The Inner Life of Educational Gladiators: An Exploratory Case Study on how Emotional Intelligence Informs, Guides and Motivates K-5 Elementary Principals who work in Title 1 Schools

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by

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Abstract

In this exploratory case study, the affective lives of five urban elementary principals are explored through the lens of emotional intelligence. The role of emotions and how leaders identify, understand, use and manage their emotions while leading within educational environments will be investigated. This study will be guided by the central research question: 

*How do K-5 educational leaders use their emotional selves to lead and survive in highly emotional learning environments found in today’s Title 1 elementary schools?* This question is further broken down into four sub questions: 1.) How do leaders use their emotions to inform their daily decisions? 2.) How do leaders identify and account for their emotions and feelings? 3.) How do leaders express their emotions in their work environment? 4.) How do emotions motivate leaders to endure the challenges of educational leadership? The five urban elementary principals share reflections, memories and stories concerning their private selves and the impact of their emotional selves on their professional lives as educational leaders. The lack of scholarly work on the emotional self lends to a pervasive silence and disregard on the reality of the affective life. Hence, the existence of the "‘myth of rationality’" continues to define and dominates leadership research and practice, and in so doing, limits a full understanding of a leader who feels, thinks, and acts in a holistic manner. Thus, a more robust, critical study that adds the actual voices of urban educational leaders is needed to broaden and deepen the role emotions and emotional intelligence impact the inner lives and leadership of urban school leaders.

*Keywords: emotions, emotional intelligence, Title 1, elementary, urban, educational leadership*
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To each of my educational gladiators, who not only agreed to participate in this study, but generously shared their inner lives with me. Your daily work and determination in providing a safe and loving environment for the most vulnerable students, does not go unnoticed or unappreciated! Thank you!
Lastly, I must include those special teaching angels (Professors) at the University of Guelph, York University, University of Toronto/OISE, Queen’s University and Northeastern University, who gave me my intellectual wings, who planted deep seeds of critical and progressive thought, who taught me that the act of educating children is political and messy, and who developed in me a deep love for learning and a deep intellectual curiosity. To these men and women who touched my life in immeasurable ways, so that I could become a gladiator in the world of education—I simply say thank you!
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to Hollis J. Sobers, my dear uncle, who while on this earth, proved to be a loving and generous father figure. I know that he is looking down on me with his wide smile, beaming at my latest accomplishment. For instilling in me the importance of knowing one’s self-worth, and the value of self-confidence and perseverance, I am forever grateful! In addition, I dedicate this work to all the practicing Title 1 classroom teachers and principals who are deeply committed to working with children who are intelligent, beautiful, creative and loving. Children who have big dreams for their futures, despite living in forgotten and impoverished zip codes across America.
GLOSSARY

*Ability Model Four Branches of Emotional Intelligence*: The domain of emotional intelligence describes a number of discrete emotional abilities, which can be divided into four classes or branches: Perception and Expression of Emotion, Assimilating Emotion on Thought, Understanding and Analyzing, Emotion, Reflective Regulation of Emotion.

*Affect*: One of three traditional spheres of mental activity (along with motivation and cognition), involving emotions, moods, and other associated feeling states such as liveliness and tiredness.

*Cognition*: One of the three traditional spheres of mental activity (along with motivation and affect), involving learning, thought, judgment, memory, and other forms of thinking.

*Emotional Intelligence*: Involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Salovey et al, 2007, p. 35).

*Emotion*: Short-term feeling states including happiness, anger, or fear that mix varying amounts of pleasantness-unpleasantness and arousal-calm, among other sensations.

*Title 1*: Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local agencies and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, www2.ed.gov).

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Chapter One: Introduction

“The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.”
Aristotle—quoted by Diogenes Laertius in Lives of the Philosophers

My Canadian Story (Part 1): Innocence

“When pigs fly” is when I will become a teacher! “Who in their right mind would want to go into education?” These are the words that were uttered by yours truly so many years ago, when asked by friends and family what my next step was going to be after I announced that I was leaving social work just two short years after receiving my Bachelor’s in Social Work. Working as a case protection worker for the Catholic Children’s Aid Society was both emotionally and physically exhausting. It soon occurred to me that I would not be able to protect all the children in Toronto from sexual predators; nor could the over-burdened juvenile justice system. I no longer wanted to be part of a bureaucratic nightmare, which seemed to protect the perpetrators better than it did the child victims. It was time for me to find another career. I knew I deeply cared for the well being of children but I also knew that I did not want to become a teacher. However, I needed to step away. Instead, I hatched up a grand plan to go into public relations or journalism to become an international modern day communications crisis expert extraordinaire, an effective crisis professional. However, after enrolling and subsequently dropping out of my first and only public relations course, I quickly realized that (there was no glamour) in learning how to write strategic communication press releases. In addition, I had not gained entrance into a top tier Canadian journalism school, (my own fault since I found no reason to send multiple applications—the arrogance!), it was time for me to find my life purpose.
I bargained with myself, and decided that if by some fluke the best Teacher’s College in Toronto (University of Toronto/OISE) accepted me to complete a master's of education, it would be a sign to pursue this career path (secretly hoping this was not my destiny). However, I really didn’t have to worry because I knew I wouldn’t be accepted! I surely didn’t have thousand of hours volunteering in schools, or didn’t spend time pretending to be a teacher teaching my little cousins or the neighborhood kids while growing up. I didn’t tutor friends, and I hadn’t stepped foot in a School Box store, mesmerized and brought to tears of joy by the vast array of teacher resources and stickers. No, there were no predestined signs pointing me toward the world of education, except that letter I received so many years ago—welcoming and congratulating me to the University of Toronto/OISE Graduate School of Education. Once finished with my masters of education I found that I could neither pursue educational consulting nor educational policy without some practical experience.

I decided that the next obvious step was to apply to teacher’s college. I was accepted and was armed with my bachelor’s of education in one year. I graduated in May 1999, and began my first teaching job in September, in a Toronto Title 1 elementary school, with 32 wide-eyed, rambunctious 5th graders. Here began my most interesting journey into the world of education, which would take me to Atlanta, Georgia in 2001, recruited by the Atlanta Public Schools District, where I would be “schooled” in the politics of education for the next 10 years.
My American Story (Part 2): Unapologetic Realism

On a beautiful sunny Friday afternoon while I was cleaning out my office getting ready for summer holidays, my phone rang. It was the secretary of a regional executive director (ED), instructing me to come down to the ED’s office immediately. After I asking repeatedly, what the meeting was about, the voice on the phone, assumed a very sharp tone and told me that I was to attend an emergency meeting at 4:00p.m., and that she could not tell me any more details about the meeting.

After putting down the phone, I went into my principal’s office and asked her if I was being fired? My principal looked at me, and said, “You have been picked to be one of the interim principals!” She told me to sit down, and explained to me that due to the impending removal of principals in this particular region, 12 assistant principals would be picked to become interim principals to run their schools until the Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI) and the Professional Association of Georgia Educators completed their own ethics investigations.

Months before, the district had been rocked by an 800 page report ordered by the Governor’s office. This report had identified schools and staff members who at that time, were alleged to have engaged in erasing and changing student’s test answers from wrong to right answers on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) documents during the 2009 CRCT testing window showed highly suspicious testing results. Suffice it to say, I developed a pounding migraine and I recall hearing my voice state smugly that I would not go; I wasn’t ready to be a principal, particularly, not under these circumstances!
My principal smiled and said, “You cannot say no to the firm. Besides, it is already done”.

“Call me when you get out of the meeting”. I’m not sure how I drove safely to the office, nor do I remember the details of the conversation. I just remember being handed a blue folder and a ring of keys. I was instructed to be at the school the next morning at 9:00 a.m., (Saturday) to meet my new staff. At this meeting my new ED officially introduced me as the interim principal, all the while the former principal was cleaning out her office down the hall. I didn’t have time to be nervous. But the truth was, I was exhausted with worry as the responsibility began to seep into the core of my being. I had been picked to lead an elementary school, which had been identified as having the third statistically highest erasures (answers changed from wrong to right) during the 2009 CRCT testing window. I was about to step into a world of suspicion, doubt, and anger, and I was expected to ensure the academic success of the students.

In my first three weeks of being placed in my new school, nine teachers were removed from the building. For several weeks, officers from the Georgia Bureau of Investigations camped out in the media center and the conference room interviewing the remaining staff members. This began my stormy two years as the school’s new leader in a broken and angry community who wanted things like they used to be with their former leader back at the helm. It was during this time, as I worked long days and evenings to establish trust amongst all the various staff, and stakeholders that my dissertation topic was beginning to take form. I decided that I wanted to use my rich and highly unique experience as an interim principal to add to and broaden the research worlds of educational leadership, emotions and emotional intelligence.
It became very apparent to me that leadership was indeed highly emotional work, which impacted all areas of my daily work. For example, I had to make immediate staff decisions, build new relationships with staff, and allay the fears of the community and the business partners; all of who were expecting a quick and miraculous turnaround.

As I spoke to other interim principals (particularly two close colleagues of mine), it became apparent that all of us were putting in an extraordinary amount of emotional labor into our daily work. We discussed the various emotions we experienced in a typical 10 -14 hour workday. The range of emotions included anger, joy, sadness, determination, frustration, fear, anxiety, confusion, suspicion, insecurity, compassion and excitement.

As a means of documenting and reflecting on my daily work and emotions, I started to keep a work journal; I needed a safe outlet to process my emotions and to remind myself that the children’s needs (academic, and social) had to remain at the forefront during my tenure. These journal entries would become rich informal data that I used as a starting point to delve more deeply into the scholarly literature and educational research on how emotions affected/effect ed the work of school leaders, particularly, elementary leaders who worked in challenging Title 1 schools. In addition, I was curious to find out specifically, if emotions understood through the lens of emotional intelligence played a role in how elementary leaders used, managed, and understood their emotions in their daily work lives.

Reviewing the body of emotional intelligence (EI) research has been a long walk in a vast and thick forest of information, often with highly contested conclusions, regarding the validity of the construct itself and its current measurements (more discussion about this will be detailed in the Methodology part of this study).
Surprisingly, I found limited scholarly literature and research on EI covering my very specific interest in the topic. However, the research on emotion and educational leadership seemed to be much more organized and cohesive, yet still very sparse regarding the inner lives of elementary school leaders.

Having had some years to reflect on this experience, I can now appreciate those two years of being an interim principal in an entirely different light. Ultimately, the experience grew me as a leader and as a person; it also demonstrated the determination, humility, and resilience that exist in all of us; endearing qualities found in the human spirit wrapped in compassion and empathy. There amongst the chaos, there were indeed many occasions to smile and to be proud of the work both the staff and I did together to move the school forward.

Although this experience was such a unique and highly emotional one for all of us involved; an experience I do not wish on any bright-eyed teacher or assistant principal who is working diligently toward her first principalship. The uniqueness of this experience and the daily challenges, unfortunately, took me to the dark side of my emotions many times. The pain of cynicism, pessimism, and anger became my close companion for a while, but it was a time when I became acutely aware and sensitive to the ways in which I felt, and more importantly, the necessary care I needed to use in managing and respecting the inner lives of others. My journaling and reflection practice allowed me to completely acknowledge and account for my emotions, and helped me come to an important decision. After 10 years with the district, I decided it was time to leave, and did so in the spring of 2013.
I no longer felt I could offer the hope, enthusiasm, or energy to the students and teachers of the Atlanta Public Schools, a community I had held so near and dear; the work of leading and teaching were difficult in “normal” times; however, amid the scandal, APS became a chaotic and tainted district. Its new leaders had difficult work to do to rebuild the trust of the broader community, families and students. Leaving the district at this particular time was perfect timing; I could now spend more time on my studies (my research courses were finally completed), and I could delve deeper as a scholar-practitioner, to gain new insights and understandings around my topic and subsequent research.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to further explore how emotions, as understood through the lens of emotional intelligence, affect the daily work and success of K-5 Title 1 school leaders. Unfortunately, the current dearth of research exploring the affective work of school leaders (Beatty, 2000/1999; Blackmore, 1996; Fullan, 1997/1998; Harris, 2004; O’Connor, ND, Sachs & Blackmore, 1998) continues to silence the inner life of educational leaders who lead in urban school environments. The lack of research continues to marginalize the role of emotions and educational leadership. The dominant cognitive rational managerial discourse written and voiced by “experts” on educational leadership makes it hard for principals to acknowledge that the emotionality they experience on their job is an inherent part of their daily work experience (Kelchtermans, Piot, & Ballet, 2011). In addition, according to Goleman et al. (2002), the ability to recognize one’s emotions, and to realize that emotionality can provide cues to understanding a leader’s purpose can result in a greater ability to expand emotional capacity (Johnson, et al., 2005).
Therefore, investigating the role of emotions and emotional intelligence and their effects on the work and the emotional lives of elementary urban school leaders must become a new and exciting chapter in educational leadership research. It is time for the educational research literature to acknowledge the great emotional labor leaders exert and the personal sacrifice these educational gladiators give of themselves so that the most vulnerable children can be well-educated and given opportunities to dream big.

**Statement of the Problem**

The emotional experience of leaders is rich in its potential to assist us in deepening our understanding of leadership (Beatty, 1999). The practice of educational leadership in the era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) reform and accountability has become increasingly challenging for all who work in public education. Under the reauthorization of the United States Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB, 2001) requires that all students must demonstrate proficiency in learning objectives specified by state standards (Cook, 2006).

Teaching and learning in American public schools have become synonymous with student mastery, value-added growth, standardized assessments, data analysis, daily attendance rates, constant changes in curriculum, increased childhood poverty, growing class sizes and decreased school budgets. In addition, there exists an increasingly vocal and hostile public that blames the failure of post-modern public education on school leaders, which has led to dramatic changes in the role of the principal and the school environment.
The aforementioned elements found in today’s schools are heightened and are fundamentally more complex in Title 1 schools, (which receive additional funds from the Federal Government under Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), (ESEA). These funds are used to better service schools where high percentages of children from low-income families attend by offering remedial (academic, social and emotional) support to ensure that all children meet the challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, www2.ed.gov).

Subsequently, as a direct result of the challenging landscape that exits across many states, urban schooling has shifted dramatically over the last 15 years, leaving a trail of many “wounded” leaders in the process.

**Significance of the Research Problem**

As a former interim principal, I know firsthand the enormous daily challenges faced by leaders who work in these environments while trying to adequately meet the needs of students, parents, staff, stakeholders and the community-at-large. School leadership has become a frenetic dance of wills and competing interests. Moreover, principals must constantly jockey and prioritize each of these competing interests (i.e., academics, assessments, budgets, teacher evaluations and community concerns) on a daily basis. Consequently, these exceptional men and women must critically examine the ever-changing landscape they navigate and therefore, must have the essential skills to expertly tackle the many emotional issues they are faced with on a daily basis.
Working in such highly dynamic and volatile environments has placed principals under enormous levels of emotional stress. “Leaders are expected to respond to rapid change and redirection of policy through restructuring, which is highly emotional work” (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 270). Thus, the emotional life of a principal is constantly in motion; feelings and emotions are in a constant state of flux on a daily basis, as they lead and navigate from one problem to another. Interestingly, “what is missing from the knowledge base regarding the emotions of leadership are the voices of leaders themselves” (Beatty, 2000, p. 332).

