confidence (being aware of strengths and areas that need improvement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Self-control (being calm and in control of emotions that may cause disruption)</li> <li>- Trustworthy</li> <li>-Careful (being aware of accountability &amp; responsibility)</li> <li>-Adaptable</li> <li>-Tolerant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Being empathetic with others</li> <li>-Being kind and calm while interacting with others</li> <li>-Helpful</li> <li>-Good listener</li> <li>-Having organizational knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Promoting open communication</li> <li>-Enhancing collaborative decision-making</li> <li>-Inspiring others</li> <li>-Providing opportunities to empower others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Accepting diversity</li> <li>-Giving respect to diverse ethnicities</li> <li>-Being Empathetic</li> <li>-Communicating with diverse cultural groups</li> </ul>

### **Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Practices**

All participants agreed that emotional intelligence positively influences the practices of educational leaders. Both principals were in consensus that emotional intelligence may not be the key factor for educational leaders to be successful but, it is an essential component of effective leadership practice. Teachers confirmed that responsibilities of principals can be achieved proficiently with professional knowledge and expertise but in order to accomplish the tasks effectively, emotional intelligence is required. Carmeli (2003) acknowledged emotional intelligence as an important skill for leaders that enhances positive work attitudes and task performance. The findings from the interviews confirm this and reveal that practices most influenced by emotional intelligence include: building relationships; collaborative decision-making; managing conflict/sensitive issues; and valuing diversity.

Building relationships is at the heart of leadership practices. Participants of the study believed emotional intelligence facilitates school leaders to have a better understanding of their school community (for example, with students, staff, and parents). This enables school leaders to approach them (school community) in a positive way through understanding their perspectives and emotions. PA approaches and interacts with each staff member differently and according to their specific frame of mind. This enhances positive working relations and staff feel valued and comfortable. PA is aware of his staff's learning needs. TA confirms that the principal is mindful of individual learning requirements of staff and supports them in growing their professional capacity. Attending to emotional and professional needs in this way and supporting staff through coaching and mentoring raises teaching and learning standards. Having strong and positive relationships with staff also facilitates PA in successfully leading change. As Fullan (2014) confirms, by understanding others' perspectives, establishing emotional bonds and building relationships, leaders can successfully implement change.

PB focuses on open communication for building relationships. Cardno (2012) notes that the capability of engaging in formal and informal communication practices enhances productive relation-building. Educational leaders at School B ensure that they communicate with staff at personal levels to stay aware of their professional learning needs and requirements. TB acknowledged that students and teachers feel free and comfortable to go to the principal's office

when discussing any concern. This leads to establishing a positive working environment for teaching and learning.

Both school leaders practise collaborative decision-making in their school and this practice demands adoption of an emotionally appropriate approach to managing different perspectives and attitudes. At School A, five levels of collaborative decision-making are practiced and in School B different professional learning groups are involved in decision-making. However, both principals agreed that in their role there are certain decisions for which only they are responsible such as school related operational and financial decisions. Participants acknowledged that school leaders' abilities to impact others and enhance collaboration enables them to build effective relationships with staff and students. Cherniss (1998) supports the view that school leaders' skills of influencing and collaborating builds a positive working atmosphere. In both schools, practices of collaborative decision-making influenced by emotional intelligence facilitates educational leaders to reduce the risk of resistance to change and develop a shared sense of responsibility and commitment among staff. Staff feel valued and satisfied that they have a voice in decisions and this improves the quality of future decisions for enhancement of school community togetherness.

Educational leaders of both schools are able to manage conflict and deal with sensitive issues empathetically by engaging staff in robust conversations. As Greenockle (2010) asserts, "the emotionally intelligent person uses their skills of self-awareness and management, along with their perception of other people's emotions to manage difficult encounters" (p. 265). All participants agreed that conversations related to difficult and sensitive issues are and should be done privately. PA acknowledged that he approaches different staff members in different ways based on his understanding of their emotional responses and mind sets. PB is especially careful before engaging in sensitive conversations so as not to offend anyone. Educational leaders manage conflict by being skillful listeners, flexible, empathetic and, most importantly, understanding the other's perspectives. This strengthens their relationships with others and promotes a school community culture of well-being.

Valuing diversity is identified as an important aspect of leadership practice. As per findings and the literature, increasing diversity in schools can be seen as a challenge. PA acknowledged that increasing diversity is proving challenging to him. However, he is optimistic that by understanding the values and norms of different cultures, he will be able to develop effective relationships. His

views are in line with Beatty (2009) who notes that emotionally intelligent leaders accept the diversity of perspectives as a rich resource instead of a threat and Bolstad et al. (2012) who support the view that diversity needs to be acknowledged as a strength.

Increasing diversity calls for engaging learners, families, and communities to address their educational needs and ensure that all students, no matter where they are from, are provided with equal opportunities to develop and succeed. Both principals are aware of the importance of understanding cultural diversity and getting themselves acquainted with values and norms of different cultures in the school community. They initiate communication to develop positive relationships with students, staff and parents belonging to diverse cultures and make them feel a part of the school community. They establish and promote safe-learning cultures in their schools. Leadership practices are informed by emotional intelligence and the influence on practices is presented in Table 5.4. Benefits of these practices are also listed in the table.

