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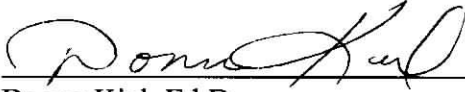
With a Concentration in Educational Leadership

by

Alicia S. Huddleston

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

June 2022

We approve the dissertation of Alicia S. Huddleston

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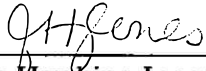
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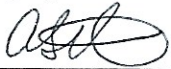
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Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation. Any assistance received in the preparation of this dissertation has been acknowledged and disclosed within it. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas, and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased, have been cited. I certify that I have prepared this dissertation according to program guidelines as directed.

Author signature _____   Date _5.5.22_

ABSTRACT

Leadership is the key determinant in the success of any organization, and leaders have an immeasurable impact on the lives and performances of those they have been entrusted to develop, support and lead. School principals are an integral part of the leadership tapestry within society and many people have been impacted by a school principal. Often enough, there are individuals who lead with or behind their title versus understanding first who they are intrinsically, and then working through those dynamics to effectively lead their own lives. When leaders are able to do this, then and only then are they equipped and qualified to assist others in effectively and ethically developing their lives. When leaders display negative and unethical interpersonal characteristics, it impacts the people within an organization. Minimal research has been conducted on how leaders, specifically school leaders' formative years have influenced who they have become as self-leaders and consequently leaders within their organization. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine how a leader's life experiences and self-knowledge influenced them as self-leaders in the areas of emotional intelligence, ethical decision making and therefore leaders in their school community. Interviews and a workshop were conducted with five school principals working in public elementary schools in the Midwest. This study used two frameworks, emotional intelligent competency, and ethical management. This research was guided by the following questions: 1) How does a leader's formative years influence self-identity and leadership of others? and 2) How does training in building of emotional intelligence and ethical management positively impact self-reported efficacy of leaders? Themes emerged from the interviews and workshop data describing the lived experiences of these participants. The themes were: 1) parental influence, 2) faith, 3) self-reflection connected to leadership, 4) mental exhaustion, 5) compromised ethics and 6) better equipped with prior knowledge. Findings

suggested one's formative years, specifically parental influence had a significant impact on adults' emotional competence and leadership ability, and pressure from school leaders' *bosses* – district office was a key factor in compromising their ethics. Also, participants believed coursework during their principal preparation program or extensive workshops as novice leaders, in self-identity, emotional competencies and ethical management would have better prepared them to lead others.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our life is a journey and is designed for others to join during different times of the adventure. This doctoral program and dissertation were truly a journey, and I am grateful many people were a part of it. There are several individuals I must acknowledge.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the brave leaders who make a conscience decision and sacrifice to develop, serve and lead students and staff. You have one of the most important roles in society. Own it with integrity.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the key determinant in the success of any organization and has held an important role in mankind since the dawn of history (Wren, 2013). Leaders have an immeasurable impact on the lives and performances of those they have been entrusted to develop, support and lead. When leaders lack, emotional intelligence interconnected with ethical management, the impact on the organization can be significantly detrimental.

Minimal research has been conducted on how leaders, specifically school leaders' formative years have influenced who they have become as self-leaders, and consequently leaders within their organization (Liu, et al., 2019). Little attention to early life influences on the development of leadership potential has also produced minimal research (Liu, et al., 2019; Murphy & Johnson, 2011). However, Tagle's (1981) seminal work along with other researchers have pointed to the significance of a parent's role in a child's formative years.

Tagle (1981) suggested it is within the family that personality, character, emotions, attitudes, values, and opinions are formed. Medina (2001) noted, the family plays an important role in the transmission of cultural values, beliefs, and customs, in molding the personality and character of its members, and in ensuring conformity to norms. The family has the most influence on the child since they are the ones which the child is more connected with. For this reason, a sense of responsibility among parents must be seen in regards to child formation (Gozum, 2019) and parents must be made aware of their responsibility to form, develop their children (Gozum, & Sarmiento, 2021). Since parents are the ones who first develop and cultivate a child beliefs and personality, parents have certain formative influences on one's moral development and have a huge role in character education (Sanderse, 2013).

It has been suggested that adolescence is the most critical stage for learning and practicing the complicated skills and competencies essential for leaders. One's behavior, personality, and skills are more malleable during the sensitive period of adolescence than in adult-hood (Liu, et al., 2019; Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Thus, the ability for leaders to effectively develop others to reach their highest potential is exemplified when leaders possess intrinsic awareness and understanding of who they have become. Without emotionally intelligent leaders who are ethical, people are left to their own devices. Emotionally intelligent leaders perceive and express emotions accurately and adaptively in themselves and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). However, characteristics of self-confidence, assertiveness, influence, and achievement without the good values to temper them regress to high-ego, aggression, manipulation, ruthlessness, and an obsession for total control (Knights, 2016) projecting abusive behavior toward others (Nevicka et al., 2018).

Broadly defined, leadership is an art, of bringing together like-minded people to work toward *shared aspirations* (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Ledezman (2003) posits that emotional competence is vital for leadership to be effective. Leadership is an interpersonal dynamic process, and consequently, leaders will fail if they cannot drive emotions in the right direction (accurately and ethically), whether their own or those of their followers. Succinctly put, some leaders have not handled themselves appropriately and consequently, their relationship with others (Kets deVries, 2014).

School principals are an integral part of the leadership tapestry within society and many people have been impacted by a school principal. Schools are successful in impacting others in part because principals communicate their expectations of high performance. More importantly, these effective principals are a frequent presence in classrooms interacting with both teachers

and students (Cotton, 2003). This research examines how school leaders in this study have prepared themselves to take on such a phenomenon of leading others. Additionally, participants lived experiences shed light on what has assisted them in leading the web of complex institutions that have become so vital to the collective health of modern societies (Nohria & Khurana, 2013). This study informs how a person's identity or perceived identity (metacognition and neuroscience), emotional intelligence, and ethical management impacts self-leadership and leadership within school organizations. This study also sheds light on how parents are key factors in the evolution of adult leaders.

Definitions

Key terms used in this research include:

Formative years. Early childhood between 0-8 years where rapid cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development occurs (Onuoha, 2019; Tierney & Nelson, 2009). These years can be extended to the early elementary years (The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015).

Self-identity. Self-identity has taken on several meanings throughout society but for the purpose of this study, two meanings have been joined. Berzonsky (1994) posited that self-identity is grounded in self-attributes including one's personal values, goals, self-knowledge, and unique psychological state. Bailey (2003) states, self-identity is an organized collection of beliefs and feelings about oneself as, one's sense of me. Self-identity in this study is one's belief therefore actions based on their personal values and self-knowledge.

Neuroscience. An interdisciplinary science that focuses on the brain and its impact on behavior and cognitive functions, or how people think. Neuroscience connects cognitive- behavioral outcomes with underlying neural systems (Reuter- Lorenz, et al., 2010).

Limbic System. A collection of structures involved in processing emotion and memory, including the hippocampus, amygdala, and the hypothalamus (Evans, 2021).

Psychodynamics. The psychology of mental or emotional processes developing especially in early childhood and their effect on behavior and mental states (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Emotional Intelligence. As defined by Mayer and Salovey (1990) emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive and express emotion accurately and adaptively, to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, to use feelings to facilitate thought, and have the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and others.

Ethical Management. An individual, manager, or leaders' ethical behavior in their immediate area of managerial influence (Laasch & Conaway, 2015).

Traumatic Experiences. An individual who experienced or witnessed physical, mental, or emotional injury; events experienced with intense fear or helplessness (May & Wisco, 2016).

Perseverance. Continuance effort, in a diligent manner, to carry out a goal while overcoming difficulties, obstacles or discouragement (Middleton, et al., 2015).

Problem Statement

Almost everyone in the workforce has had the experience of working with a manager or colleague who lacked empathy, resiliency, self-confidence, emotional self-control, adaptability, the ability to work well in a team, exude narcissist traits or displayed unethical practices. These competencies, among others, are important to an individual's success and to the success of teams and organizations (Ledezma, 2003). When leaders have not done the work on themselves intrinsically, they are susceptible to, "leaving their followers worse off than they found them by undermining demeaning, or intimidating them" (Burns, 2017, p. 40).

A leader's behavior influences their leadership practices. For example, leaders who initially charm, but ultimately manipulate, mistreat, and undermine their followers engage in a wide range of destructive behaviors (Burns, 2017). When leaders display negative interpersonal characteristics, such as a lack of empathy, exploitative-ness, a sense of entitlement, antagonism, and egocentrism

(Sedikides & Campbell, 2017) it will lead to abuse of power and adversely impact those they lead (Nevicka et al., 2018).

Often enough, there are individuals who lead with or behind their title versus understanding first who they are intrinsically, and then working through those dynamics to effectively lead their own lives. When leaders are able to do this, then and only then are they equipped and qualified to assist others in effectively and ethically developing their lives. This study addresses this phenomenon and offers support in assisting leaders, specifically school principals on understanding their self-identity and how this discovery can reshape how they leadto avoid abuse of power or timidity which adversely impacts those they have been entrusted to lead.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how a leader's life experiences and self-knowledge has influenced them as self-leaders in the areas of emotional intelligence and ethical decision making and therefore leaders within their own organization. Self-leadership has been defined by some researchers as a self-influence process by which people achieve self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform (Neck et al., 2019; Neck & Houghton 2006), or the process of influencing one's self (Goldsby, et al., 2021). Also, this study's purpose is for leaders to understand the complexities of their personal identity and successfully lead themselves emotionally and ethically because, "people need leaders who are able to, motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; control impulses and delay unhealthy gratification; regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping their ability to think" (Goleman, 1995, p. 34) in order for others to confidently follow. Lastly, the purpose of this study is to examine whether training in self-reflection through scientific factors, Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Competency Framework (1998), and Aviva Geva's Ethical Management Framework (2006) can positively influence a leader's self-reported increase in efficacy and leadership impact.

Research Question

Effective and ethical leaders are those who develop a range of emotional intelligent competencies, can assess situations appropriately, make sound choices about what is most needed by individuals and the group in a multitude of situations, and then deliver (Dearborn, 2002). In order for leaders to make sound choices for others, they must first be keenly aware of what guides their choices and why. Research questions were formulated to examine this phenomenon.

In this study, the researcher has chosen to explicate how the terms *influence* and *impact* have been used in the research question and sub-question. In previous studies, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) has been used to investigate *impact* related to a particular phenomenon. For example, Jarman et al., (2005) studied how HIV impacts personal relationships. Montanye (2017) further explained, in qualitative research the word *impact* is generally not intended to demonstrate causality. Instead, it refers to data generated from participants who freely express testimony in their own words and how they perceive how they have been affected by a particular phenomenon (i.e., a health condition, natural disaster, changing economy). This process can result in participants speaking of multiple or complex *influences* involving a particular phenomenon. Therefore, *impact* and *influence* references a participant's own truths regarding their experiences (Montanye, 2017). Thus, the terms *influence* and *impact* in this study's research question and sub-question focuses on how participants feel and believe their lived experiences have indeed affected who they have become as adults and leaders. For example, participants shared how their parent's parenting and emotional competenceguided their parenting and left an imprint on their emotional well-being as adults. This study is guided by the following research question and sub-question.

Research Question

      1. How does a leader's formative years influence self-identity and leadership of others?

Sub-Question

      a. How does training in building of emotional intelligence and ethical management positively impact self-reported efficacy of leaders?

Overview of Methodology and Rationale

      This research used a phenomenological approach to better understand the lived experiences of the participants – school leaders. Phenomenology is a philosophy of experiences. For phenomenology the ultimate source of all meaning and value is the lived experience of human beings (Armstrong, 2005). In a broader sense, phenomenology is the study of how people experience the world and are conscious of that experience (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology, a method for qualitative research, seeks to understand a phenomenon versus generalizing a finding (Creswell, 2012). Padgett (2016) posited that the Phenomenological Analysis (PA) approach focuses on deeper meanings achieved by prolonged immersion, that is, capturing the lived experience of individuals.

      This study, focuses on school leaders' life experiences from their formative years to present, capturing their lived experiences and studying how these experiences have influence them in leading their lives and consequently leading others within their schools. Additionally, analyses of the phenomenological interview data were conducted to find the essence or commonthemes in their experiences. It explored not only what participants experienced but also the situations and conditions surrounding those experiences (Padgett, 2016). However to avoid biases, bracketing was essential.

      Bracketing is a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potential harmful effects of preconceptions related to the research and to increase the rigor of the project (Tufford & Newman, 2012) and to put aside one's pre-existing assumptions (Wilson, 2015). Furthermore, bracketing facilitates the researcher in reaching deeper levels of reflection across all stages of

qualitative research: selecting a topic and population, designing the interview, collecting, and interpreting data, and reporting findings. Additionally, bracketing offers an opportunity for sustained in-depth reflection that may enhance the acuity of the research and facilitate more profound and multifaceted analysis and results (Tufford & Newman, 2012). In this study, the researcher used this method to assist in mitigating preconceived notions because of her experience as a school leader.

Significance of Study

Kets de Vries and Engellau, (2010) suggested leaders are who they are, and lead the way they lead, due to their early development and people are to be understood at their psychological and emotional levels. They continue by noting, some seem to subscribe to the myth that it is only the conscious, what we see and know that matters. However, the fact is the most important things in life are invisible (Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2010).

In capturing the deeper meaning of leaders' formative years, intrinsic design, emotional intelligence competencies, and ethical management, this research is significant and contributes to the field of leadership because it assists school leaders in "explicating [their] experiences that may be familiar and yet not well understood" (Wilson, 2015, p. 41) which leads to understanding the *why* on how they lead. Although prior research has focused on leadership development in the areas of emotional intelligence and ethical management, this research further contributes to the current field of leadership by incorporating a comprehensive workshop essential to this study. The workshop offered intriguing and researched based insight on self-identity (formative years, neuroscience, and metacognition) and connected it with a leader's current emotional competencies, and ethical management while offering practical strategies in communication and balanced living. Furthermore, this research is significant because it offers guidance for individuals, institutions and organizations who desire to effectively develop prospective leaders and transform current leaders from the inside out.

Role of the Researcher/Positionality

During my leadership role in schools, I gradually realized the impact my parents had in developing my values, character, self and social-awareness during my formative years. Also, how they assisted in navigating me through understanding my emotions and connecting it with my behavior. Their parenting greatly influenced my reflexivity and overall self-development and school leadership ability.

I was raised in a two-parent home with five siblings and gratefully, my parents are still happily married after fifty-five years. My first experience of seeing effective and consistent leaders were in my parents as they led our home and church community. Although I grew up under authoritarian parenting, my parent's communicative style was assertive, not aggressive as some might suggest with authoritarian parenting. I understood my parents' direct decision making created a safe environment for me and my siblings. In creating an atmosphere of assertiveness for me and my siblings, I was encouraged to be honest but respectful with my parents on how I felt and was able to share what I was going through in various seasons of my life. Within my home, although not perfect, I had an up-close view on how influential leadershiptransformed the lives of others. However, I would later realize how this phenomenon caused meto be critical of other leaders until I became a school leader.

In my first leadership role, as an assistant principal, there were times when I led behind and with my title. Eventually, I committed to doing intense work from the inside out that allowed me to authentically reflect on beliefs that conjured unwarranted behaviors. This journey of reflexivity allowed me to pursue ethical and emotionally competent behaviors in facets of my personal life and professional leadership which undoubtedly became quite rewarding.

As my career in leadership continued, I encountered *seasoned* leaders who were educational visionaries, competent in curriculum and instruction, assessment experts, able to meet data goals and eloquent orators but lacked self and social awareness, empathy, morals, and ethics. I discovered most of these leaders often looked outwardly - at others versus examining

the why behind their emotional and unethical actions. Through these observations, I realized many leaders did not have parents who walked them through discovering who they were intrinsically – their beliefs, values, neuro design and so forth or received this critical and necessary support as adults.

As a result, along with this phenomenological study, I designed and implemented a leadership workshop. Experiences as a school leader and responses from the participants' interviews informed this workshop. The workshop was imperative to this study because it propelled leaders to focus on their self-identity and discover who they were intrinsically and thus leaders within their schools.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher shares what previous and current researchers have studied and noted about the theories and frameworks used in this study and the various constructs. This chapter is organized in sections according to the topics in this study – emotional intelligence, ethical management, identity, formative years, metacognition, and neuroscience with additional topics covered in the leader's workshop: communicative styles, and a leader's balanced life. Each major topic begins with a heading, or subheading and an introductory paragraph explaining why the topic was explored in relation to the overall research topic. The researcher provides an overview of existing literature related to the topic and synthesizes existing literature, examines the contributions of literature related to the topic, concludes with a summation discussing gaps in the literature and offers an argument for the need of this study.

There is an abundance of literature cited throughout this study, that speaks about one's identity, formative years, neuroscience, metacognition, and leadership. However a well-developed theory, therefore a study that combines the constructs of self-identity as defined in this study (i.e., neuroscience, metacognition, and psychodynamics) with emotional intelligence and ethical management and how these constructs impact the way a person has led their lives and consequently others in their organization is non-existent. Past and current research discuss leaders' emotional competency (Dearborn, 2002; Martinez, 2006) and ones' formative years (Lingiardi, et al., 2015) impact on leadership but there is no current study or leadership training program that allow leaders to analyze and understand how ones' formative years, neuroanatomy, specifically the limbic system, and the process of metacognition, influences emotional intelligent competencies and choices - ethically or unethically.

In this first section, the researcher identifies and gives research references on the theories and frameworks that provide the foundation for this research study. These theories and frameworks also justify the phenomenon being investigated and how the research question align with the theories. The subsequent sections in this chapter provides additional literature on

constructs that underpin this study – *identity*, *formative years/psychodynamics*, *neuroscience*, *metacognition*, and *leadership*.

Theoretical Frameworks

A theoretical framework is the *blueprint* for the entire dissertation inquiry. It is the guide on which to build and support a study, and provides the structure to define how a researcher will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole (Grant & Osanloo, 2016). It is a benchmark to assess whether or not good work, meaning significant contribution to previous and current research, is being done (Brookfield, 2010).

Relying on two formal theories, emotional intelligence by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and deontological theory of ethical management by Bowen (2004) two frameworks were created. The theoretical frameworks guiding this study is: emotional intelligence competencies by Goleman (1998) and ethical management by Geva (2006). Both frameworks were used in constructing interview questions for participants in this study. For example, questions regarding emotional intelligence were garnered from the four domains – *self* and *social awareness*, and *self* and *relationship management*. Adding the ethical management framework was critical because emotional intelligence can be void of ethics, and fuel manipulative or inappropriate behavior, and or decision making (Segon & Booth, 2015). In order to minimize the scope of data collected, these frameworks were utilized to focus on key themes to effectively analyze and interpret the data that aligns to or challenges the domains within each framework.

Emotional Intelligence

According to the seminal work of Mayer and Salovey (1990), emotional intelligence is a persons' capability to perceive, express, understand, use, and manage emotions in oneself (personal intelligence) and in others' (social intelligence) which lead to adaptive behavior. The term emotion indicates affective component while intelligence indicates cognitive component (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019). They suggested intellect and emotional intelligence are different and

in fact use different parts of the brain. They carried out comprehensive tests to establish the validity of emotional intelligence based on the theoretical concept of emotion and a definition of intelligence (Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Smith, & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). In both seminal work, Mayer and Salovey (1990) proposed that emotional intelligence refers to a person's basic underlying capability to recognize and use emotion and Goleman (1998) proposed that emotional competencies are learned competencies or skills based on emotional intelligence with the explicit focus on the word learned, i.e., it is possible to develop emotional competencies (Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Smith, & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020).

To give some historical context, Fiori and Maillefer (2018) noted the definition of emotional intelligence was heavily influenced by early work focused on describing, defining, and assessing socially competent behavior such as social intelligence (Thorndike, 1920). They continue by noting that the attempt to understand social intelligence led to further inquiries by theorists such as Gardner (1983) and Sternberg (1988), who proposed more inclusive approaches to understanding general intelligence (Fiori & Maillefer, 2018). Gardner's concepts of intrapersonal intelligence, namely, the ability to know one's emotions, and interpersonal intelligence, which is the ability to understand other individuals' emotions and intentions, aided in the development of later models in which emotional intelligence was originally introduced as a subset of social intelligence (Fiori & Maillefer, 2018; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Salovey and Mayer's (1990) psychological theory first introduced this theory with three main goals: "to provide a model for the way in which reason and emotion interacted; to develop a framework that unified rapidly growing research on emotion at the physiological, cognitive and social levels; and to develop a theory of individual differences in emotional competencies" (Salovey & Pizarro, 2003 p. 265). Although all goals were significant, the latter seemed to resonate with the public.

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills that are thought to contribute to the appraisal of emotions in oneself and others. It can also help contribute to the effective regulation of emotions

as well as feelings (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Popularized by the publication of

Goleman's emotional intelligence book this concept became much more widely recognized.

While not everyone agrees with the idea of Goleman's model of emotional intelligence, there is

general agreement that does exist, and it is a factor that comes into play in terms of professional

and personal success (Riopel, 2021) which is outlined in Goleman's framework focusing on

personal and social competencies.

Similar to logical and rational thinking, emotional thinking can give another source of

information that guides behavior. Salovey (2004) noted that emotional intelligence is the ability

to monitor your own feelings, the feelings of other people, figure out what they are, discriminate

among them, but most importantly, use this information to guide thinking and action. Although

this concept can be extremely beneficial, it can equally have an adverse effect within emotionally

competent but unethical leaders.

Emotions are complex, episodic, dynamic, and structured. They are complex because of

the varied elements such as thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and episodes of emotion experience.