Furthermore, despite this knowledge, there continues to be an “uncomfortable silence” about their emotional lives found in the research. “The emotional experience of leadership has not been explored in sufficient depth to date in Educational Administration literature” (Beatty, 1999, p. 2). The inner lives of leaders are marginalized and virtually invisible. Blackmore (1998) clearly states, “The emotional dimension of school life and leadership is one of the great silences in the analysis of the diversity and complexity of these sites” (p. 268). To counteract the practice of this silence, a new perspective and interest must be taken to deepen and broaden this area of research. It would do well for educational scholar-practitioners to “systemically research and determine the specific, emotional and interpersonal skills needed for leadership success” (Riggio & Lee, 2007, p. 422).

Leaders committed to their daily work should not be expected to carry the additional burden of becoming the mythic “super heroes” or “super humans”, roles which are deeply embedded in the discourse of public education. The lone hero simply does not exist in this type of work.
Instead, it is hoped that those most intimately connected to the work performed by school leaders: those who hire, supervise and support school principals, will start to pay more critical attention to the emotional health and emotional skills of urban school leaders. Herein lies the significance of this study.

**Statement of Positionality**

There is a pervasive undercurrent, even belief, held by the lay public that schools that educate high numbers of impoverished children are inferior and grossly ineffective. In addition, in the minds of many, teachers and principals who teach in these schools must also be inferior and grossly ineffective educators. As a former assistant principal, and interim principal who has worked in such schools, I can say the public is only half right; just like in any work environment, there are both phenomenal teachers and leaders and ones that need to leave the profession. However, casting such a wide net on the performance of all Title 1 educators and leaders is hurtful and damaging. The truth is many educators find themselves leading or teaching in a Title 1 school, because their supervisors believed in their high level of competence, and they can do the work needed, or they have expressed a desire to work in these schools. During my time as an assistant principal and an interim principal of Title 1 schools, I observed, time and time again, highly skilled educators move the most academically challenging students with a kind heart and a fierce determination. They worked to ensure that their students knew that they were intelligent, talented and valued. Additionally, these students were also encouraged to think and learn in a safe and structured learning environment.
Working in Title 1 schools, also allowed me to witness and participate in garnering grassroots support for the school community as a whole (i.e., parents, grand-parents, and business leaders), in addition to all the children who entered our classrooms each morning. Thus, I have always maintained and continue to believe that creating and building positive interpersonal relationships with teachers, students, parents and the community members at large is fundamental in being an effective 21st century school leader. Hence, building such relationships require urban leaders to be highly skillful and aware of their own and other’s emotions. Moreover, highly effective leaders, particularly, leaders who work in Title 1 schools, must also be acutely aware of their identity and the biases they may consciously or unconsciously hold around socio-economics, race, culture, childhood poverty, the politics of the community, the district, and the geographical state in which they work. Therefore, I fully recognize and admit that my past professional experiences, my strong belief in the importance of emotional work, and my identity as an Afro-Caribbean woman (born in Northern London, England, raised in Toronto, Canada, now living and working in Atlanta, Georgia) are strong influences on this study.

**Research Questions**

This qualitative exploratory case study investigated the emotional selves of five elementary Title 1 school leaders using the following questions:

**Central Question**

*How do K-5 educational leaders use their emotional selves to lead and survive in highly emotional learning environments found in today’s Title 1 schools?*
**Sub questions**

a) How do leaders use their emotions to inform their daily decisions?

b) How do leaders identify and account for their emotions and feelings?

c) How do leaders express their emotions in their work environment?

d) How do emotions motivate leaders to endure the challenges of educational leadership?

These questions were borne out of deep reflection and of various reoccurring themes found in my personal work journals. Thus, it is hoped that this study will provide new insights which will lead to a better understanding of the importance of broadening the boundaries currently found within educational leadership research; while having acknowledged and given voice to the silent emotional lives of Title 1 school leaders. School districts can no longer ignore the existence and importance of their leaders’ emotional lives; hence personnel who hire, support and mentor principals who work in urban schools must be more aware of the importance of the affective life of their school leaders. Simply put, a healthy, vibrant school is a reflection of an emotionally healthy, vibrant principal.

**Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this exploratory qualitative study, emotions were analyzed through the lens conceptualized in Mayer and Salovey’s (1990, 1997) four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence. This particular model focused on four interrelated core abilities: emotional perception and expression (identifying/perceiving emotions), emotional facilitation of thought (using emotions), emotional understanding (understanding emotions) and emotional management (managing emotions) (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004).
The four core capabilities (or branches) are detailed below in table one:

*Table 1: The Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Perception and Expression</th>
<th>Emotional Facilitation of Thought (Using Emotion)</th>
<th>Emotional Understanding</th>
<th>Emotional Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to identify emotion in one’s physical and psychological states.</td>
<td>Ability to redirect and prioritize thinking on the basis of associated feelings.</td>
<td>Ability to understand relationships among various emotions.</td>
<td>Ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to identify emotion in other people.</td>
<td>Ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgment and memory.</td>
<td>Ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions.</td>
<td>Ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them.</td>
<td>Ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view.</td>
<td>Ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states.</td>
<td>Ability to engage, prolong, or detach from an emotional state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.</td>
<td>Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity.</td>
<td>Ability to understand transitions among emotions.</td>
<td>Ability to manage emotions in oneself and in others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 provides a visual template of the important connections between the emotions and cognitive ability needed to process emotionally laden information in a competent and effective manner (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004).
Emotional intelligence researchers (Riggio & Lee 2007, p. 421.), further explained in their research the four capabilities below using their own terminology:

1. **Identifying emotions** is the ability to define accurately one’s own and others’ emotions and feelings, as well as the ability to express these emotions. This is composed of specific skills, including emotional awareness, which allows individuals to distinguish different emotions; expression of emotion, involving the ability to effectively communicate how one feels; reading other people’s emotions (from facial expressions and other behavioral cues); and reading between the lines (when a person expresses one emotion but feels another).

2. **Using emotions** involves enhancing the thinking process by using emotion to inform decisions while paying attention to another’s perspective, thinking differently, and using emotions to problem solve.

3. **Understanding emotions** is a skill in comprehending complex emotions and how they operate in the social world. A foundation of understanding emotions involves possessing an accurate vocabulary of emotions and understanding the cause and effect relationships of emotions.

4. **Managing emotions** involves self-awareness of the emotions, the ability to harness emotions for the purpose of motivation or inspiration, and the ability to control emotions so that they do not overwhelm the individual or govern inappropriate or undesirable actions.

The Ability model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) has evolved into a framework that exists within multiple academic subjects, most notably, the psychology of emotions, the psychology of intelligence, personality theory, and cognitive abilities (Cherniss, 2010).
As a result of EI’s popularity, there exists multiple extravagant and outrageous claims about EI, which has caused subsequent backlash regarding the construct of emotional intelligence (more of this will be discussed in the next chapter in the literature review). Over the years a reformulation or clarification of the construct has occurred. In order for EI to maintain its scholarly relevance, a slight make over was deemed necessary by Mayer & Salovey; EI could no longer be regarded as a pseudo-pop cure for all personal and societal “ills” (i.e., depression, drug addiction, low self-esteem, poor communication skills, and weight loss, to name a few). Thus, a more contained and mature model was presented by Mayer & Salovey, who identified EI as a distinct “mental ability or intelligence,” fused within an “information-processing approach (Cherniss, 2010, p. 111). In addition to the reformulation of the construct of EI, a new definition was also introduced by Mayer & Salovey, (1997) which included the role of thinking about feelings:

“EI has the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotion to enhance thinking, which includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10).

“This new definition partnered with the ideas that emotion makes thinking more intelligent, and that one thinks intelligently about emotions; a nice pairing of both emotions and intelligence” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5).
Justification for use of this Theoretical Framework

The use of the Emotional Intelligence Ability Model Theory (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) was a “good fit” for this particular study. This conceptual model views emotional intelligence as an actual domain of intelligence composed of specific emotional and mental abilities, instead of relying solely on social and motivational skills as addressed in the popular mixed model created by Harvard psychologist Daniel Goleman (Riggio & Lee, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, the emotional abilities contained in the four branches of the ability model were used to guide the research questions and the overall study of the emotional lives of elementary educational leaders, who lead in K-5 urban environments. The goal of this study was not to prove or disprove the claims made by Mayer and Salovey (1997), that emotional intelligence constructed within this framework is indeed a distinct category of intelligence, or that the measurement of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test (MSCEIT) used to assess emotional intelligence abilities is valid and reliable. Instead, the broader concern of this research was a deeper qualitative interest in the role of affective leadership and its effects on the professional life of the 21st century urban elementary school principal.

The new reality for today’s school leaders demand that they have strong affective and cognitive abilities to thrive in this ever-changing educational world. To be successful in their various complex roles as instructional leaders, coaches, agents of change, community liaisons, and building managers, a new way of articulating and thinking about emotions is needed.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

In order to gain a more critical understanding of how the lens of emotional intelligence affects the daily work of K-5 Title 1 school leaders, this literature review included research and literature as it applies to emotion, educational leadership, and emotional intelligence. This chapter has been organized into six sections. The first section investigated the research and literature on emotions related to educational leadership. The second section reviewed the research and literature. The third section examined the emergence of the emotional intelligence construct, and the contested voices found within the EI world. The fourth section paid particular focus on the emotional intelligence ability theory. The fifth section examined the relationship of emotional intelligence and educational leadership. The last section of this chapter summarized the gaps in the literature and the need for more research in the area of emotions specifically related to elementary school leaders who work in urban contexts.

Keep Calm and Carry On: Emotion and Educational Leadership

The scholarly research and literature on emotion and educational leadership has been described as broad and highly interest specific (Beatty, 1999; Beatty & Brew, 2004; Blackmore, 1999; Boler, 1997; Harris, 2004; Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerda, 2005; Mills & Niesche, 2014; Rogalin & Hirshfield, 2013; Sachs & Blackmore, 1998; Zemblyas, 2010; Zorn & Boler, 2007). The role of emotions has slowly moved from the shadows of educational leadership research to become a fundamental area of scholarly concern and interest. Despite, the fact that historically, “human emotions have been consistently marginalized in educational research,” as noted by (Beatty, 1999, p. 2).
Moreover, this new focus on emotions has countered the practice of leaders, who typically have been unable to express their affect in their role as school leader for fear of shattering their professional armor and perceived “rationality” (Beatty, 1999; George, 2000; Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). Subsequently, the act of acknowledging and identifying feelings has been an intensely private and hidden one, for fear of looking weak and ineffective as a leader.

Subsequently, the process of exposing emotions has become an integral focus found in affective and educational leadership research. Researchers Zorn & Boler (2007) called on their colleagues to make a “conceptual shift in bringing emotions out of the periphery to the forefront to better understand emotions as publicly and collaboratively formed, not as individual, autonomous psychological traits and states” (p. 142). Boler (1997) further asserted in his research, that the time had come for “the cultural and historical legacies that have dismissed or privatized emotion, or depicted emotion as a feminized weakness” (p. 138), to stop. As the continued practice diminished the worthiness of the affective lives of school leaders.

Several scholars (Beatty, 1999; Beatty & Brew, 2004; Harris, 2004; Hargreaves, 2004; Johnson et al, 2005; Mills & Niesche, 2014) have written about the importance of the emotional life of educational leaders through both a humanistic and holistic lens. Their research has brought the affective and cognitive worlds together. For example, a school leader who feels and emotes, can be deemed as an expressive human subject and has the ability to do so by using both cognitive and emotional abilities to better process their emotions. As such, the above-mentioned scholars provided an alternative way to understand and frame the study of emotions and educational leadership. They challenged their readers to embrace the concept of the emotional self of leaders with as much vigor and importance as the cognitive self.
The collapse of the hierarchal relationship between intellect (reason/cognition) and emotion (affect) has become vital in the expansion of boundaries regarding emotion and educational leadership research (Beatty, 1999; Beatty & Brew, 2004; Harris, 2004; Hargreaves, 2004; Johnson et al, 2005; Mills & Niesche, 2014). We are reminded in Beatty (1999) that “reason itself is not free of emotional foundation, and even in the purest of intellectual moments, emotions are present” (p. 5).

Due to the afore-mentioned scholars’ research, a broadening of the scholarly landscape regarding emotions and educational leadership has occurred. Their work has fueled a rising concern over how best emotions should be critically studied and understood (Schutz & Cuir, 2002; Zemblyas, 2007). The need for several frameworks and methodologies to coexist has allowed scholars to better analyze the many platforms emerging in the research regarding emotions and educational leadership. Subsequently, Zemblyas (2007) has identified three of the most recurring theoretical perspectives which have emerged: emotions as a private concept (psychodynamic approach); emotions as a sociocultural phenomenon (social constructionist approach) and a third perspective, emotions as interactionist, (a mind/body approach) (p. 57).

It could be argued, that perhaps studying emotions and educational leadership in a more inclusive approach, could provide a much more robust and diverse output of scholarly works. Schutz and DeCuir (2002) suggested in their research, “…it might be more useful to take the position that having different inquiry approaches with an inquiry community (such as emotions in education) is a very useful and healthy approach” (p. 131.).
Using these approaches to gain a deeper understanding of the role of emotions and educational leadership, have the potential to move the research on emotions and educational leadership beyond their existing narrow boundaries; areas that must evolve to better include the increasing complexity, stress, and demanding realities found in school leadership (Johnson, et al, 2005). Simply, “Emotions are no longer viewed as little more than pesky interlopers, distracting from a higher, rational purpose” (Beatty, 1999, p. 4).

**The Labor of Emotions: The Daily Practice of Emotional Work**

The concept of emotional labor has been an evolving and important aspect of emotions and educational leadership research. Mindful of a newly heightened emotional environment leaders find themselves working within, scholar Humphrey (2012) asks the question, “How do leaders use emotional labor?” (p. 740). Researcher and sociologist Arlie Hochschild provided a critical analysis, when she defined emotional labor as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1985, p. 7). The notion that leaders have been (traditionally) expected to appear calm, in control, and positive in their work environments, hides from the public the practice and art of managing emotions. Hochschild’s (1983) groundbreaking study, made into a book entitled, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of human feeling*, investigated how service workers such as flight attendants were required to display certain emotions as part of their job duties (Humphrey, 2012). Authenticity of emotions and the commodification/bureaucratization of emotions were two of the major themes explored by (Hochschild, 1983, p. 16).
Affective traits, such as a “welcoming” smile and an overly pleasing demeanor were among the traits that were frequently observed during the study. However, as noted by Hochschild, “Many of the workers I talked to often spoke of their smiles as being on them, but not of them” (Hochschild, 1985, p. 8). “The smiles are simply a part of their work” (Hochschild, 1985, p. 8). Subsequently, affective traits (e.g., smiles, and being agreeable, compliant, pleasing, nurturing, supportive, and caring) have become central to the understanding of emotional labor within the educational leadership context. Emotional labor and educational leadership in the 21st century are believed to have strong socio-cultural connections, which have been studied by several researchers (Blackmore, 2010; Brennan & Mac Ruairc, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005; McWilliam & Hatcher, 2007; Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). The socio-cultural framework has greatly influenced the understanding of the concepts of affective lives of school leaders and the scholarship of emotionality as a construct. An example of this is demonstrated when school leaders communicate and use their emotions which often mirror rigorous social rules embedded in Western cultural norms. When leaders displayed a lack of “positive” emotional states (e.g., smiles, nurturing, compliance, or agreeable nature), the emotional self was seen as burdensome and lacking in control. Thus, emotional labor to dates has been best understood as a constantly changing dynamic that reflects contemporary sociocultural elements found within school environments and their communities. The scholarly literature on emotional labor and educational leadership reminds us, “Leadership involves intensive personal interactions that are publicly displayed and therefore includes an emotional dimension” (Brennan & Mac Ruairc, 2001, p. 135). Hence, leaders who strive to be an effective technical manager of a school, instead of an affective leader reflects an era that no longer exists.
Today’s educational leader must now be seen as likable, nurturing, charismatic and trustworthy to her staff, district supervisors, students and external stakeholders. As observed by Hochschild, (1983), “This kind of work calls for a coordination of mind and feeling” (p. 7); a difficult process when leaders are constantly pulled in numerous directions, with different players, in this climate of constant reform. “Leadership work in educational institutions has become more stressful and complex with multiple demands and complex relational dynamics” (Johnson et al., 2005, p. 236).