*Table 5.4: Leadership Practices and Influence of Emotional Intelligence (Schools A and B)*

<b>Leadership practices (Principal, deputy principal and teacher voice of both schools)</b>	<b>Influence of emotional intelligence on practices</b>
Building relationships	<p>-Achieved through being aware of the emotions of others and interacting with them in ways that demonstrate awareness of feelings and emotions</p> <p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enhance positive working relations</li> <li>-Opportunities for personalized learning</li> <li>-Implementation of change</li> <li>-Creation of an atmosphere of open communication</li> <li>-Development of effective relationships with members of the school community</li> </ul>

Collaborative decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Understand the perspectives of others</li> <li>-Understand the need to create a platform for voice to be heard</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Staff feel valued and comfortable</li> <li>-Improved quality of decision-making</li> <li>-Heightened levels of commitment and motivation</li> <li>-Reduced chances of resistance and conflict.</li> </ul>
Managing conflict/sensitive issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Allows leaders to engage in robust professional conversations by demonstrating empathy and sensitivity to others' emotions</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enhanced building of relationships</li> <li>-Promotion of a culture of well-being among members of the school community</li> </ul>
Valuing diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand, accept, and respect different cultural values and norms of the school community.</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-People belonging to different culture feel a part of the school community</li> <li>-Promote in-situ safe places of learning</li> </ul>

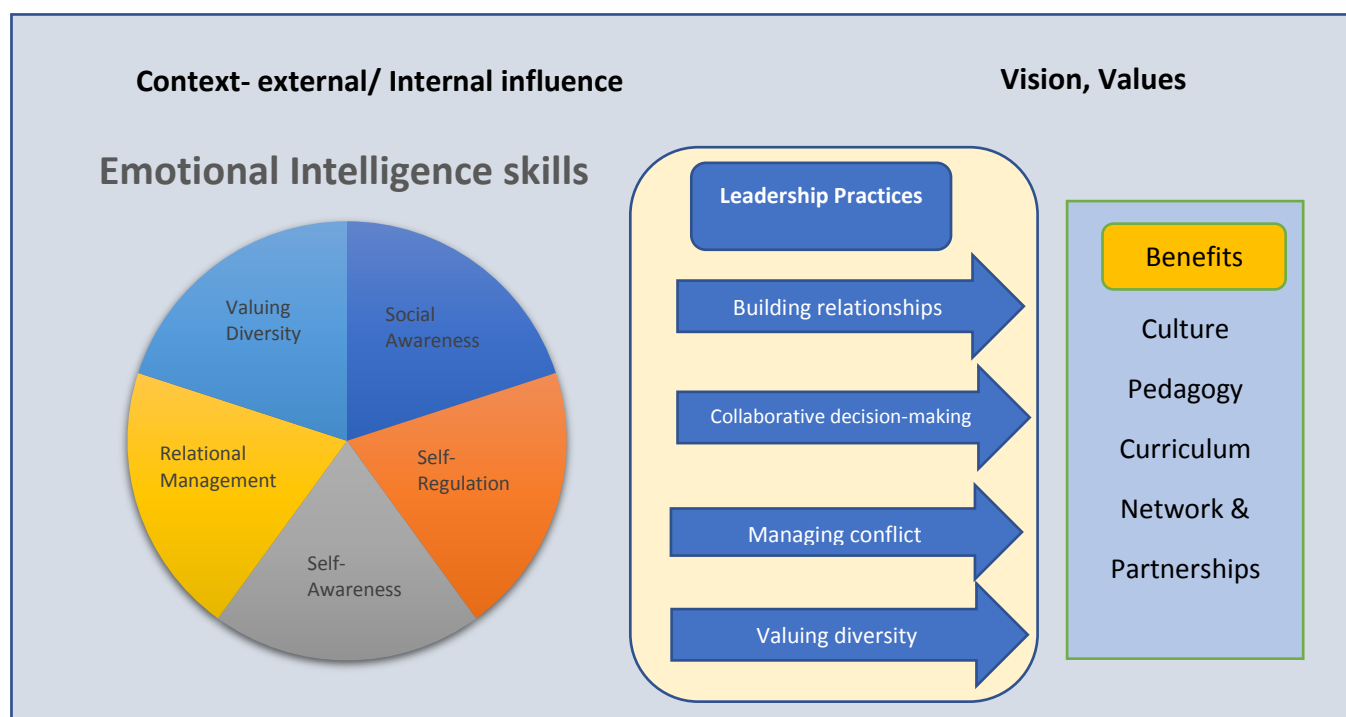
Emotional intelligence helps educational leaders to create environments which offer opportunities for professional development and personalized learning. According to Goleman (2004), emotionally intelligent educational leaders are capable and aware of staff needs and emotions and can create a culture of trust and respect, develop a common vision, motivate and encourage staff members and can maintain a focus on high achievement.

The key findings of the study revealed that practices cannot be decontextualized. Leadership practices occur in-situ and are influenced by external and internal demands such as compliance

with legislative policies, building community, managing resources, and improving the standards of teaching and learning. The vision and values of both schools endorse and influence leadership practices. For leadership practices to be successful in enhancing teaching and learning, leaders need to employ key aspects of emotional intelligence skills.

The important emotional intelligence skills identified in this study show that in addition to self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relational management as mentioned in the literature, ‘valuing diversity’ is also a recognized vital skill. Leaders need an ability to comprehend the perspectives of people belonging to different cultures and societies to successfully meet challenges of diversity. All emotional intelligence skills positively influence educational leaders’ practices in terms of building relationships, engaging in collaborative decision-making, managing conflict/sensitive issues and valuing diversity. They enable leaders to focus on developing a positive culture of well-being and happiness, provide opportunities for effective pedagogical development and modification of the curriculum in maximising teaching and learning. Emotional intelligence skills facilitate educational leaders to build and maintain positive relationships with professional partners and networks. Figure 5.1 presents the influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders’ practices.

*Figure 5.1: Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Educational Leaders’ Practices*





## **Challenges Related to Emotional Intelligence Practice**

Although the findings depict that practices of educational leaders are unique and in relation to their specific context, there are certain challenges and issues which are a source of distraction for effective implementation of practices aligned with emotional intelligence. The key challenges identified by school leaders in this study are presented below:

- Reality is different from expectations. Educational leaders' practices demand more than just functioning in an emotional way all the time. Although emotional intelligence is not a must-have requirement for being a leader, it facilitates leadership practices.
- Demands of the job are huge and complex. It is difficult to always perform within the scope of emotional intelligence in practice. Preedy et al. (2012) confirm that educational leaders are facing complex pressures and challenges including: increased autonomy for schools with respect to operational decision-making; greater accountability for performance and managing resources; pressures as a result of competition among the educational institutes; policy implementation to develop collaborative partnerships; financial constraints; tensions between the demands of external stakeholders and internal priorities and expectations, and focused attention on raising student academic achievements.
- Diversity and communicating with stakeholders in the community that don't speak English and have different cultural norms and expectations is proving challenging. Both principals commented on challenges related to diversity and perceived need for support. As educational leaders:

we attempt to serve students from numerous linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, political, and religious backgrounds, we constantly encounter perspectives that are not our own, traditions and values that seem to contradict the traditional norms of the communities within which our schools are located, and hence we find ourselves challenged and often conflicted. (Branson & Gross, 2014, p. 28)

Despite the challenges, this study suggests that because leadership practices occur in situ, they cannot be decontextualized. Each school leader's practices are influenced by specific internal and external demands. Although school leaders' leadership style falls mainly in the category of transformational leadership their practice is contextually based, inclusive of other styles and informed by emotional intelligence. Findings stress, however, that attributes of transformational leadership complement emotional intelligence and the work leaders do in practice.