It is a feature of these various elements that can come and go over time in a dynamic and

episodic manner (Eatough & Smith, 2006). One way of understanding emotion experience is to

attempt to capture it from the personal point of view because emotions and emotion experience

are always embedded in a person's narrative (Eatough & Smith, 2006). Expressing emotions is a

skill of emotional intelligence. How we express our emotions can depend on our personality; our

level of comfort with different emotions; our social norms; and larger cultural or religious rules

around when, where, and with whom we express emotions (Brackett & Simmons, 2015).

Understanding emotion experience necessitates comprehending feelings – they tell us

about an emotion from the perspective of the person who is having that emotion. Emotions

become intelligible when we consider them from the personal perspective (Eatough & Smith,

2006). Emotion experiences are often world-focused rather than self-focused – they are directed

outwards toward the world, and the people, events and objects that make up that world. These

comments indicate that a more holistic approach to understanding emotion experience is required, one which focuses on the embodied person who is world-involved (Moran, 2000).

People who have a clearer understanding of their emotions and are better able to identify and discriminate affective states should be able to make use of regulatory strategies more effectively and in turn experience fewer negative reactions to distressing thoughts (Abeyta, et al., 2015). As a result of these regulatory strategies, individuals become more trusting and willing to follow a leader who is competent in managing their own emotions. According to research, there is a great need for leaders to develop in the area of emotional intelligence competency. Keith (2009) noted research suggests the presence or absence of emotional intelligence competencies and the ability to manage them is what distinguishes effective influential leaders from ineffective ones. Therefore, the ability for a person to demonstrate intelligent use of their emotions in managing themselves and working with others to be effective at work is indispensable (Goleman, 1998).

Emotions are not just something we feel; they are a source of information. With emotional information, leaders can build trust and cooperation, display empathy to employees, display social awareness, develop collaboration, and display skill in addressing issues and solving problems (George, 2003). Emotions provide information that guide action and cognitions (Schwarz & Clore, 2007). These emotions include feedback on the significance of personal beliefs, aspirations, and behaviors (Epstein, 2003).

Although emotions begin intrinsically, others are able to see our emotions because it, involve changes to the body (e.g., facial expression), changes in autonomic nervous system activity, feeling states (subjective responses), and urges to act in specific ways – motivations (Izard, 2010). Managing disappointments felt when plans do not work out or managing anger when negative feedback, is given (Brackett, 2017) is key to self-regulations.

In summation, emotions are the driver of much of our health; strong feelings, especially unpleasant ones, and can lead to anxiety and depression. If leaders don't have strategies to manage

intense emotional experiences, their mental and physical health tends to decline (Brackett, 2017) and those who work with them can experience the same affects.

Emotional Intelligence Competency Framework

Goleman (1995, 1998) popularized the field of emotional intelligence when he adapted Mayer and Salovey's model, focusing on emotional intelligence as an array of competencies grouped around the management of our own feelings and our relationships with others (Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Smith, & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). Many individuals believed emotional intelligence was another way of being considered smart (Goleman, 1995). With this burgeoning emotional intelligence research, a framework was constructed. Goleman (1998) decided to develop this framework of emotional intelligence competence to reflect how an individual's potential for mastering the skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management translated into on-the-job success. As Goleman (1998) defines it, an emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work.

He further suggested it is not innate talents which uniquely contributes to making leaders more resonant, therefore more effective (Riopel, 2021). This reality of *learned abilities* is central, because some individuals did not experience caregivers modeling these competencies in their formative years and beyond but are able to develop them nonetheless. *Table 1* depicts the various competencies and skills of emotional intelligence. The competencies are grouped by recognition and management of one's feelings and relationship with others.

Table 1

Emotional Intelligence Framework

Recognition	Regulation
Self-Awareness (Personal Competence) • Self-confidence • Awareness of your emotional state • Recognizing how your behavior impacts others • Paying attention to how others influence your emotional state	**Self-Management (Personal Competence)** • Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check • Acting in congruence with your values • Handling change flexibly • Pursuing goals and opportunities despite obstacles and setbacks
Social Awareness (Social Competence) • Picking up on the mood in the room • Caring what others are going through • Hearing what the other person is "really" saying	**Relationship Management (Social Competence)** • Getting along well with others • Handling conflict effectively • Clearly expressing ideas/information • Using sensitivity to another person's feeling (empathy) to manage interaction successfully.

This fr

amework is essential to this study because it assisted participants in critically analyzing, and understanding their emotions and the emotions of others while asking self- reflective questions in order to strengthen or create a more cohesive and collaborative working environment within their organization. Although this framework can be measured in categories of *ability emotional intelligence* – competent decision makers, problem solvers and negotiators; *trait emotional intelligence* – behavioral tendencies, emotional self-efficacy and coping styles; and *mixed emotional intelligence* – measures traits, social skills, and competencies (O'Connor etal., 2019) the focus of this study was for leaders to analyze their personal and social competencies during the workshop and dialogue with other leaders about scenarios which highlighted these competencies or scenarios that shed light on areas of growth in particular domains of competencies.

This framework is a great tool for leaders to quickly identify areas of self and social competency however, it only focuses on one aspect of bridging the gap between identity and leadership. This framework does not address *how* leaders can become competent in these areas and how it connects with being an ethical person and leader, that is, not focus on performance base and neglect ethical choices and behavior. Carruso and Salovey (2004) posited that a manager leader who is an expert in only managing emotions can manipulate employees.

Ethical Management

People engage in unethical actions on a daily basis, much more often than they care to admit (Gino et al., 2009; Jordan & Tenbrunsel, 2015; Shalvi et al., 2011). At the same time, they strive to maintain a positive self-concept both privately and publicly (Adler, 2006; Jordan & Tenbrunsel, 2015). In fact, people wish to view themselves as moral beings (Dunning, 2007; Jordan & Tenbrunsel, 2015; Monin & Jordan, 2009) and take steps to maintain this belief when they behave immorally.

The proof of a responsible organization is the behavior and the example set by the leader. Ethical management implies that leaders need to display ethical leadership (Paine, 1994) and to make ethically sound decisions (Dávila-Gómez & Patiño, 2012). Ethical management is critical for all leaders to embody because it "serves a role-model function" (Laasch & Conaway, 2015 p. 140) and positively affects organizational performance (Kalshoven et al., 2011).

Moral judgment reflects a person's underlying organization of thinking about matters of right and wrong (Geva, 2006). Moral judgment speaks to the process of metacognition. This framework, initially developed as a typology of moral problems in business, was based on two fundamental dimensions of ethical conduct: judgment and motivation. It is both used as an analytical tool for identifying and clarifying the ethical problem (e.g., genuine ethical dilemmas, no-problem problems, moral laxity, and compliance problems) in a situation and as a strategic tool for handling it. It asks the question, 'Is there a conflict of goals or values?' It is an evaluation of right and wrong, good, and bad, virtue and vice (See Table 2). It was also developed to have a strategy that would consider the relationships among different types of ethical problems and calls attention to the need to go beyond the problem at hand and direct a dynamic ethical strategy (Geva, 2006). *Table 2* outlines ethical problems and identifies a person's motivational level based on their moral judgment.

Table 2

Ethical Management Framework

Moral Judgment *Motivation is high*	Moral Judgment *Motivation is low*
Genuine Ethical Dilemmas Unsure as to what one ought to do, but has the will and ability to do what is right	Moral laxity Acknowledges a general moral duty but given there is a range of ways to fulfill this duty is unsure on exactly what should be done and fails to take serious steps toward this moral duty.
No-problem problems One knows what the moral obligations are, and has the will and the ability to fulfill them. Although there is no actual problem here in terms of moral judgment or motivation, one still considers how to improve the chances of acting ethically.	Compliance problems One knows what the moral obligations are, but experience difficulty in fulfilling them

A primary outcome relevant to effective ethics management is moral awareness and the core of moral awareness is recognizing the existence of a moral problem in a situation (Geva, 2006). Moral issues rarely come equipped with *red flags* identifying them as moral, and as a result the ethical component of a decision may not be apparent to the decision maker (Butterfield et al., 2000). Responsible management practice calls for ethically sound and morally desirable decision-making processes, with the aim of achieving moral excellence (Laasch & Conaway, 2015) and it is critical for leaders to have an ethical management framework that can guide them through ethical processes and decision making. The heightened emphasis on moral awareness in organizations (Goodpaster, 2000) dictates the need to categorize the wide gamut of ethical problems that people on all levels, from employees to leaders, may face in their daily organizational lives. It is not far-fetched to conceive that many leaders have encountered

dilemmas in their decision-making process. Having the right knowledge along with the right skill-set to implement the right decision includes a leader's moral and ethical compass. As leaders face moral dilemmas in which the principal difficulty is to discover what one ought to do when facing a choice between non-overriding conflicting moral requirements (loyalty vs. honesty) or between non-overriding conflicting interests (to fire one of two devoted employees), (Badaracco, 1997; Nash, 1990) an outcome for effective management is moral awareness which is the first step in ethical decision making-process (Butterfield et al., 2000).

Ethical Leadership

Some leaders seemingly display areas of emotional competencies but lack ethical management as evidenced by patterns of their unethical decision-making and actions. These individuals have the capacity to demonstrate self-awareness of emotions, manage emotions, be highly aware of others' emotions and manage relationships with great skill, yet may be morally bankrupt in the purpose in which they develop relationships and the way they behave toward others (Segon & Booth, 2015). In many instances, some leaders display highly unethical behaviors in a leadership style that appears to remain consistent with a competent management profile (Babiak, et al., 2010).

For example, Bernard L. Madoff, a securities broker who conducted the biggest Ponzi scheme in history (Ortner, 2019) was a quiet-spoken, low-key guy who made you feel like you were the smartest person in the room (Henriques, 2018). Madoff in particular was noted for social awareness, displaying considerable competence to sense others' feeling and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns (Segon & Booth, 2015). Madoff was highly skilled in controlling his emotions not to display any stress and was an effective reader of others' emotions with the ability to make others the center of attention in social interactions (Henriques,

2011). He worked a lot of his unethical game through his own Jewish community and swindled many individuals, foundations, charities, and educational institutions (Henriques, 2018). Making note of Madoff is key because he is a prime example of an individual who was emotionally intelligent – socially aware but profoundly unethical. His unethical practices, literally destroyed the lives of people around the world; two investors, a French money manager and a retired British military officer who committed suicide, and on the second anniversary of Madoff's arrest, his elder son also committed suicide (Henriques, 2018).

Ethical leadership according to Bass and Bass (2008) involves, "the character of a leader, his or her ethical and moral beliefs, intentions, and behaviors" (p. 219). They further suggest that leader character is linked to virtuous traits such as integrity, justice, and fairness. However, character is necessary but not sufficient for effective leadership (Avolio & Hannah, 2011). Competency in skill-set is also critical for effective leadership. Leadership personality and leader emergence is a function of both hereditary influences and life experiences, suggesting it can be developed (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, & Kruger, 2007). Wright and Quick (2011) suggested character are parallel to morally-based values. Velasquez (2010) suggested ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues; and ethics is the continuous effort of studying one's moral beliefs, moral conduct, and striving to ensure the institutions we help shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based. In summation, character is who we are when no one is watching.

Kanungo and Mendonca (1998) posited that a leader's ethical conduct guided by moral principles and integrity gives legitimacy and credibility to the vision of the organization. Without ethical leadership, the organization is a structure without a soul (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1998).

Resnik (2016) says, the most common way of defining ethics is: norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior and, all people recognize some common ethical norms but interpret, apply, and balance them in different ways in light of their own values and life experiences.

Babiak and Hare (2006) coined the phrase *corporate psychopath* and is described as one who is a very effective reader of others and able to influence them to engage in corrupt or unethical practices. Moore (2008) and Stevens (2012) suggested a corporate psychopath suffers from moral disengagement. The *corporate psychopath* may display many of the emotional intelligent competencies described by Goleman and yet act unethical as evidence by Madoff (Babiak & Hare, 2006).

The importance of this framework assists in developing ethical awareness and accountability not only in the conventional areas of compliance and genuine dilemmas, but also in neglected areas such as moral laxity and ethics institutionalization, which are often excluded from the territory of management accountability (Geva, 2006). This framework was used for leaders to identify goals of ethical management in order to successfully navigate through the four types of ethical/moral problems: genuine ethical dilemmas, compliance problems, moral laxity, and no-problem problems. This framework was also used to bring awareness to leaders in understanding how to navigate moral reasoning and effective decision making within their schools in a timely manner.

Identity

Most have heard the Greek philosophical adage - to thine own self be true. In order for leaders to understand how to lead other adults effectively and appropriately, understanding the intricacies of oneself is paramount to achieving the phenomenon of effective leadership. As

noted by Kolzow (2014) it is important for leaders to know the words or situations that will trigger their emotional response. In other words, having the ability to be honest and reflective about ones' own emotions and life experiences is essential in assisting others in identifying their truth. Vignoles (2011) suggested self-identities can be considered as mental representation individuals hold about who they are, which include autobiographical memories, self-attributions, beliefs, motivations, recurrent thoughts, emotions, and self-perceptions. He concludes that these narratives are constantly constructed and revised. Verplanken and Sui (2019) argue true self identity is what a person considers as one's authentic core and is experienced as inherently moral and good. Although the true self-identity is in essence a belief a person holds about oneself and may thus be false or distorted, it has consequences for a person's cognitive and social functioning. For example, it has been reported that unfavorable self-related events are more likely to be forgotten (Hu, et al., 2015). More specifically, Hu et al., found people can consciously suppress unwanted memories, which influence people's behavior in a less conscious, more automatic manner than they would if they had not been suppressed. Not only can people suppress neural activity underlying retrieval of sensorimotor-rich memories, but also this suppression limits subsequent automatic influences of these memories.

Other researchers have studied how individuals identify who they have become and if identity changes are necessary. Human beings possess a motivation to self-verify – that is, to seek out and accept input from others that confirms their already formed view of self (Kwang & Swann, 2010). As such, self-verification processes promote personality stability over time. Sometimes, people take stock of themselves and decide they need to change. Their self-determined plans and activities may indeed result in change in personality traits, albeit usually modest change (Hennecke et al., 2014; Wrzus & Roberts, 2017). Expounding on this finding,

people's personality showed continuity and at the same time it changed throughout adulthood, often in relation to specific life experiences and transitions (Wrzus & Roberts, 2021). For example, Wrzus and Roberts, found emotional stability increased over the course of four years when young adults entered a romantic relationship for the first time, but not when they remained singled. The prevailing explanations of such patterns of development often refer to experiences in daily life that evoke long-term change in personality over time (Lehnart et al., 2010; Wrzus and Roberts, 2021).

Normative mean level changes in traits over the course of an adult's life (such as increases in conscientiousness and agreeableness and declines in neuroticism) are often tied to identity commitments around work and family roles. Those identity commitments may help to create stable environments going forward that, in turn, promote temporal stability in traits (McAdams, et al., 2021). To expound further, (Lilgendahl, et al., 2013 & McAdams, et al., 2021) noted, how the stories people created regarding continuity and change in their lives, moreover, appeared to influence their personality development. For example, adults who process negative life events in especially deep and probing ways tend to show increases in personality maturity in subsequent years.

Formative Years

Everyone has a past and has been shaped by it. According to Freud's (1920) foundational theory on psychodynamics, personality forms during the first few years of life and the ways in which parents or other caregivers interact with children have a long-lasting impact on children's emotional state. Perry (2004) states early life experiences determine how genetic potential is expressed or not. Heavily influenced by caregivers, the amount of attunement and adaptive functionality in one's early environment either lead to the use of primitive defenses (e.g., denial)

or facilitate the later use of mature defensive processes (e.g., sublimation) (Lingiardi et al., 2015). Freud (1920) emphasized the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping personality and behavior. Freud (1920) notes that the type of parenting a child receives has a very powerful impact on the child's personality development. The biological gift that makes early childhood a time of great opportunity also make children very vulnerable to negative experiences such as: inappropriate or abusive caregiving, a lack of nurturing, chaotic, cognitively, and relationally impoverished environments, unpredictable stress or persisting fear (Perry, 2004).

The seminal work by Scarr and McCartney (1983) states that the influences of the family environment on children's behavior are complicated by the fact that parents provide their offspring with both the family environment and genes, leading to intertwined effects and possible gene–environment correlation. Family studies have shown that the rearing environment is subject to genetic influence (de Zeeuw, et al., 2020; Vinkhuyzen et al., 2010). Ignoring genetic influences in studying the rearing environment can lead to erroneous inference concerning the role of the environment (Hart et al., 2019). In this research, Hart and colleagues shared one type of rearing environment, *passive gene–environment correlation.* This environment described the association between the genotype, an individual's complete heritable information, what a child inherits from their parents and the environment the child is raised in. It is important to note what children inherit is not solely due to environmental transmissions. To further delineate Hart's findings, genes influence both the rearing environment a child receives as well as the child's own traits, via genetic transmission from parents to child.

Lingiardi et al., (2015) suggested, depending on the environment, personality develops differently. Functional environments lead to healthy personality structures, while dysfunctional

environments are associated with neurotic, borderline, or psychotic personality structures. In their study, they discovered, increasing evidence, that both mental health and psychopathology involve many subtle features of human functioning, including, regulation and expression; coping strategies and defenses; capacities for understanding self and others; and quality of relationships. They conclude, by saying mounting evidence from neuroscience and developmental studies support the position that mental functioning, whether optimal or compromised, is highly complex (Lingiardi et al., 2015).

Although there is minimal research on how a person's formative years have impacted who they have become as self-leaders and consequently leaders within their organization, some research has demonstrated that childhood experiences affect individual health in adulthood (Daines, et al., 2021). For example, individuals who experience numerous adverse childhood experiences early in their childhood are at risk for developing depression, anxiety, substance abuse habits, and detrimental health behaviors as they mature into adulthood (Chartier, et al., 2010). However, there is literature that addresses a child's resilience that allows them to overcome trauma and thrive as an effective person in society.

Resiliency has been defined as, positive developmental outcomes in the face of adversity or stress in children who come from harsh backgrounds and yet develop without damaging emotional scars (Gartland, D. et al., 2019; O'Grady & Metz, 1987). They note resilience as a multidimensional construct that may vary across domains. To give context, in Gartland et al., (2019) they discussed how a significant number of children are exposed to adversities in childhood. The researchers found, one in eight adults reported childhood sexual abuse, and one in four reported physical abuse. They highlighted how positive outcomes in a single domain may mask negative outcomes in some areas. Conversely, while adversity and trauma will impact

the mental health of all exposed children to some degree, they may exhibit resilience in other domains such as academic or behavioral.

Additional research suggested, resilience of a developing person is not circumscribed within the body and mind of that individual. And, the capacity of an individual to adapt to challenges depends on their connections to other people and systems external to the individual through relationships and other processes (Masten & Barnes, 2018). Masten and Barnes (2018) continued, by positing, human individuals have so much capacity for adaptation to adversity in part because their resilience depends on many interacting systems that co-evolved in biological and cultural evolution, conferring adaptive advantages. Moreover, they found children are often protected by multiple *back-up* systems, particularly embedded in their relationships with other people in their homes and communities. Therefore, a child's ability to persevere through and overcome challenging home life experiences are possible and greatly depends on immersion into a healthy environment such as school.

Neuroscience

Neuroscience is an interdisciplinary science where neuroscientists focus on the brain and its impact on behavior and cognitive functions, or how people think. Neuroscience is important because it affects, if not all, human functions, specifically, behavioral neuroscience which focuses on how the brain affects behavior (Reuter-Lorenz, et al., 2010). Coined by brain scientist Gazzaniga and Miller (1976), cognitive neuroscience is the field that, connects cognitive-behavioral outcomes with underlying neural systems (Reuter- Lorenz, et al., 2010).

The amazing complex neural systems in our brain, which determine who we become, are shaped early and the human brain mediates our movements, our senses, our thinking, feeling, and behaving (Perry, 2004). Brain growth and development is front loaded such that by age four, a

child's brain is 90% adult size. In a nurturing environment, a child can grow to achieve the full

potential pre-ordained by underlying genetics (Perry, 2004).

In all environments, both children and adults rely on connections with other people to

determine their moods. A person's mood affects the emotions of the people around them. The

reason for this lies in the open-loop nature of the limbic system – a complex system of nerves and

networks in the brain that controls the basic emotions (Paninchukunnath, 2008). The limbic system

is comprised of the: *frontal lobe* - voluntary movement, expressive language, *thalamus* - relays

motor and sensory signals to the cerebral cortex (frontal lobe), *hippocampus* – memory, *amygdala*

– responsible for emotional responses (happy, fear, anger & anxiety); works with the hippocampus

by attaching emotions to memory, *hypothalamus* – maintains a steady internal state and the

olfactory bulb – involves smell and odor processed (Gupta, 2017). The limbic system's open loop

design lets other people change our emotions and hence, people *catch* feelings from one another

(Paninchukunnath, 2008). A closed-loop system is self-regulating, whereas an open-loop system

depends on external sources to manage itself. Boyatzis (2011) suggested, once primary cognitions

have occurred, secondary cognitions allow for the neocortical events (i.e., reframing) to drive

subsequent limbic or emotional labeling. Unconscious emotional states are emotions individuals

interact with before they know it, spreading it from interactions with others.

