

# Principal's Perceived Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership Throughout Their Career

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*Principals face many workplace stressors. Given these pressures, it is imperative that principals identify and strengthen their emotional intelligence, resilience, and resonant leadership. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine principals' self-perceptions of the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience and how their perceptions of these concepts were applied to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership throughout their career. This study examined the ways in which principals demonstrated evidence of initiating, utilizing, and sustaining resonant leadership. The study also examined which skills of emotional intelligence and resilience principals drew on to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. The data was triangulated utilizing the tenets of Goleman's Four Quadrant Model of Emotional Intelligence, Reivich and Shatté's seven abilities of resilience, and Boyatzis and McKee's concept of resonant leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). The study revealed that depending on a participants' years of experience, principals demonstrated different skills of emotional intelligence and resilience to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. The study findings suggest Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as pre-requisite skills to support a leader's ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership, as opposed to a byproduct of emotional intelligence and resonant leadership originally proposed by Goleman (1995) and McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008).*

## **Background**

Current education reform has placed increased demands on school principals regarding accountability and student performance. In addition to meeting these reform mandates, principals must also provide leadership that cultivates an enriched learning environment that promotes a culture of trust and respect among all members of the school community (Moore, 2009). Given these demands, principals must identify and implement a comprehensive vision of fostering the academic, social, and emotional development of all members of the school community (Benard, 2004; Henderson, 2007; Seligman, 2009). In order to meet these challenging demands, principals must recognize and develop their own emotional intelligence, resilience, and resonant leadership (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Williams, 2008). Limited research exists regarding the relationship between the introspective concepts of emotional intelligence and resilience of educational leaders (Bumphus, 2008; Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012). The current research regarding the relationship between the resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership of educational leaders suggests a leaders' skills of emotional intelligence as a prerequisite skill of resonant leadership; while a leaders' skills of resilience as a byproduct of resonant leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). In addition to these connections, several of the skills specified in the current frameworks of emotional intelligence and resilience parallel each other. By engaging in the introspective process of identifying their emotional intelligence, resilience, and the relationship between both, educational leaders can assess their ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Educational leaders face multiple challenges that threaten to erode their job performance, emotional competence, and resilience (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). This is evidenced by the fact that nearly a quarter of the country's principals leave their schools annually and nearly 50 percent leave their schools after three years (School Leaders Network, 2014). Due to this concern, increased attention has been focused on the factors that positively influence the success of principals. While education, experience, and intelligence are important factors in determining leadership success, the emotional intelligence of principals is a critical factor in the success of educational leaders (Lam & Kirby, 2002; Moore, 2009; Potter, 2011).

There is prolific research regarding the topic of emotional intelligence. The field originated with the conceptualization of social intelligence by E.L. Thorndike in the 1920's. Thorndike (1920) defined the concept of social intelligence as the ability to "act wisely in human relations" (p. 228). Later in the century, Bar-On coined the term emotional quotient (EQ) to describe the distinction between cognitive and emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006). Throughout this stage of the conceptual development, emotional intelligence was associated with personal competence, happiness, and success (Greenockle, 2010). In the 1990's, the term emotional intelligence was utilized to describe an individual's ability to recognize and regulate emotions within themselves and others (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Throughout the past two decades, researchers have focused on the developmental nature of emotional intelligence (Abraham, 2004; Goleman, 1995). This developmental emphasis has given rise to the notion of emotional competence. This concept of emotional competence stresses the ability to learn, develop, and enhance one's emotional skills over time (Nelson, Low, & Ellis, 2007; Wang, Young, Wilhite, & Marczyk, 2011). The abilities of emotional competence include the

awareness of emotions in one's self and others, tolerance, interpersonal skills, flexibility, self-management skills, resilience, conscientiousness, reliability, and motivation (Abraham, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). Due to its developmental nature, "emotional competence" has become an increasingly important concept in the study of the social and emotional development of leaders (Abraham, 2004).

The research throughout the field of emotional intelligence suggests that effective leaders have a high degree of emotional intelligence (Abraham, 2004; Goleman, 1995). Emotionally intelligent leaders foster success in themselves and their followers by recognizing and managing their emotions and those of others (Goleman, 1995). Additionally, emotional intelligence is a key component of resonant leadership (Goleman, 1995). Current research suggests that the emotional intelligence of leaders is two times more important than intelligence or expertise in predicting leadership success (Singh, 2008). This information places an invaluable importance on identifying and developing the emotional intelligence of educational leaders. By engaging in the introspective process of assessing one's emotional competence, educational leaders are better prepared to enhance their emotional competence and successfully navigate professional challenges (Gilio & Dorsey, 2016). This increased insight and leadership effectiveness is also related to the resilience of leaders (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). This relationship is apparent as the tenets of emotional intelligence and emotional competence closely parallel the current developmental theories of resilience.

## **Resilience**

The field of resilience research has undergone a consistent transformation throughout its existence. Due to this evolving construct, the term resilience has several definitions. When resilience research began almost 50 years ago, the construct of resilience originated from a risk-based perspective. In the 1990's, the movement of positive psychology influenced the field of resilience research (Seligman, 2009). The emphasis of positive psychology focused on classifying and nurturing human strengths directly impacted the construct of resilience (Seligman, 2009). This strength-based emphasis translated into a wellness model of resilience (Benard, 2004; Henderson, 2007). The seminal work by Werner and Smith (1992) provided additional support for this strength-based concept of resilience. This longitudinal resilience study reinforced a strength-based perspective of resilience by offering data that supported the successful development of individuals despite exposure to high risk environments (Werner & Smith). More recently, the field of resilience has focused on the importance of one's beliefs on their own resilience and that of others (Seligman, 2009; Shatté, Reivich, & Selgiman, 2000; Reivich & Shatté, 2004; Truebridge, 2014).

Within the research on educational resilience, there is a strong connection between the school's purpose, resilience-building factors, and educational change (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). The school's emphasis on teaching, curriculum, leadership, decision making, and assessment align with the frameworks for building resilience and creating educational change (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). This symbiotic relationship also highlights the interconnectedness of resilience, leadership, educational change, teacher effectiveness, and student success (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Additionally, connections between resilience, leadership styles, professional development, and teacher effectiveness also exists (Morrison and Allen, 2007). Educational leaders can promote a resilience perspective by creating opportunities for autonomy, a sense of purpose, social competence, problem solving, and achievement motivation among teachers (Morrison & Allen, 2007). They can individually integrate, reinforce, and model resilience building skills in their individual work with staff (Seligman, 2009; Truebridge, 2014). By utilizing a resilience-building

leadership perspective, principals have the unique opportunity to promote resilience in others by developing the belief that an individual has the capacity for resilience (Truebridge, 2014).