The findings of the study suggest that educational leaders of both schools are emotionally intelligent as confirmed by the perceptions of teachers. Being emotionally intelligent means the school leaders are self-aware, able to manage their own emotions and are also well aware of the emotions of others. They approach each staff member differently according to their specific mindsets. These school leaders integrate their leadership skills with aspects of emotional intelligence to make their practices meaningful and focused on enhancing teaching and learning. In this study 'valuing diversity' has been identified as an important perceived emotional intelligence skill. Although Goleman (1998) mentions leveraging diversity as a component of 'empathy' and this was later merged into social awareness, the findings of this study highlights that valuing diversity is a vital skill of emotional intelligence needing specific acknowledgement.

This study revealed that emotional intelligence positively influences the practices of educational leaders but is not a must-have for educational leaders to be successful. Emotional intelligence skills facilitate practices to be meaningful and focused. Although the school leaders understand the importance of emotional intelligence, in their role as educational leaders it is not possible to always display emotional intelligence due to huge pressures, responsibilities and challenges of diversity. At times school leaders have to overlook emotional intelligence while fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the findings of the research study have been discussed in light of the literature reviewed. Practices of educational leaders are informed by emotional intelligence within their situated context. The concept of emotional intelligence is differently described by each participant and no clear definition is identifiable. Empathy or understanding perspectives of different people was considered an important emotional skill. In the New Zealand educational context, valuing diversity is recognised a vital skill for emotionally intelligent leaders to possess.

Data indicates that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on the practices of educational leaders; it facilitates their practices. Emotional intelligence enhances practices of leaders to effectively carry out their responsibilities. Emotional intelligence skills enable school leaders to develop an understanding of people's feelings and by responding appropriately, build effective relationships with students, staff, and parents. It facilitates school leaders in processes of collaborative decision-making and managing conflict/sensitive issues. Although school leaders 'buy in' to emotional intelligence, they also acknowledge that challenges and pressures distract them from fully implementing emotional intelligence in practice. Chapter Six presents the conclusion of this study. It suggests recommendations, identifies limitations and notes pathways for possible future research.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

This final chapter summarizes significant points of the study and is based on the three research questions that underpin it. This is followed by presenting the recommendations and limitations. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research.

### **Significance of this Study**

Given the demanding educational leadership landscape and the need for ensuring health and well-being of those in leadership positions, there is a strong case for supporting more awareness of the influence emotional intelligence plays in the development of successful leadership practice.

This study advocates for context (situational) analysis to understand the educational leadership as practice does not occur in a vacuum. To consider practices as being decontextualized is inadequate. In this study both schools possess different contexts in terms of size, location, and culture. The findings show that school context imposes demands on ways of being and leading. The role demands of each educational leader are unique in-situ.

School leaders are faced with multiple accountabilities to a myriad of stakeholders both from external and internal contexts. External demands may include those of government policies and legislation, mandated curriculum changes, financial and budgetary constraints and so forth. Internal accountabilities include raising the standard of teaching and learning, providing opportunities for professional development of staff, managing diversity, reviewing curriculum, and focusing on development of digital pedagogies to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and teaching. The vision and values of a school also influence leadership practices. For leadership practice to be relevant, meaningful and focused on learning and teaching, school leaders need to integrate their leadership skills with key aspects of emotional intelligence while acknowledging that ‘buy in’ to emotional intelligence in terms of practice is heavily dependent on context.

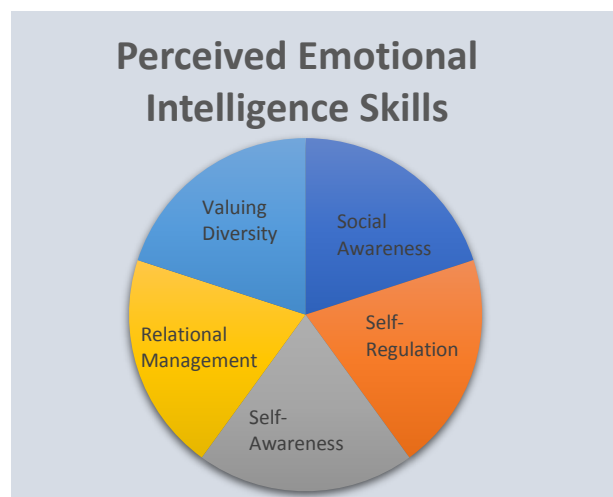
The socio-cultural demands of context mean leadership style is an evolving work-related concept, reflective of transformational leadership. The key attributes of transformational leadership include self-management, adaptability, being inspirational, having a clear vision and developing people. Demands of the context mean that leaders, although functioning mainly in transformational

leadership modes, need to continue to adjust, reflect and develop practices that draw on emotional intelligence skills in different ways.

Emotional intelligence is a difficult concept to define. It reflects abilities to enhance thoughts and understanding of interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics. The concept of emotional intelligence is described in different ways by participants with no clear definition having been established. Principals define emotional intelligence in relation to their school context and, given their roles and responsibilities, alignment with operational aspects of leadership such as supporting the vision and values of the school. Deputy principals and teachers define emotional intelligence in more definite terms in keeping with what the literature states. For all emotional intelligence is a capability which recognises emotions and is used to facilitate thinking to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relation to others (McWilliam & Hatcher, 2007).

