Impact of Grit and Emotional Intelligence on Longevity of Expert Principals

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Impact of Grit and Emotional Intelligence on Longevity of Expert Principals

A Dissertation by

Marcia Hamilton

Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

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Committee in charge:

Phil Pendley, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D.

Cheryl-Marie Osborne, Ed.D.
The dissertation of Marcia Hamilton is approved.

Phil Pendley, Ed.D.  
Dissertation Chair

Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D.  
Committee Member

Cheryl-Marie Osborne, Ed.D.  
Committee Member

Douglas DeVore, Ed.D.  
Associate Dean

February 2020
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ABSTRACT

Impact of Grit and Emotional Intelligence on Longevity of Expert Principals

by Marcia Hamilton

**Purpose.** The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what relationship exists between emotional intelligence (EI) and grit of expert principals with three or more years’ longevity. This study was conducted to deeply understand the relationship between these variables and to discover expert principals’ perceptions of how these personal attributes impacted their longevity.

**Methodology.** This study followed a sequential explanatory design model whereby quantitative methods were used initially to collect baseline data via electronic surveys followed by qualitative methods, which were used to dig deeper into the results via in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

**Findings.** The major findings included identification of 10 EI attributes representing the expert principals studied; the discovery of the four Ps of grit: passion, purpose, priorities, and perseverance; the identification of a synergistic relationship between grit and EI; revelation of 10 guiding principles to extend longevity of expert principals; and the necessity of support, training, and mentoring for principals. In addition, most participants discussed significant tragedies that occurred during their tenure and the influence these tragedies had on their longevity.

**Conclusions.** Based on the findings from this study it was concluded specific EI and grit attributes can be developed through practice, guidance, and training. It was also concluded preparation programs and induction programs would benefit from weaving information on EI and grit into their curriculum to extend principal longevity.
Furthermore, K-12 educational institutes interested in increasing expert principals’ longevity would benefit from hiring gritty principals willing to develop both attributes.

**Recommendations.** The recommendations from this study are directed to individuals involved in higher education administrator preparation and induction programs and K-12 public schools superintendents, school boards, and personnel departments. It is recommended K-12 educational agents allocate funding for professional learning activities, including mentoring for principals, developing policies and procedures from recruitment to retention for gritty expert principals, and creating and implementing policies and procedures for emergency preparedness, including protocols for tragedies.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

According to *Churn: The High Cost of Principal Turnover* (School Leaders Network, 2014), 25% of principals in the United States leave the position after the first year and 50% of principals leave after three years, creating extraordinary costs to both students and districts. Effective principals contribute up to 25% of the factors influencing academic performance for students. Thus, the year immediately following principal turnover shows a marked decline in student achievement (School Leaders Network, 2014). In addition to the impact principal turnover has on students, Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE; 2016) reported two additional costs to districts, teacher turnover and financial costs for recruiting and onboarding a new principal.

Two primary causes of principal turnover are the changing nature of the K-12 principalship and increased accountability policies resulting in increased rates of stress for principals (MetLife, 2013; Rangel, 2018). More changes to the role of the K-12 principal emerged in the past five years compared to the previous 50 years combined (Fullan, 2014). Federal and state reforms clearly impact districts and drive school board policies, but also impact the duties and responsibilities of principals held accountable for implementing such reforms (Pepper, 2010). Principals face increasing pressure for students and teachers to perform optimally with fewer resources and a student body with increasing mental health needs (Child Mind Institute, 2016; Wallace Foundation, 2013).

If the educational system is to prevent and mitigate the extreme costs of principal turnover, it must build principal capacity to lead (Fullan, 2014). This form of leadership entails a balance of cognitive abilities, social-emotional capabilities, and dispositional attributes to approach and facilitate these radical shifts (Goodwin, 2013; Zaccaro, 2007).
Research documented factors contributing to principal success and effectiveness, but none explored why some principals stay at a single school for five or more years creating stability for staff success and student achievement (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Growing awareness shows intelligence alone does not foster great leadership (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008), although a moderate correlation exists between intelligence and leadership skills (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004). Beyond intelligence, specific personality traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness also had a strong relationship to success as a leader (Judge et al., 2004). Recent studies acknowledge both emotional intelligence (EI) and grit contribute to principal success (Barnes, 2015; Davidson, 2014; Horne, 2018). However, no known research explored whether these constructs impact principal longevity or whether a relationship exists between EI and grit.

Only one study could be found linking EI to retention/longevity. Schutte, Malouff, and Thorsteinsson (2013) found training in the area of EI could increase retention of university freshmen. Although research into how grit may contribute to longevity is more substantial, research on how EI may contribute to longevity is limited. Recently, grit was linked to retention of U.S. Marine Academy cadets, novice teachers, Army Special Operations Forces cadets, sales employees, and men in marriage (Eskreis-Winkler, Duckworth, Shulman, & Beal, 2014; Maddi, Matthews, Kelly, Villarreal, & White, 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2013).

The rate of principal turnover, 25% after the first year and 50% after three years, remained consistent over time with slight variations generating the same burdensome costs to both students and districts (Rangel, 2018; School Leaders Network, 2014). Further exploration of principal personal attributes that develop expertise and how these
attributes contribute to longevity could fortify the knowledge base. In addition, exploring the impact grit and EI have on principal retention could provide essential insights for principal recruitment, development, and retention practices.

**Background**

**Principal Turnover**

K-12 public education faces many challenges, including high rates of principal turnover (Rangel, 2018). A quarter of principals in the United States leave after the first year of service, yet they contribute up to 25% of factors influencing student academic performance (School Leaders Network, 2014). Comprehensive research into the rates, costs, and causes of principal turnover provides insights and a deeper understanding of this continuing problem and the effects on schools.

Principal turnover includes principals changing to other schools, districts, or positions, and departures from the school system through resignations or retirement (Rangel, 2018). Principal turnover refers to exits from the school site at the end of the school year or not remaining at the same school (Rangel, 2018). Statistics on principal turnover vary depending on the nature of the departure and how turnover is measured. For example, in one year’s time 6% of principals moved to a different school and an additional 12% exited the principalship altogether (Goldring & Taie, 2014). In another study spanning five years, Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2009) found after one year, upwards of 30% of public school principals in Texas left their schools. Similarly, a study in Illinois by DeAngelis and White (2011) between 2001 to 2008 reported a principal turnover rate of 21% resulting from principals moving to a new school, district, state, or through retirement. Principal turnover is concerning because of the pivotal role
principals play in leading school improvement and because this improvement can take 5 to 7 years to amass (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Fullan, 2014; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; School Leaders Network, 2014; Young & Fuller, 2009).

Effective principals are second only to the classroom teacher when impacting student achievement (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005). However, research indicated a marked decline in student achievement the year immediately following a principal leaving (School Leaders Network, 2014). Moreover, researchers argued it takes five years for principals to fully actualize their vision to the point of changing student achievement and positively influencing school culture (School Leaders Network, 2014). *Churn: The High Cost of Principal Turnover* further reported the financial cost to student future earnings could be upward of $30,000 as a result of these alarming levels of principal turnover (School Leaders Network, 2014). In addition to student costs associated with this phenomenon, PACE (2016) reported high teacher turnover and financial costs. PACE (2016) calculated the financial costs of principal turnover averages $75,000 for each principal who departs a district.

Studies also investigated the determinants of principal turnover (Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton & Ikemotor, 2012; Jacob, Goddard, Kim, Miller, & Goddard, 2015; Mitani, 2017). A meta-analysis conducted by Rangel (2018) revealed a range of statistically significant factors related to causes of principal turnover. These factors include characteristics of the position, school, and students, and policy issues. The determinants most consistent across studies, contexts, and measures were the changing role of the principal, increased accountability policies, poor school performance, difficult
school conditions, student demographics, and challenges of hiring and firing teachers (Rangel, 2018).

**Role of the K-12 Principal**

Principals play a crucial role in managing and effecting change, promoting student learning, and sustaining school improvement despite conflicting priorities, teacher resistance, and limited resources (Louis, Wohlstrom, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010; Pepper, 2010). Principals promote positive academic and social-emotional growth by establishing a vision, modeling behaviors, and strengthening professional communities (Cranston, 2016; Dufour & Mattos, 2013; Strong, Richard, & Cantano, 2008). However, the role of principal changed significantly over the past 50 years with an increased urgency to reform education resulting in increased pressure on principals to attain positive results (Fullan, 2014, Wallace Foundation, 2013).

The principal role shifted from rule enforcer and school building manager to lead learner and visionary (Wallace Foundation, 2013). As cited in the Wallace Foundation’s (2013) report, *The School Principal As Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning*, these shifts bring “dramatic changes in what public education needs from principals…they can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to district rules, carrying out regulations and avoiding mistakes” (p. 6). Principals must be the lead learner, developing teams that can deliver effective instruction. Moreover, it is expected the politically savvy principal makes strategic decisions that increase achievement and social-emotional learning while seeking input from parents, teachers, and community members (Wallace Foundation, 2013).
Changing role of principal and accountability. The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) published *A Nation at Risk*, a landmark federal report raising concerns about failing schools; yet principals still face the same level of urgency to reform the educational system (Kotter, 2008). Principals face a moral imperative to close the achievement gap while ensuring all students gain the necessary skills to be healthy, happy, and productive citizens (Education Week Research Center, 2015).

In just over 50 years, five major educational reform movements were enacted in the United States: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Improving America’s School Act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RTTT) with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These federal reforms impact districts, drive policies, and impact principal duties as they implement reforms (Pepper, 2010).

In addition to federal educational reforms, California overhauled its educational standards requiring changes to the assessment and accountability systems (CDE, 2017). In addition to the CCSS, California also adopted new English language development and science standards requiring shifts in instruction and student learning. This also required adoption of new curricula for English language arts (ELA), math, and science aligned to the new standards. Simultaneously, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress became the new system for assessing English language proficiency, ELA, math, and science. This new system of assessment measured the instructional methodologies and student performance, and required technology resources to test students (CDE, 2017).
In 2013, California restructured its educational funding system. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) created funding targets based on student characteristics and provided greater flexibility to use funds to improve student outcomes (CDE, 2015). Districts with higher percentages of English learners, students receiving free/reduced-price lunch, and foster youth receive additional funds to educate these students. Along with the LCFF, schools are required to develop a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) in collaboration with parents and community members to ensure funds are used to improve achievement for these specific groups of students (CDE, 2015). It is the responsibility of the principal to monitor LCAP implementation and ensure funding is allocated to these student groups.

Amidst these changes, in 2013 MetLife surveyed American principals and 69% stated their jobs changed over the last five years and 75% reported “their jobs have become too complex” (p. 3). Approximately 50% of principals reported feeling great levels of stress often or always in their job several days a week (MetLife, 2013). With the complexities these policies and laws created for the educational system in general and specifically for principals required to implement these high-stakes changes, it is no wonder stress levels are high for principals and result in extraordinary turnover.

**Constructs for Principal Success and Retention**

Research documented several models for predicting success in leadership roles, with fewer studies focusing on retention of highly skilled leaders (Eskreis et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; McKee et al., 2008; Roberston-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). Leadership success and success as an adult led to research in the areas of dynamic psychological abilities and highly effective non-cognitive skills (Bradberry & Greaves,
2009; Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Current trends in research go beyond the need for intelligence and specific personality traits to studying the impact of EI and grit on educational leadership (Eskreis et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; Roberston-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014; Schutte et al., 2013).

**Intelligence.** In 1905, Alfred Binet developed a test to quantify and assess an individual’s intelligence. For over 100 years, researchers investigated various components of intelligence and its ability to predict success. Several researchers positively correlated intelligence and leadership success with performance (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Judge et al., 2004; Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). It was well-founded that success requires a specified level of intelligence; however, leadership does not come solely from intelligence (McKee et al., 2008). Researchers investigating what contributed to leadership success went beyond intelligence to investigate other factors influencing success. Beyond general intelligence, the literature identified personality traits as indicators for leadership success.

**Personality traits.** Initially in the literature, psychologists thought personality was mostly biological and relatively stable over time (Costa & McCrae, 1992). However, more current researchers found personality traits can evolve over time (Almlund, Duckworth, Heckman, & Kautz, 2011). Almlund et al. (2011) stated personality traits were as inheritable as cognitive traits yet can evolve over time. Researchers continue to investigate what role personality traits play in successful leadership. Costa and McCrae’s (1992) Five Factor Model is one of the most recognized and utilized models of
personality. The model examines five areas of personality: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

Judge et al. (2004) investigated the relationship between Costa and McCrae’s Five Factor Model with leadership and found extraversion and conscientiousness had the strongest relationship to success as a leader. Cavazotte, Moreno, and Hickmann (2012) further identified a negative effect of excessive neuroticism on leadership success but also reported EI aligned with the positive aspects of neuroticism contributing to leadership success. Duckworth et al. (2007) correlated their construct of grit with the personality trait of conscientiousness, which was one of the traits linked most favorably to leadership success. Zaccaro (2007), Duckworth et al. (2007), and Cavazotte et al. (2012), suggested grit and EI relate to leadership success. In the 1990s, a shift occurred from investigating intelligence and personality traits as indicators of success to studying new models of EI constructed by Mayer and Salovey (1997).