### **Resonant Leadership**

The application of the emotional intelligence and resilience theories by educational leaders has the potential to enhance the emotional intelligence and resilience of all members of the school environment. Resonant leaders are individuals who manage their own and others' emotions in ways that drive success (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). They are attuned to the feelings of the people they lead and use this empathy to move the individuals in a positive direction (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In order to demonstrate resonant leadership, principals must successfully integrate the interrelated theories of emotional intelligence and resilience into their leadership style and practice (Moore, 2009; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). In order to achieve this goal, principals must first engage in the introspective process of identifying and cultivating their own emotional intelligence and resilience. By gaining insight into the symbiotic nature of these complimentary concepts, principals gain insight into their ability to develop and sustain their resonant leadership.

The tenets of resonant leadership align with multiple aspects of the models of emotional intelligence and resilience. Resonant leaders engage in the introspective development of their own emotional intelligence (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). They utilize their emotional intelligence to build and maintain trusting relationships and foster a vibrant work environment (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Resonant leaders create a powerful collective energy that supports increased levels of productivity, creativity, unity, purpose, and results throughout the work environment (Teleos Institute, 2017). Finally, they engage those they lead in this insight-oriented approach to personal and professional development.

The conceptualization of resonant leadership demonstrates the complimentary nature of the models of emotional intelligence and resilience (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). For example, Boyatzis and McKee (2005) incorporate Goleman's four competencies of emotional intelligence (i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) into their conceptualization of resonant leadership. Furthermore, within these four competencies, many of the critical skills of resilience (i.e. emotion awareness/regulation, impulse control, optimism, flexible and accurate thinking, empathy, self-efficacy, and connection/reaching out to others) are present (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Finally, some of the critical skills of resilience (i.e. emotional awareness, flexible and accurate thinking, optimism, and empathy) are also identified as crucial elements of a leader's ability to sustain resonant leadership.

### **The Need for Emotionally Intelligent, Resilient, and Resonant Educational Leaders**

Today's educational leaders encounter multiple daily stressors. These stressors result from external and internal sources. Given the emphasis on increased accountability measures in public education, principals experience pressures from external sources such as federal and state mandates. Additionally, local stakeholders often present additional challenges for principals. Furthermore, the increased emphasis on school safety has presented principals with further roles, responsibilities, and resulting stressors. These multiple external pressures present continually increasing challenges for principals in today's public education climate.

As instructional leaders, principals are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, challenging, and supportive learning environment for an increasingly diverse student population. Given the collective demands of this learning environment, principals are faced with multi-faceted job duties and expectations. They are solely responsible for providing guidance, supervision, and support to teachers, students, and all members of the school community. In addition to supporting the academic development of students, principals are also expected to foster the social and emotional development of all members of the school community.

The multiple tasks and responsibilities of principals is compounded by the interpersonal and intrapersonal challenges that result from the demands placed on all members of the learning environment. The stress resulting from this high-pressure environment further compounds the complexity of the role of the principal. As an educational leader, principals experience personal and professional stressors and adversities. These stressors and adversities are associated with increasing principal attrition throughout public education (Lazaridou, 2009). To maintain their effectiveness and longevity, principals need to know how to effectively identify and maintain their own resilience (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005).

To successfully navigate today's multi-faceted professional and personal expectations, principals need to know how to develop and maintain a high level of emotional intelligence and resilience. These developmental skills are imperative to the success of the leader. They also enhance an educational leader's ability to demonstrate resonant leadership. Resonant leaders possess a strong desire to generate positivity and excitement among those they lead (Goleman, 1998). They can create an environment in which all parties are optimistic about the future and persevere through personal and professional adversities (McKee, Boyatzis, and Johnston, 2008). Resonant leaders utilize their self-awareness, awareness of others, empathy, and emotional intelligence to maintain and create resonance among those they lead (McKee, Boyatzis, and Johnston, 2008). Due to the multifaceted stressors faced by educators today, there is an increased need for resonant educational leaders.

### **What is Known About Principal Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership**

The fields of emotional intelligence and resilience have evolved from deficit and trait-based conceptualizations to developmental conceptualizations (Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). More recently, these topics have demonstrated a relationship to each other and the theory of resonant leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Goleman, 1995). Currently, these concepts have received increased attention in the study of leadership.

This inter-related nature of emotional intelligence and resilience is present throughout the current research. There is substantial information about external and internal resilience-building factors, social and emotional development, and leadership skills (Henderson, 2007; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Morrison and Allen, 2007; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). The current focus of resilience research discusses the use of one's social and emotional skills to educate and empower individuals to overcome adversity (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Truebridge, 2014). Resilience research also currently identifies the components of emotional intelligence as a necessary component for fostering resilience in one's self and others (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Throughout the field of school-based resilience research there is a strong connection between resilience-building factors, educational change, leadership styles, professional development, and

teacher effectiveness (Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Morrison and Allen, 2007). Substantial information exists regarding the role that strong leadership skills play in effecting resilience-building change (Henderson, 2007; Morrison & Allen, 2007). In addition to strong leadership, emerging research suggests that educational leaders can integrate, reinforce, and model resilience building skills (Seligman et al., 2009; Truebridge, 2014). Current resilience research suggests that the examination of the role of one's beliefs in fostering resilience in one's self and that of others is an important step to fostering resilience (Seligman, 2009; Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

### **What We Need to Learn about Principal Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership?**

This study fills the gap in research regarding the relationships between principal's beliefs about their own emotional intelligence, resilience, and their leadership style. Despite this interconnectedness between resilience and emotional intelligence, only recently has research focused on the relationship between the resilience and emotional intelligence of educational leaders (Bumphus, 2008; Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Seligman, 2009). Despite the importance of this need, there is limited research regarding the factors that support and foster the resilience of principals (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005).

Morrison and Allen (2007) suggest that educational leaders should utilize a resilience perspective to empower and motivate members of the school community; however, there is limited information regarding the factors that support this type of leadership. There is also minimal research regarding the relationship between the leadership style that results when educational leaders engage in the introspective process of identifying and fostering their own emotional intelligence and resilience (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). While limited research regarding the relationship of the emotional intelligence and resilience of educational leaders exists; additional research is needed regarding the introspective examination of these factors by educational leaders (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Seligman, 2009; Bumphus, 2008; Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012). Additional information is needed regarding the perceptions of educational leaders regarding emotional intelligence, resilience, and the relationship between the two concepts. Acquiring insight into this introspective process will provide principals with insight into the intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that foster their own emotional intelligence, resilience, and resonant leadership.