Neuroanatomists have shown the pathways that connect the emotional processing system

of fear, the amygdala, with the thinking brain, the neocortex, which are not symmetrical. The

connections from the cortex to the amygdala are considerably weaker than those from the

amygdala to the cortex (Paninchukunnath, 2008). This explains why, once an emotion is aroused,

it is so hard for us to turn it off at will. Furthermore, emotions release a variety of

neurotransmitters that influence our physical and mental health, including our immune-system

functioning (Paninchukunnath, 2008). People who have learned healthy ways to manage emotions like stress and anger are likely to experience greater psychological well-being (Brackett & Simmons 2015). When a leaders' emotional well-being is in a healthy place, he or she is able to create a healthy culture for those they have been entrusted to lead.

Rock (2009) explained how regulating ones' emotions is central to the success in life. He furthered shared how this is done through exercising strong cognitive control which allows us to quiet down the noise in our mind in order to hear and notice subtle things. This can happen through our prefrontal cortex which allows us to try and do many new things. One key element involves insight – stop thinking about the problem and allow a completely different summary to come through. Rock (2009) also pointed out, although smaller than the rest of the brain, the prefrontal cortex helps with imagination and inventing. It helps us to do something differently versus doing things we know how to do well or what is rational – what is familiar and comfortable. In this context, being rational impedes cognitive growth. Doing things that are rational stifles our ability to step into the discomfort of growth, leaving habits to determine our responses therefore behavior. Stepping out from behind ones' title in order to delve deep into ones' true identity takes courage (Rock, 2009).

Furthering his explanation, Rock (2009) denotes the amygdala is constantly on the lookout for potential threats - physical or social. This complex system – the limbic system which houses the amygdala, decides every moment about everything we interact with in the world. Rock (2009) continues by stating, the limbic system's degree of activation whether threat or reward is the degree of deactivation of the prefrontal cortex. Based on research, even the smallest impact on the limbic system has a significant impact on our prefrontal cortex – the

ability to solve problems and make decisions, at least beneficial ones. In order for us to regulate emotions, we need to quiet our brain from distractions and search within (Rock, 2009).

Metacognition

John Flavell (1979) coined the term metacognition to mean *cognition about cognitive phenomena*, or more simply *thinking about thinking*. However, other researchers have offered their definition of metacognition. Hennessey (1999) offered several; it is the awareness of one's own thinking, awareness of the content of one's conceptions, it is an active monitoring of one's cognitive processes, and an attempt to regulate one's cognitive processes in relationship to further learning. Kuhn and Dean (2004) noted it is awareness and management of one's own thought. Metacognition refers to a set of processes an individual uses in monitoring ongoing cognition so as to effectively control his or her own behavior (Murphy et al., 2021) and metacognition is awareness and control of thinking for learning (Stanton et al,, 2021).

One area of cognitive neuroscience in which this study focused on is *intentionality* a philosophical concept, which means the ability of humans to understand or believe things about the world, resulting in *states of mind* (Lorenz- Reuter, et al., 2010). These states of mind cause individuals to reflect in ways such as *I believe* or *I think* (Lorenz-Reuter, et al., 2010) whether true or false. As individuals, we have the ability to control the process of our thoughts and how we respond to those thoughts. A key factor in effective leadership is a high degree of metacognition, or awareness of the processes of one's own thinking and the factors and conditions that influence it (Davis et al., 2010).

Past research has shown that metacognitive abilities develop a person's critical thinking (Magno, 2010) decision making (Batha & Carroll, 2007) and is related to creative problem solving (Marshall-Mies et al., 2000). Metacognition is defined most simply as thinking about

thinking and it plays an important role in self-awareness which has been argued to be foundational to leader development (Gardner et al., 2005). Metacognition is our ability to know what we do and do not know, or to identify how and why we think the way we do (Bakkaloglu, 2020; Costa, 1988). Metacognition is the process of self-assessment and self-correcting. It includes evaluating progress, correcting errors, and implementing and perhaps changing learning strategies (Davis et al., 2010; Wieland, 2006). Additionally, when individuals have better metacognitive ability they will likely gain more from developmental experiences, as they are better prepared for richer information processing and meaning making from these experiences (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). This metacognitive reflection leads to greater self-insight, less maladaptive processing, and changes to deeper self-structures that can accelerate developmental readiness (Hannah & Avolio, 2010).

Black, (2016) believes metacognitive abilities of monitoring and adapting cognition can impact aspects of a leader's capacity to develop. These may include a leader's self-awareness, regulation of learning from one's experiences, understanding and influencing others, and even facilitating development of followers' metacognition awareness. Specifically, metacognition awareness can improve the accuracy of the leaders' beliefs about themselves by allowing them to identify inconsistencies and to adjust these beliefs so they are more representative of reality, thus increasing self-concept clarity and self-awareness (Black, 2016). Leaders who have high metacognition awareness would be better able to adjust the way they approach leadership challenges and maximize developmental opportunities (Black, 2016). Black found developing metacognition awareness through conversation with coaches and mentors provide a context where leaders can reflect on the nature and quality of their thoughts, as well as define and test strategies for developing as a leader. This type of relationship allows leaders to receive feedback

that is deemed effective and credible because it is provided by an objective third party and intended to contribute to their growth. He concluded these relationships can occur as part of a formal development strategy but can also be intentionally sought after by leaders to advance in their development path. A leader who has high metacognition awareness will be better able to stimulate metacognitive reflection in others. This ability is beneficial because collective metacognitive reflection leads to creative and expansive thinking, which can support problem solving and the development of new strategies to deal with similar situations in the future (Brand, Reimer, & Opwis, 2003).

Exploring, identifying, and understanding the root causes of our thinking is essential to intrinsic and relational growth. As a result, developing this capacity in leaders benefit their current leadership aptitudes. Furthermore, this sets them on a positive developmental trajectory throughout their careers as they encounter opportunities to learn, grow and lead others more effectively and ethically.

Leadership

Great leaders are passionate and inspirational and are able to explain what and why they want to take certain actions in order to mobilize people to follow them towards that vision (Crisan, 2019). However, in order for this to become a reality, leaders must become emotionally literate by doing the work on themselves first, from the inside out. Grella (2019) argues leadership comes in many different types, shapes, and sizes, each uniquely defined and leadership is not only defined broadly by one's influence over others but is specifically about providing followers with both support and encouragement to ensure long-term succession and accomplishment of an organization.

Some of the key researchers in the area of leadership have varying definitions on what leadership is. For instance, Covey (2004) suggested, leadership is a choice, not a position. While Goleman (2010) believes, the art of leadership is getting work done well through other people. Paninchukunnath, (2008) posited that leadership works through emotions and emotional intelligence is concerned with how leaders handle themselves and their relationships with other. Avolio (2004), examines leadership as not a role, but a process involving how an individual or a group influences others toward a particular goal or objective. According to Kets de Vries, (2012) a lot of leadership skills you learn at home and he believes what really makes for leaders is your early experience, and your first job experience with your boss. For instance, the home environment acts as a perfect leadership-learning laboratory as boys and girls observe adults accomplishing long-term goals and working through daily tasks (Seago, 2012). Katz and Kahn (1978) said leadership is, "The exertion of influence on organizationally relevant matters by any member of the organization" (pp. 271-272). Although these researchers offer their various perspective on what leadership is, Hackman and Wageman, (2007) concluded, "there are no generally accepted definitions of what leadership is, no dominant paradigms for studying it, and little agreement about the best strategies for developing and exercising it" (p. 43). However, a consensus can be gathered that leadership is vital to the sustainability of life, its processes, and systems.

Through increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modeling, authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers (Avolio, 2005). Bill George (2003) succinctly states: "we need leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity; leaders who build enduring organizations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service, and create long-term value" (p. 9).

Leaders who intentionally date themselves – learn who they truly are and make the necessary changes, become valuable treasures to those they serve.

Communicative Styles

People communicate for a variety of reasons one of which is to create common understanding (Ibrahim, 2016). The transmission of facts, ideas, opinion, attitudes, and feelings enable humans to develop awareness and to learn (Richmond, McCroskey & Powel, 2012). Communication style is fundamental to social interaction and an individual's communication style can be understood in several different ways. In schools, communication happens at all times, in all directions, and in many ways, and principals use certain forms of communication (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020).

In this study, the researcher asked principals how they perceived their communication to be in both their personal and professional lives. Participants were also asked how individuals in their personal life (spouse, child, or parent) and professional life (teachers and staff) experienced their communicative style. Principals analyzed these questions and made connections on whether or not their caregiver's communicative style mirrored their own, passive, assertive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive, and how their style had been perceived and experienced by others.

These range of communicative style behaviors have been labeled over time, passive, assertive, and aggressive. Although there are value judgements associated with these (e.g., passive = weak), using elements of all three behaviors is common and demonstrates a flexibility of styles and behaviors (Maloney & Moore, 2019). On the one hand, passive behavior is behavior that accepts events or the actions of others without resistance. Certain body language can be associated with passive communication. For example, looking away when speaking with others sends a passive or uninterested message posits Maloney and Moore (2019). They also

described passive as submissive, yielding, obedient, meek, subdued, and deferential. On the other hand, in situations in which one has little investment or interest, one might choose to be a passive observer. However, if this is someone's main style, for example a leader, that person would be seen as shy and ineffective. They found, not many people would argue against passive being equated as weak particularly in any leader. (Maloney & Moore, 2019).

Assertive communication is a style in which administrators clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others (Griffin, 2005). Being assertive means respecting yourself and other people. It is the ability to clearly express your thoughts and feelings through open, honest, and direct communication (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020). Assertive is also showing confidence and standing up for one's personal rights in a direct and honest way (Maloney & Moore, 2019). Assertive communication is an ability to listen to the perspective of others and express oneself respectfully. It involves stating requests or ideas clearly and with confidence, without feeling guilty or apologizing. Nwabueze and Ohia (2020) note, assertive communicators are self-aware (i.e. know their own feelings, goals, etc.), responsible (for their own thoughts, behavior, etc.) and honest (i.e. provide consistent verbal and non-verbal messages). Assertive communication is thought to be the most effective form of communication style, it is an open communication link while not being overbearing. Principals who are assertive in communication can express their own needs, desires, ideas, and feelings, while also considering the needs of others (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020). Similarly, being assertive can help boost ones' self-esteem and earn others' respect. This can help with stress management, especially if one tends to take on too many responsibilities because of one's inability to say no. Nwabueze and Ohia concluded, to a high extent, respondents in their study agreed listening to others without interruption, expression of feelings without guilt,

balancing one's rights with rights of others, clearly stating needs, being tactfully honest and voicing your needs confidently are ways assertive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations with their principal.

Conversely, aggressive communication is a style in which individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020). It is an ineffective communication style as the content of the message may get lost because people are too busy reacting to the way it is delivered (Richmond, et al., 2012). Thus aggressive communicators are verbally and/or physically abusive. Principals who are aggressive communicators will often: try to dominate others, use humiliation to control others, criticize, blame, attack others or, speak in a loud, demanding, and overbearing voice, not listen well or interrupt frequently (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020). Nwabueze and Ohia noted from their findings' respondents agreed the use of verbal threats to *fearfully* motivate teachers to achieve goals, use of deceptiveness to achieve goals, use of obscene language, inability to control one's anger and easily affected by tensions are some of the ways principals' aggressive communication style enhanced teachers' compliance to rules and regulations.

A Leader's Balanced Life

Work-life balance, is a process of finding personal meaning and satisfaction across multiple roles and aspects of one's life (Evans, Carney, & Wilkinson, 2013). Work-life balance can also describe workplace practices employed by organizations to help their employees balance work and family life demands (Blazovich, Smith, & Smith, 2014). School leaders in this study, shared challenges of creating a balanced life between work, home, and their social life. Mental exhaustion due to the nature of their role, at times have impacted their psychological well-being.

Huppert (2009) posited psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (e.g. disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life (Huppert, 2009).

Within the last decade, the role of school principals has expanded and has become more complex. Today, principals undertake a wide variety of work duties such as administration, management, education, guidance, financing, planning, personnel issues, and forging alliances (Beausaert et al., 2016; Dadaczynski et al., 2020). This leadership role may be conducive to a stimulating, meaningful, and satisfying work environment but, on the other hand, it may impose exhausting and overwhelming job-related demands (Skaalvik, 2020).

Recent research has revealed that many principals are at great risk of exhaustion and health impairment (Hiroyuki et al., 2021). In this study, Hiroyuki et al., used a job-demands resource model (Tims, et al., 2013) which assist individuals in reshaping characteristics of their job by means of four strategies. Hiroyuki et al., used this model to mitigate principals' risk of exhaustion. The four strategies were: (1) increasing structural job resources (i.e., mobilizing autonomy, skill variety, opportunities for development at work); (2) increasing social job resources (i.e., asking for support, performance feedback, and coaching from others at work); (3) increasing challenge job demands (i.e., appending job demands with a promise of personal growth and work goal achievement); and (4) decreasing hindrance job demands (i.e., reducing job demands that thwart the accomplishment of important goals and development). Hiroyuki et

al., (2021) identified two strategies which reduced burnout via satisfying basic psychological needs – *1. increasing structural job resources* and *3. increasing challenge job demands*. They also identified one strategy which predicted burnout and negatively predicted work engagement by frustrating basic psychological needs – *4. decreasing hindrance job demands*.

Furthermore, Dor-Haim and Oplatka, (2021) conducted scholarly work which explored the psychological experiences of loneliness among educational leaders. Principals cited the burden of responsibility at work (Korumaz, 2016), their dissatisfaction with the frequency of meetings with colleagues (Campbell, et al., 2006) and the lack of free time to build social networks outside of school (Bailey & Gibson, 2019) as contributing factors to their loneliness. Loneliness is characterized by feelings of emptiness, a sense of alienation and a lack of significant relationships with others (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014). In Dor-Haim and Oplatka, (2021) research most of the school principals in the study emphasized the negative impact that loneliness had on their professional functioning. They discussed feeling a lack of energy at work as well as a lack of self-confidence at work and further referred to the negative impact their feelings of loneliness had on their relationships with the teaching staff. According to the study, loneliness reduced principals' energy levels at work. This experience had several effects, such as decreased self-confidence and motivation, which subsequently reduced their sense of creativity and undermined their initiative taking. Loneliness has been shown to have physiological, cognitive, and emotional consequences, such as physical health problems (Park et al., 2019), declines in cognitive functioning (Baumeister et al., 2005) and sadness and anxiety (Masi et al., 2011).

Unfortunately, there is limited research on how school leaders can consistently manage stress in a healthy way or the importance of having a balanced life that includes peers and

mentorship. Nonetheless, Wallace (2016) states, developing a balanced lifestyle and being more attentive to personal needs is a far more positive approach to managing stress than leaders ignoring it. She notes, a balanced life can include work, friends, family, play, love, and time for self and spiritual enrichment. The likely result of such balance is not exhaustion but rather a greater sense of well-being. Mastering psychological well-being is imperative for leaders holistically. Psychological well-being, is as foundational to defining who we are as were personality traits some decades ago. The most informative advances have come from linking psychological well-being to physical health, biological regulation, and neuroscience (Ryff, 2014).

Lopez (2019) discusses the law of 33% and states how imperative it is for individual leaders to live a balanced life, by having 33% mentees, 33% peers and 33% mentors as part of their everyday life. Lopez posited that supporting others, doing life with people of like interests, while allowing others to pour into them creates a balanced life. When leaders are able to invest, enjoy and receive in a healthy way, their psychological well-being becomes viable and beneficial for both themselves and those they encounter.

Summary of Literature

In this chapter, the researcher shared what previous and current literature noted about theories, frameworks and constructs which underpins this study. The researcher also lend insight to the gaps in literature and the research needs this phenomenological study provides. As noted throughout this chapter, researchers expounded upon the importance of emotional competency and ethical management within leaders and the scarceness of it within leaders. The review of current and previous literature has explicated some rationales for these behaviors.

Perry (2004) explained parents play a critical role in the development of their child's emotions. Researchers have emphasized the indispensable influence parents have on the foundational development of a child which extends into adulthood (Daines et al., 2021; Freud, 1920; Lingiardi et al., 2015). The explanation of this phenomenon was also expressed through the lived experience of participants within this study. Paninchukunnath (2008) noted how a person's intrinsic identity is intertwined with their emotions and is connected directly to the limbic system – the complex system of nerves and networks in the brain that controls the basic emotions, which *shapes us early* and determines who we will become (Perry, 2004). Although research discusses the impact of one's formative years on adulthood, literature does not explore how adults, specifically school leaders, can navigate this phenomenon and connect it to current emotional competencies and ethical management processes.

Vignoles (2011) suggested personal or self-identities can be considered as a mental representation individuals hold about who they are, which include autobiographical memories. There are many facets to one's self-identity which influences emotional competencies and ethical management. Researchers noted, self-identity is grounded in self-attributes including one's personal values, goals, self-knowledge, and unique psychological state Berzonsky (1994) and is an organized collection of beliefs and feelings about oneself Bailey (2003). In other words, a person's belief therefore actions based on personal values and self-knowledge, skewed or sound defines their character. With this self-imposed belief, often enough, individuals lead with or behind their title versus authentically understanding who they are intrinsically, and then working through those dynamics to effectively lead their own lives.

Negative interpersonal characteristics, and a lack of self-awareness can cause abuse of power and adversely impact individuals, leaders have been entrusted to lead (Nevicka et al.,

2018). The emotional intelligent framework can be used to guide thinking and action (Salovey, 2004) however, it can have an adverse effect within emotionally competent but unethical leaders (Babiak, et al., 2010). Having the right knowledge along with the skill-set to implement the right decision includes a leader's moral compass and an ethical framework.

Previous and current literature does not offer viable solutions on how to integrate this study's constructs for self and school leadership. Additionally, there is no previous or current leadership training which allow leaders to analyze and understand how their formative years, neuroanatomy, specifically the limbic system, and the process of metacognition influences emotional competencies and choices - ethically or unethically. This study assists in providing a solution.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine how a leader's life experiences and self-knowledge has influenced them as self-leaders in the areas of emotional intelligence and ethical decision making and consequently leaders within their own organization. Qualitative research is lacking a study that combines the constructs of self-identity as defined in this research (i.e., neuroscience, metacognition, and psychodynamics) with emotional intelligence and ethical management and how these constructs impact the way a person, specifically school principals have led their lives and hence individuals within their schools. Noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2017) questions about lived experiences are best answered through qualitative inquiry. This chapter discusses and delves into the research design of this study, the rationale of this design, setting, and data collection methods in greater length.

Research Design

Conducting phenomenological research involves studying the way a person experiences or understands his or her world as real or meaningful (van Manen, 1997; Wilson, 2015). In phenomenology, meaning is embedded in human existence (Diekelman 2005). In other words, people are naturally disposed to experience their world as meaningful (Wilson, 2015). In conducting this qualitative phenomenological design, participants were selected who could best inform the research question and enhance understanding of the phenomenon (Sargeant, 2012).

Rationale for Research Approach

When researchers are exploring a phenomenon, as opposed to quantifying a problem, qualitative research is most appropriate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Sargeant, 2012). The phenomenological approach also explicates the deeper human aspects of a situation, attending to mood, sensations, and emotions, seeking to find out what the actual experience is, what it means

to individuals and what the personal implications are (Wilson, 2015). In this study, school leaders were able to deeply reflect on incidents in their lives, some traumatic, which connected to reasons why specific emotions were conjured or suppressed throughout both their personal and professional life. Furthermore, this approach allowed researchers to appropriately intrude on people's private worlds (Wilson, 2015) and throughout this study, the researcher asked sensitive questions regarding participants homelife and ethical decision making as a leader.

Phenomenological inquiry is well suited for questions where the phenomenon itself is at the center of the inquiry; where the goal is to grasp the *nature of the thing* (van Manen, 1998). This study's research question, *how does a leader's formative years influence self-identity and leadership of others*, and sub-question, *how does training in building of emotional intelligence and ethical management positively impact self-reported efficacy of leaders* seeks to grasp and understand both the influence and impact of participants lived experiences as it relates to self and school leadership. As previously noted, *impact* and *influence* in this qualitative study references a participant's own perception about how they have been affected regarding their lived experiences (Montanye, 2017). Not everyone, whether participant or researcher, is suited to the open-ended nature of phenomenological investigation (Wilson, 2015). In order to examine how principals reflected, analyzed, and understood who they had become as self-leaders and school leaders, choosing a research design that requires patience was key; phenomenology requires patience (Wilson, 2015).

Research Site

This study was conducted in the context of leaders lived experiences, specifically school principals. The study included principals from public schools, grades K-8, although private schools and high school principals were not excluded in the recruitment process. Each interview

was conducted at the principal's school, in their office and or conference room for complete privacy and to avoid distractions. Schools were located in the northwest, west and south suburbs in a large Midwestern city in the U.S. To ensure anonymity, each principal was asked to provide a pseudonym of their choice.

Research Sample and Sources of Data

The number of participants required in a qualitative study can vary depending on the methodology (Creswell, 2012). The number of participants depends upon the number required to inform fully all-important elements of the phenomenon being studied. That sample size is sufficient when additional interviews do not result in identification of new concepts (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, samples in qualitative research tend to be small in order to support the depth of case-oriented analysis that is fundamental to this mode of inquiry. In phenomenological research the number of participants can be as low as one to three (Finlay, 2009) and commonly ranges between six and 20, but there is no hard and fast rule (Wilson, 2015). Baker and Edwards (2012) suggest that it is better to focus on quality rather than quantity.

In this research non-probability purposive sampling was used, that is, participants were selected by virtue of their capacity to provide richly-textured information, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Sandelowski, 1996; 2000). Purposive sampling was used based on a specific criterion, and for the most effective use of limited resources (Palinkas, et al., 2015). This type of recruitment was also relevant and appropriate because the researcher identified a group of individuals – principals who were knowledgeable and experienced in the phenomenon of interest, school leaders (Creswell, Plano & Clark, 2011). Additionally, purposive sampling is being used because of the willingness and availability of leaders to participate in this study (Palinkas, et al., 2015).