Emotional intelligence. Over the past two decades, the study of EI gained attention as a predictor of leadership success. Although Goleman (1998) is best known for bringing EI into the mainstream, the Mayer and Salovey (1990) model was used most frequently to determine if EI was a valid measure of leadership success. Several studies indicated EI positively contributes to leadership (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Cavazotte et al., 2012; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004); however, other researchers questioned these studies. Antonakis (2015) cited disagreement in the scientific community as to the construct of EI, how to measure EI, and the accuracy with which EI measures can predict success. Beyond studying EI as a success indicator in the general population, researchers specifically explored how EI contributed to principal success (Barnes, 2015; Horne,
2018; May-Vollmar, 2017). Only one study could be found linking EI to retention/longevity. Schutte et al. (2013) found training in the area of EI could increase retention of university freshmen. Yet, no known studies investigated EI and the impact on longevity of expert principals.

**Grit.** Grit is a relatively new body of research with the concept being introduced in 2007 (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit was defined as passion and perseverance toward long-term goals despite any obstacles or setbacks experienced. Like predecessors generating frameworks for predicting success such as the intelligence quotient (IQ) or Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) EI, Duckworth et al. (2007) concluded grit is also a predictor of success. The results of 10 years of research firmly concluded grittier people, regardless of context, tend to be more successful (Duckworth, Kirby, Tsukayama, Berstein, & Ericsson, 2011; Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009; Hogan, 2013; A. Martin, 2011). Preliminary findings in educational leadership also indicated grit predicted success and effectiveness for superintendents and principals (Davidson, 2014; Kearns, 2015).

In recent years, grit research went beyond exploration of grit as a predictor of success to investigate grit as a predictor for retention. Studies found grit predicted retention for United States Military Academy cadets and novice teachers (Maddi et al. 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). A more recent study by Eskreis et al. (2014) found grit more predictive of retention in the military, workforce sales, high school, and marriage when compared to other context-specific “predictors such as intelligence, physical aptitude, personality traits, and job tenure” (p. 10).
Gap in the Research

Rangel (2018) conducted a thorough investigation into the research on principal turnover utilizing meta-analysis and critical synthesis analysis. Her work was the first attempt to synthesize the vast body of research on principal turnover to “improve our understanding of the ways in which principal turnover has been studied, the significant findings that have emerged, and the gaps that remain” (Rangel, 2018, p. 89). Upward of 2,000 studies were reviewed and 39 of those studies met analysis criteria for relevance, empirical nature, and scholarly quality. Rangel’s (2018) analysis on research regarding principal turnover revealed patterns for definitions, rates, causes, and consequences.

Of the 39 studies Rangel (2018) identified as empirically based, only five studies addressed stability of principals versus mobility. The stability studies investigated the amount of time one principal had at the same school versus the mobility of principals out of schools. However, only one study conducted by Young and Fuller (2009) identified possible reasons for principal longevity. Evans (2011) identified three sources of political stress that impacted principal mobility or stability, including mandated programs, factors undermining principal authority, and relationship with the district. Specific studies regarding principal stability and factors contributing to principal longevity were not found (Evans, 2011).

Research also documented factors contributing to principal success and effectiveness, but none explored why some principals stay at a single school for five or more years creating stability for staff success and student achievement (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Contemporary studies investigated how personal attributes such as EI and grit impact success in educational leadership (Barnes, 2015; Davidson, 2014; Gutierrez,
2017; Horne, 2018; Kearns, 2016; May-Vollmar, 2017), but no known research examined how these qualities could impact principal longevity. Additionally, no research examined whether a relationship exists between EI and grit.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Turnover rates for principals are extremely high, accruing extraordinary costs to both students and districts (PACE, 2016; School Leaders Network, 2014). Principal turnover impacts student academic achievement and future revenue earnings (Rangel, 2018; School Leaders Network, 2014). Principal influence on student achievement is second only to the classroom teacher, and this impact takes upward of five years to accrue (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Fullan, 2014; Marzano & Waters, 2007). School Leaders Network (2014) reported a marked decline in student achievement the year immediately following a principal leaving and reported the financial cost to student future earnings could be upward of $30,000. In addition to student costs associated with principal turnover, PACE (2016) reported district costs: high teacher turnover rates, negative impacts to climate at the site level, and financial costs. Those direct and indirect financial costs average $75,000 for each principal who leaves a district (PACE, 2016).

Three characteristics of the principalship were identified as determinants of turnover: “the degree of autonomy, relationships, and the changing nature of the position” (Rangel, 2018, p. 116). Moreover, in 2013, MetLife reported a principal’s job changed significantly and became too complex. In this study, 48% of principals felt great stress multiple days a week as a result of their position (MetLife, 2013). K-12 educational leadership now entails a balance of intelligence, dynamic psychological abilities, and highly effective non-cognitive skills to successfully navigate current educational
challenges, such as the changing role of the principal and increased accountability policies resulting in demands for improved school performance (Goodwin, 2013; Louis et al., 2010; Pepper, 2010; Zaccaro, 2007).

The literature review found only three articles (Eskreis et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; and Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014) regarding grit as it relates to retention and only one study investigating EI and retention of university students (Schutte et al., 2013). Many more studies noted the relationship between EI, grit, and leadership success. Fewer studies related EI and/or grit specifically to principal success and effectiveness. However, effective leadership did not equate to retention of principals (Branch et al., 2009; Rangel, 2018).

Some literature is beginning to emerge in the area of grit as it relates to retention in high demand leadership roles, yet no known research relates to retaining expert principals. Moreover, no research was found investigating whether EI contributes to the retention of expert principals. Therefore, further exploration of the effects of grit and EI on retaining expert principals could contribute to the knowledge base and provide essential insights for district hiring, staffing, and professional development practices for principals.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what relationship exists between emotional intelligence (EI) and grit among expert principals with three or more years’ longevity. A further purpose was to discover principal perceptions of how EI and grit impacted longevity in their positions.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do expert principals rate their level of EI as indicated on the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)?
2. How do expert principals rate their level of grit as indicated on the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale?
3. What relationship exists between EI and grit scale scores for expert principals?
4. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how EI impacts their longevity in their principalship?
5. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit impacts their longevity in their principalship?

Significance of the Problem

Principals in California are responsible for more than six and a half million students in over 10,000 schools (CDE, 2017). Principals are second only to the classroom teacher when influencing student academic and social achievement, and are also the main influence on teacher success (Fullan, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2007; Wallace Foundation, 2013). However, approximately 25% of principals leave after the first year and 50% leave after the third year (School Leaders Network, 2014). This turnover of principals creates extraordinary costs to both students and districts (PACE, 2016; School Leaders Network, 2014).

Principals are under stress to comply with accountability policies in an ever-changing educational landscape (Pepper, 2010). More changes occurred to the
responsibilities of principals in the last five years than when compared to the previous 50 years combined (Fullan, 2014). The recent changes to the role of the principal coupled with increased accountability measures contribute to the high rates of principal turnover (Rangel, 2018). It is important principals have the skills to adapt to the pressure and rapid rate of change, and have the perseverance to remain at a single school site to accomplish their vision (Fullan, 2014; Goodwin, 2013; Zaccaro, 2007). Perseverance of principals, especially expert principals, ultimately impacts student achievement and school climate for the better (Fullan, 2014, Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Research documented factors contributing to principal success and effectiveness, but none explored why some principals stay at a single school for five or more years creating stability for staff success and student achievement (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Growing awareness shows intelligence alone does not foster great leadership (McKee et al., 2008). Beyond intelligence, specific personality traits, extraversion, and conscientiousness had the strongest relationship to success as a leader (Judge et al., 2004). Recent studies acknowledged both EI and grit contribute to principal success (Barnes, 2015; Davidson, 2014; Horne, 2018). However, no known research explored whether these constructs impact principal longevity or whether a relationship exists between EI and grit.

This study could help fill the research gap by better understanding how EI and grit impact the longevity of expert principals. Principals are responsible for the education of millions of students in California. Thus, it is important to know more about what contributes to expert principals’ decisions to stay at a single school until realizing their vision that positively impacts student and teacher success.
Definitions

To provide clarity and focus for the reader, the terms relevant to this study are defined.

**Emotional intelligence.** An individual’s ability to “engage in sophisticated information processing about one’s own and others’ emotions” coupled with the ability to utilize this information to navigate thinking and behaving; emotionally intelligent people adapt to circumstances based on this information for potential benefits to self and others (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 508).

**Expert principal.** An expert principal has three or more years at a single site while earning either a state or federal school of distinction honor during his or her tenure as well as having 75% or greater of the 2018 California School Dashboard indicators in the blue/green range.

**Grit.** Grit is a personal attribute or trait capitalizing on an individual’s passion and perseverance to accomplish long-term goals regardless of plateaus or setbacks (Duckworth et al., 2007).

**Principal turnover.** Principal turnover includes principals changing to other “schools, districts, or positions as well as exits from the school system all together” through resignation or retirement (Rangel, 2018, p. 97).

**Principal Longevity.** Principal longevity refers to a principal remaining at the same school site for three or more consecutive years.

Delimitations

Delimitations are researcher chosen factors limiting the scope and establishing boundaries of a study (Simon & Goes, 2013). This mixed methods study was delimited
to expert K-12 principals employed in public schools in southern California meeting the following criteria:

1. Employed three or more consecutive years in their current school
2. Received state (California Distinguished School) or federal (Blue Ribbon School) recognition during their tenure
3. Have 75% or greater 2018 California School Dashboard indicators in the blue/green range

**Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presented a study overview including the purpose and research questions addressed, the problem and gap in literature, the significance of the study, and salient definitions. Chapter II provides a detailed review of the literature, including the significance of principal turnover, changing role of the K-12 principalship, personal characteristics leading to successful/effective principals, and the constructs of grit and EI. Chapter III provides a thorough discussion of the methodology of this mixed methods study, including the research design, study population, and sample criteria used for the study. Chapter IV provides a detailed analysis of the findings and Chapter V concludes this study by interpreting the data, offering conclusions and implications, and proposing recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study focused on the impact of grit and emotional intelligence (EI) have on longevity of expert principals and what relationship exists between those two variables. Chapter I of this dissertation presented a study overview, including the purpose and research questions addressed. It discussed the problem arising from the literature search and the importance of this study based on gaps in literature. The significance of the study and salient definitions were also presented in Chapter I.

Chapter II presents an in-depth review of the literature, including the significance of principal turnover in terms of consequences and causes. It further explores the determinants of principal turnover by extensively outlining the changing role of the K-12 principalship and how these changes impact longevity. The need for a different form of leadership is discussed regarding the necessity for a balance of cognitive abilities, social/emotional capabilities, and strong dispositional tendencies in K-12 principals. This chapter concludes with a detailed exploration of the constructs of grit and EI.

To fully comprehend the need for this new kind of leadership in K-12 principals, one must first recognize the national crisis presented by principal turnover. Nationally, one-quarter of public school principals leave their positions after the first year and upwards of half leave after three years (School Leaders Network, 2014). This churn created by principal turnover has been linked to extraordinary costs to both students and districts (PACE, 2016; School Leaders Network, 2014). The literature revealed contributing factors include the changing role of the K-12 principalship with increased accountability and the need for grittier and emotionally savvy principals (Ashworth,
If school districts are to prevent and mitigate the extreme costs of principal turnover, they must build principal capacity to “navigate these troubled waters which will require a new kind of leadership” (Fullan, 2014, p. 7). This form of leadership requires a balance of cognitive abilities, social/emotional capabilities, and strong dispositional attributes (Goodwin, 2013; Zaccaro, 2007).

**Principal Turnover**

Public schools in the United States, and more specifically California, are faced with a troubling pattern of high rates of principal turnover (Rangel, 2018; School Leaders Network, 2014). Rangel (2018) was the first to synthesize the growing body of literature on principal turnover with definitions, rates, causes, and consequences. Similarly, Farley-Ripple, Solano, and McDuffie (2012) attempted a review of the literature on principal turnover; however, issues with conceptual and methodological frameworks added to the difficulty of comparing and contrasting studies in this area. Both studies revealed and emphasized the need for clarity regarding definitions, rates, causes, and consequences of principal turnover (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012; Rangel, 2018).