The significance of this study is to add to the limited existing literature regarding the resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership of principals. Throughout the past twenty years, resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership research has focused on business executives, soldiers, nurses, and/or teachers; however, the same emphasis has not been given to educational leaders (Goleman, 1995, 1998; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Shatté, Reivich, Seligman, 2000). While there is substantial research regarding the role of principals in fostering the social and emotional competence and resilience of other members of the school community; there is limited research regarding the development of the emotional competence and resilience of principals (Steward, 2014). The topics of emotional intelligence and resilience of educational leaders have been studied separately. However, research examining the relationship between the resilience and emotional intelligence of principals is largely unrecognized (Bumphus, 2008; Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012). Additionally, there is currently no research available regarding the interconnectedness of the resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership of educational leaders.

The knowledge of principals' perceptions of their resilience and emotional intelligence will offer information about the developmental process of identifying and developing the resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership of principals. This study will add to the limited research regarding the relationship between principal resilience and emotional intelligence (Bumphus, 2008; Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012). It will also initiate a discussion of the interrelated nature of the emotional intelligence, resilience, and resonant leadership of educational leaders. Information regarding the relationship of these insight-oriented concepts can serve as a model for the personal and professional development of school leaders. This study examined the ways in which principals demonstrate evidence of initiating, utilizing, and sustaining resonant leadership. The study also examined which skills of emotional intelligence and resilience principals draw on to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. It also offers an expanded conceptualization of McKee and Boyatzis's concept of resonant leadership by identifying the concentric nature of Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence and Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as key components of initiating, utilizing, and sustaining resonant leadership (Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to ascertain an extensive understanding of the way in which principals demonstrated evidence of initiating, utilizing, and sustaining resonant leadership throughout their career. Chase defines a narrative inquiry approach as "meaning making through the shaping and ordering of experience, a way of understanding one's own, or others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole or connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time" (Chase, 2011, p.421). Due to the introspective nature of this study's research questions, this study utilized Chase's *The Story and the Life* narrative inquiry approach. This narrative inquiry process focuses on the relationship between people's stories, their identity development, and personal well-being (Chase, 2011). This approach aligned with the study's purpose to examine principals' self-perceptions of the relationship between principal resilience and principal emotional intelligence and how their perceptions of these concepts were applied to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership throughout their career.

By utilizing a narrative inquiry approach, this study aimed to provide an "in-depth understanding of the contexts and behaviors" of the study participants (McMillan, 2000, p.252). The "thick description" that results from this qualitative research approach provided the researcher with interconnected meanings of the multi-faceted concepts of emotional intelligence, resilience, and resonant leadership (Holliday, 2002, p.77). Throughout this study, data was collected via a semi-structured interview. The interview data was analyzed using the tenets of Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence, Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience, and Boyatzis & McKee's Resonant Leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

### **Setting**

This study took place in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The participants were elementary and secondary assistant principals and principals in K-12 school districts.

## **Sampling**

The researcher utilized convenience sampling methods in order to select study participants (Merriam, 2009). In order to identify the principals to be recruited for the study, the researcher sent the recruitment email. The recruitment email was sent to the district email addresses listed for all 551 assistant principals and principals listed on the websites of school districts throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania. The study sample consisted of the assistant principals and principals in Southeastern Pennsylvania who responded to the initial recruitment email, scheduled, and completed the interview.

## **Participants**

The study included 26 assistant principals and principals that responded to the initial recruitment email, scheduled, and completed the interview. This was a response rate of five percent. All interviews were scheduled according to the participant's preferred time schedule and setting (phone interview or in-person). There were four secondary principals who scheduled an interview but cancelled and did not reschedule due to their schedule.

## **Instrumentation**

In order to examine principals' perceptions of their skills in the areas of resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, and resilience, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview gathered information about the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of principals. The interview process provided the researcher with a face-to-face opportunity to gather a "thick description" of each principal's perceptions of their resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, and resilience (Holliday, 2002, p.77). Due to the potential emotionality of these topics, the researcher established rapport at the beginning of each interview to create a language for the further narrative inquiry into these concepts (Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerda, 2005). The interview provided participants with the opportunity to reflect, share, and engage in an expanded narrative regarding these complex multi-faceted topics (Merriam, 2009).

The interview began with contained six demographic questions. The demographic questions included gender, years of experience worked in the field of K-12 education, level of participant education, number of years the participant had worked as a building level administrator, number of years that the participant had worked at their current administrative position, and level of the participant's current administrative position (elementary or secondary). These questions were included to determine if these factors impacted a principal's perception of their resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, and/or resilience.

Next, the interview included eight open-ended questions regarding challenging leadership scenarios. The challenging leadership scenarios utilized were adapted from the top-ranking stressors identified in research conducted by Klocko and Wells (2015) regarding the workplace stressors of principals. Each participant was asked to share a successful and less successful example of a challenging leadership situation from four domains of workplace stressors. These categories consisted of personal task management, instructional demands, professional task management, and handling conflict. Each participant was asked to share a successful and less successful example of their work/life balance, instructional leadership, managerial skills, and conflict management skills. The researcher utilized these examples to assess the ability of the study participants to initiate, utilize

and sustain resonant leadership using Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) framework of resonant leadership. These examples were also included to determine the emotional intelligence and/or resilience skills demonstrated by each participant using Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence and Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience.

Throughout the interview process, the researcher utilized a modified form of critical incident analysis (C-IA) format, or personal story, to engage in this interview process. The C-IA technique is an exploratory, qualitative method used to generate descriptive self-reported data regarding thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Flanagan, 1954). Following the descriptions of each participant's personal examples, the researcher utilized the semi-structure interview process to gather additional data, clarify the answers of the participant and/or respond with additional probing questions to gather a "thick" description of the multifaceted and introspective concepts of resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, and resilience.

The interview concluded with two questions regarding principals' perceptions of their emotional intelligence and resilience skills that were used during the leadership scenarios they shared. The participants were given a list of the 18 skills included in Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence and Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience. The participants were then asked to list the emotional intelligence skills and resilience abilities that they felt that they demonstrated during the scenarios. This information yielded data about participant's perceptions of their emotional intelligence skills and resilience abilities.

## **Data Analysis**

The researcher identified trends and themes in the participants' interview responses. In order to efficiently and accurately analyze the data collected during this study, the researcher engaged in the dynamic and recursive three-step process of qualitative data analysis. The first step of this process was the data reduction process. This process involved the simultaneous reducing and transforming data to accurately and efficiently identify themes and trends throughout the data (Berg, 2009). For the second step, the researcher organized, analyzed, and presented the data (Berg). During the third step, the researcher drew conclusions and verified the data by spiraling back and forth between the themes and trends in the study data and the literature (Berg). Throughout this process, the researcher carefully reviewed the data analysis process and the conclusions drawn from patterns and themes in the data (Berg).