Adding gender and emotional labor to the research, scholars Sachs and Blackmore (1998), explored the role of gender and emotional labor in their study entitled, Women and the Leadership Project. This study collected various data from women leaders from 1995-1997, in Queensland and Victoria (Australia), which explored the cultural condition that was deemed most conducive to women gaining and maintaining educational leadership positions in (schools, universities, technical schools and universities) (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 266). The data from this study illustrated the difficulty many of the women leaders demonstrated in managing their emotions, and thus abiding by the “feeling rules” used in emotional labor (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 271). Hochschild (1983) coined the term “feeling rules” (known today as “display rules”) to describe societal norms about the appropriate type and amount of feeling which should be experienced in a particular situation (Wharton, 2009, p. 149).

“Feeling rules” (Hochschild, 1983) are described as a part of an unwritten professional code of behavior, which directs women to be consistently compassionate, empathetic, and understanding (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 270). These rules have feminized the affective work women school leaders are still expected to perform.
Additionally, in Blackmore’s (1996) study on emotional labor and the ethic of care, she suggested the “need to develop more sophisticated theories about emotional labour and care as being more than nurturance extension of mothering or ‘just helping others’” (p. 348). To further explore her assertions, emotional labor and its various intersections are further explored through the lens of emotional intelligence.

**Emotional Intelligence in Context**

The emergence of emotional intelligence can be traced back to E.L. Thorndike’s (1920) seminal article, *Intelligences and Its Uses*. In this article, he examined three distinct “intelligences”: mechanical intelligence, social intelligence, and abstract intelligence (p. 228). Thorndike (1920) defined social intelligence as, “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations” (p. 228).

This particular definition of social intelligence (SI) became the conceptual platform, used to launch the contemporary theory of emotional intelligence. Thorndike’s (1920) enthusiasm for his research was evident when he asserted in the article, “Today, science is eager to make use of the practical experience of men and women who succeed in managing human nature” (p. 227). Just as in the 20th century, the interest and study regarding the “managing of human nature” has continued to thrive throughout the years.
Two scholars, Salovey and Mayer (1990) have been “given credit for originating the ‘modern’ construct of EI”. “However, both Gardner (1983) and Goleman (1995) have been touted with popularizing EI” (Seal et al., 2009, p. 205). Gardner’s (1983) research work on multiple intelligences and Goleman’s best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, created a commercial boom regarding all things EI. Goleman’s EI concept, focused on both the social and emotional competencies and abilities, and was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine*, where he posed the question, “What’s Your EQ?” (October, 1995). Goleman boldly asserted on the tagline of the magazine: “It’s not your IQ. It’s not even a number. But EI may be the best predictor of success in life, redefining what it means to be smart” (1995, *Time Magazine* Cover page).

Goleman (1995) simplified the EI concept which (originated within the psychology of intelligence) by deconstructing the concept into a personality trait-model which included the following elements: self-motivation and persistence; skill at introspections; delay of gratification; self-control of impulses, moods and emotions, empathy; and social skills (the ability to make friends) (Locke, 2005, p. 426). Goleman's Time magazine article raised the concept of EI to mythic status: a new “quick fix” to greater happiness and success. EI became the new elixir for all those who believed in its power to offer a holistic cure all. Yet, it was due to EI’s overwhelming appeal and popularity to the masses, that the academic research on the EI construct became increasingly misused by business corporations, organizational psychologists, and leadership development gurus, who advocated for very different definitions, models, measures, and assumptions (Seal et al., 2009, p. 205).
The jockeying done to connect and validate EI within several professional worlds (psychology, sociology, education, leadership, leadership development, and recruiting to name a few) has created a schizophrenic output of information, found within the non-academic and scholarly frameworks.

Today, there exists a plethora of EI literature which covers a wide variety of topics EI can improve (e.g., addiction, Asperger's Syndrome, burnout, creativity, ethics and parenting). Subsequently, there has been no shortage of articles, books, magazines, blogs, research, and literature on EI, which has lead to many critical divisions among EI researchers and academic scholars.

**The Contested Voices of EI: An Elusive Construct**

There has been significant debate and criticism on the many areas found within EI literature documented in several studies, (Becker, 2003; Locke, 2005) analyzed the validity of the construct; (Landy, 2005) presented a scathing review on the historical and scientific research on EI; (Antonakis et al., 2009; Fineman, 2004 and Conte, 2005), criticized the validity of EI assessments/measurements; and (Fambrough & Hart, 2008), evaluated how well the various EI assessments measured leadership effectiveness and job performance. These are just few of the concerns which are focused on the deconstruction of EI as an intellectual construct and its validity which has fundamental challenges. Cherniss, 2010, asserted in his work, that EI could not be discussed as a viable construct when EI scholars, “lacked an agreement to what EI is.” (p. 113). Furthermore, the continued absence of a coherent and stable definition of EI allowed for highly subjective interpretations of the EI construct to emerge (Cherniss, 2010; Landy, 2005; Locke, 2005; Zeidner et al., 2004).
Subsequently, there exists a diverse number of models, definitions, theoretical and methodological frameworks continue to exist in the EI research and literature. This has proven to be very troubling for some scholars who believe that the diversity of the EI frameworks have “done more harm than good regarding establishing emotional intelligence as a legitimate, empirical construct with incremental validity potential” (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2003, p. 69-70, as cited in Cherniss, 2010).

Consequently, there has been a growing concern regarding who (the business world or the academic world) has the right to claim EI as their own intellectual property. In some of the literature, scholars have written about the dumbing down or the (democratization) of the EI construct. In his article, Locke (2005) wrote, “The ultimate motive is egalitarianism: redefining what it means to be intelligent so that everyone will, in some form, be equal in intelligences to everyone else” (p. 426). Locke (2005) goes on to note, “It is simply arbitrary to attach the word ‘intelligence’ to assorted habits or skills, as Howard Gardner and EI advocates do, on the alleged grounds that there are multiple types of intelligence...the agenda here is not scientific but political” (Locke, 2005, p. 426).

Thus, the contested voices of EI have played an important role within the larger body of EI research and the literature. They have challenged the provocative claims and unreliable measurements of EI, and have tried to rein in a construct that has morphed into something no longer manageable or governed by a few. The democratization of EI has invited a cacophony of assorted views (Mayer & Salovey, 2004), from various platforms, (i.e., leadership development, organizational psychology, change management, and psychology of intelligence to name a few).
Mayer and Salovey, (2004) articulated their ongoing concern of the emergence of such a range of views and opinions articulated by others, when they stated, “These conceptualizations and associated measures often have little or nothing to do with emotion or intelligence; they fail to map onto the term emotional intelligence” (p. 197).

Despite the controversy, over the years three dominant models of EI have emerged in the research, most notably, those of scholars, Bar-On (1997), Goleman, (1998), and Mayer and Salovey (1997). These three models of EI have remained consistent in the EI research and literature.

**Three Dominant Conceptual Models of EI**

The Bar-On model (1997) has used both the intrapersonal and interpersonal traits of an individual. In developing this model, Bar-On identified interrelated emotional and social competencies skills that impacted intelligent behavior, measured by a self-report called the emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 2006, p. 14). The five main components represented in this model are the following: a) intrapersonal skills, b) interpersonal skills, c) adaptability, d) stress-management, and e) general mood (Bar-On, 1997). These skills are used to determine ways people understand and express themselves, and how they understand and relate to others. The aim of this concept has been to find out key factors that lead individuals to a better psychological well-being (Bar-On, 1997, 2006).
The Goleman model (1998), has offered researchers ways to predict the effectiveness and personal outcomes in the workplace and in organizational environments. This mixed model is based upon the ability model with the addition of psychological traits consisting of a number of specific competencies organized into four groups: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management Goleman (1998, 2001), defines emotional competence as “a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work” (Goleman, 2001, p. 27).

The primary measures associated with this model are the emotional competency model (ECI) and the emotional and social competence inventory (ESCI) commonly known as “360” degree instruments by Goleman (2001). Figure 2 illustrates Goleman’s (1998, p. 28) emotional competencies framework:
Figure 2. A Framework of Emotional Competencies (Goleman, 1998)—This framework identifies the interconnectedness of both the personal and the social competencies of EI.

The third major model, is based on the work of Mayer and Salovey (1997), born out of their evolving definition and maturation of the EI concept. This model incorporates a revised definition of EI, which now includes an explicit connection to feelings, intelligence and emotion:

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 9).

This model, referred to in the literature as “the mental ability model,” incorporates four distinct abilities: perception, assimilation, understanding, and regulation of emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Each one is a distinct branch created in the four-branch model.
Emotional Intelligence: The Four-Branch Ability Model

The first branch of EI begins with the capacity to perceive and express feelings. A person has “the ability to identify feelings, to express emotions accurately and to differentiate between real and phony emotional expressions” (Caruso & Salovey, 2004, p. 307); the second branch of EI concerns emotional facilitation of cognitive activities. A person has “the ability to redirect attention to important events, to see multiple points, to use different approaches to problem solving” (Caruso & Salovey, 2004, p. 307); the third branch of EI involves understanding emotion. A person has “the ability to recognize the causes of emotion and to understand relationships among emotions” (Caruso & Salovey, 2004, p. 307). And finally, the fourth branch of EI supports the regulation or management of emotions. A person has “the ability to stay aware of one’s emotions, even unpleasant ones, the ability to determine whether an emotion is clear or typical, and to be able to solve emotion-laden problems without necessarily suppressing negative emotions” (Caruso, Salovey & Mayer, 2004; p. 307; Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004; Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). The scholars of the EI four-branch model, all with backgrounds in the field of psychology, take a psychological stance in explaining the importance of the hierarchy in skill and affect within the model. They assert that, “the most basic of emotions are found at the lower end, while the more complex emotional states are found in the higher sites in regulation of emotion” (Fernandez-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006, p. 8.; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Subsequently, the measure most often used to assess the EI abilities within the four branch ability model are usually the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test, known as the MSCEIT, and the MSCEIT v.2.
Both versions of these quantitative performance-based measures have been developed by the EI researchers as a means to ensure control over the instruments (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 1997).

![Four-Branch Ability Model](image)

Figure 3. The Four-Branch Ability Model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) above illustrates the hierarchal branches in order of importance (from top to bottom).

**Emotional Intelligence and Educational Leadership: A murky relationship**

Surprisingly, empirical research and literature that focus on EI and its relationship to educational leadership are very limited. Throughout the literature search, there were numerous articles found entitled *emotional intelligence* and *educational leadership*, which explored everything but the explicit relationship between EI and educational leadership. Instead, much of the scholarly literature splintered in many directions and covered a wide variety of subject matter and contexts. For example, the following themes that dominated the literature reviewed were leadership performance (Dulewicz et al, 2005; Lyons, 2005); transformational leadership (Barbito & Burbach, 2006; Leban, 2004); leadership potential (Higgs, 2003) and effective leadership (George, 2000; Goleman, 1996, 1998; Palmer et al., 2001). Many of the articles and studies suggested, an indifference to the existing superficial relationship between educational leadership and emotional intelligence.
There were broad conclusions found in the research and literature, many suggesting that for success to occur in all avenues of live, (professional and personal) the “simple” solution for educational leaders would be to have high EI skills to be better equipped to lead their schools. Hence, much of the literature relied on the theories, frameworks and methodologies more akin to organizational leadership rather, than on the complexities of educational leadership.

There are some small but notable changes regarding the focus on EI and educational leadership research. Recent scholarly research has broadened its focus to include female educational leaders. Researcher Cliffe (2011) investigated “the role of EI in a group of female school leaders who were at various stages in their careers working in different locations and environments: urban, suburban and rural in England (p.208). The findings from this study established correlations with Goleman’s (1998) aspects of EI competencies and leadership among all seven headteachers (p. 209). The EI competencies used in the study were the following: knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivation, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships. At the conclusion of the study, Cliffe (2011) wrote, “these headteachers have been able to make intelligent use of their own emotions and those of others; first in reaching the position of headship and second, in how they faced the challenge of leadership” (p. 214). A comprehensive overview of the headteacher’s comments led Cliffe (2011) to assert “that having skills of emotional intelligence contribute to the successful leadership; as well as illustrating their ability to cope emotionally when faced with day to day pressures headship brings” (p.215).

Furthermore, emerging literature and studies completed by Williams (2007) and Farahbakhsh (2012) explored, “EI and its relationship among the leaders who lead in an American urban school context, post No Child Left Behind era” (Williams, p. 37).
The relationship between “EI competencies (self-awareness; self-management, relation control; social awareness; and the quality of work life of elementary principals, high school principals, and support staff in Iranian schools” was studied by Farahbakhsh (2012, p. 32).

In addition, Johnson et al., (2005), investigated educational leaders’ affective lives in their study entitled, “Narratives from The Inside.” The concept of EI and how school leaders expressed both their internal and external capacity of emotionality were critically investigated. Specifically, the researchers of this study explored, “how leaders unite feelings, thoughts, and actions in ways that define their sense of competence as leaders; in short, ways to enhance the emotional literacy as educational leaders” (p.237).

Summary

This literature review has revealed the important need for more scholarly research which will critically explore the relationship between EI and educational leadership, and the role of the affective life of school leaders. Particularly, school leaders who work in Title 1 elementary schools. In addition, review of the scholarly work on emotion, educational leadership, and emotional intelligence, prove to have several gaps in the research, which seem to stem from a preoccupation by many of the researchers to keep the various academic interests separate and distinct. As a result, competing interests exist within the various academic platforms of EI, (i.e, psychology, sociology, organizational leadership), which does little to strengthen the EI construct or to further validate its importance. Hence, the addition of substantive research on emotions, and educational leadership framed through the lens of EI, will help focus the research and better connect the roles of emotions, emotional intelligence and educational leadership.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the overall methods used in this qualitative exploratory case study and the investigation of how emotional intelligence informs school leaders who lead in K-5 Title 1 elementary schools. This chapter includes the following topics: a) purpose of the study, b) research design, c) participants and access, d) data collection e) data storage f) data analysis g) trustworthiness, and h) protection of human subjects.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how urban K-5 educational leaders’ emotions affect their daily practice and success, particularly how leaders identify, use, understand, and manage their emotions to better inform their daily decisions and practice (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Researchers (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, 1997; Gardner, 1993; Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2002, & 2006) provided new insights, via new definitions, into the correlation between emotional and social intelligence competencies related to effective urban leadership. Subsequently, for the purpose of this study, Salovey and Mayer’s (1997) EI ability model was used as the guiding theoretical foundation, which views emotional intelligence as a new form of intelligence composed of specific emotional and mental abilities. This four-branch ability model focuses on four core abilities: identifying/perceiving emotions; using emotions; understanding emotions; and managing emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The role of emotional intelligence and effective leadership continues to grow as an important and dynamic scholarly research area as seen in the works of Antonakis et al., (2009); Barbuto et al.,(2006); Gardner et al., (2002); George, (2000); Prati et al., (2003); Rajah et al., (2011); and Williams, (2008).
However, more scholarly research is needed, as a result of the current lack of scholarly focus on the affective lives of urban elementary school leaders. This research study will be a critical contribution to the existing body of work regarding emotional intelligence and educational leadership.