Principal turnover includes moves to other schools, districts, or positions, and exits from the school system via resignation or retirement (Rangel, 2018). As defined by Rangel (2018) “principal turnover…occurs when a principal does not return to the same school from one year to the next” (p. 96). However, this proposed definition presents no insight into the characteristics of the principal leaving or reason for the departure. Boyce and Bowers (2016) offered more essential contextual information for defining principal turnover.
turnover. Building on the work of Johnson’s (2005) study of typology of principals who leave a school site, Boyce and Bowers (2016) found “at least two different types of principals who exit their schools based on their self-perceptions of their degree of influence, school climate, attitudes, and salary dispositions” (p. 15). These two groups were categorized into satisfied and dissatisfied. The satisfied group of principals exiting schools reported greater degrees of positive attitudes and higher levels of influence. In contrast, the dissatisfied principals reported lower levels of influence and were more likely to leave the principalship all together (Boyce & Bowers, 2016).

In contrast to Tekleselassie and Villarreal’s (2010) definition of principal turnover, which included principals who intended to leave, Boyce and Bowers (2016) and Rangel (2018) defined principal turnover as actual exits from the same school from one year to the next. These distinctions in defining the types of principals leaving are important to policy-level endeavors targeting retaining expert principals. Furthermore, the way in which the measurement of principal turnover is operationalized can impact the rates of turnover and how policy makers address turnover (Rangel, 2018).

For this study, the use of Rangel’s (2018) definition of principal turnover was further broken down based on how the turnover was measured. The distinct measurements of the mobilization of principal churn included aggregate, dichotomous, and multiple pathways measurements. Aggregate measurements analyze groups of principals “capturing the movement and distribution of principals across groups or subgroups” (Rangel, 2018, p. 97). This form of measurement is useful in illuminating trends in turnover. Dichotomous measurement results in two possible outcomes, whether the principal stays or leaves (Rangel, 2018). Dichotomous measurements are critical in
analyzing the differences between school effect versus principal effects (Branch et al., 2009). Finally, the multiple pathways measurement includes the “various decisions that principals make, such as staying, changing schools, changing districts, and so on” (Rangel, 2018, p. 97). Multiple pathways measurements aid in “tracking principals across the trajectory of their careers” (Rangel, 2018, p. 98).

Rangel (2018) attempted a meta-analysis of the growing body of literature on principal turnover; however, only three out of the 1,909 studies and articles published between 1990 and 2017 met criteria for the meta-analysis. Therefore, utilizing a critical analysis framework, she assessed various studies to synthesize the literature. Studies were included in her critical analysis based on three criteria: relevance, empirical nature, and scholarship quality. Moreover, studies were included that focused on principal turnover, had sound empirical methodologies, and were peer reviewed. Of the 1,909 studies, 36 were selected based on these criteria. Six of the 36 studies focused on longevity of principals versus the turnover of principals. The remaining 30 studies all focused on mobility of principals out of their current school. Of these 30 studies, four used aggregate measurements of principal turnover adding to the body of research on trends in principal turnover, 16 used dichotomous measurements of principal turnover helping to determine between school versus principal effects, and 10 used multiple pathways measurements mapping out career trajectories of principals. It is critical to understand how principal turnover is defined and measured as statistics on principal turnover rates can vary depending on the nature of the departure and how it was measured (Rangel, 2018).
Rates of Principal Turnover

The rates of principal turnover increased over time. DeAngelis and White (2011) used both aggregate and multiple pathways measurements of principal turnover in Illinois public schools to compare data sets from 1998-2001 to 2001-2008. They found principal turnover rates increased from 14% to 21% of principals leaving their schools each year within the stated time frames. From 2001-2008, 21% of principals left their school site and almost half left Illinois public schools all together. In contrast, 14% of principals left their school site from 1998-2001, only 20% of those principals left Illinois public schools.

Using data collected from the National Center for Educational Statistics, Berry (2014) examined both dichotomous and multiple pathways measures of principal turnover from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009. He reported one in five schools (20%) experienced a change in principal. Furthermore, Miller (2013) conducted dichotomous measurements of principal turnover using 12 years of data from North Carolina public schools and found 20% of principals leave their schools each year.

Burkhauser et al. (2012) examined whether principals stayed or left a school site in six major public school districts: Memphis City Schools, Chicago Public Schools, New York City Public Schools, Washington DC Public Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Oakland (CA) Unified School District. The findings indicated 23% of new principals leave within the first two years, especially those who did not meet accountability targets. Of the 520 first year principals studied, 12% left the first year and an additional 11% left the second year (Burkhauser et al., 2012).
Similarly, Goldring and Taie (2014) collected aggregate principal turnover measurements using the 2012-2013 Principal Follow-Up Survey conducted by the Census Bureau. In 2011-2012, 114,330 principals were surveyed and the following year 23% reported not returning to the same school site for the 2012-2013 school year. Of the 23% who did not return, 6% reported moving to a different school, 12% left the principalship all together, and 5% could not be reached to determine the reason. Of the principals who reported moving to another school, 54% remained in the same school district (Goldring & Taie, 2014).

Principal turnover rates vary based on the school level (Young & Fuller, 2009). In their analysis, Young and Fuller (2009) found at the elementary level, 15% of principals left after one year, 54% before year five, and 84% before year 10. At the middle school level, 20% of principals leave after the first year, 63% leave before year five, and 89% leave before year 10. The highest rates of principal turnover are at the high school level with 24% leaving after just one year, 70% before year five, and 91% before year 10 (Young & Fuller, 2009).

Although many studies rate principal turnover between 20-23%, Beteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2012) reported rates of principal turnover vary significantly based on the concentration of low-income, minority, and low-achieving students at the school. Using dichotomous measurements of principal turnover, Beteille et al. (2012) found 15-30% of Miami Dade public school principals left their schools each year. However, this rate varied based on the student characteristics of the school site. Specifically, schools with high concentrations of low-income students experienced principal turnover rates as high as 28% compared to schools with lower concentrations of low-income
students with 18% principal turnover. Furthermore, Miami Dade schools with more low-achieving students experienced as high as 30% principal turnover in contrast to 16% for schools with fewer low-achieving students. Similar results were found in Milwaukee and San Francisco (Beteille et al, 2012).

Young and Fuller (2009) also found higher rates of principal turnover based on increased levels of poverty and decreased levels of student achievement. Rates of principal turnover at schools with higher concentrations of poverty varied based on school level. At high poverty middle schools, 67% of principals left within five years compared to 75% of high school principals. Contrary to this school level variance, all school levels experienced similar principal turnover rates for low-performing schools; 75% of principals left low-performing schools within five years compared to 60% for higher-performing schools (Young & Fuller, 2009).

School Leaders Network (2014) reported “twenty-five thousand, one quarter of the country’s principals, leave their school each year, leaving millions of children’s lives adversely affected” (p. 1). Compounding this issue was the increased rate of 50% turnover of new principals by year three. “Given how long it takes to improve whole organizations, it requires sustained efforts by tenacious principals,” yet 50% of new principals do not stay beyond their third year (School Leaders Network, 2014, p. 18).

California was ranked in the top eight states with the highest rates of principal turnover (Superville, 2014). Principal turnover is concerning because of the pivotal role principals play in leading school improvement and because this improvement can take 5-7 years to amass (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Fullan, 2014; Marzano & Waters, 2007; Young & Fuller, 2009). Although this is the case, the average length of longevity for a
principal in the top eight states with the highest rates of principal turnover, including California, was 2.7 to 3.5 years (Superville, 2014). Kearney, Valdez, and Garcia (2012) purported less than 30% of newly hired principals remain at the same school for five years. Furthermore, Young and Fuller (2009) found “39 percent of elementary principals, 31 percent of middle school principals and 27 percent of high school principals remained in the same schools for at least five years” (p. 7). These retention rates decrease significantly when schools have higher concentrations of students in poverty and under-achieving students (Beteille, 2012; Young & Fuller, 2009).

Ultimately, slight variations in the rates of principal turnover exist and a need exists to understand how principal turnover is measured. Researchers agreed rates are high and continue to have burdensome consequences on students and districts (Berrong, 2012; Berry, 2014; Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Branch et al., 2009; Burd, 2015; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Daloisio, 2017; DeAngelis & White, 2011; Finnigan & Daly, 2017; Goodwin, 2013; Kearney et al., 2012; Miller, 2013; School Leaders Network, 2014; Rangel, 2018; Young & Fuller, 2009). A growing body of research claims to identify causes and consequences of principal turnover.

**Consequences of Principal Turnover**

According to School Leaders Network report (2014), *Churn: The High Cost of Principal Turnover*, 25% of the nation’s principals leave after the first year and 50% leave after three years, creating extraordinary costs to both districts and students. Effective principals contribute up to 25% of the factors influencing academic performance for students (School Leaders Network, 2014). There are potential benefits to the school if the principal leaving is ineffective (Beteille et al., 2012). However,
research indicated several negative effects of principal turnover, especially if the exiting principal was effective or with multiple years of churn of ineffective principals (Beteille et al., 2012). Some student consequences of principal turnover include a marked decline in student achievement the year immediately following a principal leaving, decreased future earnings for students, and lower graduation rates (Berrong, 2012; Beteille, 2012; Burd, 2015; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Kearney et al., 2012; Miller, 2013; Rangel, 2018; School Leaders Network, 2014; Superville, 2014).

In addition to the student costs associated with this distressing phenomenon, PACE (2016) reported related costs to districts include high teacher turnover and various financial costs. In addition to the financial costs of principal turnover to districts, researchers identified several factors disruptive to the climate and culture generating negative effects for the school and district (Beteille, 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Finnigan & Daly, 2017).

**Decline in student achievement.** Several studies investigated the negative effects of principal turnover to declining student achievement. In analyzing all principals in the state of Texas from 1995-2001, Branch et al. (2009) found principal turnover had a slight but meaningful decrease on student achievement, .002 decrease in standard deviation. Beteille et al. (2012) found similar results in their study of over 400 schools in the Miami Dade City Public Schools from 2003-2009. These researchers reported achievement was negatively impacted by principal turnover even after accounting for the school’s prior performance trajectory. Furthermore, Beteille et al. (2012) reported a .013 standard deviation decrease in achievement for schools with a new principal. Equally important was the negative relationship between principal turnover and student
achievement was most predominant at failing schools and schools with high levels of low-income students (Beteille et al., 2012).

Miller (2013) analyzed 12 years of data from North Carolina public schools and found a negative relationship between principal turnover and student achievement. On average, student scores fell .21 standard deviations below the established baseline. She calculated baselines by analyzing achievement scores from the four previous years before the principal exit. This loss in student achievement was compounded the first two years of the new principal’s tenure by declining another .025 standard deviations. Miller (2013) further purported the original baseline level of student achievement was not actualized until the new principal’s fifth year. Burd (2015) also investigated the correlation between principal turnover and student achievement at over 45 schools in Florida. She found a statistically significant increase in both reading and math scores associated with lower rates of principal turnover when controlling for other variables such as low-income students and students with disabilities (Burd, 2015). Of the 520 new principals Burkhauser et al. (2012) studied in various large school districts throughout the nation, 62 left after one year at the school. Their descriptive analysis indicated 40 (65%) of those schools experience a decline in achievement the year after the principal exited (Burkhauser et al., 2012).

On the other hand, Berrong (2012) reported a weak correlation between principal turnover rates and student achievement in math and reading/English language arts using multiple regression analysis. His study examined student achievement on the Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test in relation to principal turnover. Although his results indicated a weak correlation between student achievement and principal turnover
for all students, he found specific sub-populations impacted by principal turnover. In English language arts, for minority students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students, principal turnover was a predictor of lower performance. Similarly, principal turnover was also a predictor of lower performance on math for minority students and economically disadvantaged students (Berrong, 2012).

Equally important, Kearney et al. (2012) analyzed the relationship between principal longevity and student achievement for 105 elementary schools and 44 secondary schools in Texas. A high correlation was found between elementary and secondary principal longevity and student achievement. For elementary school performance, there was a .227 standard deviation increase and for secondary schools a .375 standard deviation increase (Kearney et al., 2012).

Principal turnover negatively impacts both math and reading/English language arts scores during the first year after a principal exit (School Leaders Network, 2014). Subsequently, schools continuing to struggle with principal churn “realize serious cumulative negative effects” on student achievement (School Leaders Network, 2014, p. 4). Moreover, it can take 3-5 years for the new principal to regain the student achievement losses (School Leaders Network, 2014); therefore, retaining expert principals at sites is imperative to student success.

**Decreased future earnings.** School Leaders Network (2014) concluded principal churn negatively impacts student future earnings. Minority and low-income students are especially impacted (Berrong, 2012; Beteille et al., 2012). A national analysis determined “a 10 percent reduction in principal turnover in high poverty schools…has the potential to affect a single child’s earnings by $30,024” (School Leaders Network, 2014,
p. 9). This was calculated by factoring in the 10% reduction in principal turnover from on average 25% to 15% per year while also improving principal effectiveness from the 25th percentile to 50th percentile of effectiveness. School Leaders Network (2014) further estimated $470 million dollars lost in taxable revenue due to principal churn and ineffective leadership by averaging the lost future earnings for an urban school district with 72,000 students such as Fresno Unified or Long Beach Unified.