Key skills of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relational management are highlighted in the findings. An important perceived skill of “valuing diversity” must be added to the afore mentioned skills. In the New Zealand context, demographics are rapidly changing and schools are becoming more diverse. To respond to increasing diversity and ensure safe learning environments, school leaders need to develop abilities which enable them to respect and understand the cultural norms of multiple ethnic groups in the society in which their school is located. Respecting and interpreting diversity is considered a vital skill for school leaders practicing emotionally intelligence. In the light of the findings, Figure 6.1 highlights emotional intelligence skills that inform leadership practice.

*Figure 6.1: Perceived Emotional Intelligence Skills*



### ***Impact Emotional Intelligence has on Educational Leaders' Practice***

School leaders operate in various ways employing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to improve the overall environment and culture of their schools. Working with emotional intelligence they create safe, supportive and resilient environments (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016).

In this study, different school contexts impose unique demands on the role of educational leaders and leadership practices are aligned with their respective contextual needs. The leadership practices of School A demands leading teaching and learning, developing self and others, leading change and management of the school while leadership of School B focuses on Teaching as Inquiry, developing staff and others, and building a culture that values diversity and inclusion.

In the current landscape where collaboration and collegiality is a pronounced way of leading, educational leaders have to build relationships. This can be difficult and create tensions because on the one hand, they lead through building relationships but, on the other, they also have to act with authority as school principals are the ones with ultimate responsibility. The mounting list of challenges they face include: task overload; pressures from various stakeholder groups in the area of decision-making; increasing diversity; focus on digital pedagogies; and reviewing and modifying curriculum, all of which serve to raise the question – how much can they buy in to emotional intelligence in terms of leadership and management practices?

Findings from this study show that educational leaders' practice as informed by emotional intelligence focuses on building relationships, collaborative decision-making, managing conflict/sensitive issues and valuing diversity. The study suggests that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on the practices of educational leaders, however, it is not a must-have for school leaders to be successful. Emotional intelligence facilitates school leaders to have a better understanding of various school community groups and approach them in a more positive manner. Drawing on emotional intelligence skills of understanding people, school leaders build effective relationships which is at the heart of leadership. This helps in facilitating change, enhancing personalized learning, promoting collaboration, managing conflict/sensitive issues and promoting interaction with others in the school community. Use of emotional intelligence skills such as empathy, building relationships and respecting diversity promotes in-situ safe places of learning. Heightened awareness of emotional intelligence skills allows educational leaders to engage in

contextual analysis and manage their role and responsibilities to enable personal growth and resilience.

Finally, Figure 5.1 presented in Chapter Five depicts the significance of this study. Leadership practices are embedded in-situ. External and internal demands of context along with vision and values influence the practices of educational leaders. In such a demanding and challenging educational landscape, educational leaders 'buy in' to emotional intelligence attempts to ensure the happiness and well-being of all involved in the school community. It positively affects the leaders' efforts to build positive school cultures which offers opportunities for pedagogical advancement in line with curriculum modification needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning.

### **Limitations of this Study**

It is important as a researcher to be knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of one's research design (Briggs et al., 2012). This study has its limitations. The study was delimited to the two primary schools in Auckland making it a relatively small-scale project. Subsequently, findings and conclusions may not be a precise representation of the perceptions and experiences of staff else-where in New Zealand primary schools. This qualitative study did gather rich data and the literature was used to discuss the findings. The findings of this study may be transferable to other school sites to benefit stakeholders develop their practices in line with emotional intelligence.

Time constraint was another limitation of this study. Data collection occurred at the end of term four which is a busy time for primary schools. At this period, setting up three interviews on each site with several interviewees having a load of responsibilities with very limited release time proved difficult. This made the researcher very conscious of time constraints and she had to rush through the interviews in terms of collecting data. Although the researcher managed to collect rich data, for future practice it is suggested to consider providing adequate time for data collection.

Every data collection method has its own constraints. While conducting interviews, the interviewer may try to be systematic and objective but the limitations of everyday life will still be the part of his/her interpersonal transaction (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher tried to establish an appropriate atmosphere for participants to feel secure and talk freely. However, the researcher being an unknown person and belonging to a different ethnicity with no prior connection to the participants may have restricted them from freely conversing on their personal perceptions and experiences related to emotional intelligence. Despite this, the experience of working in various

educational contexts enabled the researcher to demonstrate strong degrees of empathy and respect towards all participants involved in the study and was able to build good rapport with participants by being polite and respectful at all times.

## **Recommendations**

An analysis of the impact of emotional intelligence on educational leaders' practice in primary schools has led to the following internal and external recommendations.

### ***Internal Recommendations***

- School leaders should evaluate their practices informed by emotional intelligence skills by engaging in contextual analysis. In addition to managing their roles and responsibilities and enabling personal growth and resilience, school leaders may use psychometric performance-based methods of measuring their own emotional intelligence such as MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test), Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I), (Bar-On, 1997) the ECI, a performance-based 360-degree assessment etc. These are valid and reliable methods to assess the emotional intelligence of individuals and the scores represent the participants' perspectives of their own emotional intelligence. Once leaders are aware of their emotional capabilities they can confidently use this information in their schools to further improve their leadership practices for the well-being of the school community. Moreover, this also provides them with ongoing opportunities to develop and enhance their essential EQ skills.
- It is recommended that emotional intelligence skills of educational leaders be improved and enhanced through workshops, training and development activities within the workplace. These programs could help principals and senior leaders increase their emotional intelligence and thus create a positive effect on their leadership performance. In-service provision of education and training on the emotional and relational aspects of leadership roles concerned with learning, managing conflict/sensitive issues, employing support programs and analyzing self and others would be a great benefit.



