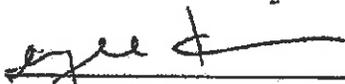


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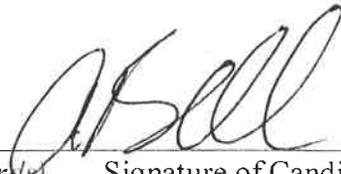
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EQ & OC: THE IMPACT OF K-12 ADMINISTRATORS EMOTIONIONAL INTELLIGENCE
ON SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

by

Amanda Lee Bell

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the key factors of K-12 administrators' emotional intelligence as they lead their staff through creating sustainable systems as they navigate organizational change. The theoretical framework used was Daniel Goleman's theory on Emotional Intelligence and how EQ impacts administrators as they systematically approach organizational change. The lens used to look at navigating change was John Kotter's eight step model of creating sustainable organizational change. The study included 80 participants, who are K-12 administrators in the Southern California area.

The expectation for the research is to provide insight for administrators and districts in determining what professional learning might be needed to support administrators in leveraging their EQ to approach change in a systematic and sustainable manner. The findings revealed that self-awareness was one of the most critical factors of EQ when it comes to leading change. Results also showed that administrators can create a sense of urgency, build a guiding coalition, co-create a vision, but then they struggle in communicating the vision, empowering the employees, consolidating gains, and anchoring the change initiative in the organization. Supporting administrators in explicitly developing their EQ and how they tap into each construct as they navigate the steps of organizational change would increase the likelihood of sustainable organizational change.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The numbers four, fifteen and nine may not have much significance to anyone other than me, there is one last number twenty-three. I have been an educator in the k-12 setting for twenty-three years. During that time, I have worked for four superintendents, fifteen central office administrators, and nine different principals. These twenty-eight administrators have all helped shape and influence the leader I am today. Over the years, I began absorbing traits from them that I believed were effective in inspiring staff to create change. I noticed how they spoke, interacted with others, developed systems, and if they were able to leverage the capacity of their staff to cause positive momentum in the organization (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012). The incredible part is that if I looked at each leader individually, I would see areas of strengths and areas of growth, and all were able to contribute to my perception of the traits and strategies effective leaders utilize.

The most impactful administrators that I worked for were able to utilize their emotional intelligence to create an infectious energy which inspired staff work towards the vision or ideal state for the school or district (Kotter, 2012). The administrator tapped into the staff around them to help the vision come to fruition. The most successful leaders also demonstrated strategic thinking and co-created systems to ensure that they were working towards the desired outcome. When I became a school leader, I not only observed the people to the “North” of me, but I also observed my peers and aspiring leaders, and began to think about what sets the impactful and inspiring leaders apart from the rest. There is no such thing as a perfect leader, so how are some K-12 administrators consistently navigating the challenges of leadership more effectively than others.

School administrators are often tasked with improving academic achievement and closing achievement gaps. Many administrators come in new to a school or district and lack the relationships and trust needed to effectively and efficiently implement sustainable systems of change which typically results in positively impacting academic achievement (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012). Often the school administrators have been promoted from the classroom and have been thrust into leadership roles, which can be stressful as they navigate their new position and try to build relationships with staff and the school community. These leaders need to tap into a variety of skill sets to leverage their staff, one of the most important indicators of success is when leaders demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence (McChesney, 2012; Levasseur, 2004; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019). Leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence have higher levels of performance, success, and job satisfaction in the workplace (Stahl, 2018). These leaders also tend to cultivate a positive culture in their workplace.

Many leaders jump into their new role and tend to be more challenged by the affective aspects rather than the technical components of their positions (Bloom, 2004). They are focused on ensuring that the school or district level department is running effectively, which usually means compliance, staff, and data related issues. School leaders who possess lower levels of emotional intelligence can become overwhelmed with their role and fail to tap into the emotional intelligence competencies needed to successfully navigate their position (Goleman, 2019). These school leaders' function more as a manager or "boss" than a leader who is effectively able to empower staff (Levasseur, 2004; Kotter, 2012).

Some new school leaders become victims of "emotional potholes" which can be common situations that many new administrators fall prey to some of which include, being able to recognize that the job is never done, transitioning to a supervisor of adults, being always in the

spotlight, and letting go of emotional responses to problems (Bloom, 2004; Patti et al.; 2018, Reilly, 2022). School leaders who possess high levels of emotional intelligence: understanding of themselves and others have increased levels of success as they navigate their roles and build relationships and trust with the staff they serve (Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009).

The challenge is that all levels of school administrators, from assistant principals to superintendents need the skill set to be able to leverage their teams to create positive change and improve academic achievement (Covey, 2012; Goleman, 2003). Coming into a new school or district can present a unique problem of building relationships and developing trust with staff in a timely manner. Relationships and trust allow for the school leader to gain the most out of the staff and allow for the leader to create teams to effectively move the school system forward (Hughes et al., 2018; Naicker & Mestry, 2016).

The reality is that many new leaders struggle to tap into their emotional intelligence because they are caught up in the daily grind of putting out fires and managing situations on the campus (Patti et al., 2018). Emotionally intelligent leaders have been found to be resilient in the face of challenges and navigating organizational change (Maulding, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). If school leaders utilized and developed their emotional intelligence, they would be better equipped to lead as they supported staff in co-creating systems of sustainable change which will positively impact student achievement, which is supported by John Hattie's meta-analysis (2010) which found the school leader has a profound impact on school culture.

Faculty need to feel valued and trusted as professionals, which will support them in being willing to adapt to new changes in the system (Bess, 2015; Bower et al., 2018). Educational leaders who have higher levels of emotional intelligence can develop and nurture positive workplace cultures, which enables and motivates teachers to perform at higher levels

(Mendelson & Stabile, 2019, Patti et al., 2018; Reilly, 2022). An important consideration is that emotional intelligence can be cultivated in individuals through consistent practice and a desire to continue to grow in this area (Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Ni, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the key factors of K-12 administrators' emotional intelligence as they lead their staff through creating sustainable systems as they navigate organizational change. At this stage of research, emotional intelligence will be defined as the ability for administrators to tap into their social emotional abilities to build relationships and trust with staff. Organizational change will be defined as something that is identified in the organization that is systematically addressed to create lasting change. The intent of this research is for educational leaders to be able to utilize the findings to improve their leadership practices to orchestrate change in their educational organization.

Research Questions

- **PRQ: How do school administrators utilize emotional intelligence to guide staff as they navigate change?**
 - SQ1: How do school administrators use emotional intelligence to form a powerful coalition and empower staff to take action to create sustainable system-wide change?
 - SQ1.1: How are school administrators developing relationships and trust with existing staff in order to form a guiding coalition?
 - SQ1.2: How does administrator motivation, empathy and social skills impact their ability to empower staff to take action and create change?

- SQ2: How do school administrators use EQ to create a sense of urgency, create a vision and communicate the vision so it is widely understood and implemented?
 - SQ2.1 How does administrator self-awareness and empathy impact the creation of a vision for change?

Hypothesis

School administrators struggle with creating sustainable change because of navigating the daily challenges of managing a school (Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Patti et al., 2018). Oftentimes, the managerial tasks create barriers for administrators to invest in their staff's development as leaders and creates challenges for the school administrator to function as a leader (Kearney et al., 2014). Many leaders become hyper-focused on completing the tasks at hand, and they forget to tap into the 5 constructs of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2019). School administrators need time to develop relationships with their staff, and the staff needs time to see that the school administrators' actions match their words. Many school administrators become complacent and do not take on the challenge of leveraging staff to create systematic change and will fall into the mindset of it is not broken, so why should it be fixed (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012).

Typically, most school administrators have a vision of where they see the ideal state for their institution, but they struggle to fully connect and create the sense of urgency in the staff for change and are challenged with ensuring that all educational partners have a full understanding of the vision and fail to see how steps being taken and new initiatives that are proposed are in support of the vision (Naicker & Mestry, 2016; Twal, 2018). When staff feel valued and trusted, they are more willing to support the vision of their leader (Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Spraggon

& Bodilica, 2015). Leaders who use a systematic approach to achieve their vision, can effectively demonstrate, and communicate the steps that will be taken to reach the desired state (Kotter, 2012; Langley et al., 2009; Schein, 1999). They are also able to create a sense of urgency in the staff by helping them recognize that the status quo is no longer acceptable and systematic change is needed to reach the vision (Appelbaum, 2012; Calegari, 2015). If school leaders demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence and strong systems thinking they are more likely to demonstrate traits of transformational leadership, have higher job satisfaction, and effectively lead organizational change.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Daniel Goleman's work on Emotional Intelligence while considering Kotter's Model of Organizational Change (KMOC). Kotter's model offers a structured approach to navigating organizational change through 8 steps. The KMOC steps provide the leader guidance and considerations for each step on how the leader can build a sense of urgency, towards creating a guiding coalition, who will co-create the vision for change, how the vision will be communicated, and employees will be empowered with a shared understanding of the vision, as well as celebrating the short-term wins, consolidating gains, and producing more change, and finally anchoring the change in the culture. The use of Kotter's model of organizational change is one critical factor to creating effective change, the other component is the leader them self.

Leaders who demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence in all five constructs: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills can more effectively cultivate a positive work environment (Goleman, 2019; Maulding et al., 2012; Patti et al., 2018). These leaders embody characteristics such as high levels of self-awareness, where they recognize how

their actions and behaviors impact themselves and others. They can self-regulate and can motivate their staff. They use their strengths with empathy and social skills to connect with their staff and anticipate when they need to adjust to support staff in reaching the desired outcome. To fully understand the constructs of emotional intelligence the subsequent sections will describe: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Self-awareness is described as knowing one's beliefs, values and how it can impact interactions with others both personally and professionally (Levasseur, 2013). Individuals who are self-aware tend to be truthful with themselves and others; they are realists (Goleman, 2019). The self-aware individual will often stop to reflect on situations throughout their day (Patti et al., 2018).

Self-regulation is when individuals can control their emotions (Ent et al., 2012; Goleman, 2019). This is not to say that they do not experience a range of emotions, but rather they are able to reflect, understand what caused the emotion, and manage any potential outburst that could negatively impact others (Goleman et al., 2001; Tikkanen et al., 2017).

Motivation is exhibited by individuals having a drive and passion for the work (Goleman, 2019). They ask questions and are driven to move the organization past status quo (Kotter, 2012; Badura et al., 2020). Leaders who embody high levels of motivation and other emotional intelligence constructs are able to channel their energy to motivate and inspire their teams (Choi, 2006; Jiang & Lu, 2020).

Empathy allows individuals to have a deep understanding of various perspectives (Goleman, 2019). Leaders who are able to tap into their empathy skills to connect with others can form a powerful bond which can support staff as they navigate change (Kotter, 2012;

Krznaric, 2021). Using empathy to demonstrate compassion, motivation, and passion towards the work can allow the leader to positively connect with staff (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015).

The final construct of emotional intelligence is social skills, where the individual has a purposeful friendliness and is able to build common ground with others (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Goleman, 2019). Leaders who tap into the use of social skills have a deep understanding of the individuals they support and are able to anticipate and build teams and connections because of the strong rapport they have with staff (Donohoo et al., 2018; Camburn & Han, 2015).

Emotional intelligence is an interrelated set of emotional and social competencies and skills that allow individuals to understand one's own and other's emotions and to be able to leverage this knowledge to guide one's decision making and apply it to their personal life and workplace (Bar-on, 2006; Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009; Stokes, 2004). Daniel Goleman (2004; 2019) found that emotional intelligence was two times as important as technical skills and IQ in all job levels. In the past, employers were focused on hiring individuals with high intelligence and technical skills to perform the job at hand; if an employee had strength with emotional intelligence, that was considered an added value for the organization (Goleman, 2003; Levasseur, 2013). Then, the employee not only would be adept at identifying and managing their own emotions, but also recognizing and adjusting their behavior to work with the emotions of others, which can support them in being successful in the organization (Hughes et al.; 2018; Levasseur, 2013; Stahl, 2018).

More recent research has found that employees who demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence and moderate technical skills are able to flourish and effectively inspire, motivate, and lead their teams, therefore making it a necessary trait (Goleman, 2001; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Moore, 2009). These effective leaders can cultivate strong relationships and trust amongst

their employees, engaging them in vertical and horizontal relationships across the organization (Hughes et al., 2018; Gratton & Erickson, 2007).

A consideration of emotional intelligence is whether individuals are born with high or low levels of emotional intelligence, where it could be viewed as a personality trait, which would imply heredity and genetic factors (Finnigan & Maulding-Green, 2018; Petrides, 2011). Research has found that emotional intelligence does have a genetic component to it, but environmental factors can also influence the degree of emotional intelligence an individual has; emotional intelligence is not stagnant, but can be developed overtime (Goleman, 2019; Stahl, 2018). Another consideration with trait based emotional intelligence is that it can be seen as a predictor for leaders who will be more open to experiences and tend to demonstrate more transformational leadership practices (Bandura et al., 2020; Hajncl, & Vučenović, 2020).

To develop emotional intelligence, the individual must be committed to the idea of growing in themselves in this area. Emotional intelligence cannot be learned through a book but is able to be developed through experiences and interactions with others (Kearney et al., 2014; Levasseur, 2013). Finnigan and Maulding-Green (2018) assert that trait based emotional intelligence skills can be learned and should be included as part of leadership programs. Additionally, they recognize human nature and the desire to recognize emotions to maintain harmonious relationships, where trait based emotional intelligence allows for individuals to recognize and regulate emotions to adjust behaviors to maintain the balanced relationship (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Tikkanen et al., 2017).

It has been found that most college graduates have strong technical or “hard skills” which means that it is left up to the employer to develop their soft skills, which are the traits that help employees navigate and build productive relationships (Bloom, 2004; Levasseur, 2013). Leaders

can develop their emotional intelligence, but that it needs to be practiced and strengthened with diligence and a willingness to exercise and grow these skills. It has been found that leaders who demonstrate high levels of intra and interpersonal skills, also known as emotional intelligence, tend to have staff who demonstrate similar practices in being reflective, and are eager to follow and support the leader (Goleman, 2019; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019).

Leaders who demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence have been found to have higher levels of performance in organizations and tend to demonstrate transformational leadership, while increasing staff job satisfaction (Bandura et al., 2020; Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Cavallo & Brienza, 2001; Patti et al., 2018). In the school setting, principals who have high levels of emotional intelligence have been found to leverage their transformational leadership to promote positive achievement (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Bloom 2004). These principals have also been noted to create a warm family-like culture on their campuses, where they are leading their staff and tapping into their impulse control, demonstrating flexibility, optimism, and patience to inspire and motivate their staff (Bower et al., 2018; Mullen & Jones, 2008).

The intersection of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change and Goleman's research on Emotional Intelligence provide the framework that will be used to guide the research on how school administrators use their emotional intelligence as they navigate organizational change.

Significance of the Study

K-12 education, like most industries, has been significantly impacted by the global pandemic. The result has been a significant level of educational leader burnout, which has led to many skilled leaders retiring or opting for other professions. As educational leaders have been tasked with monumental changes, such as flipping education models from in person instruction to virtual instruction to hybrid instruction, as well as following ever changing health and safety

guidance, there have been some leaders who have thrived during this time and still maintain high levels of job satisfaction and efficacy, while others have struggled manage the change and have lower levels of job satisfaction and efficacy. A wondering is if the leaders who are struggling have weaknesses in their emotional intelligence or their ability to navigate change systematically. This study intends to discover what strategies and strengths K-12 administrators utilize in terms of emotional intelligence and systems thinking to produce effective organizational change, resulting in higher job satisfaction and retention of quality administrators. The data gathered will provide information for further research and professional development on the intersection of emotional intelligence and systems thinking.

Definition of Terms

Emotional Intelligence: The ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions and feelings to guide decision making. Our terminology is based on Daniel Goleman's 5 constructs of emotional intelligence (see constructs below).

Construct 1: Self-awareness: knowing one's own emotional strengths and weaknesses and their impact on others

Construct 2: Self-regulation: managing or redirecting disruptive emotions and impulses.

Construct 3: Motivation: being driven for the sake of achievement.

Construct 4: Empathy: considering others' feelings especially when making decisions.

Construct 5: Social Skills: managing relationships to move others in a certain direction

(KMOC) Organizational Change: The use of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change
(see steps below)

Step 1: Creating a sense of urgency for the change based on data to address concerns or opportunities.

Step 2: Creating a guiding coalition: selecting team members with a variety of perspectives and experiences to be part of the guiding coalition.

Step 3: Developing a vision and strategy: create a vision that will direct the change effort

Step 4: Communicating the change vision: the guiding coalition and leader regularly communicate and model the behaviors of the vision.

Step 5: Empowering employees for broad based action: as employees have a shared understanding of the vision, they are empowered to make decisions in alignment with the vision.

Step 6: Generating short term wins: the change process can be challenging; it is important that the leader and guiding coalition keep morale and motivation high by recognizing the successes based on the vision.

Step 7: Consolidating gains and producing more change: as the vision is more widely understood, some leaders might assume the change has become part of the culture. During this step, it is imperative that the focus and intensity remains to reach the ideal state.

Step 8: Anchoring new approaches in the culture: the change process is used by staff regularly and it has become the new status quo.

Change process: The steps through which the organization must go through to create major change.