Decrease in graduation rates. An additional consequence of principal turnover was lower rates of graduation, especially with multiple principal exits in succession. Rangel (2018) determined a single change of a principal had no effect on graduation rates; however, a second change in principal had a significant negative effect on graduation rates. In the same way, School Leaders Network (2014) found “states with the highest proportion of novice principals also have the lowest graduation rates” (p. 11) and are the same states experiencing high rates of turnover (Superville, 2014). Furthermore, School Leaders Network (2014) claimed principal turnover as it relates to graduation rates is as predictable as “SAT scores and college GPA” (p. 11).

Increased financial costs. Although several researchers discussed the district costs of principal turnover in their own studies (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Mitani, 2017; Rangel, 2018; Superville, 2014), they cited the analysis completed by School Leaders Network (2014) or PACE (2016). School Leaders Network (2014) deconstructed the various costs a district experiences as a result of principal turnover, including human resource costs, transitional training costs if offered, and continuing education costs.

Human resource costs include recruiting, hiring, signing, and continued preparation programs (i.e., administrator induction costs) that average $58,000 (School
Leaders Network, 2014). Costs for transitioning the principal into the district, including mentoring costs, can be between $11,000 to $15,000. Moreover, the continuing education costs to develop a principal average $4,000 per induction program (School Leaders Network, 2014). District investment in professional development ranges from $0 to $2,500 annually per principal, although these investments are lost when the principal leaves the district (PACE, 2016). The total of human resource, transitional training, and continuing education costs ranges from $36,850 to $303,000 and averages about $75,000 per principal (PACE, 2016). Increasing principal retention rates among affluent schools from 73% to 80% was estimated to save public schools in the nation $163 million annually (School Leaders Network, 2014).

**Increased teacher turnover rates.** In addition to the financial costs of principal turnover, a higher rate of teacher turnover was associated with principal churn (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Young & Fuller, 2009). Berry (2014) argued teacher turnover rates were 17% higher at schools with a new principal. Miller (2013) confirmed principal turnover related to higher rates of teacher turnover among the most effective teachers. She further asserted teacher churn impacted student achievement, claiming: “The year before a principal left a school, teacher turnover increased by 1.3% on average, and in the year after the principal’s departure, teacher turnover increased by an additional 1.6%” (Miller, 2013, p. 68).

**Disruptions to climate and culture.** Principal turnover creates instability and disruption impacting school culture (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Finnigan & Daly, 2017; Rangel, 2018). For instance, Beteille et al. (2012) claimed principal turnover resulted in instability that could ultimately
undermine improvement efforts. Thus, when a principal leaves a school institutional memory is lost, goals and expectations become unclear, and employee networks become fractured, all contributing to instability linked to a lack of progress on improvement efforts (Beteille et al., 2012). Burkhauser et al. (2012) added new principals frequently introduce too many changes to policies and practices staff previously valued. Among first year principals, “the most common challenge was gaining teacher buy-in for the direction and strategies the principal wanted to implement” (Burkhauser et al., 2012, p. 37).

Building on research about instability resulting from principal turnover, Boyce and Bowers (2016) argued churn negatively impacted school culture. Conflicting approaches implemented by new principals undermined a consistent vision leading to lower staff morale (Finnigan & Daly, 2017). Subsequently, issues with morale influence teachers respect and engagement with the new principal (Boyce & Bowers, 2016).

Rangel (2018) concurred the direct and negative relationship between principal turnover and school culture “was a significant mediator between turnover and student achievement” (p. 115). Moreover, in an article in American Educator, *The Trust Gap*, Finnigan and Daly (2017) further argued principal turnover resulted in trust issues with the staff and created instability due to a loss of knowledge and social support. This disruption to teacher routines and guidance impacted student achievement in the end. “In essence, constant churn at the leadership level has a significant social cost that affects teachers on multiple levels” (Finnigan & Daly, 2017, p. 25).
Causes of Principal Turnover

In reviewing the literature about causes of principal turnover, it is vital to remember principals are unique human beings and vary in the reasons for leaving the principalship (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Rangel, 2018). In addition, there is not typically a single reason for leaving a principalship but rather a convergence of external factors outside the principal’s control resulting in higher rates of stress and dissatisfaction leading to principal turnover (Berry, 2014; Beteille et al., 2012; Daloisis, 2017; Evans, 2011; Kearney et al., 2012; Mitani, 2017; Rangel, 2018).

A range of external and internal factors emerged as statistically significant in relation to principal turnover, some more predominant in the literature such as shifting demands of the job as it relates to accountability, characteristics of the student population, and principal stress and satisfaction levels (Berry, 2014; Beteille et al., 2011; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Daloisis, 2017; Evans, 2010; Kearney et al., 2012; Mitani, 2017; School Leaders Network, 2014; Rangel, 2018). Mitani (2017) used a nationally representative sample of principals to systematically analyze causes of principal turnover and found accountability measures and sanctions for underperforming schools, which typically have higher concentrations of low-income students, created increased levels of stress resulting in high rates of principal turnover. Lesser researched variables related to why principals leave included both relational and policy issues (Daloisio, 2017; Evans, 2011; Finnigan & Daly, 2017; Goldring & Taie, 2014; Kearney et al., 2012; School Leaders Network, 2014; Rangel, 2018).

Relational and policy issues. Relational issues leading to principal turnover included feeling a lack of support, isolation, and disrespect (Daloisio, 2017; Finnigan &
Researchers cited negative relationships with the district or feelings of lack of organizational commitment contributed to a principal’s decision to leave a school (Daloisio, 2017; Evans, 2011; Rangel, 2018). Kearney et al. (2012) argued one reason principals leave was due to a lack of parent, community, and district office support. Rangel (2018) reinforced the finding by Boyce and Bowers (2016) that principals with a positive relationship with the district office reported higher levels of autonomy. Conversely, the findings also reported “principals who perceived they lacked autonomy were more likely to leave their position” (Rangel, 2018, p. 103.). Similarly, Evans (2011) found principals who left a school reported the most difficult relationship to manage was the one with the central office. Principals who left felt “isolated, disempowered and disenfranchised” (Evans, 2011, p. 33).

School Leaders Network (2014) asserted principals lacked the support needed from the organization to be successful in their position. This study further asserted 95% of principals reported they learn on the job and with little to no professional learning to aid in necessary skill development. Moreover, the study concluded the “absence of attention to ongoing support and training” led to high levels of stress (School Leaders Network, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, principals were 1.4 times more likely to leave if there was no professional development offered in the previous year (Goldring & Taie, 2014).

Daloisio (2017) asserted a lack of respect, support, and connection to central administration was a trigger for a principal’s decision to leave the principalship. Equally important to lack of support was the finding principals feel isolated in their position (Finnigan & Daly, 2017; School Leaders Network, 2014). Principals “lack the ongoing
support and development required to maintain and foster sustained commitment” to the organization (School Leaders Network, 2014, p. 1). Finnigan and Daly (2017) elaborated by arguing “principals were cut off from both other principals and central office leaders, effectively making them islands in the leadership network” (p. 28). The lack of support and feelings of isolation contributed to principals’ level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Boyce & Bowers, 2016).

Less prevalent in the research on causes for principal turnover were policy issues. The most researched policy issue contributing to principal turnover was salary (Rangel, 2018). The predictability of salary to principal turnover was dependent on how principal turnover was measured. Two of 1900 studies investigated by Rangel (2018) found a relationship between salary and turnover. Tekleselassie and Villarreal (2010) found increasing a principal’s salary by $10,000 increased the likelihood he or she would stay by 87%. In their correlational study, Tran and Buckman (2017) reported an increase in salary by approximately $3,200 was enough incentive for a principal to leave their current district for another.

Another policy challenge associated with principal turnover related to staffing practices. Evans (2011) and Rangel (2018) both reported staffing issues such as hiring, firing, and union practices undermined principal authority. Rangel (2018) elaborated by sharing that these staffing challenges related to principal dissatisfaction and because of this dissatisfaction, principals chose to leave their principalship.

**Student characteristics.** Principals leave schools at higher rates when there are higher concentrations of low-income and lower-performing students (Beteille et al., 2012; Burkhauser et al., 2012; DeAngelis & White, 2011; Mitani, 2017; Rangel, 2018). In
Miami-Dade, Milwaukee, and San Francisco public schools, principals expressed a preference for schools with higher achieving students (Beteille et al., 2012). Principal turnover rates were 10% higher at schools with more low-income students and 14% higher at schools with low-achieving students when compared to more affluent schools (Beteille et al., 2012). Young and Fuller’s (2009) analysis of Texas principals found a relationship between low-performing schools and principal turnover. Within five years, 75% of principals left low-performing schools compared to 60% of principals leaving high-performing schools (Young & Fuller, 2009).

Goodwin (2013) added principal frustration with the inability to improve struggling schools resulted in their decision to leave a school. Based on existing research, two causes strongly linked to principal turnover are school performance and accountability policy (Rangel, 2018). Rangel (2018) noted research into causal links between student achievement levels and principal turnover were inconsistent. DeAngelis and White (2011) expounded it was not just the population of low-performing students but accountability pressure of progressing achievement that significantly related to principal turnover. Mitani (2017) further agreed underperforming students alone were not the reason principals left, but rather the accountability sanctions for not advancing students, resulting in increased stress levels for principals that ultimately determined if they left.

**Accountability and shifting demands of the job.** One of the most predominant reasons a principal leaves a school is due to increased stress from accountability sanctions and the ever-shifting changes to their role as principal (Mitani, 2017). In researching factors that influenced principal turnover, Daloisio (2017) found principals
felt their job responsibilities increased remarkably and there was a need to develop principals’ critical role in human capital management. Equally important, Evans (2011) found principals left their principalship because of the intense stress they felt from mandated programs and the inability to make required progress.

Expanding on this idea, Mitani (2017) further explained principals facing sanctions due to accountability measures felt more stress, which was aggravated when the school had a large population of underperforming or low-income students. First time sanctions at a school resulted in a principal leaving 2.5 times more frequently to another school within the district and 1.2 times more likely to leave the district all together (Mitani, 2017). Rangel (2018) added new accountability measures created more and new work. Principals felt “overwhelmed with central office demands they could not respond to and that often conflicted with locally articulate priorities” (Rangel, p. 104).

**Principal stress and satisfaction levels.** Fullan (2014) used the term *moral imperative* to emphasize that all students are provided with a fair and substantive education. Thus, principals are charged with ensuring all students achieve at high levels and closing ever-widening achievement gaps. Ultimately the goal of the education system and responsibility of the principal is that all students are career and college ready (CDE, 2010).

Although lagging academic achievement of students on the global level was well documented for over 30 years, recently the educational focus shifted to the mental health crisis for children (Child Mind Institute, 2016). Over 10 years ago, Gray (2010) found a national increase in the number of students experiencing social-emotional issues including mood disorder, depression, and anxiety. According to the Child Mind Institute
(2016), over 17 million children, or one in five, meet clinical criteria for a major mental health disorder. America is facing a challenge in education to ensure children grasp the academic skills necessary to prosper in life but also acquire the social-emotional skills to aid in their future success.

As a result, state and federal education reforms broadened the previously narrow focus on academics to include social-emotional skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The moral imperative expanded so all students are provided social-emotional skills necessary to prosper in life and positively contribute to the community (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These shifting demands of the principalship and increased accountability measures contributed to increased levels of stress for principals (MetLife, 2013). The enactment of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) increased the stakes for principals and educators to ensure students achieve a balance of EI and high levels of academic achievement.

These new educational initiatives require the principal to sell them to their teachers and help teachers navigate through these changes (Fullan, 2014). With each of these educational changes, including new standards and education laws focusing on social-emotional needs, teachers require professional development and principal support (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). However, it is becoming more complicated for principals to keep staff feeling emotionally supported; Educator Quality of Work Life Survey (American Federation of Teachers, 2017) indicated teachers found their work always or often stressful 61% of the time, which is significantly higher than the general population. With the complexities policies and laws created for the educational system in general and
specifically for principals implementing these high-stakes changes, stress levels are high and districts experience extraordinary levels of principal turnover.

Boyce and Bowers (2016) identified two types of principals: satisfied and dissatisfied. Dissatisfied principals leave the principalship at higher rates and are more likely to leave the principalship altogether (Boyce & Bowers, 2016). Berry (2014) added negative perceptions of job satisfaction triggered a principals’ desire to leave the job. “Principal’s success, job satisfaction, and willingness to see the job through appear to hinge on their people skills, which enable them to create a cohesive school culture and work with teachers to chart a course for improvement” (Goodwin, 2013, p. 80). Roughly one out of three principals of 500 surveyed were “actively considering leaving the profession” as a result of the impossibility of the job and dissatisfaction (School Leader Network, 2014, p. 9).

Conclusions from the MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership (2013) determined “running the nation’s schools has become more complex, challenging, and stressful” (p. 1). This survey investigated satisfaction and stress levels of over 500 principals nationally and found 75% indicated the principalship became too complex and 69% stated their job had changed significantly over the last five years (MetLife, 2013). Regarding principal satisfaction, 68% of principals on a 2008 MetLife survey indicated they were satisfied with their job whereas only 59% of principals on the 2013 MetLife survey indicated they were satisfied with the job, a recorded decline in principal job satisfaction (MetLife, 2013).