## **Findings**

The study's findings revealed specific introspective, social, and behavioral qualities of leaders that are closely aligned with Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence, Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience, and Boyatzis & McKee's Resonant Leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). The findings showed that principals employ the skills of self-awareness, awareness of others, mindfulness, hope/optimism, and compassion/empathy to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. In addition, the data showed that depending on a participants' years of experience as a building level administrator, principals demonstrated specific skills of emotional intelligence and resilience. The study findings suggest Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as pre-requisite skills to support a leader's ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership, as opposed to a byproduct of emotional intelligence and resonant leadership originally purposed by Goleman (1995) and McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008).

## Components of Resonant Leadership

Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) conceptualization of resonant leadership incorporates self-awareness, awareness of others, and the process of renewal including mindfulness, hope/optimism, and compassion/empathy. The data revealed that principals demonstrated these components of Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) conceptualization of resonant leadership.

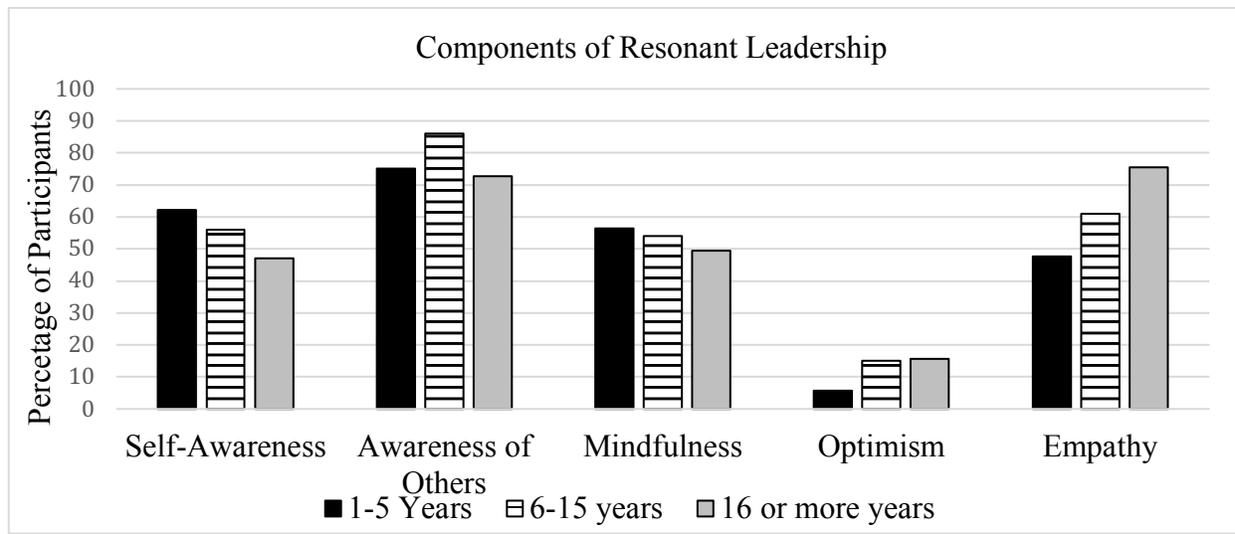


Figure 1. *Participants' Demonstrated Components of Resonant Leadership*  
 Note.  $n=26$  (1-5 years  $n=8$ , 6-15 years  $n=13$ , 16 or more years  $n=5$ )

**Self-Awareness.** The interview data revealed that principals employ the skill of self-awareness (Figure 1). They engage in the introspective process of understanding their own emotions and utilize this knowledge to act with authenticity and conviction (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson, 2008). The data showed that participants with less experience demonstrated higher percentages of self-awareness. The data identified that 62% of participants with 1-5 years of experience as a building level administrator, 56% of participants with 6-15 years of experience as a building level administrator, and 47% of participants with 16 or more years of experience as a building level administrator demonstrated self-awareness.

Among principals with five years or less experience as a building administrator, examples of self-awareness included reference to their self-awareness of their strengths and weakness as they experience their role as a building administrator to initiate resonant leadership. A secondary building administrator with two years of experience said, "Being new to my role I think there's always a lot of doubt and uncertainties, so I think anytime I feel success certainly feels good and reassuring and just builds my confidence in other areas and pushes me to grow and be strong in other areas." Principals with 6 to 15 years of experience demonstrated self-awareness related the efficiency and effectiveness of their leadership performance to utilize resonant leadership. An elementary principal with seven years of experience explained, "You must put things in perspective and look at things from a balcony approach. Sometimes we get stuck into the minutia of things and it causes us to lose perspective. However, if you look at things from the balcony onto the dance floor, so to speak, it allows us a broader perspective and be able to see how the pieces may be fit together." Principals

with more than 16 years of experience demonstrated self-awareness related their values, beliefs, and authority as a leader to sustain resonant leadership. A secondary building administrator with 16 years of experience said, “the art of it is having an understanding of what your authority is and being comfortable, as I said before, being the boss but not in control of every single thing because you'll lose your mind.”

**Awareness of Others.** The interview data revealed that principals employ the skill of awareness of others (Figure 1). They engage in the observational and interpersonal process of identifying and understanding people, groups, and organizational cultures (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson, 2008). Principals utilize this information to act in the interest of others. The data showed that 75% of participants with 1-5 years of experience as a building level administrator, 86% of participants with 6-15 years of experience as a building level administrator, and 73% of participants with 16 or more years of experience as a building level administrator demonstrated awareness of others.

Among principals with five years or less experience as a building administrator, examples of awareness of others focused on principals identifying and recognizing others to build relationships with staff, students, parent, and colleagues to initiate resonant leadership. An elementary principal with two years of experience as a building administrator said, “I think number one is building that relationship, building relationships with people. You have to spend the time to build those relationships and earn their trust.” Principals with 6 to 15 years of experience as a building administrator, expanded on the notion of building relationships by utilizing active listening and perspective taking to identify and understand the perspectives of staff, students, parent, and colleagues to utilize resonant leadership. A secondary principal with 12 years of experience as a building administrator said, “I was able to successfully manage the complex because essentially usually parents and school have the same goal, but they just see it from two different perspectives.” Principals with 16 or more years of experience as a building administrator identified maintaining relationships and perspective taking skills to develop staff, students, parent, and colleagues to sustain resonant leadership. A secondary principal with 19 years of experience said, “If you do not understand where the teachers are, you'll never be able to move that person along to where you want them to be. You need to be able to have an idea of what you want them to be in the future, not just now, but in the future and how you're going to get them there.”

**Renewal.** The interview data revealed that all principals in the study engaged in some aspect of the introspective process of renewal. This process involves the leader fostering specific thinking styles and social behavior to counter the negative effects of stressors related to leadership. Throughout this renewal process leaders utilize mindfulness, hope, and compassion, to take proactive steps to overcome the inevitable stressors associated with their leadership role. This renewal process provides leaders with an increased ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership.