School Administrator: This includes site administrators (principal and/or assistant principal), k-12 district administrators (superintendent, associate superintendent, directors, coordinators and classified managers).

Staff: This includes staff (teachers, classified personnel, or other administrators) who are supervised by the school administrator.

Summary

As K-12 education is rapidly changing, there has been a significant amount of school administrator burn-out and emotional fatigue (Patti et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tikkanen et al., 2017). Ensuring that educators can use a systematic approach to navigating change and are able to tap into their emotional intelligence to leverage the capacity of their staff and educational partners is an essential component. This study intends to find the key factors of emotional intelligence and systems thinking that administrators use to navigate organizational change.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this study, the educational leaders' emotional intelligence is directly connected to Kotter's Model of Organizational Change. Specifically, the study will consider how leaders take organizations through the eight steps of transition or transformation as described by Kotter (2012), while tapping into their emotional intelligence, which has 5 constructs as defined by Goleman (2003) to leverage their staff to create lasting organizational change. In this chapter, the following topics will be covered: Kotter's Model of Organizational Change, Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership where Kotter's Model and Emotional Intelligence connect to ensure sustainable change.

Change in Organizations

Organizations have many reasons for engaging in change initiatives. There can be outside influences such as the market changing due to a new competitor or events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These outside influences can result in the leader having knee-jerk reactions, where they react to a situation without pausing and thoughtfully addressing the problems or need for change. Organizations can also engage in organizational change to continuously improve the way that they are doing their business (Camburn & Han, 2015; Cordes et al., 2011). When addressing change initiatives, having a systematic plan to identify the need for change and a clear vision for staff to modify their practices and work towards is essential (Bess, 2015; Kotter, 2012). There are a variety of models to navigate organizational change such as a Kurt Lewin's model, McChesney's 4 Disciplines and Gerald Langley's Model for Improvement.

Lewin's model of change involves 3 steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Hussain et al., 2018; Schein, 1999). In the unfreezing stage the organization recognizes the need for

change and supports employees in understanding the purpose of status quo no longer being an effective model. This also helps create a sense of urgency and motivation from the individuals in the organization to implement the change (Levasseur, 2013). The second step is changing where the organization implements the change and regular communication about the purpose of the change is communicated. It has been noted that the changing step can be challenging because of the uncertainty in doing something different than what is familiar. The final step is refreezing, where the organization will ensure that the change is solidified into the muscle memory of the organization. Lewin's model of change is widely used by organizations throughout the world. The simplicity of the 3 steps is a strength of the model but has also been reported to be a challenge because of the lack of specificity in each step (Hussain et al., 2018; Schein, 1999).

The 4 Disciplines of Execution are a model of change developed by Chris McChesney et al. (2012). In this model there are four principles to executing change. The first principle is called Focus on Wildly Important, where igniting the passion of the individuals involved in the collectively understanding and having a willingness to tackle the change. The second principle: Act on Lead Measures involves leveraging impactful actions and activities that support the organization. The third principle: Keep a Compelling Scoreboard allows the individuals to know if they are winning or not in their change initiative. Finally, the fourth principle: Create a Cadence of Accountability is the way that organizations have systems in place to ensure regular checks for accountability to perpetuate the organization moving forward. Although, this model was specifically addressing educational organizations, the principles could be widely used in the business world.

Langley's Model for Improvement (2009) is based around the central questions: What are we trying to accomplish? How will we know that the change is an improvement? What changes

can we make that will result in improvement? The questions drive the organization's thinking around the change initiative. The second component is the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle that supports the organization in systematically and flexibly analyzing, implementing, and refining the change initiative so it can achieve the intended outcome. The Model for improvement is used in business and educational settings and has been praised for the flexibility the system offers, rather than a rigid step by step approach that other systems for organizational change utilize.

Organizations can use a variety of models to systematically address the change. The use of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change as a roadmap to guide an organization through the change has been found to be an effective way to ensure sustainable change in a variety of organizations, from the business world to educational institutions.

Kotter's Model of Organizational Change (KMOC)

Organizations are constantly faced with the challenge of continually growing and improving their practices to increase productivity, relevance and purpose (Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012). These challenges create a need to regularly assess their current reality and make needed changes and innovations to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for the organization. Navigating change can be challenging without research affirmed change model to follow. A structured system for navigating change will provide the organization with a map to anticipate and address specific needs as they move through the change process (Hill, 2013; Levasseur, 2013; Van Wart, 2013; Wentworth et al., 2020).

John P. Kotter's model (2012) provides eight steps to navigating change; it also provides guidance on tapping into leadership skills to navigate the change. Researchers have found that the simplicity of the eight-step model allows for it to be applicable in the business settings and school settings (Pollack & Pollack, 2015; Wentworth et al., 2020). Priorities for leaders include

staffing, planning, and problem solving, where leaders establish direction, align, motivate and inspire staff (Donohoo, 2018; Kotter, 2012; Lambert, 1998). In order to effectively navigate the change process, it is essential to have highly effective leadership guiding and supporting staff in terms of motivation and generating momentum as they navigate the change process (Hill, 2013; Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012).

Various leadership styles, such as transformational and transactional leadership, and leaders' level of experience navigating change and leading organizations have been known to help or hinder a systemic change in an organization (Bandura et al., 2020; Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Lamm et al., 2016). Additionally, poor leadership has been found to create more of a crisis through mismanagement (Hill, 2013). Effective leaders tend to have a longer career span in their community, which fosters trust, rapport and a willingness to follow and implement the change model from the staff (Bower et al., 2018). The explicit steps through which Kotter's Model of Organizational Change guides leaders is perceived as an effective starting point for navigating an improvement cycle (Mukhtar & Fook, 2020; Wentworth, 2020).

Leaders must be able to anticipate and be prepared to respond to factors that impact the change initiative by gathering data to inform the need for shifting practices and ensuring that all pertinent staff members have a shared understanding of the need for change and can clearly communicate it (Hill, 2013; Kotter, 2012). The use of technology as a means of communicating and collaborating on the change effort is an impactful tool in a digital era to ensure that the message is widely shared (Hill, 2013). Another consideration is the group dynamics and how relationships and trust can be cultivated to build shared expectations in support of the desired outcomes for change (Goleman, 2019; Hughes et al., 2018; Vassilev, 2019).

Effective change models can be utilized in a variety of arenas: politics, business, nonprofits such as: churches and schools. Most organizations will encounter a need to change due to ineffective practices, striving to reach the next level, and or organizational change due to personnel shifts (Kotter, 2012; Maulding et al., 2012). A critical factor to consider in systematic change is that the change includes the individual people involved in the system, but more importantly, it includes the variables such as relationships, capacity building of the whole group, collaboration and systems thinking (Mukhtar & Fook, 2020; Naiker & Mestry, 2016).

Kotter's Organizational Change Model will be defined (Kotter, 2012) while making connections from the theory to application in the business and educational settings. Special consideration will be given to the leaders how they leverage their emotional intelligence as they guide their teams through organizational change.

Step 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Urgency is a critical ingredient in creating a culture of change. Urgency can be defined as something important that requires swift action, and it is critical that leaders inspire a sense of urgency so staff will constantly be thinking about how their actions are moving the organization towards a common vision (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Kotter, 2012). In an organization, a call for urgency can arise when there is a crisis in the organization that demands an immediate need for change to improve the condition of the organization (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Cultivating a strong sense of urgency often requires dramatic and risky action from leaders to support staff in developing a shared understanding of the problems at hand and necessity of change based on data and transparent conversations (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020).

An example of how to create a sense of urgency is using a "visible crisis" in the organization (Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012). A visible crisis allows for the employee to

know the data and expectations that would be needed to help them address the crisis (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al.; 2020). Some leaders will create a crisis by exaggerating or dramatizing concerns, which in turn can activate teams to have a sense of urgency in addressing the concern, and the organization may still have additional resources to support the change plan (Calegari, 2015; Kotter, 2012). In addition, creating a sense of urgency in this manner can be risky, but is also associated with good leadership. Middle managers need an ability to be autonomous to cultivate a sense of urgency and support staff in owning the shared vision, without a level of autonomy their efforts might be hindered by events occurring in the rest of the organization. (Kotter, 2012). The expected outcome is that the sense of urgency will create a collective energy with the staff where they will align their efforts towards a common goal, namely the change initiative (Bower et al.; 2015; Pollack & Pollack, 2015; Naiker & Mestry, 2016).

A potential barrier to creating a sense of urgency is complacency. Complacency is defined as a self-satisfaction of accomplishments, which may be accompanied by a lack of awareness of deficiencies. When employees do not see a crisis or threat to the organization, they can become complacent in their thinking and work accepting the status quo as everything in the organization seems to be working well (Kotter, 2012; Ruark 2017). In an organization, the middle managers have a significant impact on reducing complacency, a key factor in their ability to do so is autonomy to work with their teams to create a guiding coalition, develop a vision, and activate their teams (Kotter, 2012). Managers need to be keenly aware of how they are interacting with staff and communicating about the organizational change. For some managers, especially in organizations that are not regularly interacting with the public, they remain inwardly focused on the organization and maintaining the systems (Ruark, 2017).

These managers must believe that status quo is unacceptable and be willing to strive for the next level, as well as believe that the change is imperative to improving the organization (Kotter, 2012; Ruark, 2017, Twal, 2018). For leaders who feel most comfortable in a management style where everything tends to be under control, the shift in taking risks to ramp up the urgency of the staff can be uncomfortable and can undermine the improvement goals of the organization (Bandura et al., 2020; Kotter, 2012). Leaders need to create a space where staff can have an open and honest dialogue to confront challenges rather than brushing them aside with surface level banter (Bess, 2015; Kotter, 2012).

Leaders need to take the first step in creating a sense of urgency in the team despite the anxiety it can cause. Being systematic in terms of approaching organizational change is critical to support the team in having a common lens for the need to change and move past the status quo (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Twal, 2018). Knowing the current reality of the organization, considering both the strengths and challenges will allow the leader to have a full understanding and ability to message the areas of need and create a compelling reason for change. It is up to the managers and leaders to encourage exceptional performance levels and cultivate a culture of excellence, which can motivate staff and create momentum for positive change (Cordes et al., 2011; Ruark, 2017). As the leaders are engaging in the daily work and the messaging about change, they need to be mindful of their body language and wording when they interact with others because it could inspire staff or perpetuate the status quo (Ruark, 2017). In the educational context, it has been found that principals will use their personal energy to create motivation and excitement in their teams (Bower et al., 2018; Donohoo et al., 2018; Kaufman & Mitra, 2020). It has also been found that when leaders are holding themselves to high expectations their drive

and energy can have a positive impact on the expectations that staff hold themselves too (Bower et al., 2018; Maddocks, 2017).

The use of concrete evidence and data to support the need for change can strengthen the sense of urgency in the team. Asking a variety of stakeholders will allow the leader to look at the problem from a variety of perspectives, the critical factor is for the leader to listen carefully to the stakeholders (Kotter, 2012; Twal, 2018; Van Wart, 2013; Warrick, 2019). The goal is to create a high sense of urgency and assemble a credible and influential group of organizational partners who understand the problem and can communicate the need for change to develop a sense of urgency in the organization because if the shared desire for change is low, little to no progress will be made (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012; Lambert, 2002).

Step 2: Creating a Guiding Coalition

The influential group, also known as the guiding coalition, are a team of employees who are trustworthy and credible; they share a common understanding of the vision or goals at hand (Calegari, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Van Wart, 2013). Being trustworthy is essential for team members to be able to share honestly and openly without fear of someone being a “snake” in the group who undermines individual and collective trust (Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012). Credibility of the team members is another factor that can enhance or destroy a change initiative. Credibility involves the stakeholders having a strong reputation within the organization, which in turn allows for other employees to take their word and initiatives they support more seriously (Kotter, 2012; Nitta et al., 2009; Vasseliv, 2019; Wentworth et al., 2020). The components of trust and credibility are critical factors, as are who are the key players and their role in the guiding coalition (Anderson, 2019; Hughes et al., 2018).

A guiding coalition must be composed of managers, leaders, and influential staff. A benefit to having the composition of the coalition be represented by staff who are leaders, managers and employees will support the coalition in developing vertical and horizontal trust and credibility within the organization (Hughes et al., 2018; Levasseur, 2004; Pollack & Pollack, 2015). The managers will be able to support the flow of the tasks at hand and will be instrumental in the development of the plans (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Kotter, 2012). If a group is composed primarily of managers, they run the risk of lack of communication regarding the change initiative and lack of empowerment of employees (Kotter, 2012; Walumba et al., 2004). When developing the guiding coalition, the following criteria can support the formation of a strong team; positional authority, credibility, leadership influence, and knowledge (Nitta, 2009). It has been found that teams are more productive when they are task and relationship oriented (Gratton & Erickson, 2007). Another consideration is the pre-existing relationships with the coalition. When team members do not know each other prior to joining the coalition, it can take longer to develop relationships and trust, which are needed to create momentum and movement in the change initiative (Gratton & Erickson, 2007).

Effective leaders are able to communicate the vision and rationale behind the initiative and can empower and inspire staff to initiate change (Kotter, 2012; Ruark, 2017; Warrick, 2019). Both managers and leaders are integral parts of the change initiative, as they form a powerful coalition and are well informed and committed to the initiative and decisions that will impact the outcomes of the initiative (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012). The leaders of the coalition should be working to create the conditions for the team to collaborate to achieve and sustain the desired change; this is about investing in the development of the coalition to ensure they are performing at their highest potential (Levasseur, 2013). When leaders empower the

members of the coalition to have a voice, an ability to express concerns and believe that their decisions are being heard, the leader can keep morale higher (Goleman, 2019).

As shared earlier, the components of trust, credibility and a guiding coalition formed with the critical key players: leaders and managers are essential to creating the conditions for effective teamwork. When the coalition trusts each other the conditions for effective teamwork are present (Hughes, 2018; Kotter, 2012). Trust allows for the team members to collaboratively develop a common goal. When the efforts of a guiding coalition fail, it is often because the team members do not feel that the change is necessary, or that a team is needed to guide the change (Kotter, 2012). A powerful guiding coalition can lead the work through developing a vision and empowering employees to act based on that shared belief; they can also see the big pictures and the details necessary to guide decision making in the change effort (Kotter, 2012; Van Wart, 2013). Additionally, the powerful coalition can support the speed of implementation because the individuals that comprise the team are informed and committed to organizational change.

In the school setting the guiding coalition can be composed of teachers in different grade levels or departments, administrators, and classified staff. The coalition should work together collaboratively using a distributed leadership model while they engage in the structure of the change model to effectively implement the change (Fildes et al., 2015; Kurz & Knight, 2004; Liu et al., 2018). Fildes (2015) found that when schools created a coalition that had a shared understanding of the sense of urgency and clear and common expectations of the vision, they were working towards they were able to make significant progress towards their goals.

Step 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy

A vision as defined by Kotter (2012) creates an image of the future and supplies the driving force because individuals should work towards that future. Many times, a vision can be

referred to as the “North Star” that everyone in the organization is focused on reaching. A vision supports an organization by focusing the direction, inspiring and motivating people to act, and by supporting employees in having a shared sense of purpose, which can make achieving the vision more effective (Kotter, 2012; Kurz & Knight, 2004; Lambert, 1998; Vasseliv, 2019). A strong vision can be used as a tool to measure ideas and new initiatives against. If the initiative is not in alignment with the vision, then it can be set aside to focus on more relevant tasks. A strong vision can help guide reluctant staff in understanding the purpose of sacrifices that might need to be made to reach the next level of improvement (Kotter, 2012). In the development of the vision, the leader of the coalition can plant seeds to support the team in co-creating a vision that supports the organizational change and provides guidance and a plan to reach the vision (Donohoo et al., 2018; Goleman, 2019; Wentworth et al., 2020).

An effective vision can improve the efficiency in an organization because all of the stakeholders have a shared understanding of the values and purpose of the vision, which will allow them to make focused decisions without always having to check with their superiors or colleagues (Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 1996; Kotter, 2012). A well-designed vision will be imaginable- stakeholders can picture what it will look like in the future, it is desirable for all stakeholders, is feasible with attainable goals, is focused to ensure that decision making is in alignment, is flexible to adjust when conditions change, and communicable where it can easily be understood by all stakeholders (Appelbaum, 2012; Calegari, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Patti et al., 2018). Another relevant factor when developing a vision is that it needs to be drastically different from the status quo, which will help generate motivation and excitement in the organization (Appelbaum, 2012; Choi, 2006).

A vision should not only be easily understood, it should be grounded in the shared values of all stakeholders, it should also create a sense of urgency by being emotionally appealing and can support the staff in moving towards their “North Star” despite any obstacles or setbacks (Calegari, 2015; Kaufman & Mitra, 2020). A clear vision is like providing the organization with a roadmap of expected outcomes. It should be able to create momentum and be nimble enough to allow for stakeholders to act (Choi, 2006; Kotter, 2012). This can help limit the distractions that can take the organization off course because the stakeholders have a common shared understanding of the change vision (Kotter, 2012). It is critical for the guiding coalition and leaders to articulate the vision clearly and effectively.