Nearly half (48%) of principals reported feeling intense stress several days a week (MetLife, 2013). Compounding the stress principals feel was the sense they had little
control over key decisions. Eighty-nine percent of principals reported feeling responsible for everything happening to students and staff. However, significantly fewer principals reported having control over key decisions affecting both students and staff. Seventy-eight percent of principals reported difficulties allocating and managing dwindling budgets to meet the needs of students and staff and 83% stated they had issues meeting the diverse learning needs of their students. Another external factor contributing to principal stress and dissatisfaction was garnering parent engagement to improve student outcomes, as indicated by 72% of principals reporting frustration with these efforts (MetLife, 2013). Shifting roles of the principal and accountability measures left principals feeling greater stress and dissatisfaction, leading to higher rates of principal turnover (Mitani, 2017).

Role of the K-12 Principal

The changing role of K-12 principalship and increased accountability also factor into understanding the impact grit and EI may have on longevity of expert principals. K-12 principals are the second most influential person impacting student achievement next to the classroom teacher and the driving force for teacher success (Fullan, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2008; Marzano & Waters, 2007). Principals play a crucial role in managing and effecting change, promoting student learning, and sustaining school improvement despite conflicting priorities, teacher resistance, and limited resources (Louis et al., 2010; Pepper, 2010). Principals establish vision, model behaviors, and strengthen professional communities (Cranston, 2016; Dufour & Mattos, 2013; Strong et al., 2008). However, the principal role changed significantly over the past 50 years with
an increased urgency to reform education resulting in increased pressure on principals to attain positive results (Fullan, 2014, Wallace Foundation, 2013).

The principal’s role shifted from rule enforcer and school building manager to lead learner and visionary (Wallace Foundation, 2013). As cited in the Wallace Foundation’s report (2013), The School Principal As Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning, these shifts bring “dramatic changes in what public education needs from principals…they can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to district rules, carrying out regulations and avoiding mistakes” (p. 6). Principals must be the lead learner, developing teams that can deliver effective instruction. The Wallace Foundation (2013) further established five key responsibilities of the principal:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students based on high standards
- Creating a climate hospitable to education with safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction
- Cultivating leadership in others so teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision
- Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost
- Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement

In addition, as defined by ESSA, principals are now asked to ensure all student subgroups make proportional growth in math, science, and ELA, and are happy, healthy contributing citizens, while also building positive relationships with parents and teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Moreover, it is expected politically savvy
principals make strategic decisions that increase achievement and social-emotional indicators while seeking input from parents, teachers, and community members (Wallace Foundation, 2013). This section reviews how educational reform changes affect the principalship, contribute to an increased moral imperative that resulted in high levels of stress and decreased job satisfaction culminating in a spike in costly principal turnover.

**Changing Role of K-12 Principal and Accountability**

An investigation into how education changed over time and the effects those changes have on the role of principals can shed light on the complexities currently contributing to high levels of principal turnover. In just over 50 years, five major educational reform movements were enacted: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Improving America’s School Act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RTTT) which added Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and ESSA. These federal reforms clearly impact districts and drive board policies, but more specifically impact the duties and responsibilities of principals held accountable for implementing such reforms that frequently lack necessary funding (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Principals are faced with increasing pressure for students and teachers to perform optimally while faced with fewer resources and a student body with historically high levels of mental health needs (Child Mind Institute, 2016).

President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 signed ESEA into law. This was a civil rights law attempting to level the playing field for children and provide equity to low-performing students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). This act improved education for low-achieving students; however, in 1983 a publication by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, claimed American schools were no longer
keeping up globally and educational quality had declined significantly. This reform increased the responsibilities of the principal to ensure all students, including low-achieving and minority students, were succeeding (Jennings, 2018).

In 1989 President George Bush met with the Nation’s Governors at the Charlottesville Education Summit National Governor’s Conference in which six national education goals were developed (National Education Goals Panel, 1999). These six national education goals were revealed at President Bush’s State of the Union address in January 1990. These goals to be achieved by 2000 included children starting school ready to learn; high school graduation rates increased to 90%; assessing all students’ performance in 4th, 8th, and 12th grades; becoming first in the world in math and science; graduates being skilled and literate citizens; and school environments being free of drugs so students can learn (American Presidency Project, 1990). These six educational targets broaden the principal’s responsibility and initiated the standards movement that later came with critical accountability targets that, if not met, resulted in severe sanctions.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed into law a five-year re-authorization of ESEA titled Improving America’s School Act (“Summary of the Improving America’s School Act,” 1994). This act required state standards and assessments. It also defined state adequate yearly progress (AYP) criteria and identified schools in need of improvement. The most prominent aspect of this act was the $11 billion of Title I-XIV funding earmarked to aid schools serving the most vulnerable students (Fullan, 2014). With these new monies came accountability to ensure funds were spent as authorized and increased responsibilities of the site and district leadership to track funding, services, and results (Fullan, 2014).
In 2001, due to continued frustration with the lack of progress American students were making, NCLB was signed into law by President George W. Bush (Fullan, 2014). Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked reading, math, and science scores for the United States significantly low compared to other countries. As a result, the age of accountability commenced whereby all students in 3rd – 8th grades were to be assessed on specified reading and mathematical standards; however, it was up to the individual states to determine those standards and assessments (Jennings, 2018).

NCLB also launched static AYP targets for all districts, schools, and subgroups (Jennings, 2018). If AYP was not met, there were consequences. If schools failed to document AYP for two consecutive years, they were subjected to escalating sanctions and possible closure (Fullan, 2014). This level of culpability increased stress for district personnel, principals, and teachers, yet the anticipated results were not achieved (Mitani, 2017). A key to the NCLB sanction system was the idea this would provide incentives for principals to improve student performance through practices such as designing better curriculum for high-stakes subjects, analyzing data, frequently observing teachers, and engaging parents and staff in key decisions to drive student achievement. Ultimately, NCLB resulted in increased stress for principals and higher rates of turnover (Mitani, 2017).

RTTT was introduced by President Barack Obama in 2009. Policymakers realized NCLB was too prescriptive and unsuccessful in its endeavors (Fullan, 2014). RTTT had four components: new standards and assessments, improved data systems, increased quality of both teachers and principals, and a focus on improving the bottom 5% of schools (Jennings, 2018). It was during this same period the CCSS were
developed and endorsed by 90% of states (Fullan, 2014). The CCSS acted as an antidote to the disintegrating educational system with hopes to close achievement gaps with other countries (Jennings, 2018). CCSS also regulated standards across American in hopes of leveling the playing field for all students. The rigor of these standards and how to instruct students changed significantly, creating stress and additional complexities, including re-training veteran teachers, aligning curriculum materials with standards, and ensuring technology was available and functioning for both students and teachers (Fullan, 2014). RTTT was one of the first reforms in recent history that emphasized the importance of effective principals in boosting teaching and learning (Wallace Foundation, 2013). However, achievement gaps, especially for minority and low-income students, continued to broaden, requiring principals to double their efforts in a time when school funding dropped significantly in California (Jennings, 2018).

In 2013, California restructured its educational funding to simplify how state funds were distributed to districts and to establish eight state priorities to be addressed in the funding plan (CDE, 2013). The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) created funding targets based on student characteristics and provided greater flexibility to use funds to improve student outcomes. Districts with higher percentages of English learners, students receiving free/reduced lunch, and foster youth received additional concentration grants to educate these students; however, a strategic plan guiding use of funds, the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), must be developed in collaboration with parents and community members to ensure funds are used directly to improve achievement for these groups of students (CDE, 2015). Ultimately this responsibility falls on the site principal (Jennings, 2018).
The LCAP must address the eight state priorities, including conditions of learning, pupil outcomes, and engagement (CDE, 2015). The LCAP expanded the responsibilities for site principals to ensure they focus on school culture, climate, equity, and involvement of parents and students (CDE, 2015). Depending on the demographics of the district, the site principal may receive more or less money, yet the responsibilities for the principal continue to increase. This came at a time when principals were just implementing CCSS, new critical assessments of these standards, adopting new curricula aligned to these standards, and adopting new science and social studies standards and frameworks. This was an all-time historical increase in responsibilities and accountability for the site principal (Jennings, 2018). As these new changes were established in California, the fifth major reform, which expanded educating the social and emotional needs of children, was signed into law (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

President Barack Obama signed into law ESSA in 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This re-authorized the 50-year-old ESEA with a commitment to equal opportunities for all students. This law targeted academic achievement for students and advocated for the social-emotional needs and competencies of all students (Cranston, 2016). Simultaneously in 2015, “for the first time in 50 years, more than half of our public school students were from low-income families” (Jennings, 2018, p. 10). Educating students of poverty increased the stakes and stress levels for principals (Mitani, 2017).

With each educational reform, it was the principal held accountable for student academic success and positive social emotional growth (Cranston, 2016; Fullan, 2014). Initially, these reforms came with additional federal and/or state funding, but more than
likely this funding decreased over time (Fullan, 2014). Regardless of funding allocation, the principal’s pressure to acquire optimal results remained. The initial years of school accountability reform had a narrow focus on student academic achievement, but with ESSA, the principal’s moral imperative is expanded to include promoting positive social-emotional skills in hopes of mitigating the increasing mental health crisis students face (Child Mind Institute, 2016). “Never before has a school principal’s job been more important and never before has the job been more difficult” (Pepper, 2010, p. 43).

**Need for a New Form of K-12 Principal Leadership**

As a result of the changing role of the K-12 principalship and increased principal stress, need for a new kind of leadership was identified (Fullan, 2014; Goodwin, 2013; Pepper, 2010; Zaccaro, 2007). Exploring principal attributes in the literature explained why grit and EI could impact longevity of expert principals. Zaccaro (2007) argued there needs to be a balance of intellectual and social-emotional capabilities to be a successful school leader. In the same way, several researchers argued EI is crucial to leadership success (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Zaccaro (2007) also added there should also be strong dispositional personal attributes to balance the cognitive and EI.

Goodwin (2013) asserted a “principal’s success, job satisfaction, and willingness to see the job through appear to hinge on their people skills, which enables them to create a cohesive school culture and work with teachers to chart a course for improvement” (p. 80). This perseverance, the willingness to see the job through, Goodwin (2013) discussed is similar to Duckworth’s (2007) definition of grit: “Passion and perseverance for long-term goals” (Duckworth, 2007, p. 1087). Pepper (2010) identified a need for principals
to serve as transformational leaders of the school, supportive guides, inspirational coaches, and engaged with parents, teachers, and students. A balance of EI and grit are needed to accomplish these crucial endeavors. In exploring how grit and EI can impact longevity of expert principals, it is important to further explore attributes linked to leadership success, especially those needed for the 21st century K-12 principal.

**Constructs for Principal Success and Longevity**

To more deeply understand how grit and EI could impact longevity of expert principals, one must first investigate attributes linked to leadership success. Research documented several models for predicting success in leadership roles (McKee et al., 2008), with fewer studies focusing on retention of highly skilled leaders (Eskreis et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). Leadership success and success as an adult led to research in the areas of dynamic psychological abilities such as EI and highly effective non-cognitive skills like grit.

Current trends in research go beyond the need for intelligence and specific personality traits to studying the impacts EI and non-cognitive skills like grit have on educational leadership. The most current research trend explored the effects EI and grit have on retention (Eskreis et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014; Schutte et al., 2013). Further exploration of the effects these psychological abilities and non-cognitive skills have on retaining highly skilled principals could strengthen the knowledge base and provide crucial insights for districts’ hiring, staffing, and developing practices.
Longevity of Principals

Principal longevity is critical for creating and sustaining a transformational vision, driving improvement plans for staff and students, and developing a culture where all individuals thrive (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Yet, constant churn of principals impedes the progress by disrupting the necessary 5-7 years it takes to accomplish such goals (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Fullan, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005; Young & Fuller, 2009). Young and Fuller (2009) investigated longevity of principals and found both external and internal reasons why some principals remain at a school for the critical 5-7 years it takes to facilitate positive change.

External factors contributing to longevity of principals included school achievement and poverty levels (Young & Fuller, 2009). Principal longevity is highest at the elementary school level. However, higher concentrations of low-achieving students led to principal turnover; schools with higher levels of student achievement contributed to longevity of principals. Unfortunately, the churn at underachieving schools impedes the necessary time, 5-7 years, it takes a principal to make large scale change efforts that can positively impact achievement (Fullan, 2014; School Leaders Network, 2014). Young and Fuller (2009) found principals able to stay over five years and increase student performance levels were 20% more likely to remain at the school.