**Mindfulness.** The interview data revealed that principals utilize mindfulness to engage in the renewal process (Figure 1). In addition to the previously reported data regarding self-awareness and the awareness of others, mindfulness also includes a leader's ability to reconnect with positive aspects of one's self. The data showed that 56% of participants with 1-5 years of experience as a building level administrator, 54% of participants with 6-15 years of experience as a building level administrator, and 49% of participants with 16 or more years of experience as a building level administrator demonstrated mindfulness.

Across all study participants, the data revealed examples of mindfulness including caring for one's physical and emotional health, engaging in guidance and reflection with colleagues,

implementing and maintaining a work/life balance, and accessing support from friends and family to engage in the renewal process. These mindfulness practices support the principals' abilities to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. While the data revealed mindfulness as a practice of principals regardless of years of experience as a building administrator, the degree to which principals integrated mindfulness practices into their life varied with experience. The data showed that principals with less experience relied on others to engage in mindfulness practices; while those with more experience were able to independently engage in mindfulness practices. A secondary principal with one year of experience as a building administrator described this reliance on others to engage in mindfulness practice, "If I'm walking towards the edge, they would not let me do that. I think we're all very supportive of each other to try to help manage the work/life balance." The data revealed that principals with 6 to 15 years of experience as a building administrator, identified more definitive and independent mindfulness practices. A secondary principal with eight years of experience as a building administrator said, "Boundary setting is a big one. You have to know when to shut it down." Similarly, principals with 16 or more years of experience as a building administrator demonstrated increased decisiveness and independence in mindfulness practices. An elementary principal with 21 years of experience as a building administrator said, "When I get home, I try to focus on what's there and I try to make sure that I really have downtime. I need to rest. I take care of me."

**Hope/Optimism.** The interview data revealed that principals utilize the practice of hope/optimism to engage in the renewal process. This data is illustrated the relationship between the interconnectedness of resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Hope parallels optimism as described by Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence and Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience (Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008) describes hope as the ability to look forward to a feasible and enticing future. Similarly, Goleman describes optimism as persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks. Finally, Reivich & Shatté define optimism as having hope for the future, belief that one can control the direction of one's life. The data showed that 6% of participants with 1-5 years of experience as a building level administrator, 15% of participants with 6-15 years of experience as a building level administrator, and 16% of participants with 16 or more years of experience as a building level administrator demonstrated hope/optimism.

Among participants that demonstrated hope/optimism, years of experience as a building administrator resulted in differing sources of optimism. The data showed that principals with five years of less years of experience as a building administrator demonstrated an internal source of optimism. A secondary principal with five years of experience as a building administrator said, "I do have a very positive personality, a positive outlook on everything that happens." The data revealed that principals with greater years of experience as a building administrator identified external sources of hope/optimism. A secondary principal with 11 years of experience as a building administrator said, "Understanding each day I'm coming and I'm trying to do it better than I did the day before." Similarly, an elementary principal with 21 years of experience as a building administrator said, "You can come tomorrow and make sure that the student gets what she needs."

**Compassion/Empathy.** The interview data revealed that principals utilize the practice of compassion/empathy to engage in the renewal process. This data is illustrated the relationship between the interconnectedness of resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Compassion parallels empathy as described by Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence and Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience (Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008) describe compassion as empathy in action. Similarly, Goleman

describes empathy as sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns. Reivich & Shatté define empathy as the ability to identify and understand the psychological and emotional states of others. Among participants that demonstrated compassion/empathy, principals with more years of experience as a building level administrator demonstrated more examples of compassion/empathy. The data showed that 48% of participants with 1-5 years of experience as a building level administrator, 61% of participants with 6-15 years of experience as a building level administrator, and 75% of participants with 16 or more years of experience as a building level administrator demonstrated empathy.

Overall, principals acknowledged utilizing the skills of compassion/empathy in situations with teachers, parents, student, school community members, and their family members. The data revealed that principals with five years of less experience as a building level administrator expressed compassion/empathy in the context of supervision of ineffective teachers and parent conflict; while principals with additional years of experience as building level administrators generalized compassion/empathy to all areas of their role. An elementary principal with six years of experience as a building level administrator said, "Understanding people and their personalities and their perspectives, you have to have that, you know, it's like a soft skill." A secondary principal with 16 years of experience as a building level administrator said, "I knew that I had to put my needs aside for the needs of the staff." Similarly, a secondary principal with 19 years of experience as a building level administrator said, "I try to move my personality with them to understand where they were going with it."

### **Skills of Emotional Intelligence**

The interview data in Figure 2 shows the skills of emotional intelligence that principals in the study drew on to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. According to Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence, these 18 skills are essential components of emotional intelligence. Likewise, these skills of emotional intelligence are key components of resonant leadership. While differences exist across these skills, overall principals with greater years of experience as building administrators demonstrated more skills of emotional intelligence.