Research Questions

This qualitative exploratory case study investigated the emotional (affective) selves of four elementary Title 1 school leaders using the following questions:

Central Question

The central question used for this study was, *how do urban K-5 educational leaders use their emotional selves to lead and survive in highly emotional learning environments found in today’s urban schools?*

Sub-Questions

The sub questions used to further guide this study were:

a). How do leaders use their emotions to inform their daily decisions?
b). How do leaders identify and account for their emotions and feelings?
c). How do leaders express their emotions in their work environment?
d). How do emotions motivate leaders to endure the challenges of educational leadership?

Research Design

This study attempts to capture and deeply understand particular emotional experiences of five educational leaders who work and lead in urban K-5 learning environments. Their willingness to share private emotions, feelings, and reflections makes this study possible.
As such, a qualitative exploratory case study approach allows the researcher to further establish positive interactions and trust with the participants throughout the study while “retaining a holistic and real-world perspective” (Yin, 2014 p. 4). Additionally, Yin (2004) proposes three conditions effectively used in case study methodology: a) the researcher should be willing to ask how” and “why” research questions, b) the researcher does not require control of behavioral events and c) the research focuses on contemporary events (p. 9). These three elements are evident within this study.

Furthermore, a case is defined as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 25, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). Therefore, the case presented in this study are the emotions of school leaders who lead in a particular bounded context, the K-5 Title 1 environment (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Qualitative researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2011) provide a good working definition to further explain the elements of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observers in the world.
Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world…The qualitative researcher…attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 3).

As such, this particular process allows and encourages the researcher to make important connections to self, to her participants, and to their environments. These connections flourish when the participants are placed in the center of the research and remain active participants of the study, as opposed to finding themselves as outsiders or, worse, seen as objects.
**Case Study Method**

A qualitative research case study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture of views from participants observed in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the qualitative case study is an approach to researching a phenomenon within a particular context using a variety of data. The process involved in completing a case study is depicted in the figure below.

![Diagram of the Case Study Process](image)

Figure 4. Illustration of the Case Study Process (Creswell, 2013)

The researcher’s journal entries kept while working as an interim principal, telephone interviews and emails of the participants of the study, and the researcher’s reflection notes of the interviews were collected and analyzed for this study. The five individuals/participants who volunteered their time, provided rich, personal insights throughout the interview process. Their voices have the potential to positively impact any and all future research done on the affective lives of elementary school leaders.
**Two Key Theorists: Two Similar but Different Ways of Understanding**

Two leading theorists provide approaches to implementing case study methodology: Robert Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2009, 2014). “Both seek to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored, and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed” (Baxter et al., 2008, p. 545). According to theorists, Stake (2005) may view case study research as a choice of what is to be studied, instead of a methodology, while Yin (2009, 2014) explains case study as a strategy of inquiry; a comprehensive research strategy” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). Both perspectives demand a well-organized and thorough process to ensure depth and breadth regarding the exploration of the research questions.

There are several different types of case studies worth noting, as identified by Yin (1993): exploratory (sometimes a prelude to social research); explanatory (may be used to do causal investigations); and descriptive (should be developed before starting the research) (Tellis, 1997, p. 1). Stake (1995) identifies three more: intrinsic case study (when the researcher has a deep interest in the case); instrumental case study (comes in handy when the case is used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer); and collective case study (typically used when a group of cases is studied) (Tellis, 1997, p. 1).

Subsequently, case studies provide a “multi-perspective analysis,” whereby the “researcher can consider not just the voices and the perspectives of the actors, but also the interactions between the actors and the researcher” (p. 2). This methodology allows and encourages the voices of the silent to be heard and acknowledged. Therefore, “The problem in case studies is to establish meaning rather than location” (p. 2).
Research Paradigm

Researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2011), as cited in Creswell (2012), “consider the philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology) as key premises that are folded into interpretative frameworks used in qualitative research” (Creswell, 2012, p. 22-23). As such, an interpretive social constructivist paradigm is used as the philosophical framework for this study. “Individuals seek to make meaning of their lives, and do so by developing subjective meanings of their experiences” (Ibid, p. 24). “Due to the variety of their experiences, the researcher has an obligation to look for the complexity and nuances in these experiences rather than accepting superficial, narrow meanings” (Creswell, 2012, p. 24). Therefore, it was vital that the participants’ emotional selves were shared, and their work environments critically understood. Suffice it to say, the constructivist researcher, tries to “focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants” (Creswell, 2012, p. 25).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher was an active participant, and engaged and built positive and respectful relationships over the duration of the study. Additionally, the researcher worked diligently to co-construct meaning between the participants of the study; to deeply understand the context of their work life and to learn how their emotions informed their daily practice and decisions as urban K-5 educational leaders (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, the researcher openly shared and honestly discussed biases held regarding emotions and educational leadership formed during her former positions and experiences as an urban K-5 assistant principal and an interim principal.
Sharing this information, quickly established trust and openness between the participants and the researcher.

Participants

The participants for this study were chosen using the following criteria to ensure maturity of emotions and solid practical experience as educational leaders in K-5 Title 1 schools:

a) Participant must be either an assistant principal or principal with 5-10 years work experience leading in a K-5 urban Title 1 elementary school;

b) Participant must be between 35-60 years old; (rationale for specific age group is emotional and cognitive maturity);

c) Participant must hold a Georgia certification in educational leadership and a master’s, specialist or EdD/PhD degree in educational leadership.

Furthermore, the researcher attempted to communicate with district executive leadership directors for the identification of their most highly emotionally intelligent developed K-5 leaders working for the district; however, this was unsuccessful. It should be noted, that this particular school district is a proponent of emotional intelligence and is “cited by the school district leader developers as a major contributor to leader success” (this fact was shared with me in a school district approval letter, December 5, 2014). Instead the researcher obtained a district-wide 2014-2015 school directory from the district website and sent emails to thirty-five elementary principals and assistant principals assigned to Title 1 schools.
A total of five participants who met the criteria, were recruited for this study. In addition, all participants were made aware that at any time during the study, if they chose to either drop out or refuse to participate there would be no adverse or retaliating acts made against them. The table below provides a synopsis of the participant’s race, gender, educational background and year of educational leadership experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Years of Experience in Ed. Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal Carmen</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.S.W. Social Work/Ed.S Educational/Instructional/Curriculum Supervision/Ed.D Educational Leadership</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Cathy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.A. Elementary Education/M.Ed in Educational Leadership</td>
<td>26 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Jackie</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.A. Elementary Education/M.Ed in School Counseling/Ed.S Educational Curriculum and Leadership</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Kelly</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.A. Early Childhood/* District Leadership Academy</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal Vicky</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B.A. Politics/Early Childhood/M.Ed Early Childhood/Ed.D Educational Leadership</td>
<td>21 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Overview of the Participants Race, Gender, Education, and Educational Leadership experience. Note. * All participants hold a Georgia Leadership Certificate.*
Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for this study. The researcher followed the guidelines set out in (Gay et. Al., 2009, as cited in Walker, G.J., 2014, pp.73-74), article, by being careful “to select a sample which represented the given population, individual or groups”. The researcher sampled an equal number of participants of each gender. In addition, the researcher’s sample included two different racial groups (for diversity and inclusiveness). The groups were identified as African American and Caucasian. For this study, suitable candidates were identified by using sampling criteria, which included certification, experience as educational leaders, leadership experience in mid-size to large urban school districts, and leadership experience in urban K-5 Title 1 elementary schools. A visual of a sampling matrix used to organize the participants can be seen in the table below:

Sampling Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Criteria</th>
<th>Quantity of Participants</th>
<th>Quantity Projected for Final Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>male 50%</td>
<td>2 (actual 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female 50%</td>
<td>2 (actual 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>African American (2-3)</td>
<td>2 (actual 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian (2-3)</td>
<td>2 (actual 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Leaders</td>
<td>K-5 assistant principals (2-3)</td>
<td>2 (actual 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K-5 principals (2-3)</td>
<td>2 (actual 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. The sampling matrix below was used by the researcher to outline the process (Walker, G.J., 2014, pp.72-78).

**Recruitment and Access**

The researcher received the IRB approval letter from Northeastern University (on January 29, 2015) and permission from the school district a couple of weeks before hand on (on December 5, 2014) for recruitment and access of participants. Once approval was obtained from Northeastern University and the school district’s director of research and assessment, an informed consent form to participate in the study (Appendix A) and a recruitment email which included the full details of the purpose and scope of (Appendix A) were sent to 35 principals and assistant principals who worked in identified K-5 Title 1 schools.
A follow-up email and telephone call were done two weeks after the initial email was sent. Out of the 35 principals and assistant principals contacted (7 males and 28 females), a total of 5 (female) participants agreed to participate in the study (2 assistant principals and 3 principals).

**Data Collection**

The researcher collected qualitative data from four of the participants of the study in two sets of semi-structured telephone interviews (the participants’ preference). The fifth participant was interviewed face-to-face for her initial interview (her preference), and then via telephone for the second part of the interview. Other sources of data such as notes and documented reflections were also sent to the researcher by the participants at the conclusion of their interviews and during the process of member checking. Student enrollment information was also collected from each of the participant’s schools and reviewed. Before any data collection occurred, an initial telephone call (lasting 30 minutes) was scheduled with each participant to reiterate the purpose of this study, to review scheduling times of the interviews, and to answer all questions and discuss any concerns. During this initial call, all participants gave their expressed verbal consent and agreement to audiotape the interviews using an online application (called TapeACall), to transcribe their interviews (using a professional transcriptionist), and to use their interviews for the purpose of this study. All documentation and copies of emails were housed on two email cloud services (Google Drive and Microsoft Dropbox). The first round of telephone interviews began the week of March 9, 2015 and lasted 30 to 45 minutes per participant. At the beginning of all the interviews, the researcher was careful to share the interview protocol in detail with the participants and asked introductory questions related to the participants’ biographical/personal background and the participants’ career history to date.
The second round of interviews, which began on March 23, 2015 and ended on April 2, 2015, delved into their perception and use of their emotions and emotional intelligence abilities to lead in K-5 Title 1 urban elementary schools. These secondary interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes in length. To ensure consistency, the interview protocol (interview questions and script) was also used during the second round of interviews (appendix B). Due to the preparation of the annual statewide-standardized tests commencing on the third week of April, interviews were scheduled within a very tight window. The researcher was very cognizant of the challenging time constraints during this time of year for all administrators who work in public schools.

**Data Storage and Management**

All collected data was stored online through a cloud storage service (Google Drive and Microsoft Dropbox). All research notes (field notes/journal notes) and hard copies of emails from participants were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home office. Additionally, all completed transcripts and notes used pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Access to the data was limited to the student researcher and a professional transcriber who completed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix C). All interview field notes, emails, and audiotapes will be destroyed after a two-year period, which will give the researcher the opportunity to present the data to the research participants, and at future conferences and professional development workshops.
Data Analysis

Data collected for this study was analyzed using an inductive approach. Thomas (2006) writes, “The purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (p. 238). Furthermore, Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) describe qualitative data analysis as “three concurrent flows of activity: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification” (p. 12).

Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data from interview transcripts, documents, and field notes; data display (charts, tables, graphs) refers to how well the data is organized to draw meaningful conclusions; while the “third stream of analysis” is coming to a conclusion or verification of the findings (Ibid, p. 13). The researcher read the interview transcripts multiple times before actually coding; becoming familiar with the tone, expressions, and key details contained within the transcripts. After multiple readings of the interview transcripts, initial themes and patterns were noted in a word document table that captured each participant’s distinct and familiar themes. This process was completed for both sets (Part A and Part B) of the interview transcripts. After the researcher reviewed and became familiar with each participant’s biographical/personal background; information about career path; insights into their thoughts around leadership being emotional work; and their understanding of their emotional selves through the lens of EI, the second round of coding was completed via software. The use of the qualitative analysis computer software MAXQDA (all interview transcripts were uploaded and reanalyzed) assisted the researcher in creating rich data displays of information, while keeping the transcribed text organized and manageable while coding for any new findings, patterns, and themes.
Examples of data display of coding of the four major research questions and subsequent subthemes are found in the following figures:

Figure 5. A Section of the coding and transcript in MAXQDA

Figure 6. A Section of Thematic Coded Segments in MAXQDA

These figures illustrate a section of the data display collected at the conclusion of the data analysis cycle as discussed by Saldaña (2013).
The process of coding involves two coding cycles that identify and group the data. Saldaña (2013) explains in great detail the two cycles used by qualitative researchers to complete a deep data dive: “The first cycle occurs during the initial coding of data; (i.e., open coding), while the second cycle (i.e., pattern/focused/axial coding) “develops a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/ or theoretical organization from the first cycle codes” (p. 207). This practice fosters a more critical and deeper analysis of the collection of data. An important part of qualitative analysis is the process of coding the data which Saldaña (2013) defines coding as “…most often a work or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute found in text or visual data” (p. 3). Due to the emergence of important attributes, which can emerge at the completion of several cycles of coding, researcher Charmaz (2001 as cited in Saldaña, 2013) describes the coding process as the “critical link” between data collection and the explanation of meaning (p. 3).

Although the importance of coding cannot be diminished; for a holistic, balanced, and thorough analysis of qualitative data, Creswell (2012, p. 237) provides six noteworthy steps that qualitative researchers should follow when analyzing and interpreting qualitative data:

a) The researcher collects data (interviews/observations)

b) The researcher prepares data for analysis (transcription).

c) The researcher critically reads through the data.

d) The researcher codes the data (locates/identifies text segments).

e) The researcher codes the text for description to be used in the research report.

f) The researcher codes the text for themes to be used in the research report.

The aforementioned steps provided the researcher with a logical outline of best practices used to collect, interpret, and analyze the qualitative data in a concise and methodical manner.
**Trustworthiness**

Four areas have been designed to establish the quality of any empirical social research (Yin, 2014, p. 45). Construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability have in the past been the approved best practice methods of testing the trustworthiness of quantitative research, used in qualitative designed studies. However, as a direct result of the rise of the legitimization and respectability of qualitative research or “naturalistic inquiry,” there is a marked increase in the exploration and development of better-aligned methods for qualitative investigators to use when judging the trustworthiness of their studies (Shenton, 2004).