The internal factors impacting longevity included both age and gender (Young and Fuller, 2009). Young and Fuller (2009) found individual characteristics of principals that led to longevity. Principals between the ages of 35-49 years of age were more likely to remain at their school sites. Female principals at the elementary level had greater longevity; after five-years, female principals at the elementary level had 10% higher
retention rates (Young & Fuller, 2009). Research into assessing how personal characteristics or traits such as grit or EI impact longevity of expert principals was not found. However, substantial research into the development of such skills exists.

Both grit and EI can be developed through training and focus (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Duckworth, 2016; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2018). Mattingly and Kraiger (2018) identified approximately 60 published studies on EI training programs. They calculated the effect of formal training on EI and found a moderate positive effect for the training regardless of study design. In addition, published studies had higher effect sizes when compared to dissertations. The reported effect sizes were relatively robust over time regardless of how EI was measured (i.e., ability vs. trait) or type of participants. Similar findings were reported for EI competency-based training programs (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2018).

Moreover, Bradberry and Greaves (2009) claimed EI is a fluid skill that can be cultivated through awareness and commitment. Training in EI had demonstrated benefits to various fields, including education and organizational management (Schutte & Bhullar, 2018). Schutte et al. (2013) assessed the effectiveness of EI training programs on over 435 participants. They found managers who received a 4-week EI training program showed an “average increase of 10.5% in work morale and an average decrease of 11.1% in work related stress” (Schutte et al., 2013, p. 62). They concluded EI training programs offered promise and indicated preliminary positive effects; however, more studies on EI intervention programs are needed to indicate the exact effect size of such programs.

Duckworth (2016) argued grit is a personal trait that can be cultivated through training. Considering professional development increases longevity of principals and
these two traits can be developed, it warrants investigation. To further understand how these trainable traits/skills could impact longevity of expert principals, one must first realize the impact intelligence and personality traits have on leader success.

**Cognitive Abilities**

Before delving into how the constructs of grit and EI may contribute to longevity and success of expert principals, first there is a need to better understand how cognitive levels contribute to leadership success. In 1905, Alfred Binet developed a test to quantify and test a child’s intelligence quotient. For over 100 years, researchers investigated various components of intelligence and its ability to predict success. Several researchers positively correlated intelligence with leadership success and performance (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Judge et al., 2004; Zaccaro et al., 2004). It was well-founded success requires a specified level of intelligence, but success in leadership does not come solely from intelligence (McKee et al., 2008). Researchers investigating what contributed to leadership success moved beyond intelligence to investigate other factors influencing success. Besides general intelligence, the literature identified personality traits as an indicator of success.

**Personality Traits**

Initially in the literature, psychologists generally agreed personality was primarily biological and relatively stable (Costa & McCrae, 1992). However, more current researchers found personality traits can evolve over time (Almlund et al., 2011). Almlund et al. (2011) concurred personality traits are as inheritable as cognitive traits; however, many traits can be developed, which is an important consideration in developing leadership skills. Researchers continue to investigate what role personality
traits play in successful leadership. Currently, Costa and McCrae’s (1992) Five Factor Model is one of the most recognized and utilized models of personality (Table 1).

Table 1

*Five Factor Model of Personality Traits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality Trait</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>Having an appreciation for adventure and curiosity as well as willingness to explore new concepts, ideas, and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Being organized and dutiful in completing tasks in a timely manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Being outgoing and welcoming the company of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Preferring harmony and cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Having a lack of emotional stability</td>
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Judge et al. (2004) investigated the relationship between Costa and McCrae’s Five Factor Model with leadership and found extraversion and conscientiousness had the strongest relationship to success as a leader. In the 1990s, a shift occurred from investigating intelligence and personality traits as indicators of success to studying new models of EI constructed by Mayer and Salovey.

**Emotional Intelligence**

Over the past two decades, the study of EI gained attention as a predictor of leadership success. In 2018 when searching Google Scholar, approximately 2,270,000 scholarly studies mentioned EI. Since 1990, “EI has grown into a small industry of publications, testing, education, and consulting” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 503). Whereas Goleman (1998) is best known for bringing EI into the mainstream, the Mayer and Salovey (1990) model was used most frequently to define and determine if EI is a valid construct and measure of leadership success. However, there continues to be
disagreement in the field as to the specifications and claims regarding this construct (Antonakis, 2015; Mayer et al., 2008; Roberts, Matthews, & Zeidner, 2010).

Mayer et al. (2008) argued the concept of EI was too broad, vague, and confusing, and exaggerated claims were not founded in empirical scientific evidence. In agreement with various colleagues, Mayer et al. (2008) contended many EI models did not directly concern EI, but were rather a laundry list of traits such as happiness, empathy, or optimism. One model defined EI as “an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures” (Bar-On, 1997, p. 14). These models did not solidify the processes or neurobiological science behind EI. According to Mayer et al. (2008), these trait-list models of EI did more harm than good when “establishing EI as a legitimate empirical construct” (p. 503). Furthermore, the use of an eclectic list of traits led to confusion in the field of EI. These trait-based models muddled the EI concept as an ability versus expressions of EI (Mayer et al., 2008). Furthermore, from a construct validity perspective, it was challenging to assess the contributions of so many independent qualities. Confusion resulted from models that were vague or too broad, coupled with exaggerated claims regarding EI as a predictor of success led to questioning the validity of EI (Antonakis, 2015; Mayer et al., 2008; Roberts et al., 2010).

Despite empirical science correlating EI with success (Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Schutte & Bhullar, 2018; Schutte, Malouff, & Bhullar, 2009; Schutte, Malouf, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007), claims were also exaggerated. Goleman (2005) agreed exaggerated claims of EI as a success indicator came from misinterpretation of his 1995 book. Claims such as EI “accounts for over 85% of outstanding performance in top
leaders” (Watkin, 2000, p. 89) or is directly related to earnings “that every point increase in EQ adds $1,300 to an annual salary” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 21) are argued to lack the necessary scientific rigor for such claims (Antonakis, 2015; Mayer et al., 2008; Roberts et al., 2010).

Roberts et al. (2010) asserted EI models need to be more theory driven and grounded in the neurological and cognitive processes supporting EI. They further asserted for continued scientific progress in the field of EI, a resolution of uncertainties regarding definitions, models, and measurements was needed (Roberts et al., 2010). Antonakis (2015) noted disagreement in the scientific community as to the construct of EI, how to measure EI, and the accuracy with which EI measures can predict success. These researchers strived to crystalize the concept of EI into a model going beyond a trait-list to a construct separate from intelligence and personality traits and as such Mayer et al. (2008) developed their Four Branch Model.

The original Mayer and Salovey (1990) framework included three aspects: appraisal and expression of emotions in self and others, regulating emotions in self and others, and utilizing emotions for various cognitive processes. The foundation of the original concept was “some individuals possess the ability to reason about and use emotions to enhance thought more effectively than others” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 503). In 2008, Caruso joined Mayer and Salovey to continue development of the Four Branch Model. Greene (2018) contended EI “includes the ability to engage in sophisticated information processing about one’s own and others’ emotions and the ability to use this information as a guide to thinking and behavior” (p. 1). She further argued emotionally intelligent individuals process information to understand and manage their emotions to
adapt in situations garnering positive outcomes for self or others (Greene, 2018). Schutte and Bhular (2018) defined EI as “a set of interrelated competencies to adaptively perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotions in the self and others…to control and utilize feelings wisely” (p. 4). Both definitions utilized the Mayer et al. Four Branch Model created in 2008 and updated in 2016.

**Theoretical Model for Emotional Intelligence**

**Four Branch Model of EI**

“Emotional abilities can be thought of as falling along a continuum from those that are relatively lower level…to those that are more developmentally complex and operate in the service of personal self-management and goals” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 506). The original 1990 model outlined three components of EI and in 2008, the Four Branch Model included: perceiving emotions in self and others, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding the language or signs of emotions, and managing emotions to attain specific goals. These components fall along a continuum from the lowest level of perceiving emotions to the most complex of managing emotions for specific outcomes or goals.

Each of the four branches has a developmental trajectory from easy to sophisticated skills (Mayer et al., 2008). Each ability area of the model can be operationalized for assessing EI. As unique humans, individuals have variance in each of the four processes described. This model morphed over time taking into consideration the criticisms discussed previously about precision, connection to neurobiological processes, and ability versus mixed-trait models.
Although this model is not perfect and recent concerns emerged about its ability to discern EI from personality and intelligence factors, it is recognized in the field as the flagship model of EI for assessing EI as an ability rather than a list of traits. Figure 1 presents the revised Mayer et al. (2016) Four Branch Model of EI. Within the model itself, the lowest level of the continuum is at the bottom of the model whereas the most complex is at the top. Also, within each of the four branches the relatively easy skills are also at the bottom whereas the more sophisticated skills are ranked at the top of each box.
Emotional Intelligence

Managing emotions to attain specific goals
1. Effectively manage others’ emotions to achieve a desired outcome.
2. Effectively manage one’s own emotions to achieve a desired outcome.
3. Evaluate strategies to maintain, reduce, or intensify an emotional response.
4. Monitor emotional reactions to determine their reasonableness.
5. Engage with emotions if they are helpful; disengage if not.
6. Stay open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings, as needed, and to the information they convey.

Understanding emotions, emotional language, and the signal conveyed by emotions
1. Recognize cultural differences in the evaluation of emotions.
2. Understand how a person might feel in the future or under certain conditions.
3. Recognize transitions among emotions such as from anger to satisfaction.
4. Understand complex and mixed motions.
5. Differentiate between moods and emotions.
6. Appraise the situations that are likely to elicit emotions.
7. Determine the antecedents, meanings, and consequences of emotions.
8. Label emotions and recognize relations among them.

Using emotions to facilitate thinking
1. Select problems based on how one’s ongoing emotional state might facilitate cognition.
2. Leverage mood swings to generate different cognitive perspectives.
3. Prioritize thinking by directing attention according to present feeling.
4. Generate emotions as a means to relate to experience of another person.
5. Generate emotions as an aid to judgement and memory.

Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and others
1. Identify deceptive or dishonest emotional expressions.
2. Discriminate accurate vs. inaccurate emotional expressions.
3. Understand how emotions are displayed depending on context and culture.
4. Express emotions accurately when desired.
5. Perceive emotional content in the environment, visual arts, and music.
6. Perceive emotions in other people through their vocal cues, facial expressions, language and behavior.
7. Identify emotions in one’s own physical states, feelings, and thoughts.

Figure 1. Four Branch Model of EI (Mayer et al., 2008; revised, 2016)
Predictor of Success and Effectiveness

The literature review of EI as a predictor of success is full of contradictions. Several studies reported EI positively impacts leadership (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Cavazotte et al., 2012; Labby et al., 2012; Martins, Romalho, & Morin, 2010; Mayer et al., 2008; Schutte et al., 2013). Fewer studies found little to no effect (Hall, 2007; Kirkland, 2011; Lokelani Bryson, 2008; Smith, 2005; Snuggs, 2006). Analyzing studies that used a meta-analysis helped make sense of and synthesize the vast body of contradictory studies. Three meta-analysis studies were found.

Schutte et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of the literature on EI. In reviewing over 200 studies, they found a significant correlation between EI and mental, physical, and psychosomatic health across studies. Martins et al. (2010) also conducted a meta-analysis of EI literature and found similar results. Schutte et al. (2013) found individuals participating in EI training reported “greater increases in life satisfaction, lower self-reported stress levels and better cortisol levels as measured by saliva assays” which ultimately increased leadership effectiveness (p. 61). C. Martin (2008) also conducted a meta-analysis in which he analyzed studies with over 7,300 participants. His work found a moderately strong relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness.

Labby et al. (2012) completed a historical review of intelligence and EI, highlighting the impact these have on leadership success. When leaders demonstrate EI, their employees expressed greater job satisfaction and reached higher performance levels. They further reported employees working under charismatic leaders, those with high levels of EI, had fewer relationship conflicts, better performance, and higher levels of productivity (Labby et al., 2012). Mayer et al. (2008) found managers demonstrating
high levels of EI fostered trusting relationships and increased productivity from workers. Similarly, Cavazotte et al. (2012) collected data from 134 midlevel managers and found EI statistically related to transformational leadership; they further contended leadership effectiveness was a direct function of transformational leadership behaviors.

Several studies indicated EI positively contributed to leadership (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Cavazotte et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2004). Other researchers specifically explored EI and educational leadership (Ashworth, 2013; Bardach, 2008; Barnes, 2015; Brinia et al., 2014; Cobbs, 2012; Gutierrez, 2017; May-Vollmar, 2017). Beyond studying EI as a success indicator in the general population, researchers specifically explored how EI contributes to educational leadership, including principal success.