The criterion consisted of non-Chicago public school leaders because of the additional IRB process needed within this district in order for their school leaders to participate in the research. The study was open to all levels, K-12 but only K-8 principals responded. A total of twelve principals were contacted for this research study, six responded to the recruitment email for this study and agreed to participate, five females and one male. The demographics included, one African American female principal; three Hispanic principals – two females and one male; and one Caucasian female principal. The researcher believed diversity in ethnicity of participants was significant in order to ensure a diverse number of perspectives.

The researcher emailed school leaders the purpose of the study, length of commitment, requirement of the study (participation in an interview and workshop) and stated participation was on a volunteer basis (See Appendix B). This communication was further delineated on an information sheet for participation in research study (See Appendix F). When school leaders expressed their interest to participant in the study, an in-person interview was scheduled through email and conducted at their school; the date and location of the workshop was also emailed to each participant (See Appendix D). The school leader's experiences were investigated through a sixty minute in-person interview about their lived experiences as it related to the research question. A three-hour workshop constructed based on the participants responses to their interview questions was also offered and conducted for all participants.

Data Collection Methods

In this study a semi-structured interview was conducted with five participants. Semi-structured interviews are one of the most dominant and widely used methods of data collection within the social sciences (Bradford & Cullen, 2012). They are valuable because they allow researchers to explore subjective viewpoints (Flick, 2009) and to gather in-depth accounts of

people's experiences. Typically, an interview schedule is used which enables the researcher to address a defined topic whilst allowing the respondent to answer in their own terms and to discuss issues and topics pertinent to them (Choak, 2012). The schedule, which was used in this study, guided the interview, but also allowed other relevant themes to develop throughout the interviews (Choak, 2012).

The researcher met with participants a total of two times, once for a sixty minute in-person interview and secondly, for a three hour in-person workshop respectively. The interview and workshop were conducted on two separate days. The semi-structured interviews allowed participants the flexibility to delve deeply into their past to make profound connections to their intrinsic being. At several points, participants showed great emotion that was evidence with tears as they reflected and made connections about their identity, specifically their formative years, emotional intelligence competencies and ethical decision making.

Interviews

Each interview was conducted in person at the leaders' school. For ethical consideration, the researcher included her positionality at the beginning of each interview. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and later transcribed by the researcher for data analysis. Protection for all data collected was put in place by storing the information in a secured computer under password protection and with encrypted files. The interviews included questions about participants demographics such as age/age range and ethnic heritage and there were 26 open-ended questions to gather in-depth insight into the participants lived experiences. The interview protocol was developed using the constructs of – identity (formative years/psychodynamics, metacognition, and neuroscience), and leadership which are key concepts to this study (See Appendix G).

Additionally, the domains of the emotional intelligence, and ethical management frameworks were used to develop the interview protocols.

Principals took full advantage of their sixty-minute interviews and asked clarifying questions throughout when needed. Remaining open throughout the process was essential to avoid biases and remaining available to conduct additional interviews was pivotal to clarify information if warranted. However, after conducting the interviews and concluding the workshop, it was clear that it was not necessary for the researcher to conduct further interviews or bring clarity surrounding constructs of the workshop.

Additionally, field notes compiled during the interview was a useful complementary source of information to facilitate the coding process, as the gap in time between an interview, transcribing, and coding could have resulted in memory bias (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Once all the interviews were transcribed and checked and the evaluation forms were received and reviewed the coding process began.

Workshop Description

The workshop, which was held at an elementary school not belonging to any participating principal's school. The researcher covered training in the areas of psychodynamics, metacognition, neuroscience – limbic system, and both the emotional intelligence, and ethical management frameworks. The three-hour workshop, developed by the researcher, based on participants' interview responses, consisted of a PowerPoint presentation, explaining the various constructs discussed in the interviews. Each participant received a binder with an agenda (See Appendix I), presentation documents and space to write notes. Each participant also took notes on their laptops. A fifteen-minute break was built-in and time was allotted for dialogue about the presentation, leader's lived experiences and Quora – question and answer.

This workshop, essential to this study, offered intriguing and researched based insight on self-identity. It provided practical tools and strategies in the areas of emotional competencies, ethical management, appropriate communicative styles, and reassessing for a more balanced life. This workshop allowed school leaders to hear similar phenomena of other leaders and presented space for leaders to hear varying perspectives of their peers. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were asked to complete a one question open-ended leader's self-evaluation form. This self-evaluation form assisted leaders in assessing the *why* of who they had become as self-leaders; to see if these factors had influenced their leadership; and to discover what necessary intrinsic changes are tantamount to external growth in order to lead others close up, personable and ethically. The evaluation form was used as part of the data analyses process (See Appendix J).

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher transcribed each interview and listened multiple times for accuracy. The researcher analyzed participants' responses by reading their interview transcriptions and evaluation forms. Johnson and Christensen (2016) stated in qualitative research it is imperative that data is rigorously analyzed and revisited both throughout and at the conclusion of data collection. The continual analysis allowed the researcher to explore new concepts as themes began to develop during the data collection. The researcher initially analyzed and looked for common themes through inductive coding and then through deductive coding. As noted earlier, the researcher minimized the scope of data collected by using the theoretical frameworks to focus on key themes to effectively analyze and interpret the data which aligned to or challenged the domains within the frameworks.

Coding Process

During the coding process, the researcher conducted cycles that consisted of a few methods. During the first cycle of coding, attribute coding was used for the purposes of basic descriptive information such as: pseudonyms of the participants, characteristics and demographics of the participants, length of time as a school leader, and date format (Lofland et al., 2006). During the second cycle, structural coding was used. Structural coding applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a data segment related to a specific research question used to frame the interview. The similarly coded segments are then collected together for more detailed coding and analysis (MacQueen et al., 2008). The researcher, based on the research question and sub-question utilized this method that allowed quicker access to relevant data. These data were then placed into a category or placed under a topic. Sources suggest that structural coding is perhaps more suitable for interview transcripts than other data, such as researcher-generated field notes (Saldana, 2015).

The researcher then applied descriptive coding to the data to create general vocabulary.

Descriptive coding is just one approach to analyzing the data's basic topics to assist with answering questions. Turner (1994) identifies this cycle as the development of a basic vocabulary of data to form "bread and butter" categories for further analytic work (p. 199). Description is the foundation for qualitative inquiry, and its primary goal is to assist the reader in seeing what you, the researcher saw and to hear what you, the researcher heard (Wolcott, 1994).

Throughout this entire process, the researcher reorganized and summarized data using methodologies such as identification of patterns and grouped these summations into smaller constructs; and used the most frequent patterns to discover the primary themes (Saldana, 2015). This method allowed the researcher to note and articulate how these patterns interrelated and

shed insight on causation. Pattern coding develops the *meta-code* – the category label that identifies similarly coded data (Saldana, 2015). Pattern codes not only organize the corpus but attempts to attribute meaning to that organization. Pattern coding is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Furthermore, in the coding process, similarities and topics of participants' narratives were identified. A deductive coding process based on the study's research question and theoretical frameworks was applied. This process assisted in ensuring unbiased data collection. This process enabled understanding of the lived experiences from each participants' perspective. In the findings the participants' stories are told using exemplars from their own narratives, thus grounding the research findings in the participants' lived experiences (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Throughout the coding process, 278 significant and poignant statements of the participants' lived experiences were identified. This process deepened the understanding of each participant's phenomenon which had personal meaning to their particular lived experience (Schuemann, 2014). These statements were eventually summarized and translated into codes. As explained by Creswell (2013) codes were identified from the repetitive phrases, words, actions, or beliefs of the participants. After identifying these codes, codes were highlighted using different colored markings to quickly identify possible and final themes. Analysis of the data resulted in modification of themes as data emerged (Creswell, 2012). The themes were ultimately decided upon two factors: the frequency of the codes within the data as related to similarities among participants and the research question. In the end, the decided themes captured the crux of the study's research question (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Issues of Trustworthiness

A way to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research is what Ravitch and Carl (2016) denotes as validity in qualitative research, which refers to the quality and rigor of a study by researchers affirming their findings are faithful to participants experiences. Methods of

promoting this faithfulness can be accomplished through credibility. Credibility involves the researcher's ability to consider all the complexities that presents itself in a study and to engage patterns not easily explained, transparent, honest, or empathetic (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Additional strategies of promoting credibility in qualitative research is through the various processes of triangulation. Data triangulation refers to using multiple data sources to produce a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon being studied (Sargeant, 2015). The researcher in this study used triangulation to promote credibility – interviews, workshop, a leader's self-evaluation form and member checking. As stated earlier, to avoid biases, bracketing was used in this study (Wilson, 2015). The researcher used this method to assist in mitigating preconceived notions because of her experience as a school leader.

Limitations

With most studies, researchers are susceptible to limitations. The following are limitations present in the study and possible limitations in the study noted by the researcher:

1) Male participants under-represented. Having one male participant limited deeper insight of this study's phenomenon.

2) The researcher will not have an opportunity to observe principals incorporate elements of the workshop into their leadership practices. However, participants have communicated how they will use elements of the workshop in their personal lives.

3) There is a possibility, principals did not evaluate themselves accurately.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the methodology of this qualitative study and examined how a leader's life experiences and self-knowledge has influenced them as self-leaders in the areas of emotional intelligence and ethical decision making and consequently leaders within their own organization. During this study, the researcher audio-recorded and transcribe each interview, used triangulation to promote credibility - interviews, workshop, and a leader's self-evaluation form and used inductive and deductive coding to group and regroup codes to identify emerging

and consistent themes. The researcher concluded this chapter by discussing issues of

trustworthiness and limitations within the study.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

This study explored how the lived experience of school principals' influences their self-identity and resultant school leadership. Self-identity is defined as *one's belief therefore actions based on their personal values and self-knowledge* (Bailey, 2003; Berzonsky, 1994). In this chapter, a summary of the findings is presented and an analysis of the data as it relates to the research question. In qualitative studies, the researcher tends to report *findings* rather than *results*, as the latter term typically implies that the data have come from a quantitative source (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

This study used a phenomenological design which guided the researcher in obtaining the lived experiences of each participant. To examine self-identity and the impact on leadership, two frameworks were utilized to categorize the data; Goleman's, (1998) emotional intelligence competencies and Geva's (2006) ethical management. The findings of this study give great insight into these lived experiences. The findings demonstrated the profound impact their formative years had in developing their values, emotional competence, beliefs about themselves and others. Also noted are: the lingering effects of traumatic life experiences, as reported by the participants; pressure from supervisors; unethical decision making; and the need for leaders to have self-development before entering into leadership roles. This study and its findings were guided by the research question and sub-question:

1. How does a leader's formative years influence self-identity and leadership of others? The research question was followed by a sub-question:

1. How does training in building of emotional intelligence and ethical management positively impact self-reported efficacy of leaders?

During data analysis, the researcher engaged with the data to categorize and connect to the framework. The theoretical frameworks were used to develop codes as suggested by Ravitch and Carl (2016). However, revisiting the data multiple times allowed a working list of codes to develop which brought meaning that translated into themes and actualized the phenomenon.

Summary of Participants

The findings from this study emerged as a result of five, sixty-minute in-person interviews and a three-hour workshop. Each interview was conducted privately between the participant and researcher. However, the three-hour in person workshop was conducted with all participants and the researcher. During the interview, participants were asked demographic and interview questions regarding their age, age-range, ethnic heritage, preferred pseudonym, and questions aligned to the research (see Appendix G).

The criterion for participants consisted of non-city public school leaders near a major city in the Midwest. The study was open to all K-12 principals. Six K-8 principals responded and agreed to participate in this study. The participants included five females and one male. The final number of participants were four females and one male (one participant declined at the last minute). The demographics included one African American female principal Yaya who has been in leadership for the past seven years; three Hispanic principals – two females and one male: Precious who has been in leadership for two years; Cassandra, who has been in leadership for eight years; John, who has been in leadership for five years; and one Caucasian female principal, Sarah who has been in leadership for eight years. Diversity in ethnicity of participants was significant in order to ensure a diverse number of perspectives. The following table contains a breakdown of demographic information regarding the participants (see Table 3).

Table 3

Summary of Participants

Name	Ethnic Heritage	Age	Sex	Years in Leadership
Precious	Hispanic	36	Female	2 years
Cassandra	Mexican-American	46	Female	8 years
John	Latino	41	Male	5 years
Sarah	Caucasian-Danish Swedish	47	Female	8 years
Yaya	African American	49	Female	7 years

In capturing the lived experiences of each participant, the researcher took careful note of not only what the participants said, but also observed extended pauses, tears and or deep breathes. During the interviews, key comments were made and the researcher walked away with emerging themes (Creswell, 2012). After the interviews the researcher wrote analytic memos. Birks et al., (2008) posited the process of writing memos assist in using an analytical strategy during the data process and data exploration. As a result, continuity of conception was enhanced. In this next section, the findings are presented and synthesized by direct statements from the participants, to note the themes under discussion have emerged from the participants' interviews and not from the mind of the researcher (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Overview of Themes

Sutton and Austin (2015) suggested theming refers to the drawing together of codes from one or more transcript to present the findings of qualitative research in a coherent and meaningful way. To reiterate, during the coding process, similarities and topics of participants' narratives were identified and a deductive coding process based on the study's research question

and theoretical frameworks was applied. Codes were highlighted using different colored markings to quickly identify possible and final themes.

This thematic analysis assisted in producing broad descriptive statements that reflected the overall understanding of the participants' data in response to the research question (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020). This phenomenological study identified themes and subthemes in relation to the participants' various lived experiences as both self and school leaders. These themes uncovered deeper meaning of the participants' lived experienced and highlighted similarities in their lived experiences. Furthermore, these experiences answered the research question and sub-question in this study: how does a leader's formative years influence self-identity and leadership of others and how does training in building of emotional intelligence and ethical management positively impact self-reported efficacy of leaders? Six central themes emerged from the data. The first five themes emerged from the interview data. They were (1) parental influence, (2) faith, (3) self-reflection connected to leadership (4) mental exhaustion, and (5) compromised ethics. The last theme, (6) better equipped with prior knowledge, emerged from data collected after the workshop (see Table 4).

The subthemes, *self-reported traumatic experiences* and *perseverance* derived from theme one, parental influence. The subtheme, *self-reported traumatic experiences* emerged from participants sharing how witnessing or experiencing physical, verbal, or emotional abuse, from their parents, instilled a sense of anxiety, helplessness, and emotional stress that is evident in their adulthood. The subtheme *pressure* derived from theme five, compromised ethics (see Table 4). All the themes were significant, because it defined how the participants identified themselves as self-leaders and what experiences influenced their thinking and decision-making as school

leaders. Both frameworks, emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998) and ethical management

(Geva, 2006) were used to guide the findings during the data analysis process.

Table 4

Emergent Themes and Subthemes

Themes and Subthemes	Participants Response
Parental influence	**Yaya**: My father said in my formative years, you will one day be a doctor and so not wanting to let him down, wanting to live up to the positive things that I did get from him like education, I received my doctorate degree.
Subtheme - Traumatic experiences	**Yaya**: I'm seeking counsel for my marriage…. I say should I get a divorce? And then I recognize that I'm a runner when things aren't well. I connect that back to my mother. She was in an abusive marriage and I wanted her to leave and she never would. So now I feel like I'm over compensating and I'm running because my mom didn't run.
Subtheme- Perseverance	**Cassandra**: My parents showed me hard work and perseverance; you don't give up, you keep going, you try and you give it your all. My dad taught me values of hard work and being responsible, that's in my leadership today.
Faith	**Precious**: I am very faith based. When stressed, the concept of being Christ-like and trying to be Christ-like is what always centers me.
Self-reflection connected to leadership	**John**: Reflection is huge, meaning, admitting I messed up or thinking I shouldn't act this way or think this way. Also, I try to be self-aware when I feel myself becoming frustrated or irritated with someone.
Mental exhaustion	**John**: I'm exhausted, absolutely. The amount of work and things that are put on my plate negatively impacts my emotions. I've had the same size plate here (referring to work) for three years. Nothing ever gets taken off the plate there is just more put onto the plate.
Compromised ethics	**Sarah**: I think decisions I have made sometimes on a quick basis was because my boss said to do some things. It kept reinforcing this power-oriented system. We make this one decision and I didn't think enough and then you saw just this rippling effect of families.
Subtheme – Pressure	**Cassandra**: Our Union is very powerful here. English speaking homes give us a harder time, they are constantly complaining, sending emails. Most of them are white, or their primary language is English. This is an ethical issue.
Better equipped with prior knowledge	**Precious**: I loved learning about how who we are as individuals, impact who we are as leaders. Earlier training in self-development would have allowed me to build on emotional intelligence, and be able to respond to situations in a more mature way, less reactive. **Sarah**: Leadership is not about a checklist of qualities it's about knowing who you are and how that impacts the decisions you make every day.

The first theme *parental influence* emerged from the participants rich and detailed description on how certain parental choices and experiences in the home impacted their identity as an adolescent, adult and consequently school leader. Some home-life experiences were beneficial while others were quite traumatic. The two subthemes derived from this theme was *traumatic experiences* and *perseverance*. Traumatic experiences as explained by participants were either consistent abusive behavior witnessed between parents; verbal, emotional or physical abuse they endured by their parents; or the decision by their parents to divorce. These life altering decisions made by their parents left an indelible mark on the souls of these five participants. Although the five participants were negatively impacted by their trauma, they also witnessed and experienced their parents' perseverance. For the purposes of this study, perseverance is defined as: continuance effort, to carry out a goal while overcoming difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement (Middleton et al., 2015). Participants witnessed their parents' sheer determination to make it through the difficult seasons in their lives by maintaining employment and providing for their children with minimal means. This character trait of hard work participants witnessed grounded them in a stick-to-itiveness mindset within their own careers as school leaders.

The second theme *faith,* was derived from participants reflecting on what assisted them in championing the difficult times growing up in their homes. Faith also empowered some participants to withstand challenging times as a parent and or school leader. Some participants defined faith as a "spiritual connection" from within. Others defined faith as "believing in Jesus Christ" or "believing in something higher."

The third theme *self-reflection connected to leadership,* expressed how participants have critically examined their interactions with individuals in both their personal and professional

lives. These reflections, at times, brought about behavioral adjustments. Other times, it allowed participants to connect their thinking and actions back to their formative years.

The fourth theme *mental exhaustion*, conveyed how participants felt when doing mind work. Mind work, as described by participants ranged from making decisions, making the right decision, making too many decisions, pushing back on decisions, repercussions of making the wrong decisions and not having mentors as thought partners. Additionally, the mental exhaustion was heightened when navigating a myriad of responsibilities within their schools in conjunction with home life.

The fifth theme *compromised ethics* materialized through each participant's transparent reflection on how their actions compromised their values and beliefs, which negatively impacted those they had been entrusted to serve and lead – students, parents, and staff. For example, making decisions which excluded students from programs based on language barriers. The subtheme emerged from this theme was *pressure*. Participants shared how their unethical choices were made because of pressure they received from their leader. They did not resist the pressure because they felt obligated to comply, although they knew it would negatively harm students and their families.

The sixth and last theme *better equipped with prior knowledge* speaks to participants' overwhelming consensus that training in self-growth and leadership has been essentially non-existent. Each participant shared how their school district only offered professional development in content areas, supporting students, teacher evaluations, operations, or aspects of leadership management – what a leader does. All participants concurred that prior training in self and leadership development would have enabled them to avoid character and leadership pitfalls early

on in their life and school leadership. In this next section, a general overview is given for each theme with a subsequent and more descriptive account of each participant's lived experiences.

Theme One: Parental Influences.

All participants described being raised in a home with both parents, mom, and dad, and with the consistent presence of either their maternal and paternal grandmothers, or grandfather. All participants spoke about how they experienced some form of love and affection. Parents expressed love either directly, *hugs and kisses*, *I love you*, or *laughte*r. Implied love and affection were expressed by, *parents providing shelter*, *food*, *money* for teenaged indulgences or *being present* at school functions. Participants shared if a parent did not verbally tell them they loved them, they believed it because they were *taken care of* with shelter, clothing, and food.

Participants also shared their experiences of living in a home where physical, emotional, and verbal abuse were present. Furthermore, emotional defense mechanisms were taught even if it was healthy and necessary to express their emotions. Forms of defense mechanisms was pretending everything was ok in the home, striking first at someone, or holding back tears when a loved one passed. Consequently, these lived experiences significantly affected and shaped aspects of their formative years, beliefs about who they were or how they should act and respond to others. As explicated by all participants, these shared experiences shed light on how emotional intelligent competencies: *self* and *social awareness* and *self* and *relationship management* was underdeveloped in the life of their parents and in certain areas of the participants' lives. Fortunately, participants were also able to share how they have developed specific emotional intelligent competencies throughout their adulthood.

Conversely, participants shared how they witnessed the perseverance of both parents' willingness to work and provide for the family. Parents worked tirelessly and creatively through

life's obstacles. Seeing their parent's familial commitment inspired and undergirded their endeavors to attain and maintain goals as adults and school leaders. Participants were transparent in sharing their overall childhood, and who they admired during their childhood which influenced their leadership trajectory. Lastly, participants shared how experiencing and witnessing both trauma and perseverance in their formative years left a lasting imprint on their lives.

Precious shared:

My mom and dad both raised me. We stayed with my maternal grandmother until I was about eight. My maternal grandmother cared for me when my parents were at work. I don't have memories of my parents being affectionate towards me. I knew they loved me but not through gestures, it was more like they would buy me whatever I wanted or were present at my performances at school. But if I got a kiss *ever*, it was like on the forehead, and normally the *great jobs* were like awkward side hugs. They weren't very affectionate. My grandmother was very affectionate.