The reframing or renaming of the elements used to judge the trustworthiness captures the essence of qualitative work, while “distancing naturalistic investigators from the positivist paradigm” (Shenton, 2004, p. 63). Indeed, such a paradigm “has the elements of being reductionist, logical, empirical, cause and effect oriented, and deterministic based on theories” (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). Instead, a social constructivism paradigm (popular in many types of qualitative investigations, including this case study) embraces “a worldview where subjective meanings are varied socially and historically” (Creswell, 2013, p. 25). To incorporate a more constructivist perspective, four new criteria are proposed by Guba (1981), as cited in Shenton (2004), who suggests the use of these alternative constructs that correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist/qualitative researcher:

a) credibility (in preference to internal validity),

b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability),

c) dependability (in preference to reliability),

d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity).
Hence, the researcher (a social constructivist) has considered the following various mixed qualitative element regarding the trustworthiness of this case study as suggested by Creswell (2013), Shenton (2004), and the Laerd Dissertation Online Research Guide (Retrieved May 17, 2014, from http://www.dissertation.laerd.com/internal-validity.php):

Credibility/Internal Validity

a) Adoption of established research methods: The researcher ensured that sound qualitative case study methods and research design were used to organize and frame the study (Shenton, 2004).

b) Tactics to help ensure honesty in participants when contributing data: Participants were encouraged to be frank from the onset of each session; participants were provided a “safe” space to share information and made to feel comfortable (Shenton, 2004).

c) Use of iterative questioning: The researcher used exploratory questions to elicit details and rephrased any questions that needed to be clarified for discrepancies or to build deeper understanding (Shenton, 2004).

d) History: The researcher did not observe any significant changes or historical events which changed the conditions/tone of the study (Laerd Dissertation and Online Research Guide).
e) *Maturation:* The duration of the study had no negative effects on the participants or the researcher’s data. Thus, the researcher was very cognizant of her participants’ time and effort. Strict timelines and schedules were followed (Laerd Dissertation and Online Research Guide).

f) *Instrumentation:* The use of interviews and detailed interview notes were carefully implemented to capture any changes regarding the participants’ input. This was done to limit any corruption of the research questions, which could cause weakened confidence in the study itself (Laerd Dissertation and Online Research Guide).

g) *Experimental Mortality:* (Death/No longer willing to take part/no longer available/geographical move). Experimental mortality did not occur during this study. The researcher made sure participants of the study were willing, able, and interested in participating in the study. In addition, a small token of appreciation (gift card) was offered for their time as well as scheduling interviews sensitive to their availability (Laerd Dissertation and Online Research Guide).

h) *Researcher Bias:* The researcher shared her own thoughts/perspectives, values, and past experiences as a scholar-practitioner. Also the researcher’s positionality was also shared during this study (Creswell, 2013).
i) **Familiarity**: Positive relationships were established with all the participants, due to the researcher’s transparency and openness about her past experiences as an assistant principal and interim principal, and her role as a researcher, as well as the importance of the research study (Shenton, 2004).

**Transferability/External Validity**


- **Prolonged Engagement**: The researcher ensured that a sufficient length of time was spent during the collection of data to establish positive relationships, allowing the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding. Also, the number of data collection sessions was organized to ensure minimal disruption to the professional and personal lives of the participants (Shenton, 2004).

- **Triangulation**: Collection of several data points (i.e., interviews, interview notes, reflections, and journal notes) provided rich and meaningful perspectives on the research questions, while balancing the effect of investigator’s bias (Shenton, 2004).
c) Peer Review: Throughout the collection of data and data analysis, the researcher invited both colleagues/peers and advisor to read her study to provide a critical perspective. Also feedback has been welcomed from colleagues who attended her session at the Georgia Research Education Association conference (held in Savannah, Georgia), which she attended on October 17-18, 2014 (Shenton, 2004).

d) Negative Case Analysis: The researcher explored any opposing theories that emerged over the course of the data collection (analysis), to ensure increased validity and balance regarding the research. There were no negative attitudes or behaviors displayed by the participants (Laerd Dissertation and Online Research Guide).

e) Clarification of researcher’s bias: The researcher provided an in-depth outline of her journey into education, past experiences as an educational leader, her personal values, beliefs, and assumptions regarding educational leadership, her educational background, and her personal interest in the research (Laerd Dissertation and Online Research Guide).

f) Member-Checking: Researchers Guba and Lincoln (1989) consider the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study’s credibility to be the use of checks to the accuracy of the data throughout the collection of data and data analysis. As such, the researcher shared the data with the participants via email throughout the collection and analysis phase, to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. The participants provided wonderful rich comments, clarifications, and reflections (Shenton, 2004).
g) Rich, Thick Descriptions: During the writing process, the researcher provided deep, highly descriptive analysis regarding the phenomena investigated, to ensure meaningful and critical understanding of the context and situations observed. Without this, it is difficult for the reader of the completed study to determine the extent to which the overall findings “ring true” (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability/Reliability

The researcher included a highly descriptive research design process, enabling future researchers to copy the study and to assist in capturing a thorough understanding of the methods used in this case study (Shenton, 2004).

Protection of Human Subjects

The participants of this qualitative case study were not subjected to any adverse risks due to unethical or harmful treatment over the duration of this study. To protect the participants, this research proposal went through the Northeastern University IRB Protocol (approval was granted January 29, 2015) and also met the school district’s research standards. It approved by the executive director of research and evaluation on December 5, 2014. In addition, the researcher successfully completed the National Institute of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research web-based training course, “Protecting Human Research Participants,” at Northeastern University, and was certified on November 16, 2013.
In addition, the participants of the study received a thorough review and explanation of the project, as well as copies (via email) of the Northeastern University IRB approval letter, as well as the school district’s approval letter of the research. A copy of the informed consent letter was emailed to each participant to read and ask any clarifying questions. The participants’ verbal approval of the informed consent permitted the researcher to collect and analyze data integral to this study.

To ensure added safety and confidentiality for the participants, pseudonyms were used during the transcribing process and the writing of the results. All data (tapes and documents) were stored and kept in the researcher’s home office. At the completion of this study, all audiotapes will be properly destroyed. All written documentation from the study (e.g., transcription notes, journal entries) will be kept in the researcher’s possession for 2-3 years to use in conferences, presentations, articles and/or books (Bourdon, 2012, IRB approved application).

To reiterate, the purpose of this project was to capture the dynamic lived experiences of five educational leaders, who work and lead in urban Title 1 K-5 environments. The results of this case study will provide meaningful research on how emotions, as seen through the lens of EI, inform educational leaders’ daily practice and decision-making processes. Participants in this project experienced personal and/or emotional growth through self-reflection, which led to a heightened level of self-awareness regarding their emotional selves as educational leaders (as told to the researcher during reflections).
Purposeful selection of the participants was carried out by using the following criteria: a) must be a certified assistant principal or principal with 5-10 years leadership experience working in a K-5 urban Title 1 elementary school, b) must be between 35-60 years old, and c) must hold a Georgia certification in educational leadership and a master’s, specialist or EdD/PhD degree in educational leadership. The research participants agreed to participate in this study because of their interest in the research subject; subsequently, there was no coercion by the researcher, and there would have been no adverse retaliating acts if participants chose not to participate.

**Informed Consent**

Research should, as much as possible, be based on participants’ freely volunteered informed consent. This implies a responsibility to explain fully and meaningfully what the research is about and how it will be disseminated. The participants of this study were made aware of their right to refuse to participate, the extent to which confidentiality would be maintained, and the potential ways in which the data might be used (Corti et al., 2000). The following were example questions for participants: (taken from Northeastern University Informed Consent Template, 2013):

1. Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
2. Why is this research study being done?
3. What will I be asked to do?
4. Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
5. Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
6. Will I benefit by being in this research?
7. Who will see the information about me?
8. If I do not want to take part in the study, what choices do I have?
9. What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?

10. Can I stop my participation in this study?

11. Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

12. Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

13. Will I be paid for my participation?

14. Will it cost me anything to participate?

15. Is there anything else I need to know?
Chapter Four: Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how urban K-5 educational leaders’ emotions affect their work and success; particularly, how they use, identify, understand and manage their emotions in their daily practice. The research included two semi-structured telephone interviews for four of the participants. The fifth participant preferred to meet face to face for the first interview, and participated by telephone for her second interview. Other sources of data, such as notes and documented reflections, were also reviewed. These items were sent to the researcher by the participants at the conclusion of their interviews and during the process of member checking. Student enrollment information was also collected from the participant’s schools and reviewed. The participants provided rich, detailed, and meaningful insights during the interview process and from reflections they shared via email. These discussions allowed this group of educational leaders to reflect on their affective lives. For the majority, this was a rare and welcome opportunity. This chapter will offer a more in-depth description of Title 1 schools, as it is a particular and binding context shared by all of the participants of this study. Additionally, the following areas will also be discussed: an overview of the participants, results of data analysis, key EI themes/abilities identified based on their responses to the research questions posed in this study, and a summary of the results.

Title 1 K-5 Schools: Teaching and Leading in an Urban Context

In order to understand the context of this exploratory case study, a brief description of the Title 1 program is necessary before moving into the deeper analysis of the data. All of the participants of this study have taught and led in urban K-5 Title 1 schools within a mid to large urban school district geographically located in the northeastern area of the state of Georgia.
According to the U.S. Department of Education (http://www2.ed.gov):

“The Title 1 program is the nation’s oldest and largest federally funded program (The U.S. Department of Education, http://www2.ed.gov). The department provides over $14 billion to school systems annually across the country for students at risk of failure or living at or near poverty. Originally, the idea of Title 1 was enacted in 1965, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which created policy committed to closing the achievement gap between low-income and other disadvantaged students. The policy was rewritten or reauthorized in 1994, with the expressed intent to improve fundamental goals of helping at-risk student, under the No Child Left Behind Act, which mandates all identified Title 1 schools must make adequate yearly progress on state testing and focus on best teaching practices in order to continue receiving funds.”

These mandates have placed enormous stress and challenges on leaders and teachers who work in Title 1 schools to perform and make their annual academic and attendance targets for all populations served in the school. When a school fails to meet or exceed these targets each year, the state places these schools on an alert and/or labels them as “needs improvement schools” or, more recently, “opportunity schools.” These euphemisms are used to identify schools which are unable or failing to meet and exceed their academic bench-marks on a yearly basis. Consequently, both leaders and teachers may be removed or demoted from their positions if either the state or the district deem their work as ineffective over a period of time.
The annually granted funds by the Department of Education received by Title 1 schools are typically used to provide extra programs and support staff for at-risk students in need of extra support in math, reading, social/emotional and writing skills. The support programs vary with each school’s needs, but they usually fund programs such as remedial targeted instruction, curriculum resources, counseling, parental engagement and involvement, specialized remediation teachers and remediation booster programs such as Saturday School, double connections scheduling, and after-school tutoring. Subsequently, as a direct result of the large sums of money given to these schools, the accountability of the school district becomes much more magnified, as does the workload and responsibility for leaders and teachers who are tasked with meeting annual student growth targets within a 10-month period. Many of the academic growth targets do not realistically account for children who demonstrate substantial academic gaps in their learning, particularly in content areas regarding math and reading skills. In addition, the student population attending Title 1 schools typically make up 40% or more of students who receive free and/or reduced lunch. For many of the students, these are the only meals they will receive due to their circumstances that have them living in generational poverty and in unstable, highly volatile home environments. Due to these real concerns, learning is often secondary to the daily survival for these students. These circumstances must be taken into consideration when understanding educational leadership in Title 1 schools, for this is the context of an urban public Title 1 K-5 elementary school.
An Overview of the Case Study Participants: The making of educational leaders

*Carmen (Assistant Principal/African-American)*

A seasoned educational leader, born in New York, raised in a two-parent home with three older sisters in Louisiana, Carmen came into education as a second career after working several years as a juvenile probation officer. Working with young men and women in the juvenile court system, who demonstrated huge academic gaps in basic reading, math and writing skills, led Carmen to pursue a master’s degree in education.

She knew there was a need for good educators and decided to do her graduate work in education. Moving from California to Atlanta with her family in 1994, Carmen pursued her Georgia education certification, her education specialist degree in curriculum studies and finally a doctorate degree in educational leadership. Carmen enjoyed her career as an elementary classroom teacher and didn’t pursue or apply for administration positions on her own volition. However, a natural leader and coach among her peers, she was asked to move into educational leadership where she has worked as an assistant principal in Title 1 elementary schools for the last 10 years. Very much an advocate and practitioner of shared leadership, Carmen stated several times during her interviews, “I believe in people, in growing others…If I don’t leave a succession, what am I doing”?

*Cathy (Principal/ Caucasian)*

Originally from Buffalo, New York, Cathy was raised in a two-parent family with an older sister and younger brother. While growing up, Cathy was very active in extracurricular activities, which included lessons in organ and dance (tap, ballet, and jazz). A “born leader,” Cathy was elected president of her high school class, and was preparing to seek out a glamorous, adventurous life as an air stewardess.
Unfortunately, Cathy’s mother put an end to that notion when she told Cathy one fateful evening after dinner, “No, I’m sorry, you’re not going to be a stewardess; you’re going to be a teacher.” And that was the end of that dream, as Cathy enrolled in teacher’s college to pursue a bachelor’s degree in elementary education. Working several years in the classroom, Cathy decided she wanted a new challenge. She decided to move into administration and applied for an assistant principal position.

Reflecting on her past leadership experiences in high school and college, Cathy shared her motivation for entering educational leadership, “The leadership piece in high school was exciting for me, and I realized I could get groups of people to improve things. I also liked watching people get motivated trying to improve themselves.” After working as assistant principal for six years in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, Cathy was promoted to a principal. She has worked for 14 years in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools throughout her tenure. Promoted to a special education coordinator, Cathy worked at the district level for six years before being asked to open and lead a new Title 1 school where she now works as the principal. A self-described servant leader, Cathy believes in “building and maintaining strong, positive relationships.”

Jackie (Principal/Caucasian)

Jackie was the only native Georgian to partake in this study. She was born and raised in a northeastern suburb of the city of Atlanta. Jackie was raised in a two-parent home with an older brother (who was born with special needs) and a younger sister. Kept busy as a member of the middle school and high school swim team, piano lessons, basketball, and summer camp each year, Jackie can be described as “energetic” and a “go-getter.” Her mother “believed in us trying out and joining things.”
Jackie loved school and was a good student, where she thrived and excelled as a natural born leader. “I got elected to a lot of things. I gravitated toward that… I liked influencing people.” Her love of learning and leadership paved the way for her education career. After completing bachelor’s and master’s degrees in elementary education and school counseling and a specialist degree in educational leadership, Jackie held various positions in the education field that included classroom teacher, school counselor, instructional specialist, assistant principal, and finally principal. Jackie worked as a principal for 13 years, before retiring several years ago. Choosing to lead in a democratic leadership style, Jackie “really enjoyed extending leadership opportunities to the staff…I’m very people-oriented and I tried to use my authority wisely.”