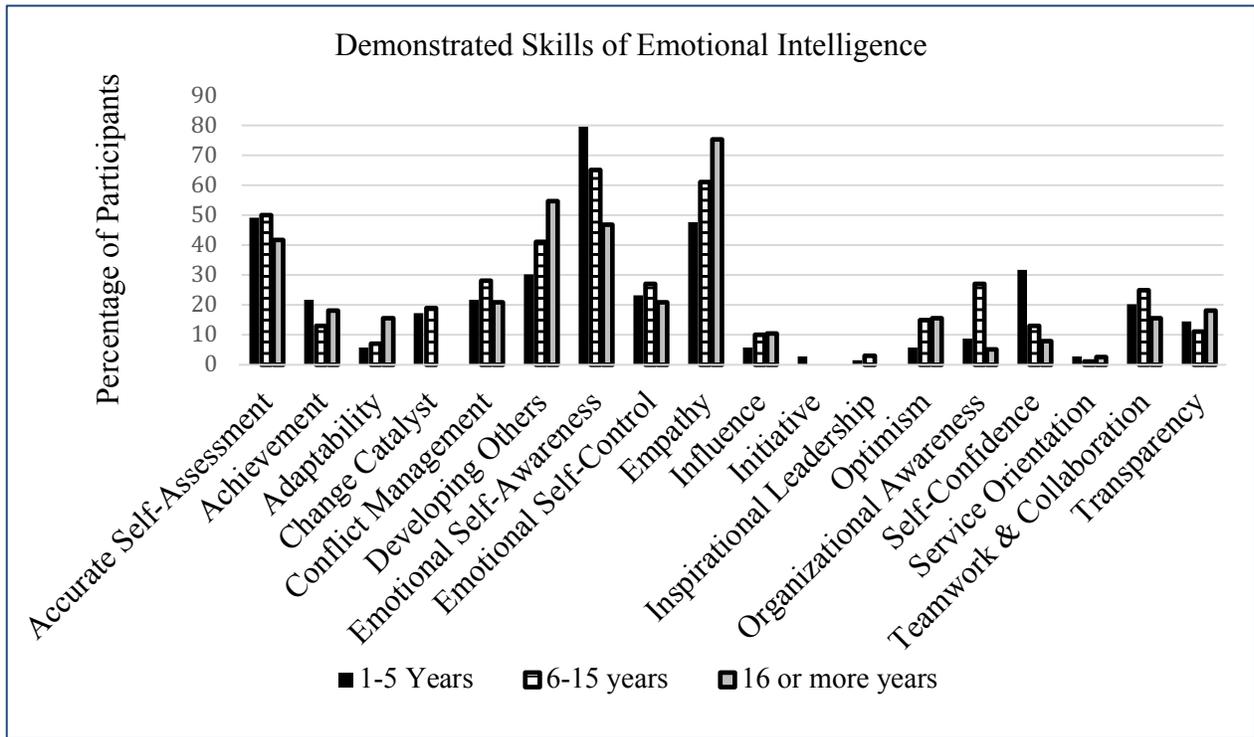


Figure 2. *Participants’ Demonstrated Skills of Emotional Intelligence*  
 Note.  $n=26$  (1-5 years  $n=8$ , 6-15 years  $n=13$ , 16 or more years  $n=5$ )

### Abilities of Resilience

The interview data in Figure 3 shows the skills of resilience that principals in the study drew on to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. According to Reivich & Shatté, these seven abilities are essential components of resilience. Likewise, some of these abilities of resilience are components of emotional intelligence. Thus, these abilities are necessary in order to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. While differences exist across these abilities, overall principals with fewer years of experience as building administrators demonstrated more abilities of resilience.

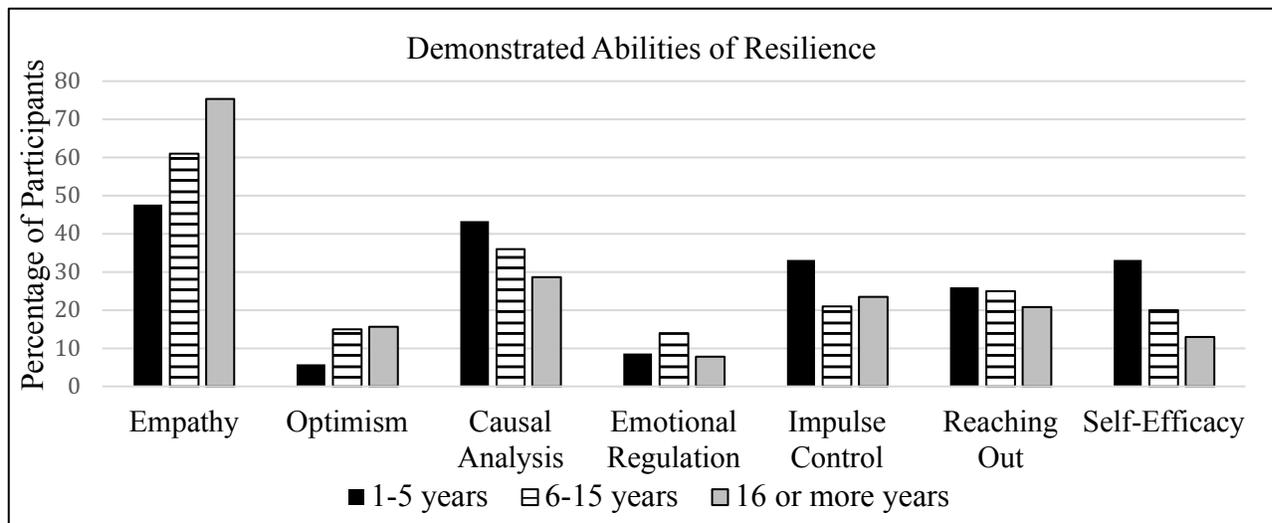


Figure 3. *Participants' Demonstrated Abilities of Resilience*  
 Note.  $n=26$  (1-5 years=8, 6-15 years=13, 16 or more years=5)

### The Relationships between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership

Overall, these findings are aligned with the existing interconnectedness of Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence, Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience, and Boyatzis & McKee's Resonant Leadership illustrated in Figure 4 (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

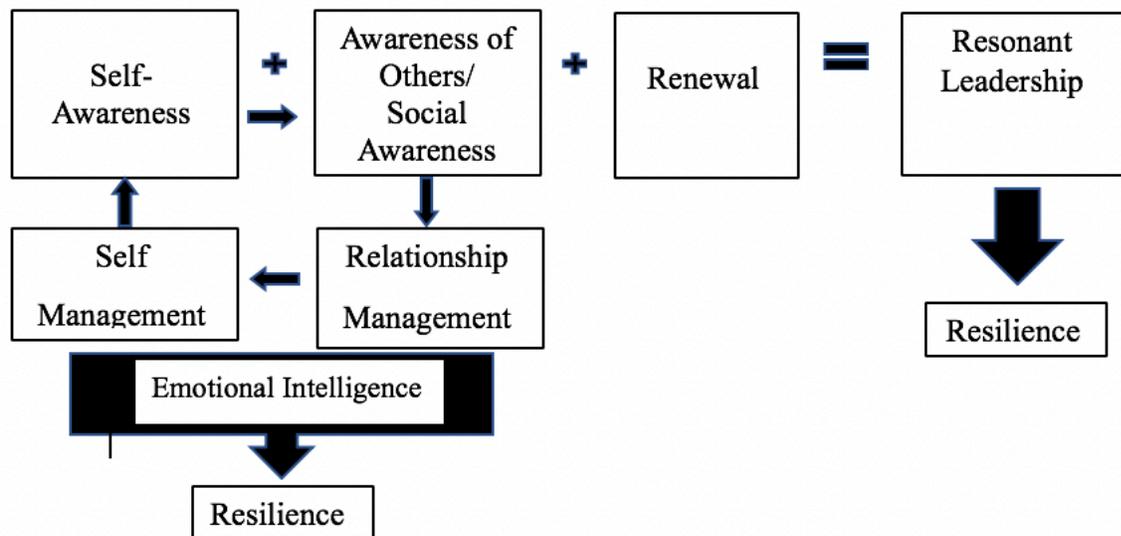


Figure 4. *Relationships of Current Theories of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership* (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002)

The interview data revealed that depending on a participants' years of experience as a building level administrator, principals demonstrated different amounts of emotional intelligence skills and resilience abilities. The data revealed that principals with greater years of experience as building administrators demonstrated more skills of emotional intelligence; while principals with fewer years of experience as building administrators demonstrated more abilities of resilience. The study findings suggest Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as pre-requisite skills to support a leader's ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership, as opposed to a byproduct of emotional intelligence and resonant leadership originally purposed by Goleman (1995) and McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008). This finding is illustrated Figure 5.