Step 4: Communicating the Change Vision

Crafting a vision is a critical element, but the real work comes in communicating the vision and supporting stakeholders in developing a shared understanding of the vision and its goals and direction from all stakeholders (Ayiro, 2014; Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012). A critical component in the messaging of the vision is to ensure that all the members of the guiding coalition fully understand and have ownership in the vision (Calegari, 2015; Wentworth et al., 2020). It is important that these members are the right people, otherwise the communication about the vision can get muddled (Kotter, 2012; Van Wart, 2013).

Having a shared understanding of the vision with the guiding coalition is one important aspect, and the other critical aspect is how the message is being conveyed to the rest of the organization, and do the messengers have trust and credibility with the staff (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012; Nitta et al., 2009; Vasseliv, 2019). Sometimes, the guiding coalition will assume that the stakeholders will grasp the vision in a fraction of the time, without understanding that the stakeholders have not had the time to process and become comfortable with the new vision

(Calegari, 2015; Kotter, 2012). This can cause breakdowns in communication, where the coalition and leadership understand the vision, but they do not effectively communicate the need for change, shared values, and the purpose of the vision (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Nitta et al., 2009). The breakdown in communication can result in a lack of trust, which can cause staff to question motives, thus impeding the change movement (Liu et al., 2018; Vasseliv, 2019).

A key factor in ensuring that a vision is relatable and understandable is to keep the language simple and understandable (Calegari, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Additionally, when a vision is filled with technical jargon that is not easily understood or remembered, it can minimize the impact of the vision on the organization. It was also suggested that words can be specifically selected to make a vision statement more memorable.

Communication of the vision should not come in one medium only, it should be shared in a variety of ways: Hallway conversations, memos, large meetings and more, which allows for the vision to be shared from a variety of sources making it more likely to be heard and understood (Kotter, 2012; Pollock & Pollock, 2015; Van Wart, 2013; Wentworth et al., 2020). Simplicity and repetition of the vision are essential to creating a shared understanding in an organization.

Finally, a change vision needs to have members of the guiding coalition who are willing to “walk the talk”. The team members must be mindful that all their actions and words are in alignment with the vision (Calegari, 2015; Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012). Leaders who are tapping into their emotional intelligence can create a positive environment and can articulate the vision in such a way that it activates the staff to work towards the vision because they are inspired (Goleman, 2003; Maddocks, 2017; Wentworth et al., 2020) Ensuring that any inconsistent messages or actions are explained honestly will help stakeholders understand any actions that are not in alignment with the vision. When there are inconsistencies or

misunderstandings it is imperative that stakeholders are able to engage in a two-way conversation to ask questions and provide feedback on the vision (Donohoo et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012; Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Gathering feedback on a change initiative that has been shared can be challenging, but in the end, it will better serve the organization as stakeholders will have more buy-in with the vision and are able to actuate and make decisions based on the vision (Kotter, 2012).

Step 5: Empowering Employees for Action

To ensure that the change connects with the stakeholders, the leaders of the organization need to ensure that the employees are empowered to act based on the vision, values and goals of the organizations (Calegari, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Maulding et al., 2012). A critical factor is that the employees have a true understanding of the vision and a shared understanding of the desired changes to the organization. Empowering the employees will allow for more people to positively impact the organizational change by removing potential barriers and challenges, which can allow the organization to function at high levels without the leader being directly involved in every decision (Appelbaum, 2012; Kotter, 2012; Levasseur, 2004; Van Wart, 2013). Challenges arise when employees are making decisions in alignment with the vision, and the structure of the organization can include managers who question and undermine the confidence of the employee's decision making that the employee will stick with the previous way, which is oftentimes less effective (Calegari, 2015; Choi, 2006; Kotter, 2012).

During a change effort, barriers also include the limited amount of training that employees are provided with. The expectation is that after a few days of professional development the employees will completely transform their practice in alignment with the new

vision. This model is typically not the most effective because it lacks on-going professional development to support the transformation process (Kotter, 2012; Stefanovic, 2021).

There is a balance of on-going professional development and work experiences that will cultivate an environment where employees are empowered to make change. It is critical that personnel systems and information are aligned to the vision (Anderson, 2019; Kotter, 2012). Empowered employees that have a full understanding of the vision, will ask questions, and will engage in the work in a way that may not be as comfortable or familiar to the supervisors (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007; Wentworth et al., 2020). Supervisors should ensure that they have a clear understanding of the vision and be flexible with the changes occurring as the guiding coalition is empowered to make changes in the system to be more effective (Lambert, 1998; Van Wart, 2013). If supervisors are undermining the change effort, it is imperative that they are confronted, or the change initiative could be slowed or stopped (Kaufman & Mitra, 2020; Kotter, 2012). Employees who are empowered tend to be more collaborative and productive as they are driven to achieve (Stefanovic, 2021; Van Wart, 2013).

In the school setting, when a principal empowers staff, they can support the staff in shared decision making about school policies, practices, and culture (Debes, 2021; Mullen & Jones, 2008). The guiding coalition of educators will convene to engage in discussions and reflect on practices as the leader facilitates or participates in the discussion to ensure that all educational partners have a voice in decision making (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007; Van Wart, 2013).

Step 6: Generating Short-Term Wins

Motivation of employees who are acting on the transformation effort can support the vision in taking hold. An effective strategy for motivating employees is helping them to see short-term wins (Kotter, 2012; Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Short-term wins should be intentionally

planned by the leader and the guiding coalition, which will add credibility to the change effort (Donohoo et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012). The short-term wins also provide opportunities for structured opportunities for mini-milestones, feedback, and celebrations of the wins (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020). The feedback gathered from the short-term wins will allow the guiding coalition to analyze what is working and what might need to be adjusted as they pursue the vision for the organization. Success on the short-term wins tends to garner more support from naysayers as they are seeing concrete evidence of success, as well as minimize the resistors blocking change efforts (Kotter, 2012; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). The transformation efforts also serve as a reminder to leadership that the change effort is progressing (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012). A balance of high-quality leadership and effective management are critical towards moving a change effort forward; the managers are able to ensure that the processes in the organization are running effectively as the change effort is being activated (Kotter, 2012; Ruark, 2017).

Step 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

As the change effort gains credibility and more short-term wins, it is critical to maintain the stamina and momentum, otherwise the change effort risks regression (Appelbaum et. al, 2012; Kotter, 2012; Mukhtar & Fook, 2020). Another challenging aspect of maintaining progress is the recognition that when an organization is being changed, the changes are often linked to multiple systems. These systems can be interdependent and require a multitude of elements that can be managed by many people (Fildes et al., 2015; Kotter, 2012; Naicker & Mestery, 2016). Additionally, during this time, it is possible that the change efforts might slow down as employees become complacent. Revisiting and clarifying the change efforts with the guiding coalition to develop a plan to raise the level of motivation in the organization would be a

priority to ensure that the coalition has a collective and ongoing understanding of the change initiatives (Kotter, 2012; Kurz & Knight, 2004).

In order to accomplish the change effort, the leadership and management teams will need to work together to ensure that staff understand the big picture as well as are able to activate the change in all the interdependent systems (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020). Additional people might need to be included in the guiding coalition to move the change effort forward, this could be through promotion and professional development (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012). The leader will need to tap into their emotional intelligence and continue to press upon the individuals in the organization that have the most influence so they can persuade others to persist in the change movement (Goleman, 2019; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Moore, 2009). Staying focused on the vision, reflecting on practices, keeping the guiding trust high with the guiding coalition and the organization during times of change, will support the organization in creating lasting and sustainable change (Donohoo, 2018; Hughes et al., 2018).

Step 8: Anchoring New Approaches in Culture

Lasting effective change initiatives requires a shift in culture, which is described as the shared values and behavior among a group of people (Kotter, 2012; Kurz & Knight, 2004; Stokes, 2004). When values are shared by the group, as members change in the group, the values remain intact, and new members are enculturated to the core beliefs (Kotter, 2012; Levasseur, 2013; Wentworth et al., 2020). As the new practices are developed, they should be in alignment with core values of the organization or they will struggle to take hold (Kotter, 2012; Patti et al., 2018). Another factor to consider is who are the employees in the organization, are they similar in characteristics, or are they varied. Recognizing the impact of too many like-minded individuals on a team can limit the productiveness and ability to progress because these

individuals may be so entrenched in the group norms that they cannot see a need to change (Hajncel & Vučenović, 2020; Jiang & Lu, 2020; Warrick, 2019).

A shift in the organizational culture only occurs after the employees' behaviors have been changed over a period of time and they are able to make the connection between their actions and performance based on the change effort (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020). Factors such as the staff collaborating and having a culture where collective efficacy and shared decision making are valued will support the initiative in being anchored into the organizational culture (Bandura, 2000; Calegari, 2015; Donohoo et al., 2018; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). It is also important that the leader continues to tap into their emotional intelligence to motivate and guide the team in order to ensure that the change is lasting and sustainable (Goleman, 2003; Maulding et al., 2012).

Emotional Intelligence

For organizations to effectively change, even when using Kotter's Model of Organizational Change, leaders need to be adaptable, act in a way that is consistent with the needs of the organization and to be able to motivate and inspire the employees to activate change (Bower et al., 2018; Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012). Specifically, leaders need to have not only high systems thinking to be able to effectively plan, orchestrate and empower employees to create sustainable change, they also need to possess and exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence to effectively lead change (Bandura et al., 2020; Maulding et al., 2012; Moore, 2009).

Educational leaders are thrust into situations which require them to tap into their emotional intelligence throughout the day, each of the decisions they make and problems they solve require the leaders to have a strong sense of their values and beliefs and the impact the

decision will have on their campus (Bower et al., 2018; Goleman, 2019; Van Wart, 2013). Some of the daily interactions such as interacting with students, staff, teachers, families, district administrators and school board members require the principal to tap into all aspects of their emotional intelligence daily (Kearney et al., 2014; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Moore, 2009). Principals with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to deal with the daily stress that comes with the position and have been found to have a larger social network to support them in successfully navigating the challenges of their position (Bower et al., 2015; Finnigan & Maulding-Green, 2018).

Emotional Intelligence Construct #1: Self-Awareness

Leaders should be aware of the needs of the staff that they serve, but they also need to be self-aware: which allows them to honestly assess their strengths and areas of limitations; these individuals tend to seek out constructive criticism, are skilled at listening, and building trusting relationships (Goleman, 2019; Warrick 2019). Self-aware leaders can translate their reflective nature to the organization as a whole, and can assess areas of need and strengths, which can benefit the productivity and efficiency in an organization (Bar-on, 2006). They are also able to honestly assess their own leadership practices and regularly reflect how they might be impacting the organization (Patti et al., 2018; Stefanovic, 2021; Warrick, 2019). Authenticity is a defining characteristic of the self-aware leader, which means that the leader behaves and communicates the same to themselves as others (Duncan et al., 2017; Goleman, 2019). The self-aware leader is able to tap into the expertise of others to help them reflect on their practice and continue to develop their leadership skills (Levasseur, 2013). These leaders have a desire to grow their emotional intelligence (Boyatzis, 2013; Stahl, 2018).

In the school setting the self-aware administrator recognizes that they are not the expert in all areas and are able to see the strengths and talents their staff possesses to balance out the administrator's weaknesses, and they are able to listen to their inner voice to inform their decision making and relationships (Goleman, 2019; Levasseur, 2013). Another factor aligned to self-awareness is the self-efficacy, where the leader's beliefs in their abilities to perceive and respond to situations effectively (Bandura, 2000; Patti et al., 2018). Research has found that emotional intelligence is positively correlated to self-efficacy, which allows for emotional intelligence to be a strong indicator of self-efficacy (Debes, 2021; Hoi et al., 2017). Administrators that demonstrate higher levels of self-efficacy are better able to manage their emotions and behaviors to lead their schools more effectively (Toprak & Savas, 2020). Self-efficacy is a form of self-awareness that tends to support educational leaders in having higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction, which can minimize burnout while maximizing career and personal effectiveness (Patti, et al. 2018; Stokes, 2004).

The self-aware leader is able to utilize their strengths when navigating organizational change by co-creating and effectively communicating a vision for the organization (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012) Self-aware leaders have the confidence and belief in their ability to achieve the intended vision (Bar-on, 2006, Kotter, 2012).

Emotional Intelligence Construct #2: Self-Regulation

The emotionally intelligent leader needs to master the art of self-regulation, which is the ability to manage emotions, work stress, and can be demonstrated by the ability to reflect, comfort with change and high levels of integrity (Ent et al., 2012; Goleman, 2019; Tikkanen et al., 2017). This is not to say that the leader cannot experience a range of emotions, but they are able to channel those emotions and work through the feelings without reacting in an

unreasonable manner (Goleman, 2019; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2015; Tikkanen et al., 2017). According to Goleman, leaders who are in tune with their feelings cultivate an environment of trust and fairness.

Self-regulation is also aligned to integrity, where an individual who has high self-regulation can control impulses that might be less than ethical (Ent et al., 2012; Goleman, 2019). Leaders that demonstrate self-regulation share characteristics such as abilities to be reflective, navigate change and integrity (Goleman, 2019; Stahl 2018). There is an effect called a “mood contagion” where the leader’s mood is contagious and can impact the organization positively or negatively (Goleman et al., 2001). Scientists have described this effect as “interpersonal limbic regulation” where the mood of the leader has a physiological and psychological impact on the staff. Another way to think about the concept of interpersonal limbic regulation is how two people can enter a conversation with their bodies at different rhythms, and after a bit of time their body rhythms start to align with each other. In the workplace the interpersonal limbic regulation might manifest itself as in how the employees are always monitoring the boss and tend to take their emotional cues from him/her (Bower et al., 2018; Goleman, 2001).

Leaders need to develop self-regulation to ensure that they are not creating an environment where their mood is negatively impacting the organization since the majority of staff are always watching the leader’s actions. Demonstrating cognitive control by having calm demeanor during a crisis is another way in which leaders navigate organizational change and achieve goals (Goleman, 2019; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2015).

As the leader grows in their maturity ability to regulate their moods and impulses, they will be able to cultivate a safe environment where staff are willing to take risks and feel

supported through the leader's ability to empathize, demonstrate self-awareness and motivate staff, which can result in positively influencing the workplace climate (Anderson, 2019; Ent et al., 2012; Goleman et al., 2001; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2015). It has also been found that leaders who are able to effectively self-regulate their emotions are also less at risk for burnout and have higher job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tikkanen et al., 2017). Effective strategies to encourage self-regulation are cognitive and behavioral engagement and disengagement as well as professional development to help leaders continue to develop a bank of strategies to ensure they strengthen their self-regulation skills. (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Finnigan & Maulding-Green, 2018).

Leaders who demonstrate high levels of self-regulation are adept in supporting staff in creating a sense of urgency in a manner that inspires and motivates rather than creating a culture of fear (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012). They are also able to manage any negative emotions to ensure that short-term wins are recognized, and losses are acknowledged and learned from.

Emotional Intelligence Construct #3: Motivation

Motivation is commonality between effective leaders, what distinguishes the good from the great leaders is an innate desire to achieve (Goleman, 2019), and a drive to help motivate their team to achieve goals that are not necessarily short-term (Kotter, 2012; Maulding et al., 2012). Motivation can be defined as the way that individuals are propelled to achieve goals through their intensity and persistence in their actions (Badura et al., 2020; Donohoo et al., 2018). The use of a vision to create a shared understanding is one of the tools that a motivated leader can use to guide their team in achieving a goal (Goddard, 2004; Kotter, 2012). Motivated leaders are passionate, driven, life-long learners that have abundant energy to keep the organization progressing (Goleman, 2019), which is like the characteristics of a transformational

leader: where the leaders build a connection between the leaders and followers in terms of motivation and ethics (Maulding et al., 2012; Northouse, 2022). These charismatic leaders are always raising the bar for themselves and their teams by using performance data as a form of measuring progress and persistently questioning the status quos to develop more effective results (Choi, 2006; Goleman, 2019). Organizational commitment, loyalty, is another factor that is demonstrated and cultivated by effectively motivated leaders, where they are effectively able to connect with the staff they lead and inspire them to work towards achieving the vision (Bandura et al.; 2020; Choi, 2006; Goleman, 2019).

Leaders who demonstrate high level of motivation are essential in navigating organizational changes. When considering Kotter's Model of Organizational Change, the talents of the motivated leader flow through all eight steps. Motivation is most prevalent in establishing a sense of urgency (Step 1), where the leader will inspire the organization to act. Consolidating gains and producing more change (Step 7) as well as anchoring new approaches in the culture (Step 8) are also critical time to empower and continue to know what the staff needs to stay motivated and achieve the desired outcome (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012).

Emotional Intelligence Construct #4: Empathy

Empathy is an unsung hero in terms of emotional intelligence. Generally, people can recognize if someone is empathetic in the context outside of work-life. Empathy is demonstrated by an inquisitive nature regarding others, and ability to read and understand another's emotions and perspectives (Krznic, 2021). The unusual part of empathy is that it is not widely recognized or celebrated in the workplace environment (Goleman, 2019). Empathy in the context of emotional intelligence is defined as the way a leader utilizes knowledge of how

employees feel and other factors to make informed and intelligent decisions (Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009).