### ***External Recommendations***

- The Ministry of Education needs to work on addressing issues such as “huge workload demands” which influence school leaders’ practices and their ‘buy in’ to emotional intelligence. The growing job demands, complexity and accountabilities are a source of stress for educational leaders which affect their performance. Professional support is recommended for coping with stress and workload. The Ministry of Education needs to monitor opportunities for school leaders to engage in improved and efficient professional support networks on a regular basis.
- The Ministry of Education needs to address the requirements for principals to be well-resourced with emotional intelligence skills to enhance practices in-situ that promote safe work places. Knowledge of emotional intelligence skills and related potential practices could be a part of professional leadership programmes for emerging and aspiring principals. This could support them in their learning journey to achieve the aspirations of their school community and create positive environments for teaching and learning.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The topic, “the influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders’ practice” merits further examination. Possibilities for further research include investigating:

- The influence of emotional intelligence in greater depth using a larger sample in different contexts other than being geographically restricted to two primary schools in Auckland, New Zealand;
- The importance of emotional intelligence in ethical and moral practices of educational leaders;
- Emotional intelligence skills employed by educational leaders when dealing with diversity – people belonging to different cultures; and
- The influence of emotional intelligence skills and its competencies in developing partnership networks.

## **Conclusion**

This small-scale study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on the practices of educational leaders in two primary schools in Auckland, New Zealand. The positive influence of emotional intelligence on educational leaders' practices highlighted the important perceived emotional intelligence skills. The results of the study suggest that for leadership practices to be successful and meaningful, leaders need to integrate their leadership skills with key components of emotional intelligence. Educational leaders also need to ensure their practices are shaped by context and applied in-situ. As such the research findings may be of interest to educational leaders focused on developing collaborative, context-based practices with an in-situ focus. However, more investigation is needed in the future to evaluate the impact emotional intelligence has on educational leaders' practice and on leadership development.

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## **Appendix A:**

### **Ethics Approval**

28 August 2017

Patricia Stringer  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Patricia

Re Ethics Application: **17/273 Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Subcommittee.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 28 August 2020.

#### **Standard Conditions of Approval**

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEK prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEK Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEK Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEK grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

Yours sincerely,



Kate O'Connor  
Executive Manager  
**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

## **Appendix B:**

### **Interview questions for principals and deputy principals**

#### **Possible questions:**

1. Can you tell me a little about your role and what you do in your job on a day-to-day practice basis?
2. How would you describe your leadership style? How do you like to lead?
3. I am particularly interested in leaders' emotional intelligence. How would you describe emotional intelligence?
4. In your opinion, what important emotional intelligence skills do school leaders need to have? How important do you think these are in your day-to-day practice? Why do you think that?
5. What sorts of things do you do as a leader in regard to being emotionally intelligent?
6. Could you tell me how you engage with teachers or staff members when it comes to communicating on topics that are of a sensitive nature?
7. What skills do you consider important for building effective relationships with members of the school community (students, staff, parents)?
8. What skills do you think enhance working with staff belonging to different cultures? Why do you think this way?
9. Do you agree that emotional intelligence could influence the practice of school leaders? Could you provide me with an example of practice linked to emotional intelligence?
10. Could you tell me how emotional intelligence positively influences your practice?
11. Is there anything else you can tell me about emotional intelligence skills and the influence it has on the practice of educational leaders?

### **Interview questions for teachers.**

#### **Possible questions:**

1. As a teacher, what aspects of leadership practice do you consider are important for you? why?
2. I am particularly interested in the influence of emotional intelligence on the practice of school leaders. In your opinion, what emotional intelligence skills are important for educational leaders to demonstrate in practice? Why do you think that?
3. In your opinion, which skills identifies a school leader as emotionally intelligent?
4. Could you tell me how school leaders should engage with staff while communicating on topics that are of a sensitive nature?

5. Could you tell me how educational leaders could exhibit support and empathy towards staff members?
6. In your opinion, what factors are essential for developing effective relationships among members of the school community (students, staff, parents)?
7. In your opinion, which skills enhance working with staff belonging to different cultures?
8. Do you agree that emotional intelligence could influence the day-to-day practice of school leaders? Could you provide me with examples?
9. Could you tell me how emotional intelligence positively influences leadership practices?
10. Is there anything else you can tell me about emotional intelligence skills and the influence it has on the practice of educational leaders?



## **Appendix C:**

### **Email to Principals**

Dear (Principal name)

Kia ora,

I hope this email finds you in the best of health.

My name is Sadia Kashif. I am a postgraduate student at AUT conducting research on emotional intelligence under the supervision of Dr Patricia Stringer. My research study is titled 'Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis'

I would like to invite you to participate in my research which investigates the influence of emotional intelligence on the practice of educational leaders. I hope to gain insight related to the importance of emotional intelligence skills in developing effective relationships with students, staff and parents.

You have been identified by my supervisor as a principal who demonstrates highly relational leadership practice and who may be interested in participating in this research.

This research study also seeks to explore the views of a deputy principal and a teacher. For your information and clarification, a flyer and the Principal and Deputy Principal's Participant Information Sheets are attached herewith to provide you with details about the nature of my study, its purpose and potential benefits. If you decide to participate, I would like to request you kindly email the Deputy Principal's Participant Information Sheet to your deputy principals so that they could indicate their willingness to participate in the study by contacting me directly.

If you agree to participate in the study, I would like to visit your school personally and brief the teachers about the nature of my research study at a staff meeting. I will also put the flyer on the staff notice board inviting the teachers to participate. Teachers could indicate their willingness to participate in the study by contacting me directly.

Thanking you in anticipation and looking forward to a positive reply.

Kind regards,

Sadia Kashif

## **Appendix D:**

### **Participant Information Sheet: Principal**

**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 04 September, 2017

#### **Project Title**

Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis

#### **An Invitation**

Kia ora Principal,

My name is Sadia Kashif. I am a postgraduate student at AUT (Auckland University of Technology) completing my Masters in Educational leadership. I am conducting research for my thesis under the supervision of Dr Patricia Stringer.

My research is concerned with exploring the perceived influence of emotional intelligence on the professional practices of educational leaders in primary schools. The design of this research requires three participants to be involved in the interviews to gain their perception of emotional intelligence and influence of this on leadership practices. The three participants will include: the principal, a deputy principal and a teacher. The different perceptions of participants are important to ensure trustworthiness and alignment of data in relation to the topic. I would like to extend an invitation to you to take part in this research. This study has met the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (AUTEC) of AUT.

#### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research study is concerned with investigating the influence of emotional intelligence skills on the practice of educational leaders. It will not only explore perceptions related to emotional intelligence but will also examine the perceived importance emotional intelligence skills have on practice. The research findings and recommendations may provide opportunities to gain further insights into the importance of emotional intelligence in developing supportive and effective relationship with students, staff and parents. The study is not designed to critique practices but to discover positive strategies aligned with emotional intelligence. This study will explore practices that are working well, analysing why they are working well and then doing more of it. This study will benefit me to complete my Master of Educational Leadership degree and present the findings at a conference or publish a journal article.

#### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified through professional networks of my supervisor and mentor as a principal who demonstrates highly relational leadership practice aligned with emotional intelligence and who has had experience of at least three years in the same school.

As this study requires two other participants, namely a deputy principal and a teacher, an invitation will be extended to all potential participants and the first person who responds to the invitation will be selected to participate.

#### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

I sincerely hope you will agree to participate and would like to offer you a week to consider my invitation. I am confident the knowledge and experience you have to share will support educational leaders to improve their emotional intelligence skills in building effective and strong relationships. If you are willing to participate in this research, kindly contact me and I will provide you with the consent form to sign confirming your participation in the study.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as

belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

#### **What will happen in this research?**

If you agree to participate, an interview would be scheduled at a time and place convenient to you. The interview would last about an hour. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your understanding about the concept of emotional intelligence, along with your perception of the importance of emotional intelligence skills and its influence on practices. You will not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable and will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interview will be audio recorded. I will transcribe the interviews and will send the transcripts back to you to check and note necessary changes or amendments needed before I proceed with the data analysis phase of the research.

I would ensure not to ask any questions outside of the scope of study and you will not have to answer any question if you are not willing. Moreover, I will ensure that the interview will be conducted in an appropriate location where the conversation and recording would unlikely be heard by other people to protect and minimize harm. If an appropriate space could not be arranged at your school to conduct an interview, I will book a space at the AUT campus to protect your privacy.

#### **What are the discomforts and risks and how these be alleviated?**

It is very unlikely that you will experience any discomfort or risk by participating in this research.

#### **How will my privacy be protected?**

While transcribing and analyzing the data and writing the final thesis, I will use pseudonyms to protect your identity. You also have the option for your name to be disclosed should you wish in the findings. However, despite my strict adherence to protecting your identity, I cannot guarantee total confidentiality as it will be likely for you, as the principal, to be identified by others.

#### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

I will need approximately 50-60 minutes of your precious time for an interview and an additional 30-45 minutes for you to read and check your transcript.

#### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Once you receive the Information Sheet, please take your time to consider my invitation and contact me within a week.

#### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, I will provide you with a 1-2-page summary of findings at the end of the study.

#### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr Patricia Stringer*, [patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

#### **Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details: Sadia Kashif.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: *Dr Patricia Stringer*, [patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28 August 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/273 Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis .

## **Appendix E:**

### **Participant Information Sheet: Deputy Principal**

**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 04 September, 2017

**Project Title**

Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis

**An Invitation**

Kia ora Deputy Principal,

My name is Sadia Kashif. I am a postgraduate student at AUT (Auckland University of Technology) completing my Masters in Educational leadership. I am conducting research for my thesis under the supervision of Dr Patricia Stringer.

My research is concerned with exploring the perceived influence of emotional intelligence on the professional practices of educational leaders in primary schools. The design of this research requires three participants to be involved in the interviews to gain their perception of emotional intelligence and influence of this on leadership practices. The three participants will include: the principal, a deputy principal and a teacher. The different perceptions of participants are important to ensure trustworthiness and alignment of data in relation to the topic. I would like to extend an invitation to you to take part in this research. This study has met the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (AUTEC) of AUT.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This research study is concerned with investigating the influence of emotional intelligence skills on the practice of educational leaders. It will not only explore perceptions related to emotional intelligence but will also examine the perceived importance emotional intelligence skills have on practice. The research findings and recommendations may provide opportunities to gain further insights into the importance of emotional intelligence in developing supportive and effective relationship with students, staff and parents. The study is not designed to critique practices but to discover positive strategies aligned with emotional intelligence. This study will explore practices that are working well, analysing why they are working well and then doing more of it. This study will benefit me to complete my Master of Educational leadership degree and present the findings at a conference or publish a journal article.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified as a deputy principal who has been working in the same school context for at least three years with the principal who has been acknowledged as demonstrating highly relational leadership practice aligned with emotional intelligence. As this study requires only one deputy principal, the first person to respond to this invitation will be selected to participate

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

I sincerely hope you will agree to participate and would like to offer you a week to consider my invitation. I am confident the knowledge and experience you have to share will support educational leaders to improve their emotional intelligence skills in building effective and strong relationships. If you are willing to participate in this research, kindly contact me and I will provide you with the consent form to sign confirming your participation in the study.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

**What will happen in this research?**

If you agree to participate, an interview would be scheduled at a time and place convenient to you. The interview would last about an hour. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your understanding about the concept of emotional intelligence, along with your perception of the importance of emotional intelligence skills and its influence on practices. You will not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable and will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interview will be audio recorded. I will transcribe the interviews and will send the transcripts back to you to check and note necessary changes or amendments needed before I proceed with the data analysis phase of the research.

I would ensure not to ask any questions outside of the scope of study and you will not have to answer any question if you are not willing.

Moreover, I will ensure that the interview will be conducted in an appropriate location where the conversation and recording would unlikely be heard by other people to protect and minimize harm. If an appropriate space could not be arranged at your school to conduct an interview, I will book a space at the AUT campus to protect your privacy.