Precious continued by sharing that her childhood and mid-adolescent years were:

Full of trauma, very dramatic. Crying was a sign of weakness. Whatever happened at home had to stay at home. If someone comes at you, you strike first. I feel like I was in a constant fight mode or like I was very guarded all the time. I would navigate through life not trusting people as much and kind of like this idea like I had to do things for myself because no one else was ever there for me. And if anyone ever tried to be a part of my life I would put up barriers because they would eventually end up hurting me. So I just didn't have time to deal with that so I was kind of just focused on my own stuff.

When asked who she admired most as a child, Precious went further to share:

I admired my father and his work ethic and persevering through hardships. I think that my dad has had the most influence in my leadership abilities. He has a lot of common sense; he is a problem solver. He would throw you in a situation and have you find your way out of there. And I feel like that really influenced who I am as a leader and that I don't get scared from things like other people, "oh what am I going to do!" I'm normally like, I got this. I don't know how but I get it done. Its good and bad. I can see him in time past why he couldn't take a sick day or why he had to…. sometimes I burn myself, because I'm like I can't take sick days. I got to do this because I saw it in him. But then my husband reminds me that I have sick days and I'm not going to be penalized for taking them unlike our parents who could have lost their jobs for taking sick day. My mom, her, and I, we never really had a great relationship so I don't feel like she really influenced me in a positive way. I feel like what I really learned from her is the don'ts. Do not do this, be a better person.

Cassandra reflected on her formative years and explained how her mother and father's perseverance has resonated with her. She shared:

My parents took care of me until I was about two because my mom saw bruises on my legs and thought the babysitter had done it so she decided to send me to Mexico with all my siblings. I'm the youngest. My grandmother and oldest brother were my caretakers until I was six, until my mom felt like she wanted her family here in Chicago. My grandmother came too and she was central because my Mom was working. My parents and grandmother showed me hard work and perseverance; you don't give up, you keep going, you try and you give it your all. My dad taught me values of hard work, being responsible, and by providing.

When asked who she admired as a child, with no hesitation, she said:

> "My grandmother. She was a hard worker. I always saw her as somebody strong, as
>
> somebody who could take care of us, that would protect us, because of the conflict in the
>
> home."

When reflecting on her family's affection, Cassandra mentioned:

> I think growing up in Mexican families, even though we didn't have that much
>
> financially, the kitchen was the place where we would talk and do a lot of things together.
>
> They did say I love you but there were struggles but then at the same time, I also think in
>
> their actions they showed how much they cared for me. My parents showed they loved
>
> me by food and time. So they were not physically affectionate, yes and no. I did get hugs.
>
> My overall childhood was full of love, but at the same time there were struggles that help
>
> me grow and perhaps grow faster than I had to.

Cassandra pointed out that she was taught defense mechanisms in her home. She remembered,

> I grew up where things in the family stayed in the family. We didn't talk about what
>
> happened in the family. These were traumatic experiences for me. If I need to categorize
>
> it, I'm a former social worker, there was domestic violence in my house. DCFS was
>
> involved.

Fighting back tears which eventually rolled down her cheeks onto her conference table,
Cassandra grabbed some tissue and continued:

> At times school was the safe haven, it was a nice place to be. I was smart and teachers
>
> liked me … they say you need your champions. My siblings and I created our own little
>
> family because my parents were constantly fighting um because of many things,
>
> primarily money. Often times, I wanted to please others because then it wouldn't put so

much focus on me. I did positive things that was good just so I could please others and

have the family be happy with what I did. My siblings got more spankings, hitting, and

abuse than I did because I was the youngest, my siblings would protect me too. There

was a lack of communication and my parents had their own mental health issues. My

parents divorced when I was nine.

Unlike Precious and Cassandra, John's reflection on his formative years differed in the

area of physical affection and guidance in emotional competencies. However, he had similar

experiences in witnessing his parents as hard workers.

John shared:

My mother was very affectionate. My father was affectionate but not as affectionate as

my mother. When I got up in the morning, lots of hugs, kisses, and good morning. My

dad was at work by the time I got up in the morning. When I got home from school, it

was the same thing: how was school, a hug and a kiss from my mother and that kind of

stuff, and that was pretty much a daily routine. My grandfather also showed me a lot of

affection. My childhood was pretty good. I had everything I needed, um not everything I

wanted but everything I needed. I think both my parents were extremely hard workers

and I think that is something I carry with me in my leadership.

John highlighted memorable life lessons from his parents on both self-awareness and self-

management. Sharing explicitly, he remembered:

Um, I spent a lot of time with my parents. We would talk about things, whether or not

something was right or wrong, especially growing up. If I made a mistake there was

always a conversation about what happened, "why did it happen, are we going to do this

again or not, how will I approach this situation differently?" I felt like growing up, I got

a lot of guidance from my parents in terms of what it is one should do. If I didn't agree, my parents would say, "this is what I expect from you." I think in high school and college I could easily hear my parent's voice in the back of my mind saying, "hey this is not how I raised you" or you know what, 'this is a good idea do this, continue to work hard, I'm proud of you.'"

John shifted the conversation and said:

My parents got divorced when I was in eighth grade. I remember, there was lots between the two of them, arguing and yelling nothing ever physical. They would argue and sometimes I think my initial response to situations is to kinda bark at somebody but I know deep down, that is not going to fix the problem. I think growing up in the house I grew up in certainly had an impact on who I am.

When asked who he admired most as a child, John said:

My grandfather. He spent a lot of time with me teaching me how to fish and hunt, those types of things. I admired him most for his work ethic, he was a hard worker and showed me a lot of affection.

Sarah's reflection on her formative years mirrored John's lived experience in the area of physical affection and expressed loved from her parents. She too believed that her parents had a positive impact on her overall leadership ability.

Sarah disclosed:

My grandmothers took care of me quite a bit. Not to say my parents weren't around, they were always there at dinner times and things but our house was always full of additional people beyond my parents. My grandparents were a significant piece of my life growing up. I had a very good and joyful childhood and were raised by parents that I think have

really set me into my leadership abilities and my personal relationships in life. They

loved each other very deeply and as children, we had a lot of hugs and kisses growing up.

I would say my mom was a little less but I think that was because of her mother, they

were just a little bit hard core when it came to life in general. We were ok to have

emotions. I saw my dad cry but my mom raised us where it was more about what we

looked like on the outside.

When asked who she admired most as a child, Sarah smiled and said:

My dad. He is no longer with us and that might have a little more significance but um

my dad. He raised one son and three daughters and I think he developed me at a very

young age to make my own decisions but also nourished me in the right way for a young

girl. I think I grew up thinking, I can do anything!

Sarah also reflected on times when her father's aspirations changed the trajectory of her post-

secondary years. She explained:

My father was a dreamer and he had high hopes and he made lots of money but he also

lost lots of money. We were never financial stable in our house. My older siblings got

lots of things and by the time it got to me, my whole college fund was wiped out! So I

knew I couldn't afford a four-year college so I took a two-year college. I had to work and

learned a lot of skills and it pushed me to get out of my home town. I didn't want to be

there.

Yaya gave a vivid account of her lived experience which resembled both Precious and

Cassandra's formative years. All participants, discussed having their grandparents as an integral

part of their formative years. However, Yaya is the only participant who did not mention

grandparents. Nonetheless, she shared how other members of her family, specifically her aunt and uncle, played an essential role in her formative years.

Yaya noted:

> I was raised by my mother and father primarily but I had a strong extended family, my aunts and uncles who would come and pick me up on the weekends. My father a retired Vietnam veteran who I now understand and understand post-traumatic stress disorder was very abusive. He was abusive to my mother and I witnessed that. I was trying to please my parents, by being a good student, to keep down this volatile environment I lived in. I didn't see a lot of affection. I knew my mother and father cared for me but we did not exchange the I love you or a lot of physical touch but I knew they cared for me. My extended family showed affection toward me by making sure they came to get me on the weekends and doing fun things. (Looking at my overall childhood) I now know looking back I was poor and my parents did the best they could to provide me with a childhood experience. It was good for what they could provide and I have very fond memories from my childhood.

Yaya further shed light on her experience living with a Vietnam veteran and how her father taught her defense mechanisms that she unconsciously practiced. She remembered:

> I was absolutely taught defense mechanisms. As a 49-year-old woman, I'm still actually using one of those mechanisms which is shut down. I witnessed my father completely shut the world out, and I learned that from him. I wasn't trying to pick that up but I picked that up along the way. And so, I still do it, where I go quiet. I'll just shut down completely. I remember a specific incident where a very close cousin passed away. I knew something had happened to him. I went away for a band trip for the day and when I

came back my father picked me up and told me that he was gone, he didn't make it, he

was stabbed to death. I started to cry and my father was like, "no, don't do that, don't do

that!" And so, I was like holding my breath. I held that in, I sucked it in. My defense

mechanism, I think also comes from my experience with my parents and my father being

abusive. Learning to just deal with it because I was just a little girl. I wasn't seeing a

counselor because back then, we didn't get counseling…figure out how to manage this

and so um yeah it was just like….my dad is upset and we are all living through this and

when he gets over it we are supposed to snap back and be happy and like, "oh hey dad"

and deal with my anger internally.

When asked who she admired as a child, Yaya's eyes lit up when she said:

My 5th grade teacher Mrs. R. She is the reason why I am an educator. She was not only a

teacher about academics but raised me to be a fine young lady. So things I would do, she

would pull me to the side and say, "Young ladies don't do that, no we don't do that!"

And so, she poured into my life beyond what most teachers ever did and I think I've

loved her for that. I will always remember Mrs. R for what she poured into my life.

Theme Two: Faith.

When participants were asked what aspects of life positively impacted them in either

their formative years, adult life, or leadership, all but one, John, discussed their faith or

spirituality.

Precious communicated:

I am very faith based. I'm Christian. So anything that's like a devotional, or like

anything where I see God or hear, you know like have those conversations with Him, and

say to God, I see what you mean. Those connections are really like positive for me and

the concept of being Christ-like and trying to be Christ-like to me is what always centers me.

Cassandra was immediately able to identify her faith as a positive factor in her childhood. She mentioned:

I had faith and hope that things would get better. Growing up in a Catholic home, there was a lot of prayer. There was somebody, that Higher being that was going to help us and it did….. at times there were hard times… and we were able to survive, we were able to overcome. Growing up in church and being a part of the church influenced my leadership as well.

When reflecting on her overall adult life and leadership, Sarah connected it with her spirituality:

I want to lead my life in a positive way, I am a spiritual person. I believe in a Higher power that sends you into a journey, like that's my path. Spirituality helps me a lot. I just want to find peace. I started a lot of emotional digging at my previous job as to why I was getting to be not at my best. Somebody told me, "oh you would be great at this" so I just followed (referring to her principalship). I didn't lead myself so I felt like this time, I really led myself into a journey that was spiritually right.

Yaya expressed how it was her faith as a child that carried her through her traumatic childhood. Similar to Cassandra, faith and attending church was a key source of encouragement while living in a tumultuous home environment.

Yaya shared:

My aunt and uncle picked me up every weekend and took me to church. My uncle made sure of it. I understood who God was and accepted Christ at the age of 11. I am very grateful to my uncle, who is sick now, because he cared about my soul. I had peace when

I was able to go on the weekend with my aunt and uncle. Knowing Jesus, let me know

my better days were coming. That is what sustained me as a child living in an abusive

home.

Theme Three: Self-Reflection Connected to Leadership.

Throughout the interviews the concept of metacognition was discussed with participants:

thinking and reflecting on how their childhood experiences influenced what they believed about

themselves and others. Participants expressed how their childhood experiences evolved into

specific *interaction* with others, in both their personal and professional life. All participants were

refreshingly candid through their self-reflection process. Precious shared how transitioning

abruptly to an all-English environment as a sixth-grader greatly traumatized her. At times, she

experiences evidence of this trauma lived out in her adulthood.

Precious explained:

Growing up, English was my second language so I didn't really acquire it until 6th grade.

I was supposed to gradually transition into English, but they never really gradually

transitioned me. So at a certain point they said she just needs to go into all English. I

was always self-conscience; it was a time when you were exploring your identity as a 12-

year-old in 6th grade and then you had this to add on (learning English). I always felt like

dumb, I felt very stupid because I didn't know English even though I was a very bright

student in Spanish. I think there are a lot of times where if I'm made or feel like I don't

know something, or someone makes a comment, or my husband would say something, or

like try to teach me something new, or give me an explanation, I get triggered. And I'm

like, "I'm not stupid, I have two Masters, I'm now getting a PhD, you're treating me like

an idiot!" And he's like, "no, I'm really just trying to show you." I find a lot of moments

when I'm like oh, I see why I utter certain things out loud. I'll catch myself thinking like

oh, I'm only saying this because of what happened to me when I was younger. I'm an

over-thinker but I am constantly reflecting. I think I'm not good at moving on. When I

have moved on, in a sense, I haven't really moved on.

Precious continued reflecting on how she has tried to de-escalate situations with a staff

member when they pushed boundaries. She commented vigorously:

I just listen. Agree to disagree, and find common understanding if we are in posing views.

But if a person comes to me and I can't get them to de-escalate…..it's gotten to the point

where I've asked people to like step out of my office and come back when you are

calmer. There was an incident where I verbalized in a very stern way, like, "this is what

it is, you can love it, if you keep coming at me the way you are coming you are going to

keep getting this response! This is not me; this is a result of what you keep doing so

check yourself!" There was no way around it.

Precious also reflected on how she allows team members to offer her feedback about her

leadership:

Staff members can come in person and be honest. It can be informal. My leadership team

gives me feedback. There is always someone that says you can improve in

communication…..everyone wants to be communicated to differently and so like I just

haven't found a way to hit on all modalities I guess.

Through self-reflection Cassandra was also able to pinpoint the root of her insecurities as a

leader.

Cassandra offered her truth through tears:

My thinking can be a little impulsive because I am a little impulsive. However, I've

learned to slow down and really try to get to the root cause of some of my actions and

behaviors. And the more that I've learned and reflected, there is sometimes fear,

hesitation and self-doubt that I have. Being a former social worker it's like…. being in

the field of education I always hesitate because I'm like maybe I don't know content

enough. I always have that doubt, not knowing the content, but I've done this for seven or

eight years. I think the fear goes back to our family, to where we were growing up, it

goes back to probably that child that was scared and I kinda suppressed my own feelings.

Cassandra continued self-reflecting as a leader and made further connections to her

childhood. She said:

When staff criticizes me, negative Debbie downers, ugh, it just gets to me. It's like let's

look at some of the positive, we can't just focus on the negative. I often ask myself: "why

is this bothering you Cassandra?" I feel the judging…. it gets difficult and it goes back to

those young years of feeling judged. I wanted to be perfect and that has created a little

bit of anxiety in me! It goes back to where I was young and couldn't express that.

John talked about his self-reflection process as a leader. He discussed:

Reflection is huge, meaning, admitting I messed up or thinking I shouldn't act this way or

think this way. I've never been afraid to tell anybody, whether it's a classroom teacher, or

supervisor, that hey you know what, after thinking about this, I think I messed up. I don't

think I made the right choice. I made whatever choice I made with the information I had

at the time. Had I known x, y, or z I likely would have chosen something different. I

think I do a lot of self-reflection on the way home from work where I think about my day,

how did it go, what I could have done better. Also, I try to be self-aware when I feel

myself becoming frustrated or irritated with someone. There is likely a reason and it's easy to look pass those reasons and just kinda make judgment on somebody because they are acting a certain way. For example, I've had parents come in and they are upset because they felt like the classroom teacher mistreated their son or daughter. I try to sit here objectively and listen. I try to put myself into that position. And sometimes, even if I don't necessarily completely agree, I think it's important to acknowledge those feelings of the parent and at least bring it to the awareness of the teacher, saying hey, this is how the parent is feeling.

Sarah shared how self-reflection on her personal life allowed her to make some changes. This reflection permitted her to identify parenting she modeled after her mother. She realized her parenting needed modification in order to offer her children emotional support they longed for. Sarah disclosed:

You know I think innately ever since a young child, I have been self-aware to a detriment and um not until probably my professional career did I do that a lot more in a positive way. I really do think a lot about decisions that I make in my job and personal life and why I am making that decision. [I ask myself] was it something that I grew up with and that's why I'm immediately making that decision. Am I trying to really think in a different way about those deficiencies I had in life and do something different with that?

Sarah continued by carefully and emotionally pausing as tears welled in her eyes, she disclosed:

An example. My daughter has had mental health this last year and she was hospitalized and I think up until that point and time, I did a lot of things that my mom use to do. I didn't think at the time that I was that similar to her but upon reflection about how I need to make a change…..because my daughter tried committing suicide three times. That just

spurred my thinking of what am I doing? What is it that I am making decisions on, that

might be impacting someone like her (my daughter) who need a different style or a

different approach to things? My thinking about discipline was quick and swift, it was the

way I was raised. I do think a lot about how I was raised and how it has formulated me as

a parent and leader.

She also reflected on how she has grown in changing her beliefs when specific staff

members push boundaries. She noted:

When I was younger (in my career) I thought pushing back wasn't a good thing and that

it meant I wasn't doing my job. I thought we should all be working together. The older

I've become, the more I've read and reflected…..there are voices that need to be around

the table pushing our thinking around systems, and there should be push back. So if the

leadership team is very diverse and we are having a real in-depth discussion, I think that's

good.

Yaya reflected and connected how living in an abusive home caused her to thrive as a student.

Also, her self-reflection allowed her to connect inconsistencies in her belief about her leadership

capability. Critical analyses of her emotions regarding her marriage also brought greater insight

connected to her formative years.

She mentioned:

In those formative years, I was making it my business to not be a problem for my parents.

What I mean by that is I wanted to be a good student. Now, when I look back on it, I

wanted to deflect us aways from the violence and the abusiveness to ooh look, she is

getting straight As' she is a good student, so that continued. I became intrinsically

motivated to do well in school. My father said, in those formative years, you will one day

be a doctor. So wanting to live up to the positive things that I did get from my parents like education, and not wanting to let them down, all of that played a part in me being a good high school student and actually a life-long learner. I started thinking about um the inconsistencies of, I am an educated woman. When I was an assistant principal, I was like, can I be a principal? So on one hand I would say I am a smart woman and then I started to question, can I do the principal job? Even right now I'm a principal and I have my superintendent endorsement and somebody reached out to me and said hey, apply for this director's position and I was like, um, can I do that, am I qualified? There are some inconsistencies (in my thinking) and somedays I'm like, I'm smart, I can do it and then other days it's like, can I? When I became those things (assistant principal and principal), my perception changed. This isn't what I thought, it isn't hard. I'm trying to examine if some of these inconsistencies are deeply rooted issues from childhood, from people not expecting much from this poor girl from Rosewood. As an educator, reflection has become a part of my professional practice, like, being aware of biases. That is always in the forefront when I am evaluating teachers. For example, I'm giving her this rating but is that fair? I think about it in my current marriage, it's like, I'm upset but am I upset with you or am I upset about something that happened at work and am I bringing this into the home? Another example. I'm seeking counsel for my marriage, right, and so I said, "should I get a divorce, and I'm asking myself, 'have I done enough?'" Then I say, oh, but I'm a runner. And then I recognize that I'm a runner when things aren't well, then I run. I connect that back to my mother. She was in an abusive marriage and I wanted her to leave and she never would. So now I feel like I'm over compensating and I'm running because my mom didn't run.

Theme Four: Mental Exhaustion.

During this study, participants were asked to describe their psychological well-being as leaders and how they mastered their well-being. People who have learned healthy ways in managing emotions like stress and anger are likely to experience greater psychological well-being (Brackett & Simmons 2015). Without hesitation, the majority of participants said they were mentally exhausted as school leaders because of all the responsibilities and decision making needed throughout the day. Aspects of their personal life compounded this phenomenon. Mental exhaustion is characterized by a decline in cognitive performance and deterioration of subjective well-being (Boksem & Tops, 2008) as well as intrinsic motivation (Martin et al., 2015). If participants did not mention mental exhaustion, they noted as leaders they were, "just going through the motions" or expressed "tiredness of adults" not taking ownership of their responsibilities.

Precious noted:

I feel like there really isn't ever down time. Every minute is accounted for. I'm like running like a chicken without a head, from responsibility to responsibility. I feel like this year more than ever we are wearing many hats, even more from before that I never thought was a part of my role as a principal. I would joke and say where was this in my application, in my roles and responsibilities? I'm constantly like, I can't shut my brain off. There's always something that you have to be thinking about and there is always that fear of like I'm forgetting this. I don't feel like an expert in any area right now. So I feel like because of it, I'm just exhausted. It's just a lot and not enough time to process those things. It's a very stressful job. To keep my emotions in control or in check, I work out 3 to 4 times a week. I disconnect. I just shut it off and do like a self-care. Like being with

my loved ones, my babies, my husband. My pastor, he's like a phone call away. If I ever need to chat about something or feeling overwhelmed, he's my therapist.

Cassandra noted that she was not mentally exhausted when it came to leading a school.

She admitted:

Even though its challenging, I feel like I'm just going through the motions. I'm comfortable. It's not stressing me as much and I think it's because of my yoga and meditation. To manage stress, I do deep breathing. Exercise. I go to a boot camp three times a week. I'm aware that if I do not exercise, it affects my emotions and I get depressed.