As industries have become more globalized, the need for regular collaboration and communication with teams locally and globally have become more essential. By tapping into empathy, leaders can connect with their teams on a more personal level and are able to see situations from a variety of perspectives and be more sensitive to the needs of their team (Choi, 2006; Moore, 2009; Goleman, 2019). Empathetic leaders demonstrate abilities to manage staff interactions, dynamics and mentor staff, which encourages staff to engage in looking at situations from a variety of perspectives and results in cultivating a more collaborative work environment (Bower et al., 2018; Jiang & Lu, 2020) When employees feel connected and supported by their leader and feel their perspectives are heard and carefully considered they tend to demonstrate a higher level of organizational loyalty and job satisfaction (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Patti et al., 2018).

Many would argue that when a leader is always considering employee needs or feelings it will not improve the organization; factoring employee needs will create loyalty and employee buy-in and create a culture where shared decision making can occur. Leaders who utilize their empathy to know when to challenge staff and when to hold back create an environment of where their staff feel valued and trusted, and that the leader recognizes the need to adjust initiative pacing to support the staff (Anderson, 2019; Bower et al., 2018; Donohoo et al.; 2015).

Empathetic leaders are essential in navigating organizational change. As the guiding coalition is formed, they will have an ability to know which key players should be part of the group to form a strong and cohesive coalition (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012). As the vision is being communicated, empathetic leaders can sense how the messaging is being received by the

employees in the organization. They can also anticipate potential pitfalls in the change process because they are able to understand situations and people from a variety of perspectives.

Emotional Intelligence Construct #5: Social Skills

Social skills, like empathy, is a way in which a leader can navigate relationships with others (Goleman, 2019). It can be defined as purposeful friendliness, which allows the leader to move people in a desired direction. Leaders with high social skills can find common ground between team members and foster a sense of rapport and create a climate that fosters a sense of appreciation (Goleman, 2019; Hughes et al., 2018; Maddocks, 2017). Organizations tend to recognize the need for leaders to have high levels of social skills, as managing relationships is a critical factor in leadership (Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009; Vassilev, 2019). In the school setting, social skills can be seen as how the administrator is able to navigate relationships and build rapport with students, staff, and community as they are working towards moving the school in a positive direction (Bower et al., 2018; Camburn & Han, 2015; Toprak & Savas, 2020).

When looking at all the factors of emotional intelligence, social skills are the culmination of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy (Goleman, 2019). Effective leaders tap into each of the areas of emotional intelligence to motivate and inspire their teams; the leaders need to be aware of how their emotions can affect their staff (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Cordes et al.; 2011). In education it has been found that principals who demonstrated empathy and caring towards their staff affected the teachers' passion for their work and they built trust and synergy with their staff through engaging and acknowledging mistakes (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Bower et al., 2018; Lambert, 1998). Occasionally, the perception of socially skilled leaders is that they are not working because they are “socializing”, the leader feels that it is an opportunity to get to know more people to leverage their talents and strengths (Bower et al., 2018; Goleman,

2019; Moore, 2009). When a leader taps into their social skills, they can leverage all of the areas of emotional intelligence to motivate and inspire the individuals they are leading.

Transformational leaders demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence and systems thinking to lead their staff and create sustainable organizational change (Bower et al., 2018).

Social skills are used in navigating organizational change because the system cannot change unless the people in the organization are willing to change. Leaders who tap into their strength of social skills can support the entire process of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change because they understand and value the individuals within the system and know how to connect and inspire them even in the face of challenges (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012).

Transformational Leadership: Integrating Goleman and Kotter

During the literature review I addressed the critical factors of emotional intelligence and how it can impact how a leader interacts with their staff. The emotional intelligence of a leader can influence the morale of an organization and how effectively it is run (Bower et al., 2018; Goleman, 2019; Warrick, 2019). Research has found that leaders who demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence are able to effectively lead change and cultivate an environment of shared commitment (Hughes et al., 2018; Moore, 2009; Patti et al., 2018). A leader that can tap into the five competencies of emotional intelligence does not guarantee that an organization will be able to make great strides just because their staff morale is strong due to the nature of their leadership (Mendleson & Stabile, 2019; Stefanovic, 2021). Ensuring that emotional intelligence is coupled with systematic thinking can create the conditions for sustainable organizational change (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012, Maulding et al., 2012).

The use of Kotter's (2012) eight step model is a systematic way to approach change. A leader who can systematically address the need for change is critical. Research has shown that

Kotter's model is an effective tool to guide organizations as they embark on change initiatives and can support them in analyzing their progress on the initiatives (Bess, 2015; Fildes et al., 2015; Wentworth et al., 2020). A recent study by Mukhtar and Fook (2020) found that organizational change and emotional intelligence of the leader are positively correlated with a significant level of .05. This study indicated that leaders utilized transformational leadership practices and the employees tapped into their emotional intelligence, which resulted in a positive outlook towards organizational change. Mukhtar and Fook's work demonstrates the need for the independent variables of organizational change and emotional intelligence of the leader to create a positive energy to initiate the change process.

On the converse, if leaders lack the emotional intelligence to read their stakeholders, the change initiative may fail or may not be sustainable because the staff do not fully buy into the need for change (Bess, 2015; Kotter, 2012). It can also be the result of the leader misdiagnosing the problem, lack of analysis before moving to develop a solution and lack of follow through in the plan to address the problem at hand (Hill, 2013).

It is imperative for leaders to access their leadership style tool kit, where they tap into styles such as charismatic leadership to support their staff in developing a vision and empower them to help the vision become a reality (Ayiro, 2014; Choi, 2006; Northouse, 2015). A transformational leader must tap into their emotional intelligence and their ability to use systems thinking to tackle organizational change (Bower et al., 2018; Mukhtar & Fook, 2020; Northouse, 2015; Van Wart, 2013). When a leader can use their emotional intelligence and the systems thinking they can leverage the capacity of their staff to make organizational change (Jiang & Lu, 2020).

In the case of school administrators, they are constantly faced with hundreds of people (staff, students, and community) that are lobbying for their specific needs to be addressed. School leaders need to leverage their emotional intelligence in order to successfully navigate organizational change (Bower et al., 2018; Naicker & Mestry, 2016). Research has found that there is a correlation between principal effectiveness and job satisfaction when using emotional intelligence and tapping into transformational leadership (Bower et al., 2018, Duncan et al., 2017; Moore, 2009). Being an emotionally intelligent school leader allows for the principal to be self-aware enough to reflect on themselves and how their actions impact their school community (Maulding et al., 2012; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Warrick, 2019).

There has been some debate as to whether emotional intelligence precedes transformational leadership, thus influencing transformational leadership skills. For the purpose of this literature review, it is recognized that both emotional intelligence and transformational leadership are factors that are critical to motivate and inspire staff in organizational change (Ayiro, 2014). Transformational school leaders utilize their personality and leverage their emotional intelligence to influence the actions of the staff to create a harmonious work environment to drive organizational change on the school campus (Jiang & Lu, 2020; Walumba et al., 2004). Transformational leadership has also been found to be aligned to authentic leadership, which encompasses utilizing the components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills, as well as the leader taking the time to reflect on their personal core values and how that might impact the organization through decisions that are made (Duncan et al., 2017; Mauling et al., 2012, Toprak & Savas, 2020). The leader's interactions with staff have been found to be a catalyst for change with employees.

To create and maintain sustainable change, it is important to build a leadership “bench” where leaders are intentionally developing and providing opportunities for their staff to develop their leadership voice and style. Intentional leadership training should be provided to managers, supervisors, and aspiring leaders to support the development of transformational leadership and building collective efficacy, which in turn would support positive outcomes for organizational change (Kotter, 2012; Patti et al.; 2018; Walumbwa et al., 2004). School leaders should start by looking for staff who demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence and glimmers of transformational leadership (Ayiro, 2020). These individuals who were tapped because of their leadership potential should be part of the guiding coalition to which crafts and drives the change initiative (Kotter, 2012).

It is clear that it is important for the leader to tap into their personal emotional intelligence to facilitate organizational change with their staff by co-creating sustainable systems that their future successors are familiar with and can leverage the team to help the organization continually grow and be successful in their endeavors (Bandura et al., 2020; Hill, 2013). Recognizing the specific skills, strategies, and traits that leaders tap into to leverage the capacity of their staff to create organizational change has implications for guiding and mentoring aspiring leaders as they begin their leadership journey and should be incorporated into leadership programs for aspiring and current administrators (Anderson, 2019; Finnigan & Maulding-Green, 2018; Kearney et al., 2014). District level leaders can utilize knowledge and assessments of emotional intelligence to strategically place principals at school sites that could benefit from the strengths that the principal brings to the table (Mendelson & Stabile, 2019).

Leaders who demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence tend to be approachable and humble and desire to have open conversations and reflect on how their leadership is

impacting the organization (Warrick, 2019). They tend to focus on themselves, others and the interactions of themselves and others in the world (Goleman, 2019). Emotionally intelligent leaders have organizations that tend to have higher achievement levels than most organizations (Bower et al., 2015; Maulding et al., 2012). Providing seasoned and new leaders with opportunities to grow their skills in terms of emotional intelligence through cognitive experiences (listening and hearing others), emotional experiences (relating to others) and actionable experiences (initiating and building relationships) will allow them to sharpen their lens on the specific strategies and skills that are strengths for them and develop the areas that they need to grow in (Bandura et al., 2020; Kearney et al., 2014; Stefanovic et al., 2021). A critical factor to consider is that the leader should be willing to grow in their areas of need and should be intentionally mindful about building those skills (Boyatzis et al., 2013; Kaoun, 2019). Additionally, being mindful cultivates a sense of urgency and relevance to developing the necessary traits.

Summary

When organizations initiate change, typically it is either a response to outside environmental forces or a proactive, initiative-driven strategy towards continuous improvement or transformation (Bess, 2015). Most organizational change that is driven by external factors are often unintentionally lacking a systematic and researched based approach. Kotter offers a proven 8 step process for organizational change that is based on decades of data collected from small and large organizations around the world that have experienced transition or transformation. These eight steps are utilized with high fidelity in organizations that have most successfully completed their change. In addition, Goleman's research on emotional intelligence informs Kotter's Model of Organizational Change by addressing the interpersonal and

intrapersonal skills, aptitudes, and attitudes that a leader must embody and employ to effectively lead such change.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

School administrators are often tasked with improving school culture which will often result in gains in academic achievement and closing achievement gaps as the adults in the system are working towards a common goal (Bower et al., 2018; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019). Many administrators come in new to a school or district and lack the relationships and trust needed to effectively and efficiently implement sustainable systems of change which will result in positively impacting academic achievement (Anderson, 2019; Mukhtar & Fook, 2020). School leaders who have promoted within the system face different challenges of gaining support of the individuals they lead and ensuring they clear in their leadership voice and presences (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015). Often the school administrators have been promoted from the classroom and have been thrust into leadership roles, and struggle to navigate managing all aspects of their new positions, especially the shift to working with primarily adults instead of children.

Some school leaders jump into their new role and tend to be more challenged by the affective aspects rather than the technical components of their positions (Bloom, 2004). They are focused on ensuring that the school is running effectively, which usually means compliance, staff, and data related issues (Donohoo et al., 2018; Wentworth et al., 2020). It is imperative for leaders to develop their emotional intelligence and resiliency, which results in their leadership capacity increasing (Maulding, 2012). These results would seem to indicate that the relationship between leadership characteristics and emotional intelligence and resilience is substantial. School leaders who possess lower levels of emotional intelligence can become overwhelmed with their role and fail to tap into the emotional intelligence competencies needed to successfully navigate their position (Goleman, 2019).

Some new school leaders become victims of “emotional potholes” described as a common situation that many new administrators fall prey to some of which include, being able to recognize that the job is never done, transitioning to a supervisor of adults, being always in the spotlight, and letting go of emotional responses to problems (Bloom, 2004). School leaders who possess high levels of emotional intelligence: understanding of themselves and others have increased levels of success as they navigate their roles and build relationships and trust with the staff they serve (Ayiro, 2014; Bower et al., 2018).

The challenge is that all levels of school administrators, from assistant principals to superintendents need the skill sets of high emotional intelligence and strong systems thinking to be able to leverage their teams to create positive change and improve academic achievement (Bower et al., 2018; Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012; Mullen & Jones, 2008). If school leaders utilized and developed their emotional intelligence, they would be better equipped to navigate and lead as they supported staff in co-creating systems of sustainable change which will positively impact student achievement. Faculty need to feel valued and trusted as professionals, which will support them in being willing to adapt to new changes in the system.

Research Questions

PRQ: How do school administrators utilize emotional intelligence to guide staff as they navigate change?

- **SQ1:** How do school administrators use emotional intelligence to form a powerful coalition and empower staff to take action to create sustainable system-wide change?
 - **SQ1.1:** How are school administrators developing relationships and trust with existing staff in order to form a guiding coalition?

- **SQ1.2:** How does administrator motivation, empathy and social skills impact their ability to empower staff to take action and create change?
- **SQ2:** How do school administrators use EI to create a sense of urgency, create a vision and communicate the vision so it is widely understood and implemented?
 - **SQ2.1** How does administrator self-awareness and empathy impact the creation of a vision for change?

Research Design

The research design used for this student will be a mixed methods study using concurrent triangulation, where both quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered and analyzed to address the research questions (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009). The use of quantitative data will provide evidence of the use of emotional intelligence and systems thinking that the administrators are using. The qualitative data will provide specific experiences that the administrators cite, which will validate or invalidate their perceptions of using emotional intelligence to leverage systems thinking. The data will be gathered concurrently on a survey which will contain quantitative and qualitative questions.

Quantitative data typically looks for a larger sample size and asks the participants specific questions which can be quantified to be analyzed. The responses participants provide in the quantitative portion of the survey can be referred to as hard data because it is typically based on a numerical scale like the Likert scale.

Qualitative data is more open ended, where participants are asked questions that could result in a variety of responses based on their perspective. In qualitative research, the responses are analyzed to see if themes and patterns emerge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research

tends to be more exploratory than quantitative research. Strategies for qualitative research include open ended survey questions, focus groups and interviews with participants.

Phenomenology is a method that can describe a shared experience of a group, where the researcher is able to analyze the data gathered and can describe the shared experience and how it was experienced (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In considering the study, I would be looking at the shared experiences of administrators' emotional intelligence from their perspective, and the influence of the administrators' emotional intelligence on their school setting. The next lens to be explored is how the administrators were able to utilize systems thinking and models of organizational change to create effective sustainable change in their workplace.

Currently, it seems as though I am looking at two independent phenomena and how they intersect to create a common shared experience. A potential challenge for me will be bracketing, where the researcher sets aside their personal experiences to have a fresh perspective on the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As an administrator, I am personally interested in this topic because I see colleagues who are amazing systems thinkers struggling to leverage their teams to create sustainable change due to their gap in emotional intelligence.

On the flip side, I know other colleagues who have tremendous emotional intelligence, but struggle to develop sustainable systems because they are more focused on the culture of the campus. I have worked at several school sites, and currently serve as administrator, where I tap into my emotional intelligence to leverage teams I work with, so this is where bracketing could be a challenge. The goal is to support all administrators in understanding these experiences of how they can leverage their emotional intelligence to guide staff in developing sustainable systems.

Setting and Participants

In the state of California there are approximately 8,000 administrators. In order to capture their thoughts and perceptions about how they utilize emotional intelligence to leverage their systems thinking would be nearly impossible. I will be utilizing a snowball sampling based on a digital survey. The initial request to survey administrators will be sent to seven Southern California School Districts. The goal is to acquire a sample size of 300 survey respondents. The digital survey will be administered and open at the end in May of 2022. Based on data analysis, any follow up interviews with individual participants will occur in June of 2022.

Sampling

In this phenomenological study, sampling participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018) from multiple perspectives will allow me to gather data and analyze the use of emotional intelligence to develop sustainable systems from the perspective of the administrators. A snowball sampling will be used for the quantitative and qualitative data collection for K-12 principals in the state of California. Purposeful sampling through selection of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018), for the qualitative portion of the research, open ended question responses will be analyzed and coded to look for emerging themes. Based upon the findings of the survey, potentially three principals in three different Southern California school districts will be interviewed to dig deeper into their perception on how they leverage emotional intelligence to create sustainable systems.

The qualitative sample size will be limited by the number of districts, administrators participating within each district. The use of stratified sampling, where the researcher is analyzing a specific subgroup of principals, who demonstrate high emotional intelligence and strong systems thinking in each district. Combination sampling where triangulation of data

points surveys, open-ended questions, and interviews will allow the researcher to delve deeper into the essence of the shared experience of the administrator's thinking on how they leverage emotional intelligence and systems thinking to effectively address organizational change.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the impact of school administrators' emotional intelligence on leveraging staff to co-create sustainable systems. At this stage of research emotional intelligence will be defined as the ability for administrators to tap into their social emotional abilities to build relationships and trust with staff to co-create sustainable systems. The following research questions will guide this concurrent mixed method research, where quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed to analyze the broad perspectives of the principals, and open-ended questions will inform the researcher about specific behaviors of individual participants and how they used emotional intelligence to leverage systems change.

Instrumentation

For this study, I am planning on using a variety of instruments to gather data on how principals use emotional intelligence when leading their staff, and how they utilize systems thinking. A survey has been developed based on the literature review and existing surveys on emotional intelligence and systems thinking during organizational change. To gather quantitative data the survey will use a 5-point Likert scale to measure the degree to which the administrator perceives their actions and behaviors are in alignment with the statement. Using open-ended questions will allow the researcher to find correlations between the quantitative and qualitative data gathered. Finally, if there is ambiguity in the results, I will follow up the surveys with

interviews of the participants who are demonstrating high emotional intelligence and high systems thinking. Figure 1. 1 depicts both the qualitative and quantitative process described.