**Emotional Intelligence in Educational Leadership**

A phenomenological study was conducted to investigate how California superintendents regard the impact of EI on their leadership skills (Gutierrez, 2017). The superintendents reported EI contributed to effective leadership. These study participants further shared EI supported reactions and responses to situations, an openness to learn, effective communication, strong relationships, recognition of emotions in others, and supported a safe environment. Furthermore, Gutierrez (2017) argued “creating emotional safety was by far the most frequently mentioned outcome” (p. 107). In addition to the studies of EI in the field of education, several studies investigating EI and principal success (Ashworth, 2013; Bardach, 2008; Barnes, 2015; Brinia et al., 2014; Cobbs, 2012; Horne, 2018; May-Vollmar, 2017).

**Principal emotional intelligence.** Assessing the degree of association between middle school principal EI and school success, Bardach (2008) found a significant
association when comparing experiential (i.e., perceiving emotion and facilitation of thinking) vs. strategic (understanding emotions and managing emotions) EI. He used the Mayer et al.’s Four Branch Model to assess principal EI levels. For every one-point increase in a principal’s experiential EI score, the “odds of the school meeting AYP increased by .05%” with a 96% confidence level (Bardach, 2008, p. 79). Similarly, for every one-point “increase in a principal’s total EI score, the odds of the school meeting AYP increased by .06%” with a 95% confidence level (Bardach, 2008, p. 78). There was no significant association of school success with the principal’s strategic EI scores.

Brinia et al. (2014) surveyed over 300 teachers and 36 principals regarding the role of a principal’s EI in leadership. Their findings revealed emotionally intelligent principals cultivated and inspired organizational culture creating trust among teachers. This allowed teachers and the principal to focus on improving student achievement (Brinia et al., 2014). Using a sample of 105 secondary principals, Ashworth (2013) investigated the relationship between principal EI and school performance in a mixed methods study. The quantitative analysis indicated no significant relationship between EI and school performance. However, the qualitative analysis revealed two major themes. EI was associated with strong interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and positive leadership capabilities. Emotionally intelligent principals reported key factors affecting school performance included “relationships, motivation, inspiration, organizational skills, emotional regulation, and communication skills” (Ashworth, 2013, p. v).

Barnes (2015) explored whether principal EI impacted student achievement at eight different Title I schools. She conducted a phenomenological study in Texas and found social awareness and relationship management allowed the principal to motivate
the school community while simultaneously creating an environment in which student achievement improved and previous academic success was sustained. These emotionally savvy principals also relied on awareness and self-management to reflect on strengths and weakness and adapt for personal and professional growth (Barnes, 2015). It was further concluded EI aided in these principals’ ability to self-monitor and reflect for the benefit of staff, students, and personal growth (Barnes, 2015).

Further contributions from Horne (2017) revealed principals believed their EI contributed to their success and these competencies could be cultivated and developed. Moreover, in a quantitative analysis of EI, May-Vollmar (2017) found a substantial correlation between EI and effective leadership practices. In this study, the r-squared value determined 28% of effective leadership can be attributed to a principal’s EI. Research into EI as a success indicator is vast, yet little research examined whether EI contributed to longevity or retention.

**Factor in longevity.** Schutte et al. (2013) found training in the area of EI could increase retention of university freshmen. In an introductory university class, beginning students were provided information on EI using the Four Branch Model. When assessed with an EI instrument, students who received the training scored higher. “The retention rate for the students in the EI training group was 98%” (Schutte et al., 2013, p. 59) when compared to 87% in the control group. Only one study could be found linking EI to retention/longevity. Although the research into how grit may contribute to longevity is substantial, the research on how EI may contribute to longevity is limited. “A truly healthy individual has neither thought alone, nor emotion alone, but a functional integration among his or her major psychological processes” (Mayer et al., p. 514).
**Theoretical Model for Grit**

Grit is a relatively new body of research introduced by Duckworth et al. in 2007. Grit is defined as “passion and perseverance for long-term goals” despite obstacles, setbacks, or boredom (Duckworth et al., 2007, p. 1087). Like predecessors generating frameworks for predicting success such as IQ or Mayer and Salovey’s (1990) construct of EI, Duckworth et al. (2007) concluded grit is also a predictor of success.

**Predictor of Success and Effectiveness**

Researchers expanded the scope of grit research in the past decade to investigate it as a predictor of success and effectiveness. Duckworth et al. (2009) determined grit was a positive predictor of teacher effectiveness. In their longitudinal study, Duckworth et al. (2009) studied almost 400 novice teachers. They measured teacher effectiveness by student academic gains and found students who had grittier novice teachers made greater academic gains (Duckworth et al., 2009).

In addition, three separate studies investigated student success. A. Martin (2011) contended grit contributed to increased academic performance and grittier students outperformed less gritty students. Duckworth et al. (2011) investigated the impact of grit on National Spelling Bee contestants. Their research determined grit was a key factor to succeeding in the spelling bees; grittier students were able to persevere for longer periods of study time and push through obstacles resulting in wins. Cranston (2016) studied the impact of grit on students of poverty. She found grit mitigated the profound impact poverty has on academic and non-academic skill development. Grittier students in expanded learning programs increased academic scores over peers with lower levels of grit (Cranston, 2016).
Hogan (2013) studied the impact grit and a growth mindset have on the success of women working in big law firms in a mixed methods study. She first identified female lawyers who rated high in grit. Interviews with these female lawyers revealed grit contributed to their ability to overcome challenging obstacles and land jobs, cases, and wins in their careers. Duckworth (2016) also reported grittier football teams, especially those specifically focusing on cultivating grit, had more wins. Duckworth studied and worked with Peter Carroll, head coach of the Seattle Seahawks, and NFL football players on his team. Duckworth (2016) claimed players scoring higher in grit had more success in the NFL. The results of 10 years of research firmly conclude grittier people regardless of context tend to be more successful. Preliminary findings in educational leadership also indicate grit predicts success and effectiveness for superintendents and principals (Davidson, 2014; Hubbard, 2018; Kearns, 2015).

**Grit in Educational Leadership**

Contemporary researchers just began to further scrutinize the effect of grit on educational leadership. Kearns (2015) examined the relationship between superintendent success and grit. She asserted grit is a relatively new topic and a lack of studies on grit and educational leadership warranted further research. Kearns (2015) argued dissatisfied superintendents experiencing rapid turnover require high levels of grit. She found superintendents who met the criteria for success rated themselves higher on grit, as did their subordinates. In addition, Kearns (2015) found major themes contributing to superintendent grittiness, including purposeful perseverance, others focused, clear goals and vision, life experience in formative years, high expectations, hard work, a support system, and celebration of small wins. Kerns’ (2015) research helps build the
understanding of how grit and leadership are related and opens the door for more studies in this area, specifically investigating the relationship to employment retention.

Hubbard (2018) explored the perceptions of K-12 superintendents and how grit impacted their success and tenure in a qualitative study. Her sample included superintendents with longer than usual tenure and who rated themselves high in grit. Hubbard (2018) argued superintendents felt grit contributed to their overall success and grit increased each time they successfully met a challenge. Furthermore, these superintendents reported grit aided in lengthening their tenure beyond three years.

**Principal grit.** Davidson (2014) investigated the relationship between grit and hope, and their effect on elementary school principal transformative leadership behaviors. He affirmed the lack of research and clear understanding of how grit is associated with effective leadership in education. Davidson (2014) found hope and grit positively related to effective, transformational leadership behaviors. Moreover, Davidson (2014) also found hope and grit predicted transformational leadership behaviors. His research suggested grittier principals were effective. Despite an expanding body of research indicating grit has a positive effect on educational leadership success; a gap exists in how grit relates to longevity of expert principals.

**Factor in longevity.** In recent years, grit research moved beyond exploration of grit as a predictor of success to investigate grit as a predictor for retention. Current studies positively reported grit as a predictor of retention for United States Military Academy cadets and novice teachers (Maddi et al., 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2013). Eskreis et al. (2014) found grit predictive of retention in the military, workforce
sales, high school, and marriage when compared to other context-specific predictors such as intelligence, physical aptitude, personality traits, and job tenure.

Grit was researched over the past decade and continues to grow as a body of research. Current studies explored the construct of grit in educational leadership from the perspective of predicting success; however, a lack of research specifically investigated grit and how it contributes to retaining educational leadership such as expert principals.

**Relationship between Grit and Emotional Intelligence**

“Viewing emotions as all-important would be a mistake, as it represents a false dichotomy…relying on emotional characteristics, or on motives, or on any single part of personality would leave the individual unbalanced” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 514). These researchers suggested success comes from a more balanced individual. A thorough review of literature revealed no known studies exploring the relationship between grit and EI, and a recommendation from the literature suggested principals need a balance of cognitive, social-emotional skills, and strong dispositional tendencies to adapt and persevere in current K-12 principalships (Fullan, 2014; Goodwin, 2013; Pepper, 2010; Zaccaro, 2007). It is important principals have the skills to adapt to the pressure and rapid rate of change, and have the perseverance to remain at a single school site to accomplish their vision (Fullan, 2014; Goodwin, 2013; Zaccaro, 2007). Perseverance of principals ultimately impacts student achievement and school climate for the better (Fullan, 2014, Wallace Foundation, 2013). The investigation into a relationship between grit and EI could verify this recommendation and help build the research base guiding districts on principal hiring and developing practices.
Summary

A quarter of the nation’s principals leave after the first year of service, yet they also contribute up to 25% of factors influencing student academic performance. Research indicated a marked decline in student achievement the year immediately following a principal leaving. Extensive research investigated the phenomenon of principal turnover, including the determinants and costs. Moreover, research documented factors contributing to principal success and effectiveness, but none explored why some principals stay at a school for five or more years to facilitate a school trajectory to improved student achievement. Recent studies expand the literature base acknowledging both EI and grit are factors contributing to the success of educational leaders. However, there is no known research exploring whether EI and grit impact longevity of expert principals, nor is there research exploring the relationship between these two variables. Although contemporary research suggested grit contributes to retention, there is no specific research on retention of expert principals. Further exploration of the impacts these psychological abilities and non-cognitive skills have on retaining highly skilled principals could fortify the knowledge base and provide essential insights for districts.

Synthesis Matrix

A synthesis matrix (Appendix A) was used to organize study variables presented in the literature review. The synthesis matrix provided a conceptual framework enabling a quick review of the research variables. This matrix assisted the researcher in drawing conclusions about relationships between entries on the table. The matrix shows the variables addressed and author, and shows support for selected ideas and concepts in the field.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study focused on the impact of grit and emotional intelligence (EI) on longevity of expert principals and the relationship between those two variables. Chapter I presented an overview of this study, including the purpose and research questions, problem statement, significance of the study, gaps in literature, and salient definitions. Chapter II presented a review of the literature, covering the significance of principal turnover, the changing role of the K-12 principalship, and the need for a different form of leadership balancing cognitive abilities, social-emotional capabilities, and strong dispositional tendencies. The chapter concluded with a detailed exploration of the constructs of grit and EI. Chapter III provides a thorough discussion of the methodology of this mixed methods study. It reviews the purpose statement and research questions, then presents the design of the study, population, sample, and instrumentation. In addition, data collection and analysis procedures are explained in detail, along with procedures to increase validity and reliability. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of study limitations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what relationship exists between emotional intelligence (EI) and grit among expert principals with three or more years’ longevity. A further purpose was to discover principal perceptions of how EI and grit impacted longevity in their positions.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do expert principals rate their level of EI as indicated on the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)?
2. How do expert principals rate their level of grit as indicated on the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale?
3. What relationship exists between EI and grit scale scores for expert principals?
4. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how EI impacts their longevity in their principalship?
5. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit impacts their longevity in their principalship?

Research Design

A mixed methods study was conducted to deeply understand the relationship between EI and grit and to discover expert principal perceptions of how these personal attributes impacted their longevity. Creswell (2014) argued, “to include only quantitative or qualitative methods falls short of the major approaches being used today in the social and human sciences” (p. 4). The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was selected to complement each other and provide greater breadth and depth of research.

This study followed a sequential explanatory model whereby quantitative methods were used to collect baseline data followed by qualitative methods used to dig deeper into the results. In this research design, the quantitative data were gathered via electronic survey and then using criterion sampling, cases were selected for interviews.
because they offered the potential for rich and meaningful data related to this study. The use of a mixed methods study allowed for triangulation, which occurs when both quantitative and qualitative data are utilized in a study (Patton, 2015).

**Quantitative Research Design**

In quantitative research, the researcher gathers numerical data allowing for statistical analysis (Patten, 2014). Patten (2014) stated quantitative researchers frequently utilize instruments with multiple choice questions or structured questionnaires to provide data that can easily be reduced to numbers for analysis. For this study, the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale and the SSEIT were used to measure expert principals’ level of grit and EI respectively. Both these instruments used fixed-choice questions. Statistical analyses were then applied to the results to determine how expert principals rated these variables and the relationship between expert principal self-reported levels of grit and EI.