When speaking about mental exhaustion, John shared an insightful illustration:

The amount of work and things that are put on my plate negatively impacts my emotions. I've had the same size plate here (referring to work) for three years. Nothing ever gets taken off the plate there is just more put onto the plate. And it's so hard to pick and choose whatever is on the plate, what I have to prioritize because the message I get often is, "well, this is important." Any and everything on my plate is important. So, when I look at my plate, I think about kids, and then after the kids I think about my staff and how this is going to impact them. That kinda determines my priority for the kids and then my staff. I'm exhausted, absolutely. It ebbs and flows. It just depends on what is going on here at school and home and sometimes the combination of the two. The truth is I could use an additional 24 hours in a day, I can use a ten-day week, there is just never enough time. I struggle with that because I try to give everything that I do my best and sometimes I can't give my best to everything. Certainly I feel exhausted, I think it's just the stress

and stress negatively impact me. In order to master stress, I work-out and talk with my reflective partners: my assistant principal, my wife, and family, like my parents.

Sarah's experience of mental exhaustion mirrored Precious. She too felt things were spinning out of control at her school, which inevitably caused mental stress and anguish.

Sarah communicated:

I felt the weight of the world. Things were unraveling. Families in need, trying to support but putting a band aid on things you know you couldn't fix. To manage my stress, I go walking outside, hiking and biking. Being in the presence of nature….. When I do that I have more energy and focus. Being at church or with my church community volunteering, that is also wonderful for my mental health. Being in the presence of people, God, Jesus, all those pieces. In the future, I want to talk with a therapist. I'm giving time to everything else and not to myself.

Yaya expressed her exhaustion in terms of tiredness, irritation, or frustration. These emotions as evidenced by her details stemmed from adult behavior within her school and marital woes.

She revealed:

I would say I'm tired, not exhausted. Tired of the adult issues and having to have courageous conversations with people about basic things like, your start time is 3:00 p.m. and you can't come in at 3:22 p.m.! And if I look at your attendance for the month, you have not gotten to work on time any day, that's a problem!

The personal part of tired is in my marriage, because it's just like, ok, you don't get it and we are two years in and you don't see the sense of urgency. With my self-care, I don't get to the point of exhaustion. What positively impacts my emotions and mental health is

positive connections I make with people; when people pour into your life and vice-versa.

Traveling, laughter, having fun, massages, wine, having an outlet.

Theme Five: Compromised Ethics.

When asked what guides participants' decisions at their schools or what is most important, all participants said, "students, kids." However, all participants shared incidents of compromising their ethics which negatively impacted students. With the ethical management framework (Geva, 2006) the motivational domains were used to identify whether or not participants self-interests undermined their motivation to act on moral judgments. The domains used were: *no-problem problems,* when an individual knows their moral obligation and has the will and ability to fulfill them; *moral laxity*, the failure to identify particular opportunities and take significant steps toward realizing or accomplishing a moral goal; and *compliance problems*, knowing the moral obligations but experiences difficulty in fulfilling them which requires a strategy for reinforcing moral conduct. As shared by all participants, except one – Yaya, pressure was one of the main deciding factors in their lapse of judgment.

Precious noted:

"Yes, I compromised my ethics when I was in a different district but its why I left. It started clashing with my own moral compass."

Cassandra openly shared how she has and continues to compromise her values regarding student academic support. She frustratedly admitted, as evidenced by her tone and body gesture:

Yes, I have compromised my ethics. We have a two-way program with mono-lingual English speakers and Spanish speakers. As a leader, I know the English speakers always complain more and have more things to say in the two-way program. We have always tried to put the best dual language teachers with the English speakers, where that should

not be. Our neediest kids are the ones in the one-way (i.e., they come from Spanish

speaking homes). We should be putting the experienced teachers in the one-way; and

I'm mad at myself that we have been doing that. We have been putting in the one-way

class, mainly new teachers and teachers who have been in the district for many, many

years. The district, shuffles the lemons (the teachers) and sends them from one school to

the other.

Reflecting on his decision-making and whether or not he compromised his ethics, John

admitted, "Yes. I think definitely in the beginning of my administrative career. Before, I

might not voice an opinion or concern about something I feel is unjust now."

Sarah reflectively shared her thoughts about how compromising her ethics had a rippling

effect within her school community.

She disclosed:

I think decisions I have made sometimes on a quick basis was because my boss said to do

some things. I'm not going to blame him, I'm going to blame myself because I should

have stopped, slowed down because I was still the leader of the building. It impacted and

hurt my families (i.e., students and parents) low income, bi-lingual or dual families that

maybe didn't get the message or it impacted them. It kept reinforcing this power-oriented

system, one that I was trying to stop and spent a lot of difficult conversations to get there.

Then all of sudden we make this one decision and I didn't think enough and I made it and

then you saw just this rippling effect of families going, "Wow, because you did that, I

can't take part in this, I can't do this." It impacts you as a leader and how do you keep

going and not do this again.

Yaya remembered distinctly compromising her ethics to support a staff member. Rolling her eyes, she said regrettably:

> Yes! There was an employee who was out of order and he put his hands on a student liked yanked him. When the parent called about the employee, I covered for him. I turned it around as if it wasn't what the student said it was. It was a huge mistake because that behavior, it happened again. I was like oh, so me doing that for you to teach you a lesson that it wasn't serious, the child wasn't hurt, and showing that I support you, you didn't learn from it. You use that to do it again rather than curve or change your behavior. I had real conversations with the employee, saying, you can't do that!

Subtheme: Pressure. All but one participant admitted to compromising their ethics due to pressure from their boss - school district superintendent, Union, or parents. Precious remembered feeling pressure from her district. She said, "the district was having us do things that I couldn't just keep doing. It was not what I signed up for. It wasn't best for our students and their families."

Cassandra openly shared:

> Our Union is very powerful here; and I feel that this doesn't jive with me. We know as administrators that a lot of times those English speakers are going to give us a harder time so we put the best dual language teachers in there. English speaking homes give us a harder time, they are constantly complaining, sending emails. Most of them are white, or their primary language is English. This is an ethical issue.

John reflected and shared:

I was just so focused on….my boss said do this so I got to do it right. Everybody

says it's all about the kids, we do this for the kids… the longer I'm around, I

realize that's really not always what it's about, that's not true which is sad.

Sarah noted:

I feel like there have been multiple times in leadership that ….. I guess that's the

thing that surprised me the most when I got into leadership is just how political it

is. The higher up you go…. you go into it thinking, you are going to do good

things, your values are going to align then all of a sudden you start seeing people

above you making decisions that are not aligning with your values.

Theme Six: Better Equipped with Prior Knowledge.

During the interviews, all participants noted they lacked self and leadership training. A

key element of this study was the implementation of a workshop based on participants' interview

responses. After the workshop, participants were given a leader's evaluation form outlining this

study's sub-question: "do you believe earlier training in self and leadership development would

have better equipped you to effectively lead others, if so, how?" Below are the findings of the

workshop evaluation as reported by the participants.

Precious stated:

Most definitely because it would have allowed me to build on emotional intelligence, and

to be able to respond to situations in a more mature way, less reactive. I loved learning

about how who we are as individuals, impact who we are as leaders. This workshop

taught me that, 1. I need to learn to be more confident and trust myself, 2. model trusting

relationships to my staff, 3. find confidants, 4. be okay with not being liked by everyone

and stop listening to the toxic environment. I want to be a mature mentor to others, and I need to stop using my mentors to reaffirm me but instead allow them to guide me.

Cassandra explained:

I believe earlier training in self-development and leadership would have equipped me to be a more effective leader. Knowing yourself is essential in order to relate and empower others to grow their leadership skills. Being aware of your emotional intelligence will help you to be a more effective leader. I realized I have to be true to myself in all settings. I believe I am an assertive communicator. I learned I have to be an assertive communicator in all areas of my life. I learned that I need to work on being transparent versus honest and not be offensive. My faith, will continue to drive all the decisions in my life.

Sarah descriptively noted:

Yes, I do believe earlier training in self-development and leadership would have better equipped me in being an effective leader. When I started leadership, I compartmentalized my work and my personal life. I viewed them as two separate entities. They are not two separate entities. When I entered into leadership, I was anxious, led more by my emotions, felt the need to control situations, and confidence in my mind was never letting anyone see me struggle. I felt I needed to have certain leadership qualities to be successful such as having a vision, working with others, having difficult conversations, and making tough decisions. I was trying to achieve those qualities without understanding who I really was. Leadership is not about a checklist of qualities it's about knowing who you are and how that impacts the decisions you make every day. As I leave this workshop, I want to continue to push myself to be more open and transparent in sharing my values and beliefs, choosing

to say what is right even when it goes against popular belief. I need to make some disciplined choices for helping myself grow and heal. When I feel better, I do better for others. I need to figure out ways to have my administrative assistant hold me accountable to my values and beliefs. Releasing control and building a strong bond with her is something I've been working on. By being in the presence of other leaders, during this workshop, and sharing personal reflections and experiences, I grew as a leader.

Yaya mentioned:

Absolutely! Although I received self-development training through my teacher preparation program, I believe that it would have been very powerful to revisit these topics in my administration preparation program, to further develop me as an educator. I really want to explore if there are differences between what I believe about myself and what others believe about me. For example, I believe my communicative style is assertive, but does my husband think I'm aggressive? Am I transparent or honest? I need to strengthen my honesty in that sometimes I omit things to protect people, which translates into dishonesty.

A more detailed description of the workshop is noted in the summary section of this chapter, along with an outline of the workshop (see Appendix I).

Themes Summary

The six themes that emerged from the interview data produced broad descriptive statements that reflected the overall understanding of the participants' data in response to the research question and sub question (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020). Theme one, *parental influence* described how caregivers, specifically parents and grandparents assisted in shaping and molding participants' beliefs, values, and emotions which they carried into their adulthood and school leadership. Theme two, *faith*, allowed participants to reflect on the main intrinsic factor that

encouraged and guided them through some of their life's greatest challenges. The third theme, *self-reflection connected to leadership*, permitted leaders to deeply reflect on who they had become based on parental influence and their faith. This reflection allowed participants to articulate how parental influence and faith had been exemplified in both their personal and professional life. The fourth theme, *mental exhaustion* emerged from participants realizing how the magnitude of responsibilities on their job compounded with homelife, has affected their psychological well-being. They also, described how self-care combats their mental exhaustion. The fifth theme, *compromised ethics*, really allowed participants to come to grips with behaviors that did not align to their moral compass. They discussed how pressure from their leader was a driving force in compromising their ethics. The sixth and final theme, *better equipped with prior knowledge* spoke to participants' belief that prior training in self-awareness and leadership is essential for personal and professional success.

Workshop

In addition to interviewing participants, the researcher created and facilitated a workshop based on participants responses to interview questions surrounding self and leadership. The workshop added to the study by offering topics, tools (the frameworks), and strategies aligned to challenges in the areas of: emotional intelligence competencies, ethical management, personality, communicative styles, and living a balanced life. These challenges were shared and made known by participants during their interviews. The goal of the workshop was for participants to walk away with understanding more of their intrinsic selves and how it connected to leading others.

The three-hour workshop was held at an elementary school not belonging to any of the participants. The workshop was conducted in a resource classroom. Rectangle lab tables were positioned in a U formation for visibility between all participants and the researcher. The

classroom had six large windows that allowed the sun to peak in from time to time. The participants connected with one another and some knew each other from previous districts. Excitement of seeing other principals, along with attending a workshop specifically designed for them, filled the atmosphere. At the opening of the workshop, participants were able to give a background on their journey to the principalship. At the end, as one principal put it, *when you don't receive self-development training at the beginning of your leadership role, unfortunately, that leaves you to learn from trial and error which is not the most effective way.*

Connection to Research Question

School leaders have an immense responsibility for the learning of all students within their schools. Staff members look to their leaders to create an environment of shared values and beliefs. Also, school leaders are expected to know their own professional strengths and needs as well as the strength and needs of their staff (DiPaola & Thomas, 2003; Lynch, 2017).

The purpose of this study was to examine how a school leader's lived experiences and intrinsic knowledge influenced them as self-leaders in the areas of emotional intelligence, ethical decision making and consequently leaders within their own organization. By conducting this study, detailed and personal accounts of participants lived experiences were gathered from their formative years to adulthood. To explore this phenomenon, the researcher posed a central research question and sub-question. The following section describes how the findings address these questions.

Research Question: How does a leader's formative years influence self-identity andleadership of others?

This study's research question and sub-question allowed participants to dig deeply, and pull-out truths on how their formative years shaped their self-identity and leadership within their

schools. Four themes emerged from the findings directly addressing the central research question. Participants talked about how their childhood, guided by their *parent's influence* directly shaped their thinking, emotions, and interaction with others.

John noted, "I could easily hear my parents voice in the back of my mind saying, 'hey this is not how I raised you'; or 'this is a good idea,' or 'continue to work hard, I'm proud of you.'" Yaya shared, two opposing influences from her father which shaped her thinking. "My father said in my formative years, 'you will one day be a doctor' and so wanting to live up to the positive things I did get from him, like education, I received the doctorate degree.'" Conversely, she said, "I witnessed my father completely shut the world out. I learned that from him, I wasn't trying to pick that up but I picked that up along the way." She continued, "and so, I still do it where I go quiet. I'll just shut down completely."

Sarah remembered, "My dad, I think developed me at a very young age to make my own decisions but also nourished me in the right way for a young girl and I think I grew up thinking, "I can do anything!" Precious candidly talked about her relationship with her mom, "my mom, and I don't have, never had a great relationship. I don't feel like she influenced me in a positive way. What I really learned from her are the don'ts. Do not do this, be a better person."

Most participants identified themselves as having *faith* in God, Jesus, or a Higher being. Participants shared how their faith *identified* who they were in the midst of difficulties and fear, how faith centered them in peace and assurance, and how the church community impacted mental health. Cassandra shared, "one of my values is faith. Faith is a big one. You know it was always that faith and hope that things would get better. Growing up in a Catholic home there was a lot of prayer." She concluded by saying, "there was somebody, that Higher being that was going to help us and it did. There were hard times and we were able to survive, we were able to

overcome." Yaya, confidently said, "knowing Jesus, let me know my better days were coming. That is what sustained me as a child living in an abusive home." Precious, shared, "the concept of being Christ-like and trying to be Christ-like always centers me." Sarah reflected, "being at church or with my church community volunteering, that is wonderful for my mental health."

Participants went through the process of *self-reflection tied to leadership*. They shared accounts of how they reflected on their thoughts, emotions, and behavior when leading others. Some participants connected this to their formative years. John shared, "I remember, there was lots of arguing and yelling between my parents. Growing up in the house I grew up in certainly had an impact on who I am. In relationships there were times I certainly argued and yelled." Yaya mentioned, "there are behaviors I participate in and I know it's wrong; it's one-upping on people. If a staff member who asks me for something but was mean to me last week, I'm going to say *no to you* just because." She continues, "It's like the petty B comes out….. and then I go back and say, God is not please with that behavior that is not what He would have me to do."

Compromised ethics pointed to participants' actions that compromised their values and beliefs which had a negative impact on individuals within their school community. Participants indicated that *students are first priority* and is the deciding factor of all they do. However, participants shared incidents that did not place students first. Yaya shared how she compromised her ethics when an employee, "yanked" a student. When the student reported the incident, Yaya was dishonest, by her own omission, because, "the child was not hurt." This left the student unprotected, as Yaya experienced in her formative years. Cassandra, talked about how school for her was a safe haven, due to her *self-reported traumatic experiences*. However, she transparently shared that she is not providing the necessary support for students, due to pressure at work, and is *mad at herself for doing this*. She attributed her lack of courage of speaking up

to, "those young years where there was a lot of anxiety in me…. I couldn't express, that has affected me."

Sub-Question: How Does Training in Building of Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Management Positively Impact Self-Reported Efficacy of Leaders?

This study's workshop was developed based on participants responses to the interview questions. During the interviews participants shared details pertaining to their formative years, self-identity, leadership, emotional competencies, and ethical decision making. The participants acknowledged how their formative years greatly impacted their self and social awareness and self and relationship management. To reiterate, Montanye (2017) posited, the word *impact* in qualitative research, refers to data generated from participants who freely express in their own words, how they perceive they have been affected by a particular phenomenon. Also, participants acknowledge how pressure from their boss played a role in them compromising their ethics.

All participants shared how their parents' display of emotions or lack thereof, impacted how they mimicked emotions in both their personal and professional lives. Based on these shared testimonies, the researcher designed a workshop covering topics on: formative years and genetics, neuroscience, metacognition, emotional intelligence, ethical management, communication styles, a leaders' balanced life and the ideal leader (See Appendix). These topics were discussed to support leaders in critically examining each concept to garner insightful perspective on the *how* and *why* of who they have become and its influence on their leadership. Additionally, strategies on changed thinking and self-awareness and management for implementation of new concepts and appropriate decision making were offered during the workshop.

After the workshop, participants answered the study's sub-question. One theme emerged from the findings directly addressing the sub-question: *better equipped with prior knowledge*. Participants overwhelmingly responded positively to the workshop. All participants noted how training in self-identity, emotional intelligence interconnected with ethical management and leadership is critical for novice and experienced leaders.

Precious noted:

"most definitely, earlier training would have allowed me to build on emotional intelligence, and be able to respond to situations in a more mature way, less reactive. I loved learning how who we are as individuals, impact who we are as leaders.

Cassandra shared:

"I believe earlier training in self-development and leadership would have equipped me to be a more effective leader. Knowing yourself is essential in order to relate and empower others to grow their leadership skills."

Sarah said:

"leadership is not about a checklist of qualities it's about knowing who you are and how that impacts the decisions you make every day. By being in the presence of other leaders, during this workshop, I grew as a leader."

Yaya mentioned, self-development training would have been very powerful in my administration preparation program.

Conclusion

Chapter Four presented the findings from this phenomenological study on participants as self and school leaders. Six themes and three subthemes emerged from this study. Four themes directly answered the central research question and one theme directly answered the sub-

research question. The context of the workshop positively supported the participants' interview

responses as reported by the participants.

Chapter 5 – DISCUSSION

In order for school leaders to effectively develop, cultivate and lead teachers and students, the next generation of leaders, understanding oneself is paramount to this phenomenon. This research and its findings are immeasurably important to the field of education because it allow leaders to identify and understand the underlying factors which make up their intrinsic design - thinking, emotions, ethics, and decision-making. However, this study not only benefit educational leaders but goes beyond the educational leadership domain. In fact, this study interconnects with societal leadership. Leadership as a whole must be re-examined on a grander scale because character flaws and leadership mishaps adversely affect all people. If not acknowledged and corrected, these flaws and mishaps within leaders, can cause followers to mimic and even justify their inappropriate thinking and behaviors.

This qualitative study showed how leaders are influenced by their formative years, values, beliefs, and overall lived experiences, and this phenomenon is not exclusive to school leaders. Although credentialing is one important aspect of leadership qualification, self-identity (personal values, goals, self-knowledge, and one's psychological state), is a significant indicator on how a person will lead others. When leaders are able to understand how their self-identity interconnects with others, they are more apt to cultivate self-exploration within others for healthier personal and societal relationships.

Additionally, this study explored the lived experiences of school principals from their formative years to adulthood and how these experiences influenced their self-identity and leadership. Interest and minimal research conducted in this area led to examination of this phenomenon. To understand these experiences, five school principals from public schools in the Midwest were interviewed. Six themes emerged from both the interview and workshop data

which described these experiences. Five themes directly connected to the central and sub-question of this study: *parental influence, faith, self-reflection connected to leadership, compromised ethics, and better equipped with prior knowledge*. In this final chapter, themes are discussed as it relates to research literature previously noted in this study, an analysis of the themes emerged from participants lived experience as it relates to the frameworks is discussed, implication for practice, and recommendations for further research is discussed.

Themes Connected to Literature

Although researchers have conducted a substantial amount of work in key areas of school leadership, research has not been conducted on the various aspects of what influences a person's leadership as discussed in this study. The research question: *how does a leader's formative years influence self-identity and leadership of others*, examined participant's adolescent years and self-identity and how these factors influenced how they led emotionally and ethically. However, it is important to note scholarly work on these constructs have been studied in isolation as it relates to school leaders. This section discusses the themes emerged from the participant's lived experiences as it relates to literature and this study's frameworks, *emotional intelligent competencies*, (See Table 1, chapter 2) and *ethical management* (See Table 2, chapter 2). These frameworks allowed participants to connect concepts to learned behavior stemmed from their lived experiences. After discussing key points of participants lived experiences aligned with each theme and framework, the researcher offers a succinct summation of interpretation and application.

Parental Influence Connected to Literature

There has been considerable research on the multitude of parental influences that shape the process of child development (Taylor et al., 2004). Yet, not much is known about how those

influences impact a child's adulthood in the areas of emotional intelligent competencies and ethical decision-making. The first theme, *parental influence* described the shared experiences of participants who discussed how their formative years played a significant role in shaping their beliefs, emotional health, and leadership ability. As shared by the participants, some of these lived experiences negatively impacted their emotional well-being. These experiences aligned to previous research. Childhood experiences affect individual health in adulthood (Daines, et al., 2021). For example, individuals who experience numerous adverse childhood experiences early in their childhood are at risk for developing depression, and anxiety, as they mature into adulthood (Chartier, et al., 2010).

Participants openly shared how throughout their formative years, specifically their parents' parenting, negatively influenced their emotional well-being and interaction with others in their adolescent years and areas of adulthood. These interactions included both homelife and workplace as school leaders. Some interactions consisted of exuding defense mechanisms, anxiety, or difficulty in self-regulation. These findings support previous research. Perry (2004) explained, early childhood, a time of great opportunity can make children very vulnerable to negative experiences such as: inappropriate or abusive caregiving, a lack of nurturing, unpredictable stress or persisting fear. Family studies have shown that the rearing environment is subject to genetic influence (de Zeeuw, et al., 2020; Vinkhuyzen et al., 2010).