Kelly (Principal/Caucasian)

Kelly was born and raised in Washington, D.C., with an older sister in a two-parent family. Tragically, her younger sister died at a young age. While growing up, a very athletic Kelly was involved in volleyball, softball, bowling, table tennis, and swimming. “We were constantly active.” After high school, Kelly become a medical assistant. After graduation, she worked for a general surgeon for three years. “Because of the work that I did there, I realized I really wanted to go to college….That gave me three years to decide what I really wanted to do, which was teach.” Her experiences working with children in the medical practice awakened her love of teaching, and she enrolled in teacher’s college to pursue her bachelor’s degree in early childhood education.
After several years working as elementary classroom teacher, Kelly’s, principal encouraged her to apply to the district’s leadership academy so she could make the move into educational administration. Not interested in educational administration, she politely declined the offer; however, her principal was persistent and told her, “You’ll like the classes.” As a life-long learner who loved going to school, she applied to the program and graduated two years later. Immediately following her graduation from the program, she was promoted to an assistant principal position. Even though through the entire interview, she told her interviewer numerous times, “I really don’t want to do this.” However, once she finally accepted the position and actually worked as an assistant principal for a couple of months, she fell in love with the work. I loved the teachers and the kids.” Kelly was an assistant principal for 5 years and a Principal for 13 years, she recently retired.

A collaborative leader who was a big proponent of a Shared Leadership style, Kelly reflects, “I hope I was fair…I think my style was really one of shared leadership, working with teachers to make decisions and using data to guide us on what we needed to do next.” “I really tried to listen to the teachers.”

Vicky (Assistant Principal/Caucasian)

Born and raised in the suburbs of Columbus, Ohio for the first 14 years of her life with her younger brother and sister, Vicky moved to the suburbs of Washington, D.C. and then moved to Atlanta, Georgia for college. Her parents divorced when she was a young girl, however, her father retained a close relationship with his children. A competitive swimmer from a young age, and a strong student, Vicky became very involved in student government during high school while living in Washington.
A notable experience occurred while she was working in student government when a family friend ran for Congress. Asked to volunteer for his campaign, this opportunity gave Vicky her first taste in leadership while successfully leading the candidate’s youth volunteer group. During the campaign, Vicky’s leadership skills emerged which were noticed by her teachers and her peers. So impressed by her initiative, a school-counselor asked Vicky to supervise, secure, and schedule speakers for a parent/speaker program offered in her high school.

Vicky went into education with a deep love of teaching nurtured by her 4th grade teacher. “I wanted to be her. I loved all the trappings of teaching too, and I liked being around little kids.” “I’d always thought I wanted to be an elementary school teacher.” During her time in college, Vicky completed a bachelor’s degree in politics and early childhood education, a master’s degree in early childhood education, and a doctoral degree in educational leadership. While discussing her educational background, Vicky recalls and shares her eventual path to educational leadership:

“My dynamic principal…just totally redefined what you could do with and for kids. I started being asked to be on school wide committees and I started liking the reward of having the school-wide impact and the development of relationships with both parents and kids. When my principal left to go open a new school, she asked me to come with her as her instructional lead teacher. It was a combination of somebody who I just totally and completely admired, and [who] encouraged and nurtured me in that direction.”

After several years as an instructional lead teacher, Vicky lost her position due to the eradication of all instructional lead teacher positions due to state-wide budget constraints.
However, with encouragement and support from her then principal, Vicky became an assistant principal. After 10 years as an assistant principal, Vicky was promoted to principal, a position she held for 11 years. She currently enjoys being in semi-retirement, and works part-time as an assistant principal in a Title 1 school. Reflecting on her leadership style, she describes her current leadership style as “the yin to the yang of the principal,” someone providing a balanced approach to the leadership needs of her current school.

**Emotional Abilities: An intimate look at the inner life**

For the purpose of this study, the emotional abilities identified in Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) four branch ability-model were used to guide the central questions for this study. The research question used were the following:

a) How do leaders use their emotions to inform daily decisions?

b) How do leaders identify and account for their emotions and feelings?

c) How do leaders express their emotions in their work environment?

d) How do emotions motivate leaders to continue this type of work?

In order to inquire more deeply about the participants’ lives, several other supplemental questions were used to garner pertinent information regarding the demographics, educational background, family background, and career paths of the participants, which can be found in Appendix B. These supplemental questions allowed the researcher to fully grasp and appreciate the whole person as it related to their affect and their work lives. These supplemental questions used were organized into the following categories: a) biographical/personal background, b) career path and c) leadership is emotional work, all found in greater depth in Appendix B.
Overview of the Data Analysis

Responses by the participants to the aforementioned research questions were robust and deeply reflective, particularly when discussing their family backgrounds and paths to leadership. The participants were able to share many nuances of their emotional lives openly and honestly during the interview and written reflection process. Many of their experiences shared with the researcher, demonstrated a deep commitment to education and a deep compassion for children. Carmen shared an example of such emotional commitment in the following statement: “When my second graders tell me, ‘I feel so much better talking to you,’ this is so empowering; this really feeds me. Got to get back out there and try again.” Vicky reflected on the most rewarding aspects of working in Title 1 schools as “being able to defy the common beliefs that lower SES (social economic status) kids can’t learn, can’t perform. I found that really rewarding…Watching the kids do what you knew they could.” Cathy shared her frustration at a memorable discipline hearing in which her goal was to come up with some alternative, helpful, student-centered consequences. “I’m pretty good at wearing my emotions on my sleeve, so I had to work really hard during those difficult parent conferences dealing with discipline. I wanted to say to the parents, ‘Are you kidding me?…You did this stupid thing.’” I wanted to say to parents many times, ‘Do you see what you’re doing here? Do you see that the two of you are in this nonsense fight over custody and who stayed 15 minutes too long at whose house? Do you see who the true victim is here?’”
A particularly heartwarming example from Cathy demonstrated a deep sense of compassion and commitment to her students, by putting their needs first:

We worked our tails off getting that building ready to be open, and it was work none of us had done before. I will never forget the first day of school and my ED was on his way; I was on my hands and knees on the cafeteria floor looking for a tooth that had fallen out of a first grader. It was black and white terrazzo floor; so finding the tooth was going to be next to impossible. This child was beside himself because it was his first lost tooth. I’m literally on my hand and knees because I was doing lunch duty. My ED walked into the cafeteria and asked the other monitor where I was…she just led him over to where I am on my hands and knees, seconds later he called my name. I looked up and I could have died. I stood up carefully and he said, “I know there’s an explanation” … I told him, “This is extremely important, and I know your visit is important, but we can either talk on the floor if you would like to help me find his tooth, or if you could wait till I find it.” He waited in my office until I found the tooth!

These particular reflections share common affective elements, which proved to be integral in motivation and sustaining the will of these educational leaders who work in Title 1 schools.

Throughout the data, evidence of the participants’ various personal leadership experiences ran the gamut of emotions from (joy, to frustration, to anger, to pride, but never hopelessness). These leaders shared many similar emotional histories, particularly in the areas of making challenging decisions and expressing their emotions in the work environment.
For example, Cathy acknowledged in her reflections that, “…emotions drove 90% of my work as a new principal. The other 10% might just be rote routine-type of things that just happen without thought and are scheduled. To me, the whole emotional piece is so big to know when to be okay…with it leading your decisions.” When discussing decision-making in our interviews, Jackie asserts, “You make so many decisions a day…I wasn’t always tired….It’s just that your body gets the best of you. It influences what you say and how you think.”

During the process of analyzing the responses that pertained to the subject of expressing emotions in the workplace, the majority of the participants identified the importance of “assessing the situation, the audience, and the level of trust.” Being able to express emotion in the workplace depended on having the skills to assess the situation correctly (what was the core of the situation), knowledge of the audience (students, parents or teachers), and the ability to be genuine and honest. On the other hand, Carmen expressed the need to be “cognizant of the environment” at all times and explained why she expressed her emotions in the workplace, “very, very, thoughtfully”. “As an African-American woman if we speak too loud, or our face is too expressive, we are regarded as too emotional.”

Interestingly, when analyzing the areas of the use of emotions as motivation to do educational leadership work in Title 1 schools, for some participants, a theme of control of their emotions in order to perform and successfully complete highly task-oriented goals emerged. Such examples are seen in the following responses: “I remove myself from the situation and go to my office and debrief…dealing with human beings takes a lot of energy.” “I think as far as my emotions, I tend to be real task-oriented more than people oriented…I’ve gotten better about that, but when I know that I’m going to be meeting with a group or someone, it’s like “What do we need to get done; where are they with it?”
“Sometimes there’s stress. I guess there’s different kinds of stressors for me. One is a lot to do in a short period of time…Now I self-talk and it’s like, “You will make time; you will find time to do this, this day, lucky for me I never did feel out of control…doing the work.”

The skills used to motivate these leaders when working in their Title 1 school environments, were based less on emotion than the completion of specific goals and their outcomes. When coding this particular data set, the researcher wondered whether their motivation to do K-5 leadership would be more positively emotional or expressive, if the participants worked in non-Title 1 schools. Would K-5 educational leaders who lead in Title 1 schools be better able to connect to their emotional selves and motivation more authentically, while exerting less control over their emotions, if they worked in a markedly different school environment?

**Key Themes Found in the Data Analysis**

In order to present the key themes in an organized manner, each category in Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence were explored using the participant’s own words, which were captured in two interviews and various reflection notes. Their voices and personal experiences highlighted important patterns, and common themes found among the majority of the participant’s responses to the research questions. The four research questions used in this study were intentionally constructed to investigate and highlight the four different abilities found within the four-branch ability model.
The first research question explored examples of EI abilities found within the category of *emotional facilitation of thought* (Using Emotions); the second research question explored examples of EI abilities found within the category of *emotional perception*; the third research question explored examples of EI abilities found within the category of *emotional understanding*; and the fourth research question explored examples of EI abilities found within the category of *emotional management*.

The research questions and the categories have purposely been placed in a different order to analyze the data collected from the lower branches of emotional intelligence (according to the ability model branches of hierarchy) found in emotional facilitation and perception, in order to better compare the more “sophisticated” and “controlled” level of emotions located in the highest branches of management of emotions (the first branch illustrated in Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) four branch ability model. The researcher was keen to understand if there was a natural growth or “maturity of emotions” displayed or articulated by the participants as expressed in the different research questions and categories found in the four branch ability model of emotional intelligence.

**Emotional Facilitation of Thought (Using Emotions)**

Emotional facilitation of thought (Using Emotions) includes the following EI abilities:

a) The ability to redirect and prioritize thinking on the basis of associated feelings,

b) The ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgment and memory,
c) The ability to capitalize on mood changed to appreciate multiple points
of view, and

d) The ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and
creativity.

These responses exemplified the various EI abilities expressed in their responses to the question:
EI abilities expressed in their responses to the question: How do leaders use their emotions to
inform daily decisions?

Carmen (Assistant Principal/African-American)

“I’m real or honest about my emotions They are all over my face. I address my
emotions; I’m a thinking and a feeling being. I take a minute and reflect on my emotions
before I make decisions and think, “What has to be done?” I use emotions and honesty to
get into problem-solving”. This response demonstrated an ability to redirect and prioritize
thinking on the basis of associated feelings.

Cathy (Principal/Caucasian): “Letting other people have a chance to talk in mostly small groups;
working with people; letting them have their say.” This response demonstrated an ability to use
emotional states to facilitate problem solving and creativity.
Jackie (Principal/Caucasian): “I will give credit to my experiences at Georgia State in the counseling department, which taught me to be a good listener and be able to identify your parents’, children’s and teachers’ needs.” This response demonstrated an ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity.

Kelly (Principal/Caucasian): “Listening, trying to recap what they said, making sure people were listening and understanding other perspectives. I have very little tolerance for people being rude to each other.” This response demonstrated an ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view.

Vicky (Assistant Principal/Caucasian): “Sometimes I have to think about how best to respond to a situation…Sometimes the context determines how to respond to somebody. It’s not so much the emotion, but how best to express it in a message.” This response demonstrated the ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgment and memory.

The daily reality of leading in K-5 elementary schools finds principals having to make numerous, and critical decisions which are affected by emotion (whether consciously controlled or not during the decision-making process). In the above responses, all four EI abilities found in the emotional facilitation of thought branch are captured in the way emotions are used for problem solving, to facilitate judgment and memory, to see multiple perspectives, and to redirect thinking. These particular abilities are fluid and dynamic elements, which overlap with each other seamlessly.
Emotional Perception and Expression

The emotional perception and expression category includes the following EI abilities:

a) The ability to identify emotion in one’s physical and psychological states,

b) The ability to identify emotion in other people,

c) The ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them, and

 d) The ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.

The following are examples of responses captured in the participants own voices. These responses exemplified the various EI abilities expressed in their responses to the question: *How do leaders identify and account for their emotions and feelings?*

Carmen (Assistant Principal/African-American): “You have to be honest regarding the environment. People are always looking at you, teachers and students. Whatever my emotions – I always remember that I am a leader. You can mask only so much regarding emotions.” This response demonstrated the ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them).

Cathy (Principal/Caucasian): “I can identify my emotions really easily…they’ve always been just right there. Probably the easiest thing for me to identify is when I get nervous. I have a physical identification thing, because my voice shakes.” This response demonstrated the ability to identify emotion in one’s physical and psychological states).
Jackie (Principal/Caucasian): “My experiences at Georgia State while I was getting my counseling degree taught me to practice asking, ‘What do you feel inside?’ Name the emotion—if you are trying to identify someone else’s feeling, there’s a lot of difference between being annoyed and being furious. Some of those practices would run through my head as a principal. You have to be honest with yourself.” This response captured the ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.

Kelly (Principal/Caucasian): “Working in Title 1 schools, we were being judged against high performing non-Title 1 schools. I would get very frustrated. I would stand up for the school and I would let them know You are talking about my heart and soul”. This response captured the ability to express emotion accurately and to express needs related to them.

Vicky (Assistant Principal/Caucasian): “When giving teachers a compliment: ‘Hats off,’ for going above and beyond, some of the teachers are very sensitive. So I would write a personal note or send a personal email instead of putting it in the weekly newsletter.” This response demonstrated the ability to identify emotion in other people.

It is interesting to note that both Kelly and Vicky had a difficult time explaining how they actually identified and accounted for their own emotions. Kelly discussed how she felt about comments made to her by her executive director about student growth challenges in her Title 1 school, while Vicky seemed to be much more comfortable in sharing how she identified her staff’s emotions when giving them accolades for excellent work done. The researcher rephrased the question multiple times in their interviews.
However, they could not or did not want to explain ways in which they personally identified and accounted for their emotional selves (emotions and feelings). Both leaders presented some emotional barriers to this question. There was a possibility that the researcher was delving into uncomfortable territory, and hence, she decided to keep them engaged by moving the interview process along.

**Emotional Understanding**

The emotional understanding category includes the following EI abilities:

a) The ability to understand relationships among various emotions.

b) The ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions.

c) The ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states.

d) The ability to understand transitions among emotions.

The following are examples of responses captured in the participants own voices. These responses exemplified the various EI abilities identified and/or expressed in the responses to the question: *How do leaders express their emotions in the work environment?*

Carmen (Assistant Principal/African American): “Very, very thoughtfully. We have to be cognizant of the environment we work in. As African-American females, we have to be careful showing our emotions.
If we speak too loud or our face is too expressive, we are regarded as too emotional.” This response demonstrated the ability to understand complex feelings.

Cathy (Principal/Caucasian): “It would really depend on the situation. I was capable of pulling it together when the situation warranted it. And really able to let loose and have fun and dress up for Halloween and be the school’s tooth fairy. I would do anything to make sure my environment was happy.” This response captured the ability to understand transitions among emotions.