Strategies for Validating Findings

To have strong research, I must ensure their study is reliable and valid. Creswell and Poth (2018) describe reliability as a form of dependability and consistency and validity to measure the accuracy of the results. Researchers must consider and address any threats to validity and reliability in their study. Maxwell (2013) emphasizes the importance of researchers minimizing threats to explanations and interpretations. In looking at the researcher's proposed study, validity will be addressed by:

- *Triangulation of multiple sources of data* (Creswell & Poth, 2018): Surveys on emotional intelligence and building sustainable systems will be administered to principals in several Southern California school districts. The principals willing to participate in the study at each school will also be surveyed on their perceptions of their emotional intelligence and their ability to build sustainable systems. The surveys will include open ended questions. Based on the data collected, principals who perceive themselves to have high level of emotional intelligence and systems thinking will be interviewed. Another source of data would be standardized test scores as a measure of effectiveness.
- *Researcher Bias*: The researcher bias will need to be addressed by disclosing prejudices and biases that can shape the interpretation and approach to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this case, I will be surveying administrators in the district they are currently employed in, which could cause a bias because I have professional relationships with the administrators and teachers in the district. Another bias is my perception of their

emotional intelligence and systems thinking and how the researcher utilized them to create sustainable systems at their school.

- *Member Checking*: This where the researcher asks the participants to review the preliminary analysis containing themes and findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By including the administrators in reviewing the findings, interpretive validity will be ensured by the data gathered reflecting what the participants shared and ensuring that I was not missing any key information or data.
- *External audits*: This allows for an outside consultant to analyze the process and product and assess for accuracy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By having an external auditor, the researchers will be able to ensure that their findings are supported by the data. When a researcher is completely engulfed by the study, having a fresh set of eyes on the study can support and guide the researcher in ensuring the study is more valid.

Reliability often refers to the consistency of the coders with multiple data sets (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this situation, I will not have a team of coders to work through the data.

Utilizing software to support the accuracy of coding after I have analyzed the data and developed a preliminary list of codes will allow me to efficiently analyze the data gathered. Through this process, the researcher will ensure internal generalizability across the districts and administrators, and that there are implications for external generalizability with regards to principals who demonstrate emotional intelligence and systems thinking being able to create sustainable systems in their school sites.

Data Analysis Procedures

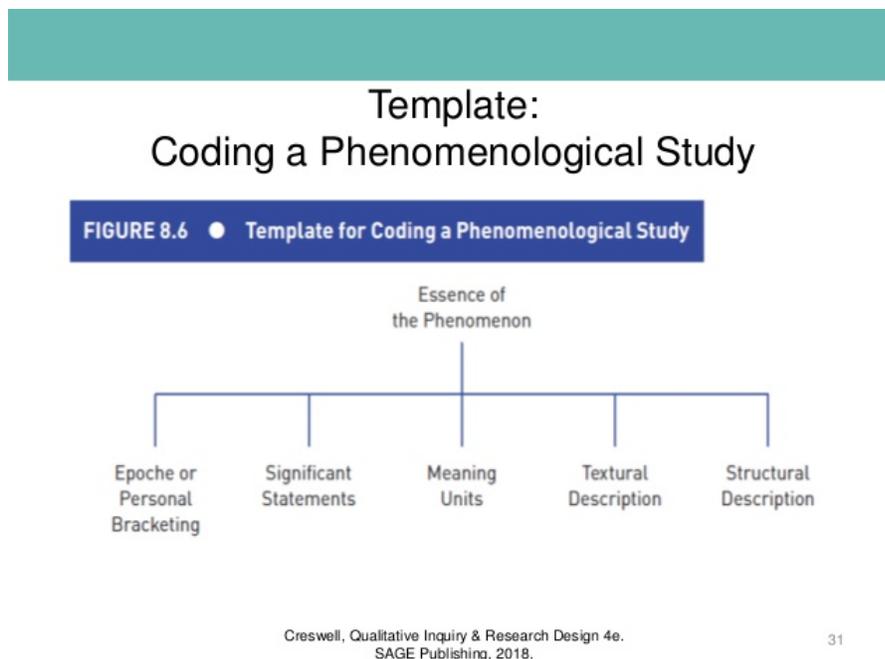
Qualitative research involves the researcher gathering data from their participants, organizing the data collected and determining the themes through coding and narrowing the

codes down so they can be represented as a table or narrative (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Prior to the advent of coding software, this was a laborious task where researchers coded by hand. Some methods included manually transcribing interviews and then highlighting the transcription to code or cutting the transcription and placing them in coded envelopes (Turner, 2019). Manually coding can be very time consuming.

Utilizing a template for coding as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) (see Figure 2. 1) will allow the researcher to strategically analyze the data gathered from the participants. A description of the participants' experiences with emotional intelligence and systems thinking will be developed, as well as a list of significant statements from participants on how participants are experiencing emotional intelligence and systems thinking in their school setting. The statements gathered would be grouped into meaningful units of information of what the participants experienced, and analysis would support me in understanding how the participants were experiencing emotional intelligence and systems thinking in their practice. Finally, the essence of the phenomenon of how administrators use emotional intelligence and systems thinking will be described based on the findings

Figure 1. 1

Phenomenological Template for Coding



Note: Description of aspects to consider when coding phenomenological research

In order to effectively analyze the data, I reviewed Delve, which is a software program that is able to streamline the coding process and make it more efficient for the researchers. Delve offers a transcription service, which will automatically transcribe interviews from various platforms and in multiple languages. Delve also offers a cloud collaboration that allows teams of up to 5 people to code online and offline and be able to merge their documents. Finally, Delve allows for the researcher to code the transcriptions to efficiently code and discover patterns and themes in their research.

I am planning on utilizing a software program like Delve to help with the coding, as the project will involve multiple open ended survey questions and potential follow up interviews of selected participants. Having the ability to efficiently code and collaborate with colleagues to determine themes and patterns will be essential to ensure the validity of the findings.

Anticipated Ethical Issues

The snowball method will be used for data collection. Ensuring that all participants are informed and consent to participating in the surveys on their emotional intelligence and systems thinking prior to completing the surveys will be an ethical consideration. Managing the researcher participant relationship will become a consideration when working with the principals in follow up interviews or gathering observational data at their school sites. Finally, ensuring that the participants will remain confidential will be a critical component of the research, as participants who demonstrate lower emotional intelligence and systems thinking could be concerned that participating in the study could negatively impact their employment. I will also need to ensure that they are being explicit in their position and engage in reflexively thinking and writing about the data gathered.

Summary of Expected Outcomes

The intent of this research is to provide aspiring and current administrators a resource of key strategies demonstrated by administrators who have high levels of emotional intelligence and systems thinking. Administrators who demonstrate characteristics from the quadrant of high emotional intelligence and high-level systems thinking can leverage their staff to create sustainable systems which will allow the next administrator to build on the systems and guide the school to the next achievement level: academically and culturally. Knowing these key strategies will allow administrators to reflect on their own practices and intentionally work on developing their skills in these areas, as emotional intelligence and systems thinking are not fixed levels. Shared experiences and intentionality can help grow these areas to improve the educational experience for students and staff in the K-12 setting.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

To better understand how K-12 educational leaders tap into their emotional intelligence to lead change I used mixed methods approach to gather data from 80 participants. The participants completed a survey answering questions about their perceptions of their emotional intelligence and how they have navigated change initiatives. The responses were captured in a 5-point Likert Scale. Participants also had an opportunity to provide examples of how they utilized emotional intelligence to lead change in the open-ended responses. The research questions guided the design of the survey and analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data.

Demographics

The research included 80 participants from seven Southern California K-12 school districts. The gender distribution of the participants depicted in Table 1. 1 demonstrate that 71% of participants were female and 29% were male. Table 1. 1 also illustrates the distribution of ethnicity with the participants. The most significant ethnicities represented were White, 63%; Hispanic or Latino/a at 26%, and Black at 8%. Based on the 2018-19 DataQuest report from the California Department of Education, the most frequent ethnicities of administrators were, White (58.6%), Hispanic (22.7%), and Black (7.7%). Although the sample size was limited to 80 participants it does fall within a reasonable range to reflect the state ethnicity demographics of administrators.

The participants surveyed worked in a variety of educational settings as depicted in Table 1. 1. The most significant participant populations were from the elementary school setting 38.27%, district office 25.93%, and middle or junior high school 17.28%. There were also participants from the County Office of Education.

Table 1. 1*Frequency Distribution of Demographics (N=80)*

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
GENDER		
Female	57	71%
Male	23	29%
ETHNICITY		
Black	6	8%
Filipino	1	1%
Hispanic or Latino/a	22	28%
Mixed Race	1	1%
White	50	63%
SITE		
High School Site	5	6.17%
Middle School or Junior High Site	14	17.28%
Alternative School Setting	4	4.94%
Elementary School Site	31	38.27%
District Office	21	25.93%
County Office of Education	3	3.70%
TK-8	2	2.46%

Participants shared their years as a teacher and their years as an administrator. The mean years of service in education was reported as 22.8 with a standard deviation of 6.7 years depicted in Table 2. 1. The mean for years of service as an administrator was 10.3 years.

Table 2. 1*Years of Experience in Education (N=80)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Years Teaching	22.8	6.7
Years Admin	10.3	7.3
Average Years	16.5	7.0

In analyzing the descriptive statistics for Kotter's Model of Organizational Change (Table 3. 1), participants used a 5-point Likert scale to respond, 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being

strongly agree. In terms of Step 1, creating a sense of urgency, participants report that they dedicate time to creating a sense of urgency ($M = 3.50$), however ensuring that the staff agrees on the need for change and can articulate the need for change is reflected in a lower mean ($M = 2.0$, $M = 2.80$). Step 2: building a guiding coalition, is a strength reported by the participants. They are adept at building diverse teams who can describe the need for change with an average mean of 3.92. In Step 3, the guiding coalition creates the vision, ensures it is aligned to the values, and can articulate the vision. The development of the vision and its alignment to the values of the organization can be perceived as a strength as the mean is higher than 4 in both areas. Interestingly, the ability for the guiding coalition to articulate the vision is lower ($M = 3.81$). In Step 4, the team communicates the vision, answers questions about it, and used a variety of communication methods. Strengths reported by participants includes team members being able to answer the questions about the vision and using a variety of methods to communicate. In terms of the guiding coalition being able to succinctly articulate the vision, the mean drops to a 3.52. Based on the results of the descriptive statistics for KMOC, participants are reporting a need for staff to be able to describe the need for change and succinctly articulate the vision to others.

Table 3. 1*KMOC Steps 1- 4 Participant Responses (N=80)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
STEP 1 URGENCY		
Time	3.50	0.53
Agree	2.00	0.22
Staff Describe	2.80	0.35
Average Urgency	2.76	0.37
STEP 2 GUIDING COALITION		
Diverse Team	3.95	0.69
Team Describe	3.89	0.78
Average Guiding Coalition	3.92	0.74
STEP 3 VISION		
Team develops vision	4.14	0.71
Vision aligned to values	4.43	0.63
Team articulates vision	3.81	0.77
Average Vision	4.13	0.70
STEP 4 COMMUNICATION		
Team communicates vision	3.52	0.86
Answer questions	4.41	0.63
Communication Methods	4.16	0.80
Average Communication	4.03	0.76

The analysis of the descriptive statistics on emotional intelligence constructs in Table 4. 1 revealed that most participants are self-aware. They can recognize their emotions ($M = 4.56$), and the strengths and weakness in their emotions ($M = 4.41$), although participants are not consistently soliciting feedback from others ($M = 3.88$). In terms of Self-regulation, participants reported the mean for losing their temper is 1.90, ability to calm themselves was reported as a mean of 4.04, and difficulty moving on was lower ($M = 2.30$). Participants reported high levels of empathy as demonstrated by being a good listener ($M = 4.28$) and having strong listening skills ($M = 4.06$), difficulty reading others' emotions was reported as a mean of 1.65. Motivation was depicted by difficulty maintaining focus on long terms goals ($M = 2.8$), maintain progress on

goals ($M = 3.90$), and not enjoying work ($M = 1.71$). Social skills was reported as enjoyment in organizing groups ($M = 3.83$), avoiding conflict ($M = 2.61$) and struggling with building rapport ($M = 1.44$). As group, the participants demonstrated strengths in self-awareness and empathy by ability to calm themselves and organize groups. Participants find it difficult to move on in the face of setbacks, struggle to stay motivated with long term goals, and avoid conflict.

Table 4. 1

EQ Participant Responses (N=80)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
SELF-AWARENESS		
Recognize my Emotions	4.56	0.57
Strengths and Weakness	4.41	0.67
Solicit Feedback	3.88	0.96
Average Self-Awareness	4.28	0.73
SELF-REGULATION		
Temper	1.90	0.82
Calm	4.04	0.99
Difficult Moving On	2.30	0.99
Average Self-Regulation	2.75	0.93
EMPATHY		
Good Listener	4.28	0.78
Listening Skills	4.06	1.11
Read Emotion	1.65	0.9
Average Empathy	3.33	0.93
MOTIVATION		
Focus on Goal	2.08	1.08
Progress on Goal	3.90	0.97
Does Not Enjoy Work	1.71	1.02
Average Motivation	2.56	1.02
SOCIAL SKILLS		
Organizing Groups	3.83	1.15
Avoids Conflict	2.61	1.02
Rapport	1.44	0.88
Average Social Skills	2.63	1.02

Inferential Analysis

The use of inductive reasoning allowed me to consider the independent variables of total years working in education and total years as an educational administrator to the dependent variables of the steps included in Kotter's Model of Organizational Change and the constructs in Emotional Intelligence. Areas of statistical significance were only reflected in Kotter's Model of Organizational Change as seen in Table 5. 1. As educators, teachers and administrators have a moderate correlation between their years of service in the classroom $r(80) = .328, p = .003$ and developing a vision where the values of the organization are aligned to the vision. A low correlation was noted between their years serving in an administrative capacity $r(80) = .240, p = .032$ in terms of recognizing that the vision and values of the organization are aligned.

A low correlation between total years in education and being able to describe the vision $r(80) = .272, p = .014$ was found. A moderate correlation was reported with total years in education $r(80) = .328, p = .020$ and answering questions about the vision. A low correlation was noted in years in administration $r(80) = .293, p = .008$ and answering questions about the vision. Lastly, there was a low correlation between years in administration and supporting the team in creating a vision $r(80) = .240, p = .032$. Points of interest include years in education and administration being correlated with an ability to see the connection between the vision and values and being able to answer questions about the vision.

Table 5. 1*Correlation KMOC Steps 1-4 and Years of Experience in Education (N=80)*

	Total Years in Education	Total Years in Administration
Vision/Values	.328**	.240*
Team Description of Values	.272*	/
Answer Questions about Vision	.328*	.293**
Team Creates Vision	/	.240*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ **Deductive Reasoning**

Using deductive reasoning, I considered which variables would be independent and dependent variables in the correlation of only the five constructs of emotional intelligence. Moderate correlations were noted in the areas of self-awareness to self-regulation, specifically administrators' strategies to calm themselves through recognizing emotion, $r(80) = .344, p = .001$, and knowing their strengths and weaknesses $r(80) = .302, p = .006$.

The constructs of motivation and self-regulation were also moderately correlated in educational leaders setting long term goals and monitor progress to having strategies to calm themselves, $r(80) = .424, p < .001$. It appears that when working towards a long-term goal, having a bank of calming strategies can support leaders. Administrators who reported not enjoying their work had a moderate correlation to difficulties moving on when they are frustrated $r(80) = .332, p < .001$. A weak correlation was noted between administrators who reported they do not enjoy work and they tend to lose their temper when they are frustrated $r(80) = .252, p = .024$.

The correlation between empathy and social skills was moderate in terms of being perceived as a good listener by others to organizing groups $r(80) = .304, p = .006$. Difficulty

reading others' emotions and struggling develop rapport $r(80) = .321, p = .003$ was moderately correlated.

Moderate correlations were reflected in the constructs of motivation to self-awareness, specifically administrators making progress on long terms goals to recognizing their own emotions $r(80) = .420, p < .001$. Knowing their strengths and weaknesses was moderately correlated to making progress on long term goals $r(80) = .316, p = .004$. Soliciting feedback from others was moderately correlated to making progress on long term goals $r(80) = .446, p < .001$.

A weak correlation was noted between social skills and motivation. Specifically, educational leaders avoiding conflict to finding it difficult to maintain focus on long term goals $r(80) = .226, p = .004$.

The following analysis involved looking at KMOC's step one- building a sense of urgency and the correlation with the five constructs of emotional intelligence (Table 6. 1). Administrators reported that their emotions, specifically self-awareness impact creating a sense of urgency. Recognizing their emotions was moderately correlated with dedicating time for staff to understand the need for change $r(80) = .316, p = .004$, for staff to agree on the need for change $r(80) = .314, p = .005$, and for staff to describe the need for change $r(80) = .365, p = .009$. They also see that knowing their strengths and weaknesses can support them in developing a sense of urgency with their staff. Soliciting feedback in describing the need for change is another contributing factor with a low correlation.

