

Abstract

DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT: Examining Emotional Intelligence in Principals

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The purpose of this study was to understand if a principal's level of emotional intelligence has a relationship to leadership practices and, in turn, to student achievement. As such, the research question driving this study was: Does emotional intelligence in a principal operate through practices that relate to student achievement? As used in this study, emotional intelligence refers to a set of abilities in a 4 dimensional model that represent an individual's competency in appraising their own and others' emotions, regulating emotions, and using their emotions to reach a goal. The data collected and analyzed in the pursuit of this question included survey questionnaires from Indiana public school principals that encompassed the Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) as well as an adapted and condensed portion of the survey developed by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) in regarding their 21 responsibilities of school principals shown to positively correlate to student achievement. For the purposes of this study, the 5 practices identified with highest level of correlation to student achievement were utilized: discipline, flexibility, monitoring/evaluation, outreach, and situational awareness.

School demographics as well as student achievement data from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Indiana standardized assessment (ISTEP+) were collected from the Indiana Department of Education.

While no correlation was found between student achievement and either the practices or emotional intelligence ratings of the principal, there were other significant results. Major findings in this study included correlations between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and their engagement of the 5 practices as well as correlations to each of the individual practices and emotional intelligence. Each of the individual domains of emotional intelligence correlated to the 5 practices as a whole, as well. Additionally, correlations between several individual practices and individual emotional intelligence domains were found. These findings of a relationship between a principal's level of emotional intelligence and effective practices related to student achievement should continue to be studied. As emotional intelligence represents a set of abilities in which an individual can increase their proficiency, this relationship may provide additional means of professional preparation for and development of school principals.