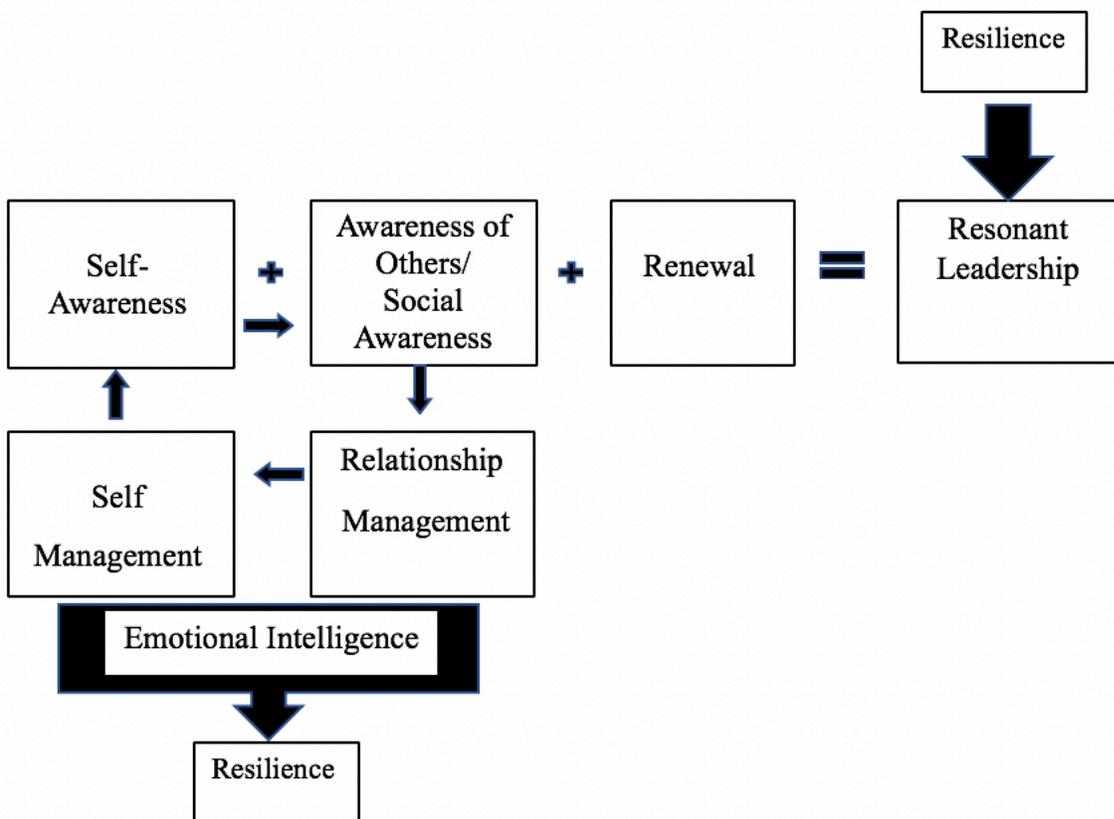


Figure 5. *Study Findings Related to the Current Theories of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Reivich & Shatté, 2002)*

### Relationship to Other Research

**Principals Employ Self-awareness, Awareness of others, and Personal Renewal (Mindfulness, Hope/Optimism, and Compassion/Empathy) to Initiate, Utilize, and Sustain Resonant Leadership.** This study's findings align with Boyatzis and McKee's conceptualization of resonant leadership. The study participants demonstrated Boyatzis and McKee's assertion that resonant leaders engage in self-awareness, awareness of others, and personal renewal (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Most study participants, regardless of years of experience as a building administrator, demonstrated self-awareness and awareness of others. In the areas of self-awareness,

principals with 16 or more years of experience as a building administrator demonstrated a slightly lower percentage of these skills. This finding aligns with Boyatzis & McKee's (2005) research that leaders who consistently utilize their social and emotional skills to recognize, monitor, and reflect their emotions and those of others are considered resonant leaders.

Study participants also demonstrated engagement in the introspective process of renewal. This supports Boyatzis & McKee's (2005) theory that resonant leaders must engage in the process of renewal and take proactive steps to overcome the inevitable stressors associated with their leadership role. Throughout this renewal process, Boyatzis & McKee identify mindfulness, hope, and compassion as essential elements of the renewal process. The majority of study participants demonstrated engagement in mindfulness; however, principals with 16 or more years of experience as a building administrator demonstrated a slightly lower percentage of mindfulness. This finding supports McKee and Massimilian's (2006) belief that mindfulness as the first and most essential step of the renewal process.

Overall, a low percentage of study participants demonstrated hope/optimism. This finding offers limited support to study participants' evidence of ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. Despite the limited demonstration of hope/optimism, principals with less experience identified internal sources of hope/optimism; while principals with more experience identified external sources of hope/optimism. The percentage of demonstrated hope/optimism might be lower in this study due to the nature of the leadership scenarios discussed in the interview and the future-thinking emphasis of Goleman and Reivich & Shatté's definitions of optimism. During the interview, the participants were asked about their thought, feelings, and behaviors in specific scenarios. They were not asked to comment on how those scenarios affected their future thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Therefore, much of the data collected did not include a discussion of principals' beliefs for the future. Despite the study findings, many of the participants demonstrated persistence in their discussion of leadership scenarios during the interview. This finding aligns with McKee and Massimilian (2006) assertion that fostering hope involves more than remaining optimistic in the face of adversity. As McKee and Massimilian (2006) suggest, the study findings revealed that participants assessed and implemented solution focused strategies to maintain their hope.

The majority of study participants with six or more years of experience as a building administrator demonstrated compassion/empathy. The study findings revealed that participants with five years or less experience as a building administrator demonstrated lowered percentages of compassion/empathy. This finding supports McKee and Massimilian's (2006) belief that compassion is an integral process for leaders to combat power stress and initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. Similarly, this finding supports McKee & Rotondo's (2007) belief that empathy is an essential element of building and sustaining resonant relationships. Likewise, the data also aligns with Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's suggestion that "without a healthy dose of heart, a supposed leader may manage – but he does not lead" (2002, p. 21).

**Principals Demonstrate Skills of Emotional Intelligence.** Overall, study participants demonstrated numerous skills of emotional intelligence. This aligns with Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) assertion that resonant leaders have high levels of emotional intelligence. While the specific skills of emotional intelligence varied between study participants; many study participants demonstrated accurate self-assessment, conflict management, developing others, emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, and teamwork and collaboration. These findings align with Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence that self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills positively impact a leader's work performance. (Goleman, 1995). The

findings also support McKee & Massimillan's (2006) belief that resonant leaders are highly skilled at utilizing their emotional intelligence to empathize with others, build trusting relationships, manage their own emotions productively.

