

ABSTRACT

Title: Emotional Intelligence: An Interview Study of Female Administrators Based on Their Decision-Making Processes on Contemporary Issues

Author: Lisa G. Mason

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Mary Renck-Jalongo

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Cathy Kaufman

Dr. Robert E. Millward

It was the intent of this qualitative study to explore and describe the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and strategies associated with emotional intelligence manifested by three female public school administrators as they render decisions relative to three specific contemporary issues: “No Child Left Behind,” “Safe and Drug-Free Schools,” and Data-driven Decision-making.

After reviewing the literature on emotional intelligence, three conceptual areas surfaced: 1) knowing and managing one’s own emotions, 2) recognizing emotions and handling emotions in others, and 3) motivating self and other (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). A conceptual framework was used that had been developed by Geery (1997) for a similar study. It described and classified emotional intelligence into four major areas: knowledge, skills, behaviors, and strategies. This conceptual framework was combined with the research from Salovey and Mayer (1990) and used to analyze the responses and examples given by the research subjects during three individual interview sessions.

The study supports that EQ is acquired through experience and was used readily in the daily responsibilities of these three administrators. The participants relied on the components of EQ in varying degrees for their success. The participant in the highest level position displayed more components of EQ.

Recommendation for future students include: examining whether a different level of EQ surfaces depending upon the position or the experience level of the administrator? Does EQ develop as the individual gains educational experience, or does that higher position occur because of the EQ level they had and employed? Is there a stronger emphasis on one of the components of EQ depending upon the administrative position that one holds? For instance, is a person more competent and assertive in a higher administrator position, such as superintendent or assistant superintendent? Are administrators more resilient and flexible if they deal with more unexpected circumstances or situations than they are if they have more control over their day and their environment? Does a preponderance of crystallizing moments result in higher levels of EQ? Can the test for EQ identify quality administrators to assist in the hiring process? Do males and females generally display different strengths in different components or conceptual areas of EQ as compared to females? Is IQ or EQ more important in attaining an educational administrative position? Is one more important than the other in climbing the career ladder once the position is attained? Do people experience different emotional stress at different levels within the administrative hierarchy? Is it dependent upon the age of the students, the size of the district, the demographics of the area, the level of experience, the state of the politics, or the economy of the given time?