The correlation between building a sense of urgency and empathy was moderately correlated in staff describing the need for change and administrators being a good listener $r(80) = .473, p < .001$ and administrators dedicating time to build the sense of urgency and their

perception of their listening skills $r(80) = .320, p = .004$. Administrator perceptions on making progress on long term goals was moderately correlated to the staff agreeing on the need for change $r(80) = .313, p = .005$. The correlation between building a sense of urgency and organizing groups was a low correlation for all three questions. There were no correlations between building a sense of urgency and self-regulation.

Table 6. 1

Correlation KMOC Step 1- Urgency and EQ (N=80)

	Dedicate Time to get Staff on Board	Staff Agree on Need for Change	Staff Describe Need for Change
SELF-AWARENESS			
Recognize My Emotions	.316**	.314**	.365**
Strengths and Weakness	.253*	.274*	/
Solicit Feedback	/	.261*	.232*
SELF-REGULATION			
Lose Temper	/	/	/
Calming Strategies	/	/	/
Difficult Moving On	/	/	/
EMPATHY			
Good Listener	.282*	.227*	.473***
Listening Skills	.320**	/	/
Hard to Read Emotion	/	/	/
MOTIVATION			
Focus on Goal	/	/	/
Progress on Goal	.223*	.313**	.256*
Does Not Enjoy Work	/	/	/
SOCIAL SKILLS			
Organizing Groups	.289**	0.27*	.256**
Avoids Conflict	/	/	/
Struggle with Rapport	/	/	/

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Step 2 in Kotter's Model of Organizational Change is building a guiding coalition. Table 7. 1 illustrates the correlation between KMOC and EQ. In self-awareness moderate correlations were noted between creating a diverse teams and administrators' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses $r(80) = .312, p = .004$ and the team articulating the need for change and the administrators' abilities to recognize their emotions $r(80) = .344, p = .002$. A low correlation was noted for the team articulating the need for change and calming strategies $r(80) = .270, p = .016$. Empathy was moderately correlated with being a good listener and creating a diverse team $r(80) = .401, p < .001$ and the team articulating the need for change $r(80) = .385, p < .001$. Motivation was moderately correlated by administrators' making progress on goals and creating a diverse team $r(80) = .311, p = .005$. Social skills included a low correlation between the team articulating the need for change with organizing groups and building rapport. A moderate correlation was reported in administrators' enjoying organizing groups and creating a diverse team $r(80) = .334, p = .002$.

Table 7. 1*Correlation KMOC Step 2- Building a Guiding Coalition and EQ (N=80)*

	Creating a Diverse Team	Diverse Team Describes Need for Change
SELF-AWARENESS		
Recognize My Emotions	.265**	.344**
Strengths and Weakness	.312**	.260*
Solicit Feedback	/	/
SELF-REGULATION		
Lose Temper	/	/
Calm	/	.270**
Difficult Moving On	/	/
EMPATHY		
Good Listener	.401***	.385**
Listening Skills	/	/
Hard to Read Emotion	/	/
MOTIVATION		
Focus on Goal	/	/
Progress on Goal	.311***	/
Does Not Enjoy Work	/	/
SOCIAL SKILLS		
Organizing Groups	.334**	.290**
Avoids Conflict	/	/
Struggle with Rapport	/	-.222*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In Step 3 of KMOC, the leader is supporting the guiding coalition in building a vision. Table 8. 1 looks at the correlation of Step 3 and the emotional intelligence constructs. In self-awareness, moderate correlations were reported in terms of the team creating the vision $r(80) = .340, p = .002$, ensuring that the vision and values aligned $r(80) = .417, p < .001$, and the team being able to articulate the vision $r(80) = .419, p < .002$ with the administrators ability to recognize their emotions. Another moderate correlation was identified in the alignment of vision

and values and the leaders' recognition of their strengths and weaknesses $r(80) = .388, p = .004$. Calming strategies were an area of low correlation with all the areas related to creating a vision. Empathy reflected a moderate correlation between the administrators' perception of being a good listener and the team being able to describe the vision $r(80) = .300, p = .007$. Low correlations were reflected in all the 5 constructs of emotional intelligence. Motivation was moderately correlated in terms of the leaders' perception on progress with long term goals and the team creating the visions $r(80) = .314, p = .006$, as well as the team describing the vision $r(80) = .314, p = .005$. In terms of social skills, organizing groups was moderately correlated with the team creating the vision $r(80) = .323, p = .004$, and the alignment of the vision and values $r(80) = .305, p = .006$.

Table 8. 1*Correlation KMOC Step 3- Guiding Coalition Develops Vision and EQ (N=80)*

	Team Creates Vision	Vision and Values Aligned	Team Describes Vision
SELF-AWARENESS			
Recognize My Emotions	.340**	.417***	.419***
Strengths and Weakness	.360***	.388***	.276*
Solicit Feedback	/	/	/
SELF-REGULATION			
Lose Temper	/	/	/
Calm	.283*	.279*	.261*
Difficult Moving On	/	/	/
EMPATHY			
Good Listener	.252*	.274*	.300**
Listening Skills	/	.230*	/
Hard to Read Emotion	/	/	-.230*
MOTIVATION			
Focus on Goal	/	/	/
Progress on Goal	.314**	.030**	.314**
Does Not Enjoy Work	/	/	/
SOCIAL SKILLS			
Organizing Groups	.323**	.305**	.267*
Avoids Conflict	/	/	/
Struggle with Rapport	-.260**	/	/

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Step four of KMOC describes how the vision is widely communicated. In Table 9. 1, it is worth noting that self-regulation and empathy were not reflected as areas of correlation.

Moderate correlations for self-awareness were demonstrated in the administrators recognizing their strengths and weaknesses and the ability to have the communicate the vision $r(80) = .370$, $p = .001$, and the team's ability to answer questions about the vision $r(80) = .307$, $p = .006$. The construct of motivation was moderately correlated between progress on goals and using multiple

methods for communicating the vision $r(80) = .312, p = .005$. Social skills was moderately correlated in the administrator enjoying organizing groups and the team being able to answer questions on the vision $r(80) = .303, p = .006$, and the use of multiple methods to communicate the vision $r(80) = .316, p = .004$.

Table 9. 1

Correlation KMOC Step 4- Guiding Coalition Communicates Vision and EQ (N=80)

	Team Communicates Vision	Team Answers Questions on Vision	Vision is Communicated via Multiple Methods
SELF-AWARENESS			
Recognize My Emotions	/	/	-.235*
Strengths and Weakness	.370***	.307**	.292**
Solicit Feedback	/	/	/
SELF-REGULATION			
Lose Temper	/	/	/
Calm	/	/	/
Difficult Moving On	/	/	/
EMPATHY			
Good Listener	/	/	/
Listening Skills	/	/	/
Hard to Read Emotion	/	/	/
MOTIVATION			
Focus on Goal	/	/	/
Progress on Goal	/	.253*	.312**
Does Not Enjoy Work	/	/	/
SOCIAL SKILLS			
Organizing Groups	.292**	.303**	.316**
Avoids Conflict	/	/	/
Rapport	/	/	/

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Findings of Qualitative Research

The qualitative research was based on the open-ended questions participants were asked on emotional intelligence and leading organizational change. The questions were not required for the participants to complete, though most participants completed the questions regarding KMOC/EQ. Figure 2. 1 lists the questions and the number of participants that responded by question.

Figure 2. 1

Participants for Survey Questions

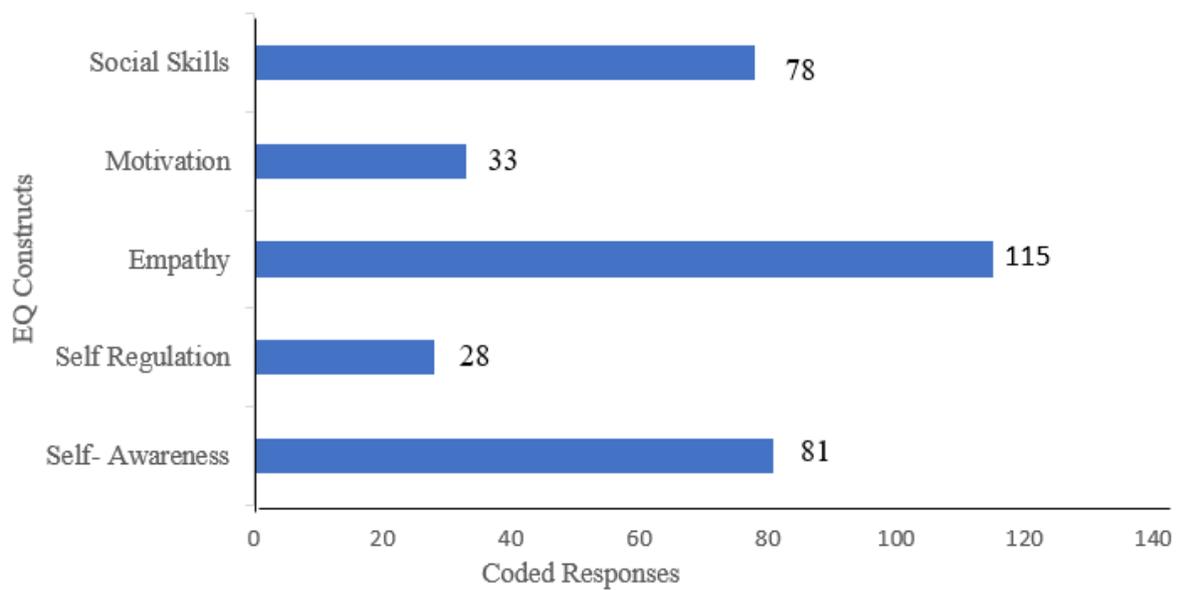
Survey Questions	Number of Participant Responses
Please free to explain or provide a clarification to the (EQ) questions above	13
Describe a time where you led a change initiative, what were some of the key factors for success or challenges of the implementation.	73
Describe how you have utilized emotional intelligence in your leadership practices to leverage the capacity of your staff.	70

Thirteen participants elected to respond to the clarification question on EQ. Participants responded with comments like “I have excellent skills in a number of areas: active listening,” “I value active listening,” and “being a good listener”. These findings are in alignment with the quantitative data where leaders recognizing the importance of being a “good listener” and having strong “listening skills”. The context of the change initiatives described by participants included changing schedules, resistance to SEL, discipline and grading practices, and increasing employee effectiveness. For emotional intelligence some of the contexts described were connecting with staff and community members to build trust, using tools to assess EQ of their staff, and seeking to understand others.

All the responses of the participants were analyzed and coded. Coding was based on the five constructs of emotional intelligence and the eight steps in Kotter’s Model of Organizational Change. Figure 3. 1 illustrates the frequency of participants referencing the constructs of emotional intelligence.

Figure 3. 1

Frequency of EQ Constructs Coded from Open-Ended Questions



As participants described specific examples, they most frequently referenced empathy, self-awareness, and social skills. Participants described empathy as “listening to understand their staff”, “hearing their voices”. Empathy was also described as “remembering what it was like to be a teacher”, “considering how the change might feel to others”, “understanding the history”, and “knowing the staff”. “Building trust” and having an “open door policy” was another way that participants described the way in which they made connections with staff and how it supported them in “reading the room”.

Self-awareness was described by participants as “knowing my strengths and weaknesses” and use of “interpersonal skills to build trust and relationships”. The administrators referenced using their knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses to be able to “help make decisions that are in the best interest of the school”. They recognize the emotions that they are experiencing and use them to “communicate effectively”.

Social skills were referenced almost as frequently as self-awareness by the participants. They provided examples of “communicating and engaging individuals”, “building relationships to create a team”, “asking questions”, and “availability to connect on multiple platforms- email, text, call or in person”. They shared how it was important to be able to “read non-verbal body language” or “read the room”. Participants also described how they had honest conversations” to “build trust”, “validate concerns” and “incorporate feedback from staff”. The administrators described being an “authentic leader” as a characteristic needed in social skills. Finally, many participants recognized the importance of “building relationships” through “regular meetings” and “consistent communication” and “celebrating success”.

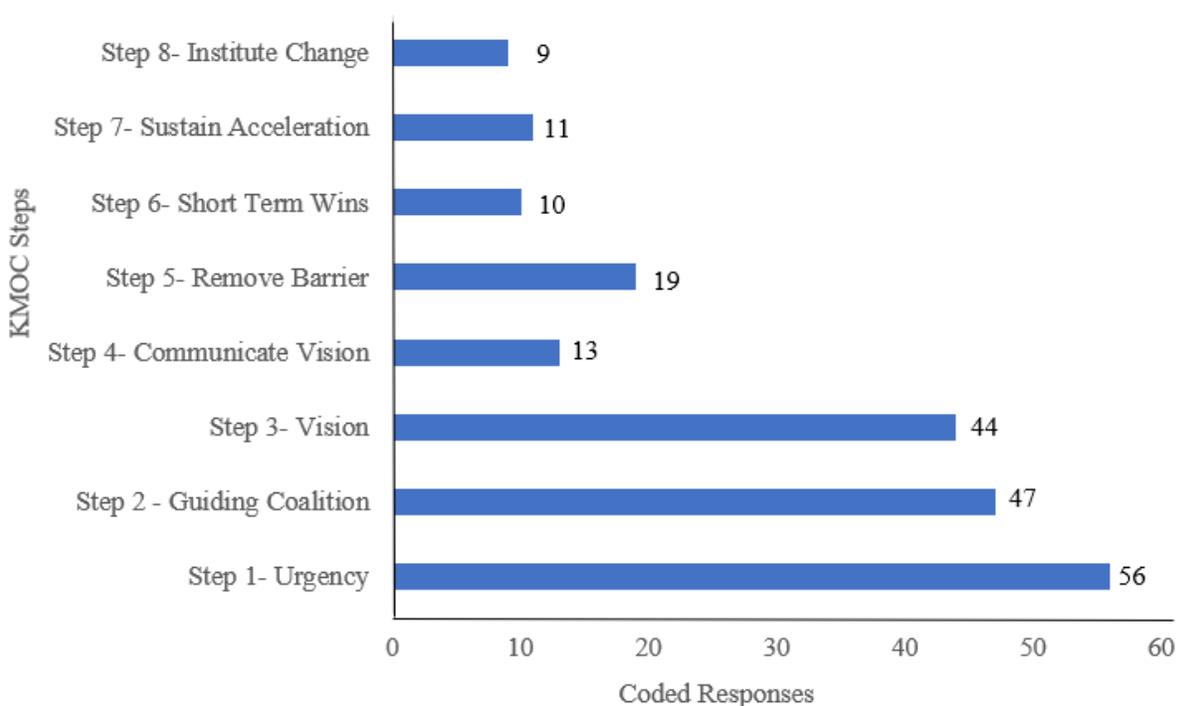
Motivation was less frequently referred to in the participant responses. When referenced they described it as “having a common focus” or “common vision” and “communicating the rationale” which allows for the staff to have “ownership of the work”. Having “strong relationships and trust” was described as a way to “allow for the staff to be pushed in positive ways”.

Self-regulation was the least frequently referenced construct of emotional intelligence. It was described as “pacing change”, “recognizing when things are going well or not”, and “considering perspectives before reacting”. Self-regulation was also referred to as the ability to “say no”.

Kotter's Model of Organizational Change was coded using the eight steps as illustrated in Figure 4. 1 Steps 1- creating a sense of urgency was most frequently described. Step 2- building a guiding coalition and Step 3- creating the vision were the next more frequently coded. Interestingly, the next highest response was with Step 5- removing barriers.

Figure 4. 1

Frequency of KMOC Steps Coded from Open-Ended questions



As participants described building a sense of urgency, they shared about “asking for opinions and possible solutions”, “the use of data” like “needs assessments”, and “building the why”. Administrators described how they “build a shared understanding that included beliefs and values” and “looking at exemplary sources for the change initiative”.

Building a guiding coalition was described as creating a diverse team with “classified and certificated staff”, “working with unions”, and ensuring “diverse perspectives were on the team”. Participants shared about the importance of starting with “believers”, “people who understand

the “why” for change”, as well as “people who can activate the details. Being able to “brainstorm and solicit change ideas” while “collaborating with the team” were also noted as key ideas.

Forming a vision, Step three of KMOC, reiterated the importance of “certificated and classified staff being involved in the process”. They noted that the team needed to have “shared values to create a common culture”. Lastly, participants described a need to understand “parameters about the scope of the work” and the importance of “developing a clear plan”.

Only thirteen participants referenced the need to enlist a volunteer army to widely communicate the vision. They suggested the need to “gather feedback from key stakeholders”. It is worth noting that only one participant described the importance of the “team communicating the message”. None of the participants described the need for the volunteer army to clearly understand the change initiative.

KMOC Step five- enable actions by removing barriers was the fourth highest in terms of coded references. Participants described “filtering information and initiatives” to staff, “giving teachers ownership”, “making adjustments as needed”, and “clearly articulate the change and look for barriers”.

Generating short term wins, KMOC step six, was described as “sharing data” and “visiting early adopters to see the impact of change”. Although “celebrating steps towards the initiative” and “celebrating wins” was mentioned, there were no specific examples cited.

Sustaining acceleration, KMOC step seven, was described as “building capacity and momentum”, “training the majority of the staff”, “monitoring implementation”, and “staying focused on the change”.