Jackie (Principal/Caucasian): “I just tried to be genuine with myself and with the teachers. I wasn’t insulted much by teachers—they were quite respectful to me in my face. I would also try to help teachers. There was a first grade teacher, and she just was new. The class would just be wild and she would have a smile on her face. I said to her, you know you need to be congruent, you need to let those students know by the expression on your face how you feel. I just tried to be genuine with myself and them. I tried to be honest about how I was feeling—not always trying to cover it up or ignoring my emotions. I think people need to know when they have made a mistake. I mean, people are people. I just didn’t let them get to me too much.” This response demonstrated the ability to understand relationships among various emotions.

Kelly (Principal/Caucasian): “I’m an upbeat person. My emotional demeanor…was more of an encourager. Like I said, it was a family. I’d go by and see everybody in the morning before classes started. I’d walk the halls and be in the cafeteria and be out there with the kids. If I was down, it didn’t need to be everybody else’s problem.
I could deal with it. They (teachers) were working didn’t need some snarly person around them.” This response demonstrated the ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions.

Vicky (Assistant Principal/Caucasian) “I express my emotions verbally in conversations or meetings. When I’m sitting in an SST meeting with parents and somebody is saying to the parents, “We need to look at retention for their kid,” I try to think about what I want to say and how to say it. Let’s say we’ve had circumstances where we’ve had to move kids from one teacher to another, you have to ask yourself how to do it professionally. Do you keep it emotionless, like “Thank you, we believe this is going to be a good fit,” or do you go into the more familiar? I would say also there are times a blank face is good to use, particularly when somebody is sharing, “Did you know that so and so…” That’s containing your emotions. You can’t roll your eyes or nod off. A lot of it has to do with the situation, the audience, and the level of trust.” This response exemplified the ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states.

The abilities found within the emotional understanding category can be furthered explained as “skills in comprehending emotions and how they operate in the social world” (Riggio & Lee, 2007; p. 421). The responses to this research question varied in terms of emotional depth, due to personal identities, power structures within the learning environment, and leadership positions held by the participants.

Carmen and Cathy reflected two very different responses—quite polar opposites—which gave interesting insights into how emotionally safe they felt leading in their respective schools.
Carmen shared her need to express her emotions in the work environment “very, very thoughtfully” as an African-American K-5 leader; being expressive may be seen as “being loud and emotional.” She felt any strong emotions expressed could be perceived as threatening to her colleagues and principal. It was evident that the need to control her feelings was a daily reality for Carmen. Vicky commented on how she remained emotionally neutral in the wake of gossip by practicing emotional containment when she didn’t want to be seen as gossiping with her teachers or colleagues. More open in expressing her emotions, Cathy seemed to be able to freely express her true emotions in the work environment where she could “…let loose and have fun…” She was not concerned that her colleagues and staff members might judge her emotions as “loud” or “emotional.” Instead, she was able to express her emotions in a more honest and public manner. Reflecting on the responses for this particular question, several layers of the “social world” seem to affect how leaders express their emotions in the workplace. Linking the identity and power structures that exist within any hierarchy of leadership will provide a deeper understanding of how leaders readily express themselves in a work environment that has become increasing political and racially diverse.

**Emotional Management**

The emotional management category includes the following EI abilities:

a) The ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.

b) The ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.

c) The ability to engage, prolong, or detach from emotional states.

d) The ability to manage emotions in oneself and in others.
Lastly, the following are responses captured in the participants own voices. These responses exemplified the various examples of the participants’ EI abilities, which are identified and/or expressed in the responses to the question: How do emotions motivate leaders to continue this type of work?

Carmen (Assistant Principal/African American): “I’ve been told that I am not a team leader…too much of an advocate for the teachers, parents, and students. I’m a big reflector. I reflect on the positive… I try to be aware of my emotions…I really try not to take things personally. I always put things in perspective; it’s not that serious. I have a healthy outlet… I’m focused on the kids, I’m very balanced.” This response exemplified the ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.

Cathy(Principal/Caucasian): “Challenges motivate me…I love a good challenge, and of course I loved seeing it work out…when I saw a light bulb go on in a teacher, a child, or a para pro who didn’t think she could get that teaching degree and she did, was so rewarding to me”. This response illustrated the ability to engage, prolong or detach from emotional states.

Jackie(Principal/Caucasian): “I was always bent toward a helping profession. I knew that I was in the right place. You just keep moving through. There were so many walks of life in the building that you didn’t get too hung up on one for too long. You have to be very emotionally stable to be a leader. You cannot, no matter where you are, let your ego lead you around by the nose. It’s a matter of not getting so tied up within yourself and making it one big ego trip for yourself, particularly when you have a title.”. This response exemplified the ability to manage emotions in oneself and in others/Ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.
Kelly (Principal/Caucasian): “Digging deeper as a child growing up, I think my confidence level was not always a strong suit. Just worrying about what other people think and just growing up like that affected me in how I deal with people. I finally reached a point where I wanted to instill confidence in other people and encourage them to be what they wanted to be and not let negative forces keep them from doing what they wanted to do. Even though growing up and feeling my confidence level shaken many times over, over many different things, it probably worked out in the long run to be a blessing. You live and you learn.”. This response demonstrated the ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant/ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.

Vicky (Assistant Principal/Caucasian): “I really like working with teacher leaders when we are looking and working towards what will work best for kids either behaviorally or academically… The whole team looking it at it in different ways, trying different things, and then you get the kids in the right place, and working with the parents too. It’s seeing results with kids. I feel a great sense of satisfaction.”. This response demonstrated the ability to engage, prolong or detach from emotional states.

This particular EI ability solicited much discussion among the participants, regarding various situations they felt were particularly difficult emotionally. A prominent theme expressed by the participants was the past disappointments and hurts in both their personal and professional lives. For example, the death of a sibling, being raised with a special needs sibling, the divorce of parents, moving from small town to the suburbs of large cities, being asked to move into educational leadership, feeling silenced, navigating power hierarchies, and leading in the most needy elementary schools have all shaped and influenced how effective these participants managed their emotions in both private and public settings.
Their candor in their responses gave a robust insight into their personalities, leadership styles, and emotional lives; leading to the conclusions that the majority of these women seemed to be able to manage and navigate their emotional selves in a healthy manner, always staying focused on both their personal and professional goals. While the ability to manage and navigate was a growth process for some, two of the participants acknowledged this ability to be something they work on daily to improve even after several years in elementary educational leadership.

Summary

Cathy’s words provided a good insight into her emotional self when sharing her frustration and her feelings of being overwhelmed at the number of tasks and responsibilities of her position: “There were so many times when my colleagues and I wanted to just scream, cry, drink margaritas, whatever, because it was just—the plate (of responsibilities) kept getting fuller and fuller, and nothing was ever removed. We were just working ourselves to death.” Her words captured so many real emotions educational leaders feel on a daily basis. The participants’ voices and personal experiences have been used to better understand and highlight patterns and common themes found among the participants’ responses to the research questions, which were intentionally constructed to investigate and highlight the four different abilities found within the four-branch ability-model.
Chapter Five: Discussion of Research Findings

This study emerged from the researcher’s experience as a K-5 elementary educational leader working in Title 1 schools. During her years as a practitioner, it became increasingly evident that the emotional lives of educational leaders were silenced (there was no safe forum to honestly discuss leaders’ emotions as they related to the work of leadership) and therefore, emotions were placed in the shadows. This has led to a significant rise of burnout among educational leaders. In addition, highly qualified teachers have become reluctant to move into educational leadership roles. In addition, there exists a substantial gap in the educational leadership scholarly research and literature dealing with the affective lives of educational leaders in particular. This exploratory case study explored the role of emotions and how they are negotiated and understood through the lens of the emotional intelligence four branch ability model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The overarching research question that guided this study asked the participants: How do K-5 educational leaders use their emotional selves to lead and survive in highly emotional learning environments found in today’s schools? This central question was further broken down into four sub questions: 1) How do leaders use their emotions to inform their daily decisions? 2) How do leaders identify and account for their emotions and feelings? 3) How do leaders express their emotions in their work environment? 4) How do emotions motivate leaders to endure the challenges of educational leadership? Five urban elementary principals shared reflections, memories and stories concerning their emotional selves and its impact on their professional lives as educational leaders. It is an unfortunate reality and practice that the emotional lives of educational leaders remains hidden in the world of educational leadership research.
Moreover, the “myth of rationality” continues to define and dominate leadership behavior and, in so doing, obscures the importance of the holistic leader who feels, thinks, and acts. The modern day elementary principal who works in a Title 1 school has numerous duties, and as a result is expected to have the necessary skills to navigate (staff, students, parents and community members) competently and effectively on a daily basis. By bringing emotions from the shadows, and paying more critical attention to emotions and emotional intelligence and the fundamental ways in which they impact the affective lives of urban school leaders, gives permission to leaders to talk about their own emotions. This study provides another platform to add the hushed voices of leaders to the scholarly world of educational leadership.

Interpreting the Findings

For the purpose of this exploratory qualitative study, emotions were analyzed through the lens conceptualized in Mayer and Salovey’s (1990, 1997) four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence EI. This particular model focused on four interrelated core abilities: emotional perception and expression (identifying/perceiving emotions), emotional facilitation of thought (using emotions), emotional understanding (understanding emotions) and emotional management (managing emotions) (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004). The value of this EI construct is demonstrated in the “ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive abilities like problem solving and to focus energy on required behaviors” (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004, p. 62; Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002).

To further contextualize the findings of this particular research study (which used Title 1 elementary schools as common bounded sites), it is important to share that four of the five participants (principals Cathy, Jackie, Kelly and Vicky) identified as Caucasian and grew up in middle class families. (One was a child of divorce.)
The fifth participant (assistant principal Carmen) identified as African-American, grew up in a middle class family. All of the participants could be considered seasoned/veteran K-5 educational leaders with 10 or more years of work experience in a mid to large urban public school district. Educationally, all held the Georgia Leadership certification, and a master’s/specialist or doctorate in educational leadership. The participants of this study shared valuable reflections and discussions that demonstrated and highlighted the emotional and cognitive abilities categorized in Salovey and Mayer’s (1997) emotional intelligence four-branched ability model. The inclusion of their voices and insights was significant in capturing the emotional selves as elementary educational leaders who were thrilled at the opportunity of being able to share verbally and in writing a small window to their emotional selves. Collectively, they verbalized many times in the interviews that “leadership is emotional work.” Hence, they were able to reflect on how their emotions affected their daily decisions, the role and management of emotions, how they expressed their emotions in the workplace environment, and how they identified their emotions, particular emotions that motivated them to continue to be educational gladiators in highly emotional work environments.

**Emotional Perception and Expression (Identifying/Perceiving Emotions)**

In this branch of EI, the participant’s responses were found across all of the abilities contained within this category: Ability to identify emotions in one’s physical and psychological states, to identify emotions in other people, to express emotions accurately, and to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.
Particularly noteworthy was Assistant Principal Carmen’s honesty and candor in her response:

“I’m real or honest about my emotions. They are all over my face. I address my emotions; I’m a thinking and a feeling being.” Expressing this type of candor with her colleagues and principal has invariably led to misunderstandings and questions about her loyalty to the vision of her current leadership team, an unfortunate consequence. This illustrates the need of leaders to be much more cognizant of the need to create safe environments for colleagues/staff members to have the ability to identify and express emotional needs in the work environment. Quite simply, educational leaders need to have a strong sense of self and confidence in themselves and in the work that they do.

**Emotional Facilitation of Thought (Using Emotions)**

In this branch of EI, the participants’ responses captured all of the abilities contained within this category: the ability to redirect and prioritize thinking on the basis of associated feelings, the ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgment and memory, the ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view, and the ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity. Multiple responses in this category displayed problem-solving and creativity, captured in the following responses:

Jackie stated: “I will give credit to my experiences at Georgia State in the counseling department, which taught me to be a good listener and be able to identify your parents’, children’s, and teachers’ needs.” (Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem solving and creativity).

Cathy stated: “Letting other people have a chance to talk in mostly small groups, working with
people, and letting them have their say.” (Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity).

Kelly shared: “Listening, trying to recap what they said, making sure people were listening, and understanding other perspectives. I have very little tolerance for people being rude to each other.” (Ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view).

Using emotions, a key branch in the four-branched ability model of emotional intelligence, is extremely important for educational leaders. Effective school leaders, as they manage people, students, and parents, must have the ability “to direct attention to important information, to interpret the meanings of emotions presented (sadness/joy), to appreciate multiple points of view, and to problem solve” (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004, p. 37). Additionally, these particular abilities are crucial for leaders to do the work of building collaborative coalitions with teaching teams and community partners so they can successfully navigate the needs of all stakeholders effectively.

**Emotional Understanding (Understanding Emotions)**

In this branch of EI, the participants’ responses displayed the abilities in this category: the ability to understand relationships among various emotions; the ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions; the ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states; and the ability to understand transitions among emotions.

Jackie stated how she feels and her understanding of the power and complexity of emotions.
“…I just tried to be genuine with myself and them. I tried to be honest about how I was feeling, not always trying to cover it up or ignoring my emotions. I think people need to know when they have made a mistake; I mean, people are people. I just didn’t let them get to me too much.”

Vicky comments that there is value in being able to contain emotions, but acting according to the situation depends on the audience and the level of trust. She states, “…I would say also there are times a blank face is good to use, particularly when somebody is sharing, “Did you know that so-and-so…” That’s containing your emotions. You can’t roll your eyes or nod off. A lot of it has to do with the situation, the audience, and the level of trust.”

**Emotional Management (Managing Emotions)**

In this branch of EI, the participants’ responses covered the abilities in this category: the ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant; the ability to monitor and reflect on emotions; the ability to engage, prolong, or detach from emotional states; the ability to manage emotions in oneself and in others. This category elicited very personal thoughts and reflections for some regarding ways in which they may not have managed their emotions well, or when their egos were bruised and they emotionally “checked out” until they could process the issues. Carmen shared several occasions when managing her emotions were crucial to how others perceived her leadership. Thus, her awareness and management of her own emotions were central themes in many of her responses: “…I try to be aware of my emotions…I really try not to take things personally.”
Additionally, Cathy shared her insights into how she tries to manage her emotions while leading: “As an administrator I often found myself walking a very thin line between leading with my emotions and reining the emotion in to let a more clinical, rational, academic approach take over. I was frequently and quickly analyzing the amount of emotion that was appropriate to share and use, as well as the amount of emotion that was politically correct to share and use, depending on the situation. However, the most rewarding moments were often those that allowed real emotion to show itself with no filter. I’m not just sure how an educational leader can be in the people business without constantly monitoring the emotional components of nearly every situation and interaction.”. The ability to manage emotions in oneself and in others must be seen as the foundation of leadership work. In order to survive the daily juggling of responsibilities, leaders must understand how to control their emotions, and be able to correctly process how they feel into positive actions and decisions. Hence, investigating the role of emotions and emotional intelligence and their effects on educational leadership and the inner lives of elementary urban school leaders must be a new and exciting chapter included in future educational leadership research. Defined as leaders who seek to break the cycle of educational inequality, it is time for the scholarly research and literature to acknowledge the great personal sacrifice these educational gladiators give of themselves so that the most vulnerable of children can be well educated and given opportunities to dream big.
Practitioner and Scholarly Significance

The scholarly significance of this study for K-5 practitioners holds great promise. Educational leaders who work in urban school districts will greatly benefit from this research and its focus on the men and women who work to transform the lives of their students and communities every day. The work is challenging and highly emotional, but, deeply gratifying. Yet it is the emotional selves that must find ways to remain healthy and intact for these people to succeed as urban K-5 leaders. Therefore, it is hoped that the voices from this research will enlighten and provide a critical platform from which to commence interest and discussion among educational scholars and educational practitioners.