Participants also shared how their parent's underdeveloped emotional competence (self and social awareness and self-regulation as evidence by verbal, emotional and physical abuse) influenced their personality, behavior, and stifled emotional development in certain areas of their adulthood. Paninchukunnath (2008) noted a person's intrinsic identity is intertwined with their emotions, connected directly to the limbic system which controls the basic emotions. Perry

(2004) shared how parents play a critical role in the development of their child's emotions which shapes early and determines who they will become. Nonetheless, participants showed resilience by overcoming extreme traumatic experiences.

Gartland, et al., (2019) mentioned, resiliency are positive developmental outcomes in the face of adversity or stress in children who come from harsh backgrounds and yet develop without damaging emotional scars. Participants discussed how their schools and extended family played a significant role in their resiliency. Prior research noted, the capacity of an individual to adapt to challenges depends on their connections to other people and systems external to the individual through relationships and other processes (Masten & Barnes, 2018).

Additionally, all participants shared how growing up their parents and grandparents greatly impacted their leadership ability as adults. Some parents were entrepreneurs and participants watched how their parents' managed employees and other aspects of the business. Others witnessed their parents persevere through challenging times using creative strategies on making ends meet with minimal resources. Previous research described how, the home environment acts as a perfect leadership-learning laboratory as boys and girls observe adults accomplishing long-term goals and working through daily tasks (Seago, 2012).

Analysis of Parental Influence

In theme one, *parental influence,* Precious candidly shared how her *traumatic* and *dramatic* upbringing and strained relationship with her mother negatively influenced her emotional competence in both *self* and *relationship management* as an adolescent and young adult. She shared, "if someone comes at you, you strike first; I was very guarded, I would navigate through life not trusting people." Precious disclosed how these similar defense mechanisms surfaced in her marriage, "when my husband is trying to teach me something new,

or give an explanation, I get triggered." Her emotional response is to yell and exclaim, "I am not an idiot!" She continues to validate her intellect by reminding her husband of her accomplishments, "I have two Masters, I'm now getting a Ph.D.!" Both her triggering and need for self-affirmation caused her to realize that she had not worked through the *emotional trauma* endured as a child within her home and as a 6th grader who was immersed in an environment that made her feel *stupid*.

In later reflection Precious noted in spite of these emotional challenges as a child, watching her father's work ethic instilled a motto in her to "get things done no matter what." This competence in self-management, *pursuing goals despite obstacles*, made Precious feel proud of her accomplishments as a leader. But, she is realizing this motto is not always the best when it comes to her personal health and overall well-being.

While Cassandra explained her overall childhood was full of love, she too witnessed how the adults in her life struggled with emotional competence in the area of self-management, *recognizing how your behavior impacts others* and relationship management, *handling conflict effectively*. This truth was expressed by the constant flow of tears as she reminisced on portions of her childhood, specifically the abuse she witnessed. Cassandra shared, "I grew up where things in the family, stayed in the family. We didn't talk about what happened in the family." This reality further deepened the trauma embedded in her soul because she was prohibited from expressing her emotions to others outside her home. As shared by Cassandra, this created a crippling view of her *self-confidence*, a competence in self-awareness. Similar to Precious, Cassandra noted, despite her dysfunctional upbringing, her dad taught her the value of hard work, responsibility by providing for the family, and overall perseverance. These character traits, instilled personal strength and grit which exudes in Cassandra's leadership today.

John shared how growing up his parents assisted in developing his self-awareness such as *recognizing how your behavior impact others*. He practiced this self-awareness in college and as a leader. He admits this self-awareness is an ongoing process. As with Precious and Cassandra, John witnessed verbal altercations between his parents which he admitted modeled how he engaged others growing up and in his adulthood. "My initial response to situations is to kinda bark at somebody." These actions speak to relationship management such as *handling conflict effectively*. Nevertheless, John's parents and grandfather's work ethic left an impression on him and positively impacted his leadership within his homelife as a husband, father, and school leader.

Sarah shared how she was raised in a loving home where her parents, particularly her father, taught her self-awareness in the area of *self-confidence* and self-management – *pursing goals and opportunities despite obstacles and setbacks*. The latter competence was strengthened in Sarah when her college fund was completely wiped out. She did not allow her father's choices, which created this dilemma, to negatively impact her post-secondary goals.

On the contrary, Sarah courageously shared how her mother's parenting negatively impacted how she reared her own daughters. This experience shed light on Sarah's competence in relationship management – *using sensitivity to another person's feeling to manage interactions successfully*. Gladly, she is learning how to manage her relationship with her daughters in a way which meets their emotional needs and mental well-being.

Yaya openly spoke about witnessing and enduring several layers of self-reported trauma - physical abuse, and murder of a close family member, compounded with her father refusing to allow her to grieve publicly. As explained in her own words, living with a traumatized parent, her father, caused Yaya to experience social-awareness, *picking up on the mood in the room*, in

an unhealthy manner. An unhealthy way is explained as, *walking, and talking gingerly around the agitated person.* A more specific example is Yaya trying to distract the negative culture within her home by academic achievement as a student, "I was trying to please my parents, by being a good student, to keep down this volatile environment I lived in." The impact of her father's mood, temperament and behavior caused Yaya to emotionally shut down which is still prevalent in her homelife and leadership as shared by Yaya.

Parental Influence Summation. Parents have a vital role in the overall development of their children, which has a lasting affect through adulthood (Daines, et al., 2021). In learning and understanding the complexity of parenting it can be said, there are no perfect parents who parent every situation well. Mothers and fathers often parent as they go along. Parents teach and guide their children with personal beliefs, emotions, and experiences, they have yet to explore and analyze themselves. It is critically imperative and necessary for individuals, specifically leaders, to intrinsically investigate, consider and acknowledge how their parents influenced their lives, good or bad. This is necessary in order for leaders to discover how these experiences will or have affected who they have become as self and organizational leaders. Finally, participants shared how growing up their parents and grandparents greatly impacted their leadership ability as adults. Also while participants shared how their parents missed the mark many times with affection, emotional competencies, and ethical parenting, it was clear through their acknowledgements, their parents positively influenced their overall lives as adults and leaders.

Faith Connected to Literature

The second theme *faith*, derived from participants reflecting on what assisted them in championing the difficult times growing up in their homes, or withstanding challenges as an adult and or school leader. Participants defined faith as a "spiritual connection" from within,

"believing in Jesus Christ" or "believing in something Higher." Research has mentioned, for many, religious faith is an important resource for health and well-being, one whose effects should not be underestimated (Koenig, 2020).

Several participants discussed how their faith and communion with God, heighten their self-awareness, kept them centered, managed their emotions, and calmed their anxiety. Malone and Dadswill (2018) shared, religion, spirituality, or belief provides a source of strength, comfort, hope, a sense of calm and peace of mind when experiencing challenges. Participants revealed how trusting Jesus and being around their church community was good for their mental health. This phenomenon aligned to other scholarship. Park (2007) noted, religious endeavors offer trust in God's love, spiritual support, and support from members of one's religious group. Furthermore, participants talked about how their faith assisted in their competency of self-management, *acting in congruence with your values*. Participants' searching within allowed spiritual excavation to uncover some of their hidden truths which was credited to their spirituality. Ushatikova et al., (2018) noted how religion puts very specific obligations to human morality.

Analysis of Faith

Reflecting on the theme *faith*, most participants openly and assuredly spoke about their faith, spiritual experiences, and fellowship with a community of believers. Some alluded to their faith as a lifeline during the most difficult times in their lives. Others as a sustaining strength.

Precious spoke about her faith in context of her adulthood. Having conversations with God created a positive intrinsic connection for Precious. She noted how her communion with God heightened her competence in self-awareness, *being aware of her emotional state* and self-management, *keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check*. She said, "anything where I

see God or hear Him or have conversations with Him are really positive for me." As she works through not allowing her emotions to take its own direction, she acknowledges her faith as the compass which keeps her *centered*.

Cassandra shared it was prayer which brought her through the hard times of growing up in an abusive home. Prayer helped her grow in self-management, *despite obstacles and setbacks, persevere.* She persevered in prayer as a child because at times, she saw her prayers answered.

Crediting it to her spirituality, Sarah is now in a place where she is regulating self-management, *acting in congruence with your values*. Through her acknowledgement, she is now making decisions aligned to her values as a leader. Searching within allowed spiritual excavation to uncover some of her hidden truths which enabled her to make appropriate decisions for both her family and those she leads.

As a child, Yaya's faith expressed hope in Jesus' ability to give her *better* days. Having faith allowed her to believe in what she could not see, a peaceful home environment, and a successful future. She too shared how faith is what carried her through her abusive upbringing.

Faith Summation. It is important for many people to understand their purpose and meaning of life. Faith and spiritual experiences are key to understanding this phenomenon. Adults and children tend to search for meaning, particularly during times of uncertainty (Azar, 2010). For many, faith is the navigator, which guides people toward their path and brings intrinsic healing and wellness in their spirit and mind. Religion are contemplative traditions, of meditation and prayer, which have the potential to change how the brain is wired (Davidson, 2021) therefore renewing one's mind.

Self-reflection Connected to Leadership Connected to Literature

The third theme, *self-reflection connected to leadership* discussed participants

metacognition process in their personal and professional life. They discussed how they reflected

on their decision making and actions and what they could have done and will do better or

differently. This finding is supported in literature. Murphy et al., (2021) noted metacognition is

a process individuals use in monitoring ongoing cognition so as to effectively control his or her

own behavior. Participants discovered through reflection how their leadership either positively or

negatively impacted stakeholders within their schools. These reflections often connected to the

participants formative years. Davis et al., (2010) supports this finding. He posits, a key factor in

effective leadership is a high degree of metacognition and awareness of the processes of one's

own thinking and the factors and conditions that influence it.

Through participants reflection, some admitted struggling with self-awareness and self-

confidence. These struggles impeded their ability to manage beliefs about themselves and others

and consequently their personal and professional relationships. Upon further reflection,

participants changed some of their thinking and adjusted their personal and leadership behavior

in a positive manner. Black (2016) believes metacognitive abilities of monitoring and adapting

cognition can impact aspects of a leader's capacity to develop. These may include a leader's self-

awareness and regulation of learning from one's experiences or understanding of influencing

others.

Continuing, participants discussed how deep reflection on self-awareness, caused them to

admit to others where they went wrong. These truths discovered through metacognitive

awareness allowed participants to address dilemmas in a more prudent manner. This supports

Black's (2016) argument. He argued leaders who have high metacognition awareness would be

better able to adjust the way they approach leadership challenges and maximize developmental opportunities. Paninchukunnath, (2008) posited leadership works through emotions and emotional intelligence is concerned with how leaders handle themselves and their relationships with others.

Other participants' self-reflection caused them to acknowledge inconsistent beliefs about their ability to lead. With one thought, *confidence* was the driving force, while another thought, *self-doubt* stirred disbelief. This angst, stemmed from their formative years of people not believing in their ability to succeed based on their socio-economic background or self-reported traumatic childhood experiences. Research has discovered metacognition awareness can improve the accuracy of the leaders' belief about themselves by allowing them to identify inconsistencies and to adjust these beliefs so they are more representative of reality (Black, 2016).

Analysis of Self-reflection Connected to Leadership

Self-reflection, the third theme allowed participants to look inwardly discovering who they had become as self-leaders and leaders within their organization. This powerful ability caused participants to discuss their emotional growth while simultaneously peeling back layers of emotional wounds. These truths made meaningful connections to the participants.

Precious' traumatic experience of being immersed in an environment where she was not fully prepared caused great insecurity. Through her own admission, she is yet struggling with self-awareness, in the area of *self-confidence* and social-awareness, *hearing what the other person is really saying*. This is evidenced by her shouting, *I'm not stupid, I'm not an idiot* when challenged in recognizing her husband's support versus demeaning or attacking her intellect.

Although Cassandra has been in a leadership position for the past eight years, she yet

struggles with thoughts of, "fear, hesitation and self-doubt" as a leader. She connected her lack of *self-confidence* to her childhood. Experiencing emotional trauma triggered by the abuse she witnessed caused her to wonder if she is enough.

John discussed how reflecting on his self-awareness, *recognizing how your behavior impacts others,* caused him to admit to others where he went wrong. Self-awareness in *handling conflict effectively*, with teachers and parents, caused relational growth within his school leadership. Honing these abilities assisted him in supporting other adults with emotional growth.

As a mother, Sarah reflected and realized maternal parenting she received as a child did not fit the mode and needs of her children. Her parenting, she believes could have contributed to her daughter's multiple suicide attempts (gratefully, her daughter survived each time). Sarah's reflection has allowed her to better navigate relationship management, *using sensitivity to another person's feelings to manage interactions successfully*. This emotional competency is critical as Sarah strives to understand the complexities of her daughter's need and overall well-being.

Yaya shared through reflection how she is aware of her struggles with *self-confidence*, and its possible root. She wondered if the root stemmed from people in her childhood not expecting much from a child who came from a poverty-stricken community. She also reflected on how she struggles with self-management, *keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check*. Her reflection ranged from, withholding opportunities from staff members if they were mean to her to admitting wanting a divorce after two years of marriage. Although Yaya struggles with these competencies, she asks herself the necessary questions to understand its premise. For example, connecting her thought of *flight* in her marriage to her mother not leaving her abusive

marriage. Reflection on self-awareness, *recognizing how your behavior impacts others* is something Yaya continues to work on in her homelife and school community.

Self-reflection Connected to Leadership Summation. Intrinsic growth is impossible without the art of metacognition, being aware of your thinking and the *why* behind it. It is important to note this process of self-awareness through thinking cannot be done consistently in isolation. It takes unbiased thought partners to propel individuals to analyze and align their beliefs and actions with emotional competency and ethical decision making.

Mental Exhaustion Connected to Literature

Participants disclosed how responsibilities as a leader combined with homelife, contributed to stress and *mental exhaustion*, the fourth theme. The inability to fix problems within their school communities, left one participant feeling *weighty* in their mind. Mental exhaustion conjured anxiety, fear, and frustration within participants as they navigated their leadership and homelife responsibilities. Psychological well-being is foundational to who we are and is linked to physical health, biological regulation, and neuroscience (Ryff, 2014).

Participants also discussed how they emotionally responded to staff members when staff treated them in an adverse manner. Participants noted how these encounters negatively impacted their psyche. These emotional responses consisted of voices being raised or participants simply *saying no* to staff members because as the leader, they held the reins. Paninchukunnath, (2008) stated, the limbic system's design lets other people change our emotions and hence, people *catch* feelings from one another. Participants divulged when staff members have hurt them, they remembered it and used it against them at the opportune moment. Research informs us how memory of experiences arouses our emotions. Housed in our limbic system, is the amygdala, our emotional responses, and the hippocampus, our memory. Both work in concert by attaching emotions to memory (Paninchukunnath, 2008), causing emotional responses when triggered by memories.

However, to combat mental exhaustion and stress, participants discussed exercising, being in nature, and spending time with family and friends. These outlets often brought a great deal of reprieve. As noted by previous research, people who have learned healthy ways to manage emotions like stress and anger are likely to experience greater psychological well-being (Brackett & Simmons 2015). Participants also considered incorporating therapy as mental self-care, and a sustainable way of committing to long term well-being. Huppert (2009) posited, psychological well-being is a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time but being able to manage negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being.

Analysis of Mental Exhaustion

Although exhilarating and rewarding, the role of school principals may impose exhausting and overwhelming job-related demands (Skaalvik, 2020). Due to the magnitude and role of school leaders, many participants expressed mental burnout. This burnout described as exhaustion was intensified with balancing homelife.

Precious recognized how her job played a key role in experiencing mental exhaustion. The competence of self-awareness, specifically, *paying attention to how others influence your emotional state*, allowed Precious to combat mental exhaustion with intentional self-care. Unplugging from others, working out and occasional talks with her pastor are supports she believe quiets her brain.

Cassandra admitted "going through the motions" mentally as a leader is not ideal, although it allows her to be less stressed. Being self-aware, *recognizing how your behavior impact others* is critical to personal and relational growth. When going through the motions, Cassandra recognizes she is not giving her best to her school community. To manage her stress, she engages in yoga and meditation which prevent feelings of depression.

John's illustration of having the same size plate to hold his ever increasing responsibilities has become progressively stressful mentally. This has challenged his self-management competence, *acting in congruence with your value*, when deciding on what is priority within his school. To resolve this dilemma, he posits adding hours to the day and days to the week to meet all his priorities which align to his values.

Sarah realized her mental exhaustion stemmed from the inability to fix problems within her school community. This left her feeling weighty. *Awareness* of her emotional state, propelled her to embrace nature and exercise which invigorated her. She mentioned how including therapy would be beneficial for her self-care.

Yaya admitted individuals, in both her professional and private life impacted her mental state. This was expressed by her stating, "I'm tired of having courageous conversation with people about basic things and 'you don't get it, we are two years in'" referring to an employee and her husband respectively. This personal competence in self-awareness, *paying attention to how others influence your emotional state*, is still an area of growth for Yaya.

Mental Exhaustion Summation. Our emotions, influences our mental health (Paninchukunnath, 2008) and regulating ones' emotions is central to the success in life (Rock, 2009). When a leaders' emotional well-being is in a healthy place, they are susceptible to appropriate decision-making. This also enables leaders to create a healthy culture for those they have been entrusted to lead.

Compromised Ethics Connected to Literature

The fifth theme *compromised ethics*, emerged from participants sharing how their primary value as school leaders was always putting students first. When asked, *as a leader what guides your decision making*, participants responded by saying, *what's best for students, kids*. However, in early stages of their leadership and in their current leadership practices, participants acknowledged how they did not or do not live up to their intended values. They transparently

shared how they compromised their ethics as school leaders. Research notes, people engage in unethical actions on a daily basis, much more often than they care to admit (Gino et al., 2009; Jordan & Tenbrunsel, 2015; Shalvi et al., 2011). In fact, people wish to view themselves as moral beings (Dunning, 2007; Jordan & Tenbrunsel, 2015; Monin & Jordan, 2009) and take steps to maintain this belief when they behave immorally.

Participants communicated how the pressure of school politics, trying to impress their *boss* and even direct pressure from their boss, played significant roles in compromising their ethics. These decisions, as expressed by the participants, negatively impacted students, parents, and staff members. Participants had difficulty speaking up against situations recognized as unethical behavior. As novice administrators, some did not possess strategies on enforcing moral conduct in an already toxic environment. Goodpaster (2000) stated, it is not far-fetched to conceive that many leaders have encountered dilemmas in their decision-making process; and having the right knowledge along with the right skill-set to implement the right decision includes a leader's moral and ethical compass (Geva, 2006).

Some participants eventually took ownership of the hurt they caused within their school community. Other participants decided to leave their schools after realizing compromised ethics was still expected by their *boss*. These decisions, leaving their jobs, were made so participants could exemplify responsible ethical and moral choices. Laasch and Conway (2015) explained, responsible management practice calls for ethically sound and morally desirable decision-making processes with the aim of achieving moral excellence.

Analysis of Compromised Ethics

Participants were transparent about times they *compromised* their *ethics* as leaders. It is often easy to say what we value. However, when intimidation or persecution presents itself, only then will we know if our beliefs and actions align. Based on participants interviews, pressure from their supervisors or stakeholders overshadowed their values as school leaders. Succumbing to this pressure stemmed from fear of losing their jobs, an absence of intrinsic bravery or alliance

with others who shared their values.

After making decisions that did not align with her values, Precious realized her moral obligations and made a professional decision. This decision translated into a moral judgment of, no-problem problems, *knowing your moral obligations and having the will and ability to fulfill them*. Since Precious' boss continued to expect unethical practices, she felt she had no other choice but to leave her school district.

Cassandra expressed frustration with herself because she struggles with the moral judgement of compliance problems, *knowing what the moral obligations are but experiences difficulty in fulfilling them*. She knows the support given to Spanish speaking students is not equitable. This struggle lies betwixt the district and parents and she continues to give into the pressure knowing it harms her students.

John also struggled with his moral judgement in the area of compliance problem. John had difficulty speaking against situations he recognized as unethical behavior from his leader. As a young administrator, he did not possess strategies for reinforcing moral conduct.

Sarah's reflection on both self-awareness competence, *recognizing how your behavior impacts others,* and moral judgment in the area of *compliance problems*, allowed her to take ownership of the hurt she caused many families within her school. As evidence by her statement, "it impacts you as a leader, and how do you not do this again" Sarah hopes to hone strategies on how to reinforce moral conduct within herself first and then others.

Yaya realized she failed to take serious steps toward her value of keeping students first – moral laxity, *failing to take serious steps toward her moral duty*. In understanding adults make poor decisions, Yaya exercised mercy with an employee versus appropriately reprimanding the employee based on him "yanking a student." However, her mercy backfired because the employee's behavior did not change. When asked if her student

knew she had betrayed his trust, Yaya, responded, "the way I phrased it to his mother, my student didn't know." This further highlights her moral laxity. When an adult within a school setting, physically grabs a student inappropriately emotional harm is imputed. When the leader of the school does not act ethically to resolve the matter and in fact covers it up, greater harm is inflicted on the student.

Compromised Ethics Summation. During the interviews, all participants displayed regret about their compromising ethics and believed they have and are learning from them. Strategies for leaders to reinforce their moral conduct could consist of exercising bravery, boldness and assertiveness in speaking truth, outright refusal to succumb to unethical pressure or creating an alliance with morally aligned individuals. Respondingethically while challenging ones' boss, takes intrinsic strength and unwavering courageparticularly when your livelihood is at stake.