The final step of KMOC, institute change was minimally referenced. Participants described the need for “ongoing communication”, awareness of timeframes for the initiative, and “sustainability after the person changed positions”.

A portion of the participants ($n = 14$) described how the lead change initiatives by themselves. They used the term “I” and only focused on their actions with the team. The ideas/initiatives were described as their personal ideas to improve their site/office.

Summary

The EQ/KMOC survey the participants completed took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Although it was a brief measure, it provided some key insights about how administrators use their emotional intelligence while navigating change with their staff. The Likert survey questions addressed the first four steps of KMOC, which are sequential. Emotional intelligence is much more fluid, where individuals may tap into various strengths and skills they have with EQ. When building a sense of urgency, leaders are tapping into self-awareness, where they are aware of their emotions and know their strengths and weaknesses. This is a critical skill set when conveying the need for change to staff to be aware of how others may be perceiving the leader and what emotions might help or hinder the messaging and urgency. The qualitative data provided examples of the leaders knowing how to leverage their strengths to make decisions in the best interest of the school/district.

Empathy was correlated to building a guiding coalition, where leaders were perceived as being good listeners. Another theme that appeared was the leader’s listening skills. In the qualitative data, participants described recalling what it was like to be a teacher and the importance of listening to understand and ensure that all voices are heard.

Building the vision was correlated to motivation and social skills. When considering the task of building a vision, the leader must ensure that all participants are heard and complete the task of building a vision that can be clearly articulated and understood by the constituents. The use of social skills allows for the leader to organize effective groups to complete the task of building a vision. Understanding the educational partners in the room will allow the leader to tap into their social skills, by understanding people's backgrounds and interests to create a space for all voices to be heard as the vision is being created. Qualitative data revealed that participants use their social skills to read the room, ensure that feedback is gathered, and that they can validate concerns. A few participants mentioned that they should be an authentic leader and ensure that trust is present. Motivation was described as having a common vision or goal. Trust being present was referred as a way for the leader to encourage momentum with the initiative.

The team communicating the vision using multiple methods is step four of KMOC. In this step, the team being able to answer questions about the vision and communicate the vision in a variety of ways was correlated to social skills, organizing groups. Qualitative data depicted the leaders building relationships to create teams, creating an environment where individuals felt a sense of trust and were able to connect and access the leader in a variety of methods. This correlation described the conditions of the team but did not capture the systems and structures needed to ensure that the vision was widely understood by the team.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the key factors of K-12 administrators' emotional intelligence as they lead their staff through creating sustainable systems as they navigate organizational change. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability administrators use to tap into their social emotional strengths and skills to build relationships and trust with staff. Organizational change is defined as something that is identified in the organization that is systematically addressed to create lasting change. The intent is for educational leaders to be able to utilize the findings in this research to leverage their emotional intelligence while systematically approaching sustainable change in their educational organization.

Research Questions

- **PRQ: How do school administrators utilize emotional intelligence to guide staff as they navigate change?**
 - SQ1: How do school administrators use emotional intelligence to form a powerful coalition and empower staff to take action to create sustainable system-wide change?
 - SQ1.1: How are school administrators developing relationships and trust with existing staff in order to form a guiding coalition?
 - SQ1.2: How does administrator motivation, empathy and social skills impact their ability to empower staff to take action and create change?
 - SQ2: How do school administrators use EQ to create a sense of urgency, create a vision and communicate the vision so it is widely understood and implemented?

- SQ2.1 How does administrator self-awareness and empathy impact the creation of a vision for change?

Summary of the Study

The study involved 80 participants who are currently serving as K-12 administrators in Southern California K-12 school districts or county offices of education which support the K-12 districts. Participation was voluntary and solicited through email communication and was approved by the superintendent or research department in each of the participating districts. A raffle incentive to win one of three gift cards was offered to encourage participation in the study. The timing of the study was during the month of May in 2022, which can be a very busy time of year for school administrators. To encourage participation, the email communication with the survey was sent out two times in each of the seven participating districts. A snowball method was also used; participants were able to share the survey with colleagues in other districts, as well as a request for participation was placed on Twitter and Facebook.

Despite the limited number of participants ($N=80$) the study yielded several results of interest. The demographics of the participants was closely aligned to the demographics of school administrators in the state of California, which supported the notion that the participants formed a representative sample of school administrators.

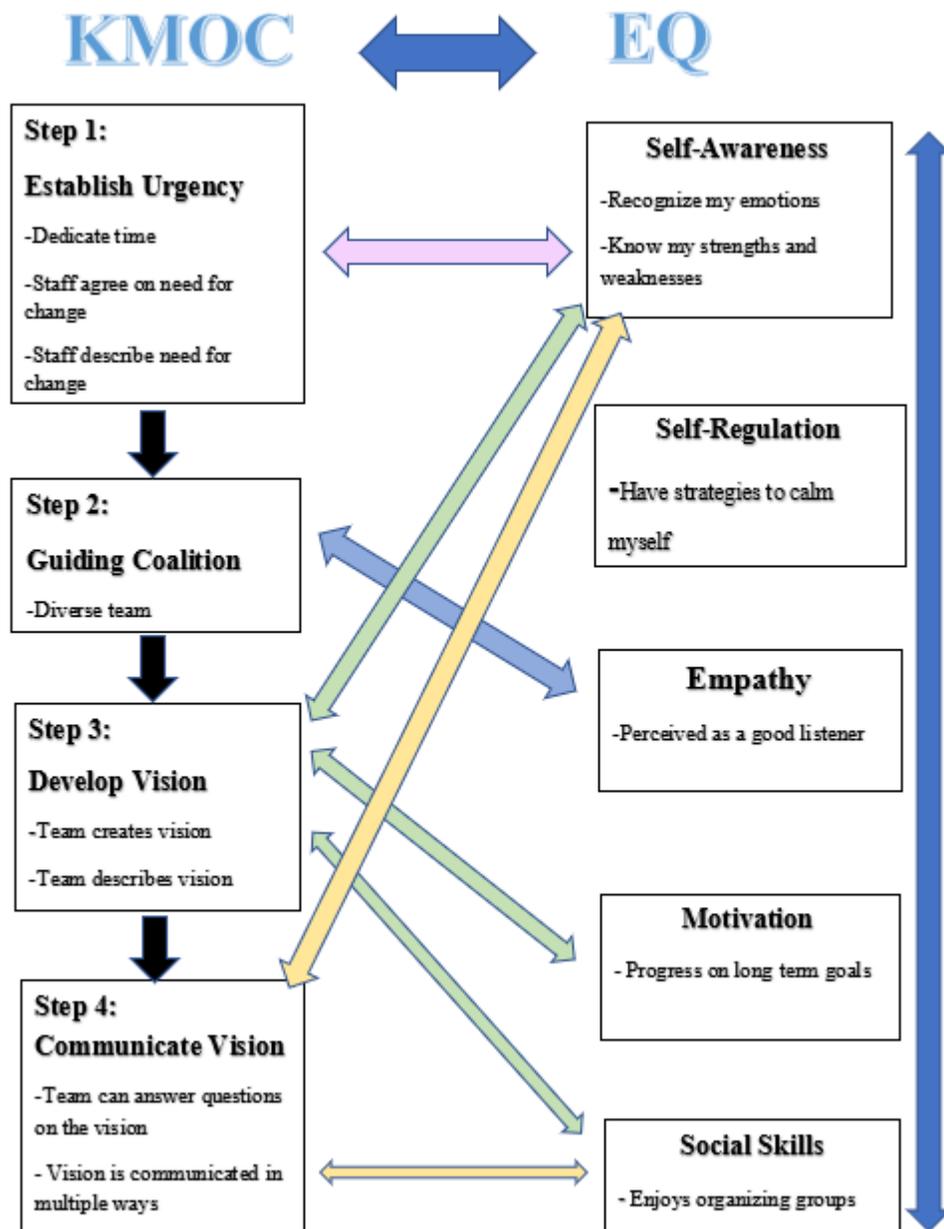
School Administrators Use of EQ to Guide Staff as They Navigate Change

The theoretical framework for the study was Goleman's five constructs for emotional intelligence and how they influence Kotter's Model of Organizational Change (KMOC) in educational leaders. The purpose of this study was to look at the impact of administrator's emotional intelligence as they navigate change initiatives. Figure 5. 1 illustrates the research

findings of the relationships between the first four steps of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change and the five constructs of Goleman's theory on emotional intelligence.

Figure 5. 1

Relationship Between KMOC and EQ in Education Administrators



As leaders are engaged in step one: establishing a sense of urgency, they tap into self-awareness by recognizing their emotions and knowing their strengths and weaknesses. Self-aware leaders are realists, who are honest with themselves and others (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 2019, Kotter, 2012). They know how their emotions impact themselves and others. As administrators are developing a sense of urgency, they can connect with their staff by sharing personal success stories and pitfalls as a way to build a realistic picture of why the change is needed.

KMOC Step two: Building a guiding coalition involves the administrator selecting a diverse group of educational partners to help formulate the vision. As the leader is building the guiding coalition, they utilize empathy as they are perceived as a good listener by the coalition. Empathetic leaders consider employees' feelings and other aspects when making decisions (Goleman, 2019). The administrator carefully selects potential team members to create a diverse group of individuals participate in the guiding coalition (Hughes et al., 2018; Fildes et al., 2015). The administrator's ability to listen and observe the team members during their employment has informed the decisions as to which members are essential to have on the team.

KMOC Step three: Developing a vision with the guiding coalition requires the administrator to utilize various aspects of their emotional intelligence, self-awareness, motivation, and social skills (Mendelson & Stabile, 2019). Leaders must be clear on their personal strengths and weaknesses in terms of facilitating the conversation on the priorities of the vision. The various educational partners will come with a variety of perspective and passions, and it is the administrator's job to ensure that all members of the coalition have a voice in the creation of the vision.

Due to the nature of this work, there are times where discussions can become heated, and the leader will need to recognize their emotions to ensure that they are able to ensure that are able to have a calm and confident demeanor. The leader will also use the EQ construct of motivation, where they are driven to achieve, have a passion for the work, and cannot accept status quo (Calegari, 2015; Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012). This level of motivation will support the administrator in making progress on co-creating a vision that is both aspirational and attainable.

Using the emotional intelligence construct of social skills will support the leader in organizing the guiding coalition meetings. It will also help the leader in making decisions about developing strong teams based on the strengths and weaknesses of each team member. Socially skilled leaders have a purposeful friendliness about them, and are strong at managing teams, and are experts at persuasion (Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009). As the vision is being finalized the administrator will tap into their self-awareness, motivation, and social skills to influence the coalition in the development of the vision.

KMOC Step four: Communicating the vision requires the administrator to utilize the EQ constructs of self-awareness and social skills to support the guiding coalition in being able to message the vision clearly and consistently. The messaging should be simple, possibly including a metaphor or analogy to paint a picture of the vision, should be shared on a variety of platforms, and repeated until all educational partners understand the vision (Kotter, 2012; Nitta et al., 2009). By being self-aware the leaders are able to know the best ways to communicate the message. They can utilize their social skills to persuade and influence the wide-spread communication of the vision.

It is of interest to note that self-regulation was not significantly correlated to the first four steps of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change. Leaders who demonstrate self-regulation are able to manage their impulses and outbursts and cultivate an environment of trust and fairness (Ent et al., 2012; Goleman, 2019). When considering various leadership styles, and historical figures, it has been observed that leaders who lack self-regulation are also able to achieve their vision, but the question of sustainability after the leader is no longer in power is something to consider.

Based on my initial hypothesis, leaders need to approach change initiatives systematically and they need to use their emotional intelligence to support staff in developing a sense of ownership to ensure sustainable change. The findings from the 80 participants have confirmed how the administrators use their emotional intelligence to navigate change. Self-awareness appears to be one of the most critical constructs of EQ as administrators navigate the first four steps of KMOC's model for organizational change. During the qualitative portion of the research, participants described how it was important for staff to "ownership", "buy-in" or a "voice" in change initiatives. Administrators need to consider how they are using their EQ to support their staff in widely understanding the need for change

Use of EQ to Form a Coalition and Empower Staff to Take Action to Change

The hypothesis was that administrators would be using empathy and social skills as the primary EQ constructs when building a sense of urgency to develop the guiding coalition. During step one of KMOC, building a sense of urgency for the change initiative, it was found that administrators recognize that their emotions, specifically self-awareness impacts how they are creating a sense of urgency with their staff (Bower et al., 2018; Twal, 2018). When dedicating time and supporting staff in agreeing on the need for change correlations were found

in how administrators recognize their emotions, strengths and weaknesses. Staff being able to agree on the need for change and to describe the need was correlated to the administrator soliciting feedback (Levassuer, 2013; Patti et al., 2018). Self-aware leaders can recognize their emotions, strengths and weaknesses, and solicit feedback to help adjust their messaging as they are creating a sense of urgency with their staff (Goleman, 2019; Warrick, 2019).

As the administrator is building the sense of urgency with their staff, dedicating time, and demonstrating strong listening skills to ensure that they staff's needs and understanding of the change initiative is heard (Kotter, 2012). The administrators who demonstrate empathy are perceived as good listeners. Being a good listener allows the administrator to create the conditions for the staff to engage in a dialogue and come to consensus on the need for the change (Moore, 2009; Patti et al.; 2018). When building a sense of urgency, empathy allows for the administrator to consider how the history of proposed initiative might feel to the staff and supports them in reading the room when developing the sense of urgency.

As administrators utilize the construct of motivation to help the staff agree on the need for change and to aid in making progress on long-term goals. The administrators understand that building a sense of urgency with staff requires dedicating time and pacing to reach the desired outcome (Kotter, 2012; Maulding et al., 2012). They know that it is important to challenge the staff regarding status quo to cultivate the sense of urgency.

In building a sense of urgency administrators recognize how the EQ construct of social skills supports them in ensuring that they can effectively organize groups. They can read non-verbal body language and communicate in a way that ensures staff recognize their feedback is being heard (Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009). Administrators know the dynamics of their staff members and ensure that the sense of urgency is developed with key staff members, who have a

level of influence and ability to communicate the need for change. These key staff members are typically the ones that are selected to participate in the guiding coalition.

Developing Relationships and Trust with Staff to Form a Guiding Coalition

The second step in Kotter's Model is building a guiding coalition, the hypothesis was that administrators would use rely on empathy and social skills to build relationships and trust amongst the coalition. As the administrator builds a core team of educational partners, they are carefully selecting individuals for their strengths, influence, and perspectives they will bring to the change initiative (Goleman, 2019; Kotter, 2012; Nitta et al.; 2009). Administrators who reported being self-aware by recognizing their emotions, strengths and weaknesses tapped into that construct while developing diverse team. They ensured the guiding coalition is able to describe the need for the change initiative. They used the construct of self-awareness to guide decision making on who is part of the guiding coalition and how the messaging is shared.

Self-regulation is demonstrated by the administrators in how they have strategies to calm themselves as the guiding coalition is describing the need for change. The calming strategies will allow for the leader to maintain a calm demeanor when messaging is unclear or incorrect from the guiding coalition (Finnigan & Maulding-Green, 2018; Goleman, 2019). Having a calm demeanor will allow the administrator to consider the perspectives of the room before reacting. The participants reported that having strategies to calm themselves and "adjust pacing" and consider perspectives before reacting was important when working with the guiding coalition.

Empathy, specifically being perceived as a good listener by others, was correlated to building a diverse team and the guiding coalition being able to describe the need for change. As administrators are engaged in the guiding coalition meetings creating a space to hear all the coalition's voices allows for trust to form in the team and with the administrator (Calegari, 2015;

Kotter 2012). Empathy was reported to “build trust”, “consider how the change might feel to others”, and “read the room” as they are working with the guiding coalition.

Motivation: maintaining stamina on long-term goals and building a diverse team were correlated. The administrator carefully selects the members of the guiding coalition to help actualize the vision. By supporting the guiding coalition and ensuring they have a sense of ownership in the change initiative the administrator is able to create the conditions for making progress on the goals (Calegari, 2015; Van Wart, 2013). Participants described motivation as having “strong relationships and trust to push staff in positive ways”.

Social skills, organizing groups and building rapport was correlated to building a diverse team and the team describing the need for change. Administrators collaborate with their guiding coalition to build trust and validate their concerns. Creating an environment where the guiding coalition is valued and perceives the leader to be authentic will support rapport being developed with the team and with the administrator (Duncan et al., 2017; Finnigan & Maulding-Green, 2018; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2015).