The use of the four branch ability model to contextualize the participants’ responses to the research question(s) offered a relevant and unique way to research emotional intelligence and K-5 Title 1 school leaders. The decision to do so was strictly informed by the researcher’s past professional experiences and the need to study leaders (as a scholar-practitioner) and their affective insights. It is her hope that there will be a substantial increase in scholarly studies on emotional intelligence and K-5 Title 1 educational leaders. The collection and analysis of voices from this particular population hold significant importance regarding the success of the most vulnerable students and the communities in which they live.

Further Implications for Educational Practice

There is a significant need for quality leadership development programs that include a strong instructional component on the importance of the inner life and leadership in urban K-5 settings.
There needs to be a monumental shift in the culture of educational leadership. The emotional health of leaders must be recognized as important as student achievement; for without emotionally healthy leaders, toxic, brutish environments flourish, greatly damaging student learning. If educational leaders are tasked with the responsibility of leading in an era of standardization and reform, and leadership is known to be highly emotional work, then hiring personnel, leadership development programs, and supervisors must better support and ensure the emotional health of their leaders. This indeed may be the true reform movement that educational policy makers and scholars have completely missed in their effort to so aggressively quantify student achievement. We have sought out leaders who can outperform the statistics, and their colleagues, by any means necessary, doing great damage to their staff, communities, and students. Unfortunately, this was something the researcher witnessed far too long in her career.

Limitations of Study

The small sample of participants (all females) agreeing to participate in this study limited the scope of the findings, as did the lack of male K-5 leaders, whose voices would have added a much-needed dimension. Additionally, a more racially diverse sample of participants would have added to the important gap in the voices/insights of K-5 leaders of color (who overwhelmingly tend to lead in Title 1 schools). Moreover, due to the sensitivity of the research topic, more practice and experience in the art of interviewing would have been helpful to use strategically probing and rephrasing techniques to navigate highly personal questions and responses related to participants’ emotional selves.
Conclusion

Historically, “human emotions have been consistently marginalized in educational research,” as noted by Beatty (1999, p. 2). “Within the culture of schools themselves, there is the tacit expectation that ideal professional demeanor is primarily rational and controlled” (Beatty, 1999, p. 7). However, such an expectation must be deemed unrealistic. There exists a complex inner self that all educational leaders must identify, acknowledge, navigate, explore, and understand. By engaging in such practice, educational leaders have opportunities to further enhance their cognitive and affective skills and to lead in an era of high-stakes educational reform.

Could it be that after all these years of such public school reform, the educational pundits have been truly misguided in their efforts to improve public education, targeting the wrong areas (e.g., the constant change of the curriculum, the implementation of standardized assessments, unattainable student benchmarks to demonstrate adequate “academic growth,” and the constant analysis of quantitative data). In all of this, the educational experts have forgotten to qualify the importance of emotionally healthy leaders, who lead in ways that create humane and holistic school communities. Leaders who lead in authentic ways, reflecting both their leadership skills and their humanity, can give children who live in impossible circumstances permission to make their audacious dreams a reality and the tools with which to be successful.

This study was born out of personal experiences while I was working as an interim principal leading a Title 1 school during a crisis deemed national in scope. During this time, my emotional self endured rollercoaster highs and lows on a daily basis, all the while keeping a fractured school together; doing the best I could to stay focused on providing the very best instructional leadership necessary for the academic success of the students. There was no option for any additional failure of leadership.
As I talked to trusted colleagues and kept work journals during this time, I saw a need to delve into this topic on a more critical and deeper level. This stirred in me the desire to further explore the emotional lives of educational gladiators and to further analyze the role of emotional intelligence as it informed, guided, and motivated their personal and professional worlds.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

My hope for the future direction of scholarly research on emotions and educational leaders is to continue to explore the inner life of educational leaders, by using their personal voices and personal experiences to bring this topic out of the shadows. A safe space for educational leaders to share their narratives within the world of educational leadership research would do wonders to counter the practice of suppression, as they typically have been unable to express their affect as school leaders for fear of shattering their professional armor and perceived “rationality” (Beatty, 1999; George, 2000; Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). Hence, the act of acknowledging and identifying feelings can no longer remain an intensely private and hidden one; such practices need to be changed to better understand educational leaders in a holistic and humane way. The women and men who lead K-5 Title 1 schools are truly educational gladiators who “battle” each and every day for small and large victories. It remains deeply troubling that such limited research and/or leadership development has been done in the area of emotional intelligence and K-5 Title 1 educational leadership. Subsequently, I look forward to working with other educational scholar-practitioners, assistant principals, principals, and leadership development professionals to continue the work in making sure emotionally healthy and emotionally balanced leaders are leading the most vulnerable students in urban K-5 elementary schools. It is time for such work to be done in earnest!
References


Walker, G. J. (2014). *A qualitative study of how cultural capital affects low-income undergraduate students' decisions to participate in highly ranked research institutions in the state of Texas.* (Unpublished Dissertation), Northeastern University, Boston Massachusetts, 1-268.


APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Letter

Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Kristal Moore Clemens (Principal Investigator), Marissa Kalu-Thompson (Student Researcher)

Title of Project: The Inner Life of Educational Gladiators: An exploratory case study on the role emotional intelligence informs, guides, and motivates urban K-5 elementary principals who work in Title 1 schools.

Request to Participate in Research

Dear Principal____________________,

We would like to invite you to take part in a qualitative research project. The purpose of this research is to gain insight into the emotional lives and success of urban K-5 educational leaders.

You are required to have 5-10 years prior work experience as an Assistant Principal or Principal of a Title 1 elementary school.

The study will take place ________________ and will take about ________________.
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in two-three interviews (conducted by Marissa Kalu-Thompson) about emotional intelligence and how it influences and motivates you as a leader and your daily work as an assistant principal or principal in an urban K-5 school environment.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use pseudonyms, and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is completely voluntary.

Please note that you do not have to participate in this research project and you can refuse to answer any question(s). You may also withdraw from the study at any time.
If you should have any additional questions about this study, please feel free to contact Marissa Kalu-Thompson (Email: kalu-thompson.m@husky.neu.edu or phone: 404-234-4638), the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Kristal Moore Clemens (Northeastern University, Boston, MA, Email: k.clemons@neu.edu) the Principal Investigator/Doctoral Advisor.

If you should have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Dr. Colin Martin, Executive Director of Research and Evaluation Office, Gwinnett County Public Schools, 437 Old Peachtree Rd., NW, Suwanee, GA 30024: Colin_martin@gwinnett.k12.ga.us

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Thank you in advance,
Marissa Kalu-Thompson
Doctoral Candidate (Northeastern University)
APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol Form

Interview Protocol

Institution: Northeastern University: 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Interviewee: (Title and Name):

Interviewer: Marissa Kalu-Thompson

Date:

Location of Interview:

Educational Leaders Interviews

Interview #1

Part 1:

Introductory Session Objectives (5-7 minutes):

Introductory Protocol:

You have been selected to speak with us today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about the experience of being an urban K-5 educational leader. Our research project focuses on the inner life (emotional life) and its influence on the daily work of urban elementary principals and assistant principals. Through this study we hope to gain deeper insights into how emotions and emotional intelligence informs, guides, and motivates elementary principals and assistant principals.

Your responses are very important, and as such, I want to make sure to capture everything you say by recording our conversation today via (audio-tape).

Do I have your permission to record this interview? I will also be taking written notes during the interview. Only a professional transcriptionist and I will be privy to the audio files.
If a transcriptionist is used, he/she will have signed a confidentiality statement, and will only be provided with the recording labeled by pseudonym, meaning they will never know your name in order to maintain confidentiality. I can assure you that all responses will be kept confidential and only pseudonyms will be used when quoting from the transcripts. I will be the only one privy to the tapes, which will be destroyed (two weeks) after they have been transcribed.

*I would like to begin recording this session now; is that alright with you? OK, the audio recording has begun.*

To meet our human subjects requirements at the university, participants have to read and verbally agree to the consent form for this study, entitled “*The Inner Life of Educational Gladiators: An exploratory case study on the role emotional intelligence informs, guides, and motivates K-5 elementary principals,*” states that you must have 5-10 years work experience as an assistant principal and/or a principal of a Title 1 elementary school. You are being asked to participate in two interviews focused around your personal background, career history, emotional intelligence, and present day realities as an educational leader in an urban K-5 context. Essentially, this consent form states that (1) all information will be held confidentially, (2) your participation is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm (emotional, psychological, or physical) during the interviews.

Any reports or any future publications based on this research will only include pseudonyms and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project. You will receive a $25 gift card to either Amazon.com or Starbucks Coffee upon completion of the two interviews and journal entries.

*Do you have any additional questions about the interview process or how your data will be used?*

*Do you give your verbal consent to participate in this research project?*

*Wonderful, thank you.*

This is the first of two interviews. We have planned this interview to run from 45 minutes to 60 minutes. We will then do a follow up interview 3-7 days from now which will last approximately 60 minutes. Today, I have several questions I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?
Part 2: Interviewee Background

As I have mentioned, the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the inner life (emotional life) and its influence on the daily work urban elementary principals and assistant principals engage in. The approach to this exploratory case study will explore in some depth the participant’s personal background, career history, use of emotional intelligent abilities, and reflections of present day realities as an educational leader in an urban K-5 context.

Today’s interview will cover the participant’s personal background and career history to date.

The second interview will cover the use of emotional intelligent abilities to lead in K-5 urban elementary schools.

Are you ready to begin?

Part 3: Questions

Biographical/Personal Background

I would like to start by asking you some basic questions in regards to your biographical background. This should only take 5-10 minutes.

1. Please share with me the basic information about yourself and your immediate family without using their names:
   b. What are your parents’ (caregivers) educational background and employment?
   c. Do you have any siblings? What are their ages and educational background?
   d. What is your race and ethnicity?
   e. Do you consider yourself religious or spiritual?
   f. Socio-economic class identification.
   g. Are you a native Atlantan?
2. **Please share information about where you grew up; you do not need to identify the exact place:**
   a. Were you raised in the suburbs, city or rural area?
   b. Did you have access to extracurricular activities in the community? What activities did you participate in?
   c. Were your parents (caregivers) active (considered role models) in the community you were raised in?

3. **Please share information about your educational background/school experiences:**
   a. What type of schools did you attend? Religious, private or public?
   b. Did you enjoy learning? Were you a good student?
   c. Who was your favorite teacher? Why?
   d. Were you considered a leader among your peers in (elementary/middle/high school or university)?
   e. Did you attend a traditional (face-to-face) or non-traditional (online) college of education?
   f. What did you study at your undergraduate level?

**Career Path**

4. **Please share information about your career path:**
   a. What influenced your decision to go into the education field?
   b. Can you tell me what motivated you to become an assistant principal and/or principal?
   c. How many years have you been in leadership?
   d. How would you describe your leadership style?
   e. What do you consider the most rewarding aspect(s) about being an urban K-5 educational leader?
   f. What do you consider the most challenging aspect(s) about being an urban K-5 educational leader?

**Leadership is Emotional Work**

5. **Please share with me your thoughts and insights regarding the following questions:**
   a. How do you use your emotions to inform daily decisions?
   b. How do you identify and account for your emotions and feelings?
   c. How do you express your emotions in the work environment?
   d. How do your emotions motivate you to continue to do this type of work?
Part 4: Wrap-Up

This concludes the questions for today’s interview. Before we wrap up, do you have any questions?

I would like to confirm the time for our next/final interview:____________________.

Thank you so much for your participation. I will call you for the final meeting on ________________.

******************************************************

Interview #2

Part 1: Introductory Protocol

Today’s interview will allow us to delve into your understanding of emotional intelligence abilities and how you integrate them into your leadership. Similar to last time, I will be audio-recording this interview. Are you ready to begin?

Part 2: Questions

a. Would you consider yourself to be a reflective leader?
b. Tell me how you deal with emotional stress?
c. How do you identify emotion in other people?
d. How do you use emotions to facilitate problem solving?
e. How do you manage your emotions when in a stressful situation?
f. How do your emotions affect your leadership style?

Part 3: Wrap-up

Thank you. This concludes the interview questions for this final interview.

*If there is a need to ask any follow-up questions, which would most likely be only for clarification purposes, would it be alright for me to contact you? Would you prefer I contact you via email or telephone?*
Over the next month, I will email you word-for-word transcripts and my initial interpretations of both interviews. If you choose, you can review the information and also provide me with any feedback, alterations, or corrections. Please confirm the email address you would like me to email the transcripts to.

Please let me know where you would like me to mail your $25 gift card (Amazon or Starbucks Coffee) for your participation in this study. Once this thesis study is complete (3-6 months from now), would you like to receive an electronic copy of the document?

Do you have any further questions for me?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study!
APPENDIX C
TRANSCRIPTIONIST CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies

Student Researcher: Marissa Kalu-Thompson

Title: The Inner Life of Educational Guardians: An exploratory case-study on the role of emotional-intelligence in the success of K-3 elementary principals who work in Title 1 schools.

Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

I am asking you (Transcriber’s name) to take part in a research study. The research collected will be one-on-one interviews. Every interview will be audio recorded using Audio Memo application on the Student Researcher’s Apple iPad, iPhone or Macbook. The use of a recording device is justified in this study because the participant’s own words and recorded feelings are critical to the data analysis.

You are responsible to transcribe the audio-tapes to ensure accurate reporting of the information provided. You will not discuss any item on the tape with anyone other than the researcher (Marissa Kalu-Thompson). No names will be asked or revealed during individual interviews. All of the audio-tapes will be stored in locked file before and after being transcribed. Tapes will be destroyed within 2 weeks of completing the transcriptions.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
The Student Researcher (Marissa Kalu-Thompson)
Address: 1520 N. Milford Creek Lane, Marietta, GA 30068
Cell phone: 404-234-4638
Email: kalu-thompson.m@husky.neu.edu
Principal Investigator (Dr. Kristal Clemons), College/University: Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115
Phone: 850-297-2021
Email: k.clemons@neu.edu

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115- Telephone: 617-373-7570, email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.
APPENDIX D
Demographic Tables of the Participant’s Work Locations

(Table 4. K-5 Elementary Title-1 School A)*

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*Not Hispanic or Latino
(Table 5. K-5 Elementary Title-1 School B)

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<th>School Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>1722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+American Indian/Alaskan Native*</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Asian*</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Black/African American*</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Hispanic or Latino, any race</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Multiracial, two or more races*</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+White*</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not Hispanic or Latino
(Table 6. K-5 Elementary Title-1 School D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Data (2011–12 to 2013–14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+American Indian/Alaskan Native*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Asian*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Black/African American*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Hispanic or Latino, any race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Multiracial, two or more races*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+White*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not Hispanic or Latino

*Two of the participants currently work in K-5 Elementary Title-1 School A