Better Equipped with Prior Knowledge Connected to Literature

The sixth and final theme – *better equipped with prior knowledge,* spoke about the overwhelming consensus of training in self-growth and leadership had been essentially non-existent for participants. Previous professional development attended by participants focused on content area, supporting students, teacher evaluations, or aspects of leadership management – what a leader does. Participants specifically talked about how successful leadership was framed as having a vision, making tough decisions, and even controlling situations. Later, participants realized leadership is not about a checklist of qualities per se; rather, leadership is being competent in who you are and how self-leadership impacts the decisions one makes for others. Grella (2019) argues leadership is specifically about providing followers with both support and encouragement to ensure long-term succession and accomplishment of an organization.

Participants further explicated how earlier training in self-development and leadership would have better equipped them in knowing themselves intrinsically, which is essential. For example, being true and assertive in all settings no matter the consequence. This would express

self-respect, their value as leaders and value of others within their school community. Scholars have noted, being assertive means respecting yourself and other people. It is the ability to clearly express your thoughts and feelings through open, honest, and direct communication (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020).

Other participants shared how earlier self and leadership training would have greatly assisted them in responding to situations in a more *mature way*, *less reactive.* This notion mirrored Maloney and Moore (2019), who discovered that assertive communication is showing confidence and standing up for one's personal rights in a direct and honest way. It is the ability to listen to the perspective of others and express oneself respectfully.

All participants concurred, prior training of self and leadership development would have enabled them to avoid character and leadership pitfalls early on in their life and school leadership. Former research connects with participants' sentiments. Negative interpersonal characteristics, such as a lack of empathy, exploitative-ness, a sense of entitlement, antagonism, and egocentrism (Sedikides & Campbell, 2017) will lead to abuse of power and adversely impact those they lead (Nevicka et al., 2018).

Analysis of Better Equipped with Prior Knowledge

Better equipped with prior knowledge spoke of participants' honest reflection on how they were not well-prepared to lead individuals within their school community. Although most participants had been leading a minimum of five years, participants were not trained in self-identity, emotional intelligent competencies, or ethical management. These acknowledgements from participants during and after the workshop was indicative of principal preparation programs and school districts not adequately preparing aspiring, novice, and *experienced* leaders. Participants acknowledged:

> "building on emotional intelligence, would have enabled me to respond to situations in a more mature way, less reactive." "Knowing yourself is essential in order to relate and empower others to grow their leadership skills." "I felt I needed to have certain

leadership qualities to be successful, i.e., having a vision, and making tough decisions. I was trying to achieve those qualities without understanding who I really was." "Self-development training would have been very powerful in my administration preparation program."

Better Equipped with Prior Knowledge Summation. When participants were asked, why did you decide to become a school leader, their responses displayed a broad spectrum: John said, "I really enjoy the challenge working and being part of a team, I really enjoy that collaborative piece of being a leader and helping other people become leaders and investing in them."

Precious mentioned:

"As an interventionalist, I got out of my four walls and started seeing teachers in action, so then that really sparked *a desire*, like I want to be an administrator. As an assistant principal I helped a new principal who had little experience. I was like wait a minute we don't really need experience I guess. He can be a principal, why can't I. So I did it and here I am."

Cassandra noted, "I've always been encouraged by my administrators. If we want to make a change, especially being Latina, representation matters." Yaya disclosed, "I think I wanted to impact more children than in the classroom. I build capacity with teachers who then in turn will impact the lives of children and so I couldn't do as much remaining a classroom teacher." Sarah communicated, "I see what they do (i.e., principals) its hard work. I wanted to be in the action, I wanted to be in the building leading staff, working with kids and families."

With all participants, desiring a leadership role consisted of doing versus knowing. Knowing oneself, and how this phenomenon would impact all stakeholders within their school community is what aspiring leaders should thoroughly investigate. Questions such as: *Who am I*

and what is effective and ethical leadership, are introspective questions which must be examined and answered before taking the helm of a school.

Implication for Practice

By conducting this study, the researcher was able to understand the shared lived experiences of leaders from their formative years through adulthood, and how these experiences influenced their self-identity and consequently their practice as school leaders. Based on this study's methodology, frameworks, and participants willingness to be open, transparent, and reflective, this study garnered significant findings. These findings can be used in practical ways for future practitioners, principal preparation programs, school districts and policies. Additionally, these findings have great implications in other fields of leadership - business, faith-based organizations, and politics to name a few.

In this section three specific findings, are noted for implication of practice, *parental influence*, *compromised ethics* and *better equipped with prior knowledge*. Parental influence the first theme, suggests parents had the greatest impact on participants identity, beliefs, emotional well-being, and work ethic. According to the findings, homelife and parent modeling have been the mainstay in participants' life journey. Parent-child relationships are foundational to every other form of human relationship. When school leaders are able to better understand how their formative years shaped their thinking, values, and leadership, they are more apt to understand the complexities of both their staff and students. School programming for K-12, in these content areas should be explored for implementation.

The fifth theme, *compromised ethics* found despite leaders' values and morals, and commitment to their school communities, all but one participant was susceptible to and succumbed to making unethical decisions due to pressure from their boss or school politics. One

participant compromised her ethics in the name of *understanding adults make poor decisions*. This study notes how critically imperative it is for leadership preparation programs and school districts to: 1) implement required and ongoing training in ethical decision making, 2) training on how leaders can consistently *model* ethical behavior despite pressure and 3) the importance of leaders *acknowledging* ethical practices in others.

The sixth theme, *better equipped with prior knowledge*, spoke about extensive workshop training in the areas of self-identity, emotional competencies and ethical management which are considerably important to the field of educational leadership. Implementing these trainings, during principal preparation programs will undoubtedly prepare future leaders beyond the mechanics of school leadership. Specifically, components of the training would allow prospective principals to exercise these constructs during their internship, before entering their leadership practice.

Self and school leadership workshops should be offered throughout school districts. Participants in this study mentioned how they attended professional development within their districts but none focused on them as individuals or how to meaningfully lead others. Workshops which allow individuals to understand themselves more fully in order to avoid character and leadership pitfalls are indispensable; as noted and evidenced by this study's participants.

The findings in this study implies leadership is *not about a checklist of qualities it's about knowing who you are and how that impacts the decisions you make every day*. It is essential for aspiring principals to ask the following self-reflective questions: 1) how has my formative years influenced who I have become as a self-leader, 2) under what conditions would I compromise my ethics as a leader, and 3) what qualifies me to know I am well-equipped to lead a community of adults and students?

Implications of the Research

This study focused on how school leaders' life experiences and self-knowledge influenced them as self-leaders in the areas of emotional intelligence and ethical decision making and therefore leaders within their own organization. However, including additional male participants and lengthening the workshop can add greater perspective to this current research. Additionally, research on other forms of societal leadership, focused on ones' formative years and intrinsic design can lend a broader spectrum and findings into this phenomenon.

Limitations of the Research

Although the researcher spent quality time with each participant, and participants were transparent and vulnerable, regarding their lived experiences, it is important to note the limitations of this study. This study's sample consisted of five participants, including one male. Having a balanced number of male perspectives could have added to the rich data and created additional themes. Another limitation to this study was the researcher's inability to observe participants exercising aspects of the workshop into their practice.

Recommendation for Future Research

Research has illustrated reasons why school principals voluntarily left their principalships after serving from two to more than ten years (Bartoletti & Connelly, 2013). Some reasons included: a sense of being isolated when dealing with challenges; a workload that sometimes seemed simply not doable and preservice training that left them feeling unprepared for the challenges of the job (Johnson, 2005). In order for school districts to recognize and maintain qualified principals, the researcher has noted a few recommendations.

A key recommendation for future qualitative research, is institutions developing case studies on school leadership readiness and practices based on implementation of courses in the

areas of self-identity, emotional intelligent competency, and ethical management. This research can assist leaders in identifying areas of self and social competencies and aligning it to one's motivation to lead ethically and effectively. Preparing leaders for introspective course work and learning during principal preparation programs, which focuses on and asks the question, *who am I* will also strengthen future research. Expanding the research to include a wider pool of participants, lengthening the time of the workshop and observation of implementation is also recommended. A second recommendation for future research involves examining how non-school leaders, connect their formative years to their thinking, emotions, ethics, and leadership practice.

Conclusion

This research, through a phenomenological design explicated the deeper human aspects of participants in this study – school leaders. This design allowed the researcher to earn the participant's trust. This trust assisted participants in being open and vulnerable to share honestly and transparently about their *actual* lived experiences, its' meaning to the participants and personal and professional implications. In this study, school leaders were able to deeply reflect on memorable and traumatic events throughout their lives and connect it to specific beliefs, emotions and actions conjured or suppressed in their lives. These organic dialogues were indicative of the dire need for leaders to have an outlet of unhindered expressions and collegial support. This is key to note because without these factors, *vulnerability*, *honesty* and *transparency*, authentic reflection, and in-depth analysis of one's lived experience is impossible. Moreover, these factors were pivotal to the relevancy of this study – leaders learning how to step from behind their title and lead with intrinsic insight, competently and ethically.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DePaul Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval

DePaul UNIVERSITY

Research Involving Human Subjects

NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

To: Alicia Huddleston, College Of Education Date: January 14, 2022

Re: Research Protocol # IRB-2021-447

Title: Hiding Behind the Title: bridging the gap between identity and leadership through neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and ethical management

Please review the following important information about the review of your proposed research activity.

Review Details

This submission is an initial submission. Your research project meets the criteria for Exempt review under 45 CFR 46.104.

Approval Details

Approval date: January 14, 2022

Approved Study Documents: See the attachments tab in the protocol application online.

Number of Approved Subjects: See the approved protocol application online.

You should not exceed the total number of subjects without prospectively submitting an amendment to the IRB requesting an increase in subject number.

Findings: 1. Exempt Category 3 i C - (3) (i) Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met: (C) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the

human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7). (REQUIRES LIMITED IRB REVIEW OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY) (ii) For the purposes of this provision, benign behavioral interventions are brief in duration, harmless, painless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on the subjects, and the investigator has no reason to think the subjects will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing. Provided all such criteria are met, examples of such benign interventions would include having the subjects play an online game, having them solve puzzles under various noise conditions or having them decide how to allocate a nominal amount of received cash between themselves and someone else. (iii) If the research involves deceiving the subjects regarding the nature or purposes of the research, this exemption is not applicable unless the subject authorizes the deception through a prospective agreement to participate in the research in circumstances in which the subject is informed that he or she will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research.

2. Exemption-Limited IRB Review - A limited IRB review of the privacy and confidentiality protections in place, and where applicable the Broad Consent for categories 7 and 8, has been completed and the privacy and confidentiality protections in place have been determined to be appropriate.

Includes:

Reminders

Under DePaul's current institutional policy governing human research, research projects that meet the criteria for an exemption determination may receive administrative review by the Office of Research Services Research Protections staff. Once projects are determined to be exempt, the researcher is free to begin the work and is not required to submit an annual update (continuing review). As your project has been determined to be exempt, your primary obligation moving forward is to resubmit your research materials for review and classification/approval when making changes to the research, but before the changes are implemented in the research. All changes to the research must be reviewed and approved by the IRB or Office of Research Services staff. Changes requiring approval include, but are not limited to, changes in the design or focus of the research project, revisions to the information sheet for participants, addition of new measures or instruments, increasing the subject number, and any change to the research that might alter the exemption status (either add additional exemption categories or make the research no longer eligible for an exemption determination).

* Once the project is complete, you should submit a final closure report to the IRB.

The Board would like to thank you for your efforts and cooperation and wishes you the best of luck on your research. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Bloom, Director of Research Compliance by telephone at (312) 362-6168 or by email at jbloom8@depaul.edu.

For the Board,

Jessica Bloom

Appendix B

Email Invitation to School Leaders

Subject: Invitation for School Leaders Research Participation

Hello School Leader,

My name is Alicia Huddleston, a doctoral candidate at DePaul University, and I am conducting research on school leaders. This research examines a leader's reflection on their formative years (two years – young adulthood), it will examine a leader's understanding of their intrinsic design (understanding the why and how behind their thinking) and examines a leader's belief regarding their emotional intelligent competencies and ethical management in order for principals to discover and identify who they have become as self-leaders and consequently leaders within their organization.

I am asking you to be in the research because you meet the criteria for this research which focuses on school leaders (principals and assistant principals) and former school leaders within the past 3 years. This research will pose no risk to you.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to be a part of this study, you will be asked to complete a one-to-one in-person interview and participate in a workshop. A Zoom meeting will be conducted for both the interview and workshop if Covid cases arise. The interview and workshop will be conducted on two separate days/dates. The interview will be no longer than 60 minutes and the workshop will be 3 hours. The interview can be conducted at your school. The workshop will take place on a Saturday morning at a neutral location for all principals.

Attached is a participant's information sheet that gives further details regarding my research. Lastly, please email me your availability on Mondays – Saturdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for the interview portion of this research.

If you are interested in participating in this research, you can respond back to aliciashavon@yahoo.com stating your interest. Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix C

Email to Interested School Leaders

Subject: Interested School Leaders Research Participation

Hello {   },

Thank you for your interest in my research. Please email me your availability for the week of January 17th, Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for the interview portion of this research. I look forward to meeting with you.

Alicia S. Huddleston

PhD Candidate

DePaul University

Appendix D

Email Reminder for First Interview

Reminder Message for First Interview

Hello_____{Name},

I hope this email finds you well. This is a friendly reminder that your interview with me is scheduled on {date and time} at {location}. I look forward to meeting with you. Again, thank you for your participation in this research.

Alicia S Huddleston
Ph.D. Candidate
DePaul University

Appendix E

Email Reminder for Workshop

Reminder Message for Second Interview

Hello   {Name},

I hope this email finds you well. This is a friendly reminder that your workshop with me is scheduled on {date and time} at {location}. I look forward to seeing you again. Thank you for your participation in this research.

Alicia S Huddleston
Ph.D. Candidate
DePaul University

Appendix F

Participant Information Form

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

Hiding Behind the Title: bridging the gap between identity and leadership throughneuroscience, emotional intelligence, and ethical management

Principal Investigator: Alicia Huddleston; College of Education, DePaul University, Doctoral Candidate

Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, IL., USA

Faculty Advisor: Donna Kiel, EdD, College of Education

I am conducting this research to examine a leader's reflection on their formative years (two years

– young adult); to examine a leader's understanding of their intrinsic design (thinking); and to examine a leader's belief regarding their emotional intelligence competencies and ethical management in order for them to discover and identify who they have become as self-leaders and consequently leaders within their organization.

I am asking you to be in the research because you meet the criteria for this research which focuses on school leaders.

This research is an interview study. If you voluntarily agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete one interview and participate in a workshop. The interview and workshop will be conducted on two separate days/dates. The interview will include questions about your demographics such as your age/age range and ethnic heritage, questions about your formative years, metacognition – understanding your thinking, emotional intelligence competencies and ethical management. If there is a question you do not want to answer, you may skip it. The interview should take about 60 minutes to complete and will be conducted at the agreed upon location.

The workshop will cover training in the following areas: psychodynamics, metacognition, neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and ethical management. The workshop will consist of a PowerPoint presentation that will inform you of these constructs and you are free to ask questions about the presentation. You will have time to reflect on what you have learned and at the end of the workshop you will be asked to complete a leader's self-evaluation form. The workshop should take about three hours to complete and will be located in a neutral location.

I will also collect some personal information about you such as your name, age/age range, ethnic heritage, and asked that you provide a pseudonym (fictitious name) that you would like to use for the study. This research will be conducted in-person.

The interview will be audio recorded in order to make accurate written notes of what you have said. Once your recording is transcribed it will be erased after the research has been completed. If you prefer not to be audio recorded or would like the audio recording to stop at any point of the interview, I will take handwritten notes or type your comments. The research data collected from

you will be collected in an identifiable way and then de-identified later (your name will be unknown).

When you first give me your information it will be linked to you with a code number and I will have a key that tells me who that code number belongs to. So for a period of time, it is possible to link this information to you. However, I have put some protections in place, such as storing the information in a secured computer under password protection and with encrypted files. After the study is completed (in about 5 months), I will remove all the identifiers and make the data de-identified. The data will be kept for an undetermined period of time in the de-identified way, since there should be no risk to you should someone gain access to the data.

Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later after you begin the study. You can withdraw your participation at any time, by contacting me at: Alicia Huddleston, 312-933-7175, ahuddles@depaul.edu. Since the information you gave me is still identifiable and linked to your code number, I can remove your data from the research at any time.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, please contact Alicia Huddleston, 312-933-7175, ahuddles@depaul.edu or Donna Kiel, dkiel@depaul.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Jessica Bloom in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-6168 or by email at jbloom8@depaul.edu. You may also contact DePaul's Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records.

Appendix G

Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol

Date:

Time:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Message to Interviewee: Please know this interview is being audio-recorded for research purposes. If you would like me to stop the recording for any reason and at any point, please let me know. Do you agree to being audio-recorded? The recording starts now.

First, I would like to thank you for your interest in and willingness to participate in this study which consist of this initial interview. Just to reshare, my study seeks to understand the lived experiences of school leaders' formative years, metacognition/mindfulness, emotional intelligent competencies, and ethical management and how these experiences and constructs have influenced them in leading their own lives and consequently their leadership as school principals. This interview should not take longer than an hour. I do not anticipate any risks to you. There are no tangible rewards for participating in this study. However, it is my hope you will receive intrinsic benefits as you reflect on and discuss your lived experiences and how you can thoroughly lead others close up and personal.

Interview Questions Protocol

1) Who were your caregiver(s)? Parents, grandparents, aunt, uncle, relative or other?	14) In what instances are people in your personal life able to change your emotions?
2) How would you describe your caregivers' affection toward you?	15) In what ways do you believe you are mastering psychological well-being, i.e., healthy ways of managing stress and or anger?
3) Can you briefly describe your overall childhood – toddler to 13.	16) Why did you decide to become a school leader?
4) Who was the one person you admired most as a child and why?	17) How long have you been in leadership as principal/assistant principal?
5) Were you taught emotional defense mechanisms as a child?	18) Besides your degree and certification, what forms of training have you participated in for school leadership development?
6) How did your formative and adolescent years develop, impact, or guide your decisions and values in high school - college?	19) Have any of these trainings focused on you as an individual?
7) How often do you explore the concept of metacognition – thinking about your thinking, before making personal decisions?	20) How have your caregivers influenced your leadership ability?
8) Do you often suppress what you are feeling intrinsically and express outwardly a different feeling?	21) Do you currently feel mentally exhausted as a leader? If so, in what way?
9) How would you describe your self-awareness? Meaning, how have you navigated honesty in self-reflection regarding your choices and actions?	22) How do you handle your internal emotions when certain team members push boundaries?
10) What kind of reflective questions do you ask yourself that stimulate memory of past experiences that sheds light on your emotional responses or non-responses?	23) Do you practice honoring your word to your team, students, and parents, particularly when it causes you some level of inconvenience? If so, please share a brief example.
11) Are these responses similar to the responses of adults in your formative years (i.e., parents, grandparents, aunt, uncle, etc.)? If so, how?	24) As a leader, what guides your decision making?
12) What kind of reflective questions do you ask yourself that stimulate memory of past experiences that sheds light on your emotional responses or non-responses?	25) Are there times you have compromised your values/ethics as a leader?
13) Do you ever identify inconsistencies regarding beliefs about yourself and then acknowledge those inconsistencies? Please share an example.	26) Have you rationalized your decisions that others believed were unacceptable?

Appendix H

Workshop Protocol

Interview II - Workshop Protocol

Date:

Time:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Message to Interviewee: Please know the introduction of this workshop is being audio-recorded for research purposes. If you would like me to stop the recording for any reason and at any point, during this introduction, please let me know. Do you agree to being audio-recorded? The recording starts now.

Welcome ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿[I will use their pseudonyms] and thank you for attending the

second portion of this research. This workshop was designed based on your responses to your interview questions surrounding your lived experiences in your formative years, your experiences in the areas of metacognition/mindfulness, emotional intelligent competencies, and ethical management and how these experiences and constructs have influenced you in leading your own lives and consequently your leadership as school principals. This workshop will be approximately three hours with a fifteen-minute break. At the end of the workshop, time will be allotted for you to thoughtfully fill out your leader's evaluation form.

Again, I do not anticipate any risks to you and there are no tangible rewards for participating in this study. I look forward to us learning from one another. The recording has now stopped.

Appendix I

Workshop Agenda

Principal Workshop
Saturday, February 5, 2022
9:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m.

Hiding Behind the Title: bridging the gap between identity and leadership through neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and ethical management

Presenter – Alicia S. Huddleston

Agenda

Introductions

Goal of Workshop - *to recognize, analyze and discover self through the lens of ones' formative years, metacognition, and neuroscience by using emotional intelligence and ethical management frameworks.*

I   Formative years – *Who Am I?*
II   Neuroscience – *Understanding the how and why behind my thinking and actions*
III   Metacognition/Mindfulness – *Critical and reflective thinking before making decisions*
IV   Emotional Intelligence Competencies – *Recognize and Regulate*

(15 Minute Break)

V   Ethical Management – *What do I really believe and value?*
VI   The Ideal Leader
VII   Leader's Self-Evaluation

Appendix J

Leaders Self-Evaluation

Leaders' Self-Evaluation Form

Leaders' Self-Evaluation

Hiding Behind the Title: bridging the gap between identity and leadership through neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and ethical management

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Direction

Please complete the open-ended question below reflecting on your workshop experience and prior knowledge.

1. Do you believe earlier training in self-development and leadership (earlier meaning prior to or at the beginning of your administrative role) would have better equipped you to effectively lead others? If so, please expound.