**What are the discomforts and risks and how these be alleviated?**

It is very unlikely that you will experience any discomfort or risk by participating in this research.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

While transcribing and analyzing the data and writing the final thesis, I will use pseudonyms to protect your identity. You also have the option for your name to be disclosed should you wish in the findings. However, despite my strict adherence to protecting your identity, I cannot guarantee total confidentiality as there is a probability that you may be identified by other participants.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

I will need approximately 50-60 minutes of your precious time for an interview and an additional 30-45 minutes for you to read and check your transcript.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Once you receive the Information Sheet, please take your time to consider my invitation and contact me within a week.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, I will provide you with a 1-2-page summary of findings at the end of the study.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr Patricia Stringer*, [patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details: Sadia Kashif.

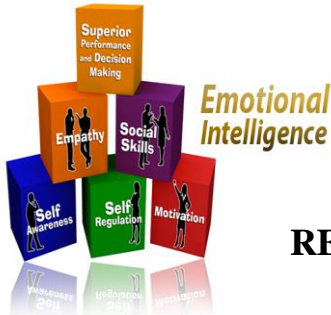
Project Supervisor Contact Details: *Dr Patricia Stringer*, [patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28 August 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/273 Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis.

## Appendix F:

School of Education

Auckland University of Technology



### PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

I am looking for a teacher to voluntarily take part in a study titled:  
**‘Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders:  
A critical analysis’**

As a participant in this study, you would be involved **in a short interview** of  
approximately 50-60 minutes in duration  
(related to emotional intelligence skills and practices of educational leaders)

**As only 1 teacher is required, the first person to respond will be selected.**

For more information about this study, please contact:

**Researcher: Sadia Kashif,**

**or**

**Thesis Supervisor: Dr Patricia Stringer,**

[patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

*When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of  
logic, but with creatures of emotion. -Dale Carnegie*



## **Appendix G:**

### **Participant Information Sheet: Teacher**

**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 04 September 2017

**Project Title**

Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis

**An Invitation**

Kia ora Teacher

My name is Sadia Kashif. I am a postgraduate student at AUT (Auckland University of Technology) completing my Masters in Educational leadership. I am conducting research for my thesis under the supervision of Dr Patricia Stringer.

My research is concerned with exploring the perceived influence of emotional intelligence on the professional practices of educational leaders in primary schools. The design of this research requires three participants to be involved in the interviews to gain their perception of emotional intelligence and influence of this on leadership practices. The three participants will include: the principal, a deputy principal and a teacher. The different perceptions of participants are important to ensure trustworthiness and alignment of data in relation to the topic. I would like to extend an invitation to you to take part in this research. This study has met the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (AUTEC) of AUT.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This research study is concerned with investigating the influence of emotional intelligence skills on the practice of educational leaders. It will not only explore perceptions related to emotional intelligence but will also examine the perceived importance emotional intelligence skills have on practice. The research findings and recommendations may provide opportunities to gain further insights into the importance of emotional intelligence in developing supportive and effective relationship with students, staff and parents. The study is not designed to critique practices but to discover positive strategies aligned with emotional intelligence. This study will explore practices that are working well, analysing why they are working well and then doing more of it. This study will benefit me to complete my Master of Educational leadership degree and present the findings at a conference or publish a journal article.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

The participant criterion of this research study requires a teacher who has been working for at least three years in the same school. As this study requires only one teacher, the first person to respond to the invitation will be selected to participate.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

I sincerely hope you will agree to participate and would like to offer you a week to consider my invitation. I am confident the knowledge and experience you have to share will support educational leaders to improve their emotional intelligence skills in building effective and strong relationships. If you are willing to participate in this research, kindly contact me and I will provide you with the consent form to sign confirming your participation in the study.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

**What will happen in this research?**

If you agree to participate, an interview would be scheduled at a time and place convenient to you. The interview would last about an hour. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your understanding about the concept of emotional intelligence, along with your perception of the importance of emotional intelligence skills and its influence on practices. You will not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable and will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interview will be audio recorded. I will transcribe the interviews and will send the transcripts back to you to check and note necessary changes or amendments needed before I proceed with the data analysis phase of the research.

I would ensure not to ask any questions outside of the scope of study and you will not have to answer any question if you are not willing.

Moreover, I will ensure that the interview will be conducted in an appropriate location where the conversation and recording would unlikely to be heard by other people to protect and minimize harm. If an appropriate space could not be arranged at your school to conduct an interview, I will book a space at the AUT campus to protect your privacy.

**What are the discomforts and risks and how these be alleviated?**

It is very unlikely that you will experience any discomfort or risk by participating in this research.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

While transcribing and analyzing the data and writing the final thesis, I will use pseudonyms to protect your identity. You also have the option for your name to be disclosed should you wish in the findings. However, despite my strict adherence to protecting your identity, I cannot guarantee total confidentiality as there is a probability that you may be identified by other participants.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

I will need approximately 50-60 minutes of your precious time for an interview and an additional 30-45 minutes for you to read and check your transcript.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Once you receive the Information Sheet, please take your time to consider my invitation and contact me within a week.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, I will provide you with a 1-2-page summary of findings at the end of the study.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr Patricia Stringer*, [patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details: Sadia Kashif.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: *Dr Patricia Stringer*, [patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz](mailto:patricia.stringer@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7414.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28 August 2017, AUTECH Reference number 17/273 *Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis*



## Appendix H:

### Permission for researchers to access organisation school teachers.

*Project title:*                      *Emotional intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis*

*Project Supervisor:*        *Dr Patricia Stringer*

*Researcher:*                      *Sadia Kashif*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 25 July 2017.
- ☐ I give permission for the researcher to undertake research within \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I give permission for the researcher to access the teachers by putting up a flyer on the staff room notice board \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature: .....

Principal's name: .....