**Principals Demonstrate Abilities of Resilience.** Overall, study participants demonstrated Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience. These findings support Coutu's (2002) and Patterson and Kelleher's (2009) assertions that resilient leaders demonstrate an accurate acceptance of reality, assessment of past/present reality, optimism, and self-efficacy. The study's findings also support existing research regarding the importance of thinking styles as a source of resilience (Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Korn-Ferry & Adaptive Learning Systems, 2016; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). While the specific abilities of resilience varied across study participants; the findings revealed that principals with five years or less experience as a building administrator demonstrated higher percentages of four out of the seven abilities of resilience. These findings showed that less experienced building principals demonstrated higher levels of causal analysis, self-efficacy, reaching out, and impulse control. Similarly, all principals, regardless of years of experience as a building administrator, demonstrated similar percentages of the resilience ability of emotional regulation. These findings are also consistent with the study data that principals with five years or less experience as a building administrator demonstrated higher amounts of the complimentary emotional intelligence skills of emotional self-awareness and self-confidence. These study findings suggest Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as pre-requisite skills to support a leader's ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership, as opposed to a byproduct of emotional intelligence and resonant leadership originally purposed by Goleman (1995) and McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008).

### **Recommendation for Application in Current Practice**

The present study revealed that principals demonstrated components of resonant leadership, skills of emotional intelligence, and abilities of resilience. While the data showed that principals engaged in the introspective process of renewal; the data showed that principals demonstrated lowered percentages of hope/optimism and empathy. The findings also suggest Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as pre-requisite skills to support a leader's ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership, as opposed to a byproduct of emotional intelligence and resonant leadership originally purposed by Goleman (1995) and McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008). The researcher offers the following recommendations for the application of this study's finding to current practice.

#### **Preservice coursework on the topics of renewal, emotional intelligence, and resilience.**

The researcher's first recommendation is to incorporate the topics of renewal, emotional intelligence, and resilience into preservice educational leadership coursework. Due to increasing workplace stressors, it is imperative that principals are knowledgeable of the renewal process prior to beginning an educational leadership position. As Boyatzis & McKee (2005) maintain, leaders must engage in the process of renewal to assess and support their emotional well-being. Boyatzis and McKee identify the importance of accurately identifying the factors that contribute to sources of stress. In order to effectively engage in this introspective process, leaders must incorporate the competencies identified in Goleman's model of emotional intelligence and several of the abilities identified in Reivich & Shatté's resilience model (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002; Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

#### **Professional development regarding renewal, emotional intelligence, and resilience.**

The researcher's second recommendation for applying this study's finding to current practice is to

offer professional development opportunities for principals on the topics of renewal, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Specifically, these professional development programs should include information regarding the tenets of the renewal process: mindfulness, optimism, and empathy. While Patterson & Kelleher (2005) and Steward (2014) suggest that currently there is limited emphasis regarding the factors that support and foster the resilience of principals; there is recent research identifying the importance of mindfulness practice for educational leaders (Murphy, 2011; Wells, 2015). Wells (2015) incorporates Boyatzis & McKee (2005) conceptualization of resonant leadership into her assertion of the benefits of mindfulness practice among educational leaders. She cites stress relief, improved leadership, and increased skills of emotional intelligence and resilience in the areas of optimism and empathy as potential benefits of the practice of mindfulness (Wells, 2015). Murphy (2011) also posits that mindfulness practice by educational leaders utilizes skills of causal analysis to increase a leader's ability to successfully recognize and persevere through stressful situations, thus fostering one's optimism and empathy.

## **Limitations**

Qualitative research presents limitations that may influence the way in which data can be interpreted. The results of this study may not generalize to all conditions. Individuals should be mindful of this possibility when interpreting and/or applying the results of this study.

**Generalizability.** This sample of elementary and secondary assistant principals and principals restricts generalizability of the data. The small sample interviewed ( $n=26$ ) were taken from the 551 principals and assistant principals in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The response rate was 5%. Despite the 5% response rate, Guetterman (2015) suggests a mean of 18 participants as an appropriate sample size for a narrative inquiry study.

The use of convenience sampling methods may have impacted the findings. The recruitment email was sent out via email to all assistant principals and principals in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Due to the personal nature of the interview process, participation in the interview was voluntary but not anonymous. The process of scheduling and interview required the participant to share contact information to participate in the interview. In addition to the lack of anonymity, participation in the interview process required participants to utilize their personal time to schedule and participate in an hour-long interview.

The demographic questions contained in the interview protocol did not ask participants to identify their race, ethnicity, or cultural values. These demographics could impact a principals' attitudes and beliefs about the multi-faceted concepts of resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership. This opportunity to gather data on the relationship between cultural values and the multi-faceted concepts of resilience, emotional intelligence, and resonant leadership was missed and should be noted as a limitation of this study.

Due to the interpersonal nature of the interview process and the emotional nature of the study's topic, participants might have demonstrated a self-reporting bias.

Due to the researcher's existing knowledge in the areas of emotional intelligence and resilience, researcher bias might have affected the internal validity of results. To decrease the likelihood of researcher bias, the researcher acknowledged prejudices and assumptions in order to ensure that these biases didn't influence the data collection and analysis process (Merriam, 2009)

**Data Collection Tool.** The data collection tool may have skewed the data as well. The nature of the semi-structured interview protocol to gather information about the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of principals during challenging leadership situations elicited immediate emotional

responses from participants. The interview design to incorporate challenging leadership situation from each of the four domains of workplace stressors as identified by Klocko and Wells (2015) yielded data regarding a participant's perceptions of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of principals during challenging leadership situations. There were no participants who were not able to identify information about the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of principals during challenging leadership situations.

For this study's findings to be generalized to a larger or more demographically diverse population, this study would need to be replicated with a sample from the population of interest.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine principals' self-perceptions of the relationship between principal resilience and principal emotional intelligence and how their perceptions of these concepts are applied to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership throughout their career. The study sample consisted of the assistant principals and principals in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Overall findings show that principals employ the skills of self-awareness, awareness of others, mindfulness, hope/optimism, and compassion/empathy to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. The study findings suggest Reivich & Shatté's seven abilities of resilience as prerequisite skills to support a leader's ability to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership, as opposed to a byproduct of emotional intelligence and resonant leadership originally purposed by Goleman (1995) and McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson (2008).

Overall, the data revealed that principals demonstrated multiple skills of emotional intelligence, resilience, and resonant leadership. The study findings suggest that principals demonstrate many skills of emotional intelligence and resilience to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership. Due to the continually increasing demands placed on principals, these skills are imperative to the success and emotional well-being of principals. Consequently, additional preservice coursework and professional development in the topics of renewal, emotional intelligence, and resilience is needed for principals. Additionally, opportunities for principals to develop and maintain supportive professional relationships is needed to foster principals' abilities to initiate, utilize, and sustain resonant leadership and enhance their skills of emotional intelligence and resilience.

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