EQ: Motivation, Empathy and Social Skills Impact on Creating Change

EQ was believed to be a critical component in empowering staff to create change. In the correlation of emotional intelligence constructs, administrators who are self-aware recognize their emotions and know their strengths and weaknesses, they also demonstrate self-regulation by having a bank of strategies to calm themselves down (Levasseur, 2013; Patti et al., 2018). Leaders who are able to “recognize when things are not going well” and can adjust strategies to ensure the coalitions’ progress towards the change initiative. Motivation to make progress on long term goals was correlated to self-regulation, where the administrators have strategies to calm themselves down. In considering this correlation, when working towards long term goals

there can be setbacks which might derail progress towards the goal. Having tools to self-regulate in the face of setbacks could support the leader in maintaining progress towards the goals (Goleman, 2019; Tikkanen et al., 2017). The emotional intelligence construct of empathy was correlated with social skills. Administrators who are perceived as having good listening skills enjoy organizing groups and administrators who find it challenging to read emotions struggle to build rapport with others. As an educational leader the use of listening skills and social skills are essential for the leader to build effective teams (Kearney et al., 2014). Administrators who demonstrate motivation by making progress on long terms goals also recognize their emotions, strengths and weaknesses, and they solicit feedback. In education, being a self-aware leader is an essential trait that supports the administrator in being a reflective practitioner (Goleman et al., 2001; Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Mullen & Jones, 2008). Administrators who struggle with social skills and motivation avoid conflict and find it challenging to focus on goals. As administrators are leading change initiatives, they can tap into their emotional intelligence and flexibly use the various constructs as they navigate each of the eight steps of change in Kotter's model to ensure the staff widely understands and can implement the vision for change.

Using EQ to Create Urgency and a Vision, and Communicate the Vision

The hypothesis of how the administrator's EQ impacts KMOC step four where the guiding coalition communicates the vision is that the constructs of self-awareness, social skills, and motivation would be essential. It is critical that the guiding coalition understands the vision and can succinctly and clearly message the vision. The coalition should be able to communicate the vision in clear and simple language using a variety of communication methods (Kotter, 2012; Hill, 2013). Correlations were noted in self-awareness, administrators recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, and the team communicating the vision, answering questions on the

vision, and using a variety of methods for communication. Administrators build trusting relationships with the guiding coalition as they are sharing the vision with the educational partners that will be impacted by the change initiative (Mendelson & Stabile, 2019).

Administrators recognizing their emotions was correlated to using multiple methods of communication. As administrators know their emotions, they can make informed decision as to which platforms would be best to message the vision.

Motivation, progress on long-term goals, was correlated to the team being able to answer questions on the vision and using multiple methods of communication. In order to actualize the vision, administrators must ensure that the guiding coalition fully understands and has ownership of the vision (Maulding et al., 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020).

Social skills, where administrators enjoy organizing groups was correlated with the team communicating the vision, answering questions on the vision, and using multiple methods of communication (Bower et al., 2015; Kotter, 2012; Moore, 2009). When leaders know strengths and weaknesses of each team member, they can support, coach, and guide the members in understanding and articulating the vision on the appropriate platform that would be best suited to their strengths. The leader is also able to ensure that the “right” people are part of the guiding coalition.

Administrator Self-Awareness and Empathy Impact on the Creation of a Vision

The hypothesis was that administrators would need a strong sense of self-awareness and empathy to understand why the change initiative was essential, as well as the impact on the educational partners involved. In step three of KMOC, the guiding coalition develops a vision for the change initiative. A strong vision can inspire the staff to make the needed change because the outcomes outweigh status quo. The vision also supports the staff in being empowered to make

decisions that are in alignment with the vision (Kotter, 2012; Van Wart, 2013). The guiding coalition creating a vision that is aligned to the organization's vision and values, and ensuring the guiding coalition can describe the vision was correlated to the administrator recognizing their emotions and strengths and weaknesses. The administrators use their self-awareness to build trust and relationships with the guiding coalition, and it supports them in making decisions that are in the best interest of the organization (Hughes et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012; Nitta et al., 2009).

The use of self-regulation, calming strategies, was correlated to the guiding coalition developing the vision, ensuring the vision is aligned with the organizations' values and the ability of the coalition to describe the vision (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015). As the administrator works with the coalition, using calming strategies will support them in navigating challenging conversations where individual members of the team feel passionate about aspects of what should and should not be included in the vision. The administrator remaining calm and being able to bring the discussion back to the values and goals of the initiative will aid in facilitation of these conversations.

Empathy, being perceived as a good listener, was correlated to the coalition creating the vision, ensuring the vision and values are aligned and the coalition describing the vision. During the vision development meetings, the coalition will be sharing their opinions and being seen as a good listener allows for all members to feel heard and valued (Mendelson & Stabile, 2019; Moore, 2009). Having strong listening skills was correlated to the alignment of the vision and values of the organization. The administrator uses their strong listening skills read the room and to guide the conversation by hearing how the team is articulating the values of the organization as they create the vision. The coalition being able to describe the vision was inversely correlated with having a difficult time reading others' emotions. Administrators who have a difficult time

reading the emotions of others might struggle as the coalition is working to describe the vision. The administrator might misinterpret what the team is saying.

Motivation, making progress on long-term goals, was correlated with creating a vision, ensuring the values of the organization are aligned to the vision, and that the team can describe the vision (Bower et al., 2018; Kotter, 2012; Maulding et al., 2012). As the vision is being created, the administrator can support the coalition in ensuring they understand the connection of the values of the organization and are able to succinctly describe them.

Social skills, where the administrator enjoys organizing groups was correlated to the coalition creating the vision, ensuring the vision is aligned to the organizations' values, and the team being able to describe the vision. Administrators use their abilities of engaging the team members by asking questions, being available, and clearly and consistently messaging to the coalition (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; Bower et al., 2018; Vassilev, 2019). The use of social skills supports the coalition in perceiving the administrator to be an authentic leader. Struggling to develop rapport was inversely correlated with the having a team create the vision. Leaders who struggle to develop rapport with others, will find it more challenging to facilitate the work and build trust as the guiding coalition is developing the vision.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings of the research, self-awareness is one of the most essential constructs of emotional intelligence for administrators to cultivate (Warrick, 2019). Self-awareness will support the leaders in being able to recognize their own feelings and others' feelings about change initiatives and will allow them to develop a plan to best approach developing a sense of urgency and moving the change initiative further (Goleman, 2019; Levassuer, 2013; Toprak & Savas, 2020).

When facilitating groups to navigate change, administrators will need to leverage the five constructs of emotional intelligence to support them in connecting with the staff and the guiding coalition. The administrator should be aware of their personal areas of strengths and weakness with emotional intelligence and develop a plan to grow themselves in the areas of weakness and or hire support staff around them that have strengths to counterbalance their emotional intelligence areas of needs (Kearney et al., 2014; Meldeson & Stabile, 2019). Leaders should recognize what are the best ways they can convey the messaging for the change initiative, for some leaders it could be through data, storytelling, or imagery. It is worth noting that leaders do not come in a one size fits all package, and each leader should use the strategies that work best with their personal emotional intelligence strengths.

A factor to consider is that the self-aware leader is authentic to their leadership styles and strengths (Spraggon & Bodolica, 2015). Authenticity coupled with self-awareness will allow the leader to connect with their staff more deeply (Duncan et al., 2017). By dedicating time to build a sense of urgency for the change. Based on the findings the correlation between motivation and self-awareness would not only support the leaders in developing a sense of urgency, but also in taking steps to make progress on their long-term goals of the change initiative.

Recommendations for Further Research

When conducting the literature review there was extensive research on emotional intelligence and organizational change. There is research about the use of emotional intelligence and organizational change in the business sector, but the research is almost non-existent in how K-12 administrators use their emotional intelligence to move through organizational change. This study's findings have barely scratched the surface of how K-12 leaders use their emotional intelligence to navigate systematic change. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to know how

K-12 leaders approach change initiatives, are they systematically planning, building a timeline, and leveraging staff to reach the intended goal. Leaders should reflect on how they are using their emotional intelligence to guide and influence the change initiative to ensure that it is sustainable.

In education, leaders are excellent at looking at data or areas of concern and recognizing the urgent need for change. They form committees or workgroups with key players who should be included in the change initiative conversation. The coalition can draft a vision of the change initiative, and then the challenge is when the members need to clearly message the vision to other educational partners (Nitta et al., 2009). Further research could be used on the challenges educational leaders experienced moving through KMOC's steps of organizational change. Allowing for administrators to reflect on each of the steps and how it worked, where they experienced challenges and how they as the leader used their emotional intelligence to "unstick" or get the change initiative moving towards sustainability. Research focused on KMOC steps four through eight and administrators use of emotional intelligence to leverage staff capacity and ownership of the change initiative would be beneficial for current educational leaders to improve their practice.

Another area of potential research would be how educational leaders are explicitly taught to use their emotional intelligence. It appears that many leaders have a very fixed mindset when it comes to EQ. The leaders that know they have it, are able to use their emotional intelligence to work with their staff and create positive change. They easily toggle between the five constructs using the strengths they need for each situation. The leaders that do not have emotional intelligence, may or may not be self-aware enough to realize there is a gap, and they struggle to make the positive impact they intend (Kaoun, 2019).

Research on how to systematically support leaders in growing their emotional intelligence, and looking at the metacognitive process that emotionally intelligent leaders use as they approach various situations would be beneficial for all educational leaders, especially those who struggle with EQ. An analogy to illustrate this proposed research topic would be teaching older elementary students to read. If teachers do not explicitly describe the processes of asking questions and making connections while they are reading silently, students would not know that this is something proficient readers use to better understand texts. Similarly, with administrators, if they do not know the thought processes, decision making, and strategies proficient and emotionally intelligent educational leaders use to engage their staff in navigating change, they might be stuck in pattern of initiating change, but not implementing sustainable change.

In the K-12 setting, most of the professional learning is geared towards classroom teachers. The current challenge is that there is a lack of substitutes to pull the teachers for training. However, there is an ability to pull administrators together for regular professional learning to support them in developing their emotional intelligence and systems thinking. Research on K-12 organizations who are effectively implementing systems to invest in their administrators' development of EQ and systematically leading organizational change could support other K-12 districts in strengthening their administrative teams, which would support the school sites and educational outcomes.

Limitations

The study contained a small representative sample ($N=80$) of K-12 educational leaders in Southern California. Though the results of the study yielded many correlations, having a larger sample size would have strengthened the validity of the results. Another potential limitation was that the survey was sent to the participants via email. In some districts, the superintendent or

designee sent the email with the survey to the potential participants. In other districts, I sent an email to the potential participants, which may have been flagged as spam or potential spam because the communication came from outside of the organization. In one district, there was a very stringent research approval protocol, but they did not supply the researcher with the names of potential participants, and they had a very secure email system, where I was blocked as an emailer to their staff. I tried multiple times but was not able to successfully send the survey to participants in this district. These challenges limited the potential sample size. The timing of the school year, May, when the survey was administered could be a potential reason why the participation rate was lower. At the end of the school year, time is precious as administrators are planning for promotion, graduation, end of year events and state testing.

Delimitations

Selecting the topic of how emotional intelligence is used by administrators to impact organizational change is a passion project. I have worked for twenty-eight K-12 leaders in my career so far. I also am an administrator in a K-12 setting. In my time in education, I have noticed that each leader has different strengths in how they connect with staff and their school community to move their organization forward. The leaders that seemed to be able to make the best impact were leaders who demonstrated strong levels of systems thinking and high levels of emotional intelligence. These leaders could plan the steps of the change initiative and had the ability to get the staff on board and having a sense of ownership with the initiative. Initially, my plan was to only survey site principals, but I realized that my topic is applicable past the site level. The decision to include superintendents through assistant principals and classified management was deliberate. The topic of using emotional intelligence to navigate change

initiatives is relevant to all educational leaders and the findings can provide points of consideration for educational leaders to improve their practice.

Conclusions

The research sought to find out how school administrators utilize emotional intelligence to guide staff as they navigate change. The findings demonstrated that the use of self-awareness is an essential construct to support the administrators as they are navigating the first four steps of KMOC. Self-aware leaders possess a realistic understanding of themselves and others and know what motivates the staff that they are leading (Goleman, 2019; Levassuer, 2013; Toprak & Savas, 2020).

The next question was how school administrators use emotional intelligence to form a powerful coalition and empower staff to take action to create sustainable system-wide change. The EQ construct that was found to be most effective in building a guiding coalition was empathy. Empathy is described as an ability to know the emotional makeup of others and treat individuals based on their emotional needs and reactions (Goleman, 2019; Moore, 2009; Patti et al., 2018). Empathetic leaders are able to cultivate talent, retain staff and they are customer service oriented.

The second sub question looked at how school administrators are developing relationships and trust with existing staff to form a guiding coalition. Based on the findings, educational leaders utilize their self-awareness to be use an authentic leadership voice with staff, and empathy to recognize the needs of the guiding coalition and create a space where all voices are heard and valued. The leaders use their social skills to support the guiding coalition in building a shared understanding of the goal at hand (Goleman, 2019; Maulding et al., 2012).

Next, the research considered how does administrator motivation, empathy and social skills impact their ability to empower staff to act and create change. The findings in this area were limited because most of the participants only shared about the first four steps of KMOC. The administrators described how they worked with the guiding coalition to build the vision, but in KMOC step four, the communication of the vision was an area of growth. Based on the participant surveys, it appears that the guiding coalition may not own the messaging, or it is too jargon filled and convoluted to succinctly share with others.

Looking at how school administrators use EQ to create a sense of urgency, create a vision and communicate the vision so it is widely understood and implemented was another research question. Based on the findings, leaders use self-awareness, empathy, motivation, and social skills to navigate KMOC step one, three, and four. Interestingly, self-regulation was not reported as a finding in this research.

Finally, how administrators' self-awareness and empathy impact the creation of a vision for change was researched. The results demonstrated that leaders use self-awareness throughout the development of the vision building process. They tapped into empathy as they were forming the guiding coalition, who are responsible for building the vision. The self-awareness supported the leader in being able to take a realistic approach towards the change initiative and to know how to adjust their actions and words to motivate the guiding coalition in the development of the vision.

Summary

The impact of how educational leaders use emotional intelligence to systematically approach change initiatives is a topic that has not been widely researched. The recommendation for further research on this topic could positively influence educational settings as they embark

on change initiatives on instructional, inclusivity and or safety practice. Leaders use their emotional intelligence throughout the day with every interaction they have with members in their school community. Often, it is an assumed skill set that leaders get to their leadership position because of the skills they demonstrate and their ability to lead others. However, all leaders do not come with a perfect balance of all five constructs of emotional intelligence and an ability to approach change in a systematic manner, such as using Kotter's Model of Organizational Change. Also, virtually all leaders are leading change that might not be an initiative that they developed. In education, from the superintendent through the assistant principals, most change initiatives are directed from the school board or from district level initiatives, due to this nature, the use of emotional intelligence and systematic implementation of change is even more critical for the administrator. If the administrator does not have ownership of the change initiative, they will need to tap into the five constructs of emotional intelligence to determine how best to approach each step of KMOC. If the leaders took an opportunity to reflect on which construct of emotional intelligence they would need for each step of organizational, that would support them in their approach with staff. If they recognized that an EQ construct was an area of growth for them, it would be beneficial for the administrator to ensure that there were other team members who had a strength in that area to support the work at hand.

Based on the findings of the research, administrators who tap into their emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness, empathy, motivation, and social skills as they navigate the first four steps of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change: establishing urgency, building a guiding coalition, developing a vision, and communicating the vision are better able to create the conditions for the change initiative. As determined by the findings, educational leaders should continue to ensure that staff are able to understand and succinctly state the vision for change.

They should also systematically approach steps four through eight of Kotter's Model of Organizational Change to make sure that the change is fully implemented and sustainable.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: EQ/KMOC Survey Demographics:

1. Gender
2. Ethnicity
3. Total years of service in K-12 position.
4. Total years of service in a K-12 institution.
5. I am currently an administrator at...

Emotional Intelligence:

6. I can recognize emotions as I experience them.
7. I lose my temper when I feel frustrated.
8. People have told me I am a good listener.
9. I know how to calm myself down when I feel anxious or upset.
10. I enjoy organizing groups.
11. I find it hard to focus on something over the long term.
12. I find it difficult to move on when I feel frustrated or unhappy.
13. I know my strengths and weaknesses.
14. I avoid conflicts and negotiations.
15. I feel that I don't enjoy my work.
16. I ask people for feedback on what I can do well and what I can improve.
17. I set long term goals and review my progress regularly.
18. I find it difficult to read others' emotions.
19. I struggle to build rapport with others.

20. I use active listening skills when people speak to me.
21. Please feel free to explain or provide a clarification regarding your responses to the questions above.

Kotter's Model of Organizational Change

22. Before implementing change at my site, I dedicate time to getting the staff on board with the change initiative.
23. Before implementing the change at my site, my staff generally agree that the change is needed.
24. My staff are able to articulate to other the urgent need for change.
25. Before implementing change, I put together a diverse team of constituents to think about solutions.
26. Before implementing change, I come up with solutions prior to discussing them with others.
27. Before implementing change, I ensure that the team members are able to articulate the need for change.
28. The team of diverse constituents helps formulate the vision for the organization.
29. The vision is aligned to the core values of the organization.
30. The team of diverse constituents are able to succinctly articulate the vision.
31. The team of diverse constituents regularly communicates the vision.
32. I am able to answer questions about the need for change and align it to the vision.
33. The vision is communicated in a variety of methods, such as word of mouth, weekly bulletins, emails, staff meetings etc.

KMOC/EQ Experiences:

34. Describe a time where you led a change initiative, what were some of the key factors for the success or challenges of the implementation.
35. Describe how you have utilized emotional intelligence in your leadership practice to leverage the capacity of your staff.

Follow up:

36. Are you willing to be contacted for any follow up questions?
37. Are you interested in being entered for the raffle to win a gift card for Starbucks or Amazon?
38. If you answered, “yes” to the question above, please enter your email below.