Principal's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28 August 2017 AUTEC  
Reference number 17/273 Emotional Intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational  
leaders: A critical analysis.***

*Note: The head of the organisation should retain a copy of this form.*

**Appendix I:**  
**Consent Form: Principal/ Deputy Principal and Teachers**

*Project title:*                      *Emotional intelligence as an influence on the practice of educational leaders: A critical analysis*

*Project Supervisor:*        *Dr Patricia Stringer*

*Researcher:*                      *Sadia Kashif*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 25 July 2017.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during my interview and that the interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed by the primary researcher.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research
- ☐ I wish to disclose my name in the research findings. (please tick one): Yes ☐        No ☐
- ☐ I wish to receive a 1-2-page summary of the findings at the end of the study.  
(please tick one): Yes ☐    No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix J: Emerging themes

P1	DP1	T1	P2	DP2	T2
Practice As managemen t  As leadership  Coaching  Professional developmen t  Research  Leadership style  Inclusive Supportive  Distributive  Collaborativ e Decision- Making  Values relationship  Related to principal as a coach  Defination	Current practices Supporting Reviewing Student well- being and academic progress  People oriented attributes  Effectiveness of flexible School context  Breaks barrier More synergy  Practices Coaching people  Knowing others relationship  Definition of EI  EI skills Understanding g people Cultural identities	Aspects of leadership  Being able to lead in the team in right direction  Setting expectations  Providing professional development specific to each individual's need  Collaborative decision- making about practices  Define EI  Self awareness  Understandin g others Being considerate Recognizing the learning level required (professional	Current Practices Meeting with people Resolving problems Meeting other principals Pedagogy Thinking strategically to improve  Leadership style: Consultation Empowering others Making decisions  Valuing staff  No micromanagemen t  Awareness about school and curriculum Autonomy  Define EI  Picking up on social skills Enabling people  EI is not essential but better to have	Current practice Administrativ e work Looks after literacy Children behavior issues  Collegial way – leading beside  Define EI Empathize Understand people  EI skills:  Empathize  Understand staff's feelings  Able to reach and understand people  practice Contact staff	Aspects of leadership  Communicatio n  clear vision ability to communicate able to listen to decide plan of action  Understand themselves – self awareness  Understand and accept different cultural identities  To understand different cultural values and norms  To recognize what is needed  EI skills: Good listener Approachable Have empathy

## **Appendix K:**

### **List of Emerging Themes/Categories**

#### **Final Emerging Themes**

School culture (SC)

Ethnicity (SC-E)

values (SC-V)

Leadership style (LS)

Definition of Emotional intelligence (DEI)

Emotional intelligence skills (EIS)

Daily Practices (DPR)

Practices as an emotionally intelligent leader (PR-EI)

Collaborative decision-making (PREI-C)

Difficult conversation (PREI-D)

Understanding staff needs (PREI-U)

Relation building (PREI-R)

Understanding and valuing diverse cultures (PREI-DV)

Influence on practice (IPR)

Awareness about people (IPR-A)

Challenges in practices (CPR)

Education system (CPR-Ed)

Communication (CPR-CM)

Develop EI (CPR-DEI)

## Appendix L:

### Emerging themes- consolidated table

Themes	Sub-themes	P1	P2	DP1	DP2	T1	T2
<b>School Culture (SC)</b>		SC-p1 (51-52), SC-p1(68-69), SC-p1 (132-142), SC-p1 (152 -155)	SC-p2 (27-28) SC-p2(40-42) SC-p2 (206-211) SC-p2 (217-221) SC-p2 (236-244)	SC-dp1 (22-29)	SC-dp2 (69-70) SC-dp2(91-97) SC-dp2(158-165)	SC-t1(17-20) SC-t1(41-42) SC-t1(122-123) SC-t1 (144-148) SC-t1(152-156) SC-t1 (186-190) SC-t1(237-240) SC-t1(268-269)	SC-t2 (37-39) SC-t2(111-113) SC-t2 (148-158) SC-t2 (160-162) SC-t2 (196-203) SC-t2 (246-247) SC-t2 (253-258)
	<b>Ethnicity</b>	SC- E-p1 (173-174) SC-E-p1 (188)	SC-E-p2(155-161) SC-E-p2(164-167)		SC-E-dp2(137-139)	SC-E-t1(179-183) SC-E-t1(193-194)	SC-E-t2 (165-171) SC-E-t2 (173-174)
	<b>Values</b>	SC-V-p1(57-58) (61-64)	SC-V-p2 (261) SC-V-p2(275-276) SC-V-p2 (282-287)	SC-V-dp1 (191-194)	SC-V-dp2 (201-208)		SC-V-t2(268-271)
<b>Leadership style (LS)</b>		LS-p1 (22-25)	LS-p2(19-23, 36) LS-p2 (119-123) LS-p2 (257-258)	LS-dp1(12-16)	LS-dp2(17-18)	LS-t1(06-09) LS-t1(14-16)	LS-t2 (04-10) LS-t2 (16-25)
<b>Definition of EI (DEI)</b>		DEI-p1(68-72)	DEI-p2(51-54)	DEI-dp1(43-51)	DEI-dp2 (24-29)	DEI-t1(37-40)	DEI-t2 (32-33) (41-43)
<b>Emotional Intelligence skills(EIS)</b>		EIS-p1(87-89)	EIS-p2(71-80)	EIS-dp1(56-64)	EIS-dp2(36-40)	EIS-t1(70-72)	EIS-t2 (60-62)
<b>Day-to-day Practices (DPR)</b>		DPR-p1 (05-10) (14-16)	DPR-p2(04,06-12)	DPR-dp1(05-09)	DPR-dp2 (04-11)		
<b>Practices as an EI Leader (PREI)</b>		PREI-p1(102-108)	PREI-p2(96-102) PREI-p2(127-135)	PREI-dp1(33-39) PREI-dp1(80-90)	PREI-dp2(51-54) PREI-dp2(58-65)	PREI-t1(47-56) PREI-t1(77-81) PREI-t1(261-263)	PREI-t2(93-108) PREI-t2 (120-121)
	<b>Collaborative Decision-making</b>	PREI-C-p1 (36-46) PREI-C-p1 (122-130)	PREI-C-p2(232-235) PREI-C-p2(248-252)		PREI-C-dp2 (210-218)	PREI-C-t1 (24-30)	PREI-C-t2 (258-262)
	<b>Difficult Conversation</b>	PREI-D-p1(112-113)	PREI-D-p2 (109-116)	PREI-D-dp1(103-105)	PREI-D-dp2 (75-88)	PREI-D-t1 (91-101)	PREI-D-t2 (71-75) PREI-D-t2(79-86)