**Qualitative Research Design**

In a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, qualitative data are used to build upon the quantitative data to tell a “story from the viewpoint of the participant” (Roberts, 2010, p. 145). As research into how EI and grit can impact expert principal longevity is new, the qualitative research supplemented the quantitative data to provide deeper insights into the experiences of these expert principals. Patton (2015) determined “when little is known about a topic, qualitative research should usually be initially favored” (p. 21); however, the use of quantitative data can help direct the course of the qualitative data within mixed methods studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). To deeply understand the perceptions of expert principals related to the impact of grit and EI on longevity, qualitative approaches using in-depth interviews was also conducted.
Population

Population was defined as “a group of individuals who comprise the same characteristics,” and thus “a population can be any size and come from any area” (Creswell, 2008, p. 644). The population for this research study was K-12 public school principals in California. California is home to approximately 10,500 schools (CDE, 2018). Assuming one principal per school, the population for this study was the 10,500 K-12 public school principals across the state. Table 2 shows the number of public schools by type and the number of students enrolled.

Table 2

Types and Number of California Public Students and Schools: 2017-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>231,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5,873</td>
<td>3,048,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>992,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>1,745,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>51,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>59,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Day</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>3,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>21,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>36,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,473</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,220,413</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Data from CDE (2018).

Target Population

The target population defines the population to which the findings are meant to be generalized. It is important target populations are clearly identified for a research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). With a population over 10,000, it was not reasonable to conduct a study of that magnitude; as such, a target population was used. According to Creswell (2014), a target population is the “actual list of sampling units from which the
sample is selected” (p. 393). Time and financial constraints typically impact a researcher’s ability to study large populations and samples (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A list of southern California K-12 public school principals was generated using the CDE’s (2019) Public Schools and Districts Data File. This generated a list of 4,344 schools with corresponding principals in the location set for the study. This list served as the target population for the study.

Sample

A sample was defined as “the group of subjects or participants from whom the study data are collected” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). A sample is a representational group of the target population the researcher plans to study. Therefore, the sample should ideally be representative of the overall population (Creswell, 2008). Typically, when quantitative research methods are used, random sampling is preferred (Patton, 2015). However, purposive criterion sampling was selected to identify the sample for the quantitative portion of the study due to access and the need to identify expert principals who met the criteria for participation. An expert principal had three or more years at a single site while earning either a state or federal school of distinction honor during his or her tenure, as well as having 75% or greater of the 2018 California School Dashboard indicators in the blue/green range. Purposive sampling was also used for the qualitative approach that followed the quantitative data collection to deepen the understanding and strengthen the data collected. Patton (2015) asserted purposive sampling is utilized when the researcher considers individuals as “key informants in terms of social dynamics, leadership positions, job responsibilities, and so on” (p. 19).
Quantitative Sampling Procedures

A list of southern California K-12 public school principals was generated using CDE’s (2019) *Public Schools and Districts Data File*. This generated a list of 4,344 schools with corresponding principals in southern California. To further narrow the sample, principals were selected whose school met two of the sampling criteria: (a) awarded a state (California Distinguished Schools) or federal (National Blue Ribbon School) recognition of excellence during the principal’s tenure, and (b) had 75% or more of the indicators on the 2018 California School Dashboard in the blue/green range. By using CDE’s lists for National Blue Ribbon schools from 2017 and 2018 and the California Distinguished Schools from 2018 and 2019, the potential sample was narrowed to 265 schools and their corresponding principals. By adding the criterion regarding blue/green level indicators on the 2018 California School Dashboard, this decreased the sample to 230 schools and their corresponding principals. Table 3 shows the number of potential participants based on the sampling criteria.

Table 3

*Quantitative Participants based on Sampling Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Sampling Criteria</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern California K-12 Public Schools</td>
<td>4,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Blue-Ribbon School (17 or 18) &amp;/or CA Distinguished School (18 or 19)</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% or greater blue/green indicators on 2018 CA School Dashboard</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Data were retrieved from the CDE website.

Cook, Heath, and Thompson (2016) reported electronic survey response rates were typically 25-30% without follow-up and increased to more than 50% with follow-up. The survey respondents were further filtered by the final criterion (three consecutive
years at their current site) to fulfill the needed sample size of at least 30 principals for the
correlational analysis. The sample process used the following procedure:

1. An initial request for participation was sent to all 230 principals
2. An informational letter (Appendix B) was sent via email to potential
   participants who indicated a willingness to participate in the survey along with
   the informed consent form (Appendix C) and Participant Bill of Rights
   (Appendix E)
3. Thirty of the willing participants, 15 elementary and 15 secondary, were
   chosen for participation in the survey

**Qualitative Sampling Procedures**

Patton (2015) described sequential explanatory mixed methods as selecting
specific cases from a sample for “greater in-depth inquiry to illuminate and validate” the
quantitative data (p. 272). A selected group of individuals, six elementary and six
secondary principals for a total of 12, who participated in the quantitative portion of the
study were chosen for qualitative interviews. Initially, participants were identified and
purposively selected for the quantitative portion based on the stated criteria. For the
qualitative portion, individuals were selected based on a willingness to participate in
interviews and convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the use of subjects most
accessible to or convenient to the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This
method of selection was utilized due to time and travel constraints.

Qualitative analyses typically require smaller sample sizes than quantitative
analyses. Qualitative samples should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all
perceptions. Obtaining most or all the perceptions leads to the attainment of data
saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommended 5 to 25 participants and Morse (1994) suggested at least six. Qualitative sample sizes may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990). The sample size selected for this study was 12.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used to collect data for this mixed methods study. Two instruments were used for the quantitative portion. An additional one was used for the qualitative portion of this study.

Quantitative Instrumentation

When collecting data for a study, researchers must ensure data are “reliable and will provide a range of responses” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 226). Patten (2014) stated quantitative researchers frequently utilize instruments with multiple-choice questions or structured questionnaires to collect numeric data. Both the 8-Item Grit Scale and SSEIT (Appendix F) provide numeric data to quantify self-perceived levels of grit and EI, respectively. Permission from authors of the instruments were obtained (Appendices K and L).

Grit scale. The original instrument developed to assess grit was the Grit-O Scale, also known as the 12-Item Grit Scale (Duckworth et al., 2007). This instrument was comprised of 12 questions associated with a two-factor structure based on the construct of grit: effort and stamina based on interest. Additional research was conducted to refine
the original grit scale to a shorter, more reliable instrument (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). This instrument is referred to as the 8-Item Grit Scale, or the Grit-S Scale. The Grit-S Scale assesses the attribute of grittiness. This 8-item instrument uses a 5-point Likert-type scale for respondents to rate their grit. Reverse coding was used for half of the items. Reverse coding means the numerical scoring goes in the opposite direction. Reverse coding is used when questions are posed both in the affirmative and negative to ensure consistency of response. Four of the items scored the most points to the response *Very Much Like Me* whereas the other four items scored the highest points to the response *Not Like Me at All*. Reverse coding aids in determining consistency in participants’ responses. All points are summed and divided by eight to acquire the scale score, which ranges from one (not gritty at all) to five (extremely gritty). The mean grit score for over 1,500 American adults was 3.4 with a standard deviation of .70 indicating approximately 68% of Americans have grit scores between 2.7 and 4.1 (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009).

**SSEIT.** The SSEIT is based on the Salovey and Mayer (1990) original model of EI. Although Mayer et al. (2008) refined the 1990 model, no significant differences exist between the basic aspects of EI proposed in the original scale and therefore the SSEIT remained the same. Rather than assessing EI through performance tasks, the SSEIT assessed the attribute of EI through self-report (Schutte et al., 1998). This instrument includes 33 items in which participants rate themselves on a 5-point Likert-type scale (Schutte et al., 2008). This instrument also uses reverse coding to ensure participant consistency of response. Once reverse coding was utilized on three of the items, then all items are added up for a total scale score ranging from 33 to 165. The higher the scale score, the more emotionally intelligent the individual based on established standard
deviations. Carmeli (2003) reported the mean EI score on the SSEIT for 100 senior managers was 122.43 with a standard deviation of 12.21, indicating approximately 68% of managers’ EI scores are between 110.21 to 134.65.

**Quantitative Validity**

Validity ensures an instrument or study “measures or tests what is actually intended” (Shenton, 2004, p. 64). Validity also assures the findings from the instruments are true and aligned to the research questions (Patton, 2015; Roberts, 2010). Various strategies were employed to create quantitative validity.

Construct validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). To increase construct validity for this study, two existing instruments were used, the 8-Item Grit Scale and the SSEIT. These instruments were previously validated to measure the intended constructs, grit and EI. Several studies were conducted by Duckworth and Quinn to validate the 8-Item Grit Scale. They found the 8-Item Grit Scale was shorter and more efficiently measured the trait of grit. Duckworth and Quinn (2009) further contended:

> Confirmatory factor analyses supported a two-factor structure of the self-report version of Grit-S in which consistency of interest and perseverance of effort both loaded on grit as a second-order latent factor. Both factors…were strongly intercorrelated, r = .59. (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009, p. 173)

Schutte et al. (1998) conducted several studies to validate the SSEIT. The 33-item instrument developed through factor analysis showed evidence of validity. When comparing the SSEIT to other measures of EI, a substantial relationship emerged to the
“EQ-i, another self-report scale of [EI], at r = .43” (Schutte et al., 1998, p. 175). This indicated the SSEIT correlated to the EQ-i. Correlation coefficients greater than .40 are considered moderately strong (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). However, when compared to a performance test of EI, although “the relationship was statistically significant, it was not strong at r = .18” (Schutte et al., 1998, p. 176). Regardless, the researchers found evidence of predictive validity in that SSEIT scores for incoming college students predicted end-of-year grade point average. “The scale also indicated discriminant validity as it proved different from cognitive abilities and was not significantly related to four of the big five personality dimensions” (Schutte et al., 1998, p. 174). The SSEIT was found to be a valid measure of EI (Schutte et al., 1998).

**Quantitative Reliability**

Reliability is achieved when an instrument continues to produce similar results when used in different circumstances (Roberts, 2010). Different strategies exist to ensure reliability of quantitative instruments (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Reliability in research also serves as a measure of rigor and trustworthiness of the research findings.

External reliability refers to achieving the same results of a study either done in a different context or by a different researcher. Although this concept is less applicable to qualitative research, external reliability is necessary for quantitative studies. Using established instruments to measure grit and EI increased the reliability of this study as both measures were already deemed reliable, producing consistent results over time.

The 8-Item Grit Scale was deemed a reliable instrument of the construct grit. Duckworth and Quinn (2009) determined both factors of this scale, consistency of interest and perseverance of effort, showed “adequate internal consistency and were
strongly inter-correlated, $r = .59$, $p < .001$” (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009, p. 173).

Furthermore, the 8-Item Grit Scale “displayed acceptable internal consistency with alphas ranging from .73 to .83 across four samples” (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009, p. 174). In addition, the 8-Item Grit Scale was stable over time. The correlation between scores on the 8-Item Grit Scale from spring of 2006 to spring 2007 was $r = .68$, $p < .001$ (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009).

The SSEIT was studied extensively, including 10 studies in the United States and 20 outside the United States, showing it had good reliability (Schutte et al., 1998). The initial internal consistency of the SSEIT, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, was .90 (Schutte et al., 1998). The additional studies in and outside the United States found a mean internal consistency of .87 (Schutte et al., 2009). Moreover, there was a “two-week test-retest reliability of .78 for total scale scores” (Schutte et al., 1998, p. 173).

**Qualitative Instrumentation**

An integral part of this study’s qualitative research was conducting interviews. During qualitative research, the researcher becomes an instrument of the study (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012); as such, the researcher’s background coupled with her attitudes influenced the study. Sample selection, personal connection during interviews, and researcher as an instrument of the study make data vulnerable to bias. Intentional and unintentional influence of the researcher on the study is referred to as bias (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In full disclosure, prior to the study, the researcher worked as a K-12 public school principal in a southern California unified school district.
Qualitative Validity

Various strategies were employed to ensure qualitative data collected were valid. Prior to data collection, a series of interview questions were developed by the researcher and reviewed by an expert panel. This series of scripted interview questions were aligned to the Duckworth et al. (2007) framework on grit and the Mayer et al. (2008) framework on EI. The researcher used an interview question development matrix designed to align the research and interview questions (Appendix H). This ensured the data collected were congruent with the research questions increasing the validity of the questions asked.

Before the study was conducted, safeguards were built into the design to limit the influence of researcher bias. Various measures can be incorporated into qualitative research to ensure the trustworthiness of the data (Shenton, 2004). These include practices such as using expert panels to review interview protocols and questions, field testing the interview protocol while being observed by an expert in qualitative research methods, audio-recording interviews, and using member checks (Shenton, 2004).

Triangulation of data. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contended triangulation of data across inquiry techniques such as quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews yield different insights that strengthen the credibility of findings. Furthermore, Patton (2015) argued triangulation occurs when both quantitative and qualitative data are utilized in a study. The quantitative data were initially gathered via survey and then using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling, cases were selected for interviews because they offered the potential for rich data about the topic.

Expert panel. Validation of the interview questions using an expert panel was completed prior to data collection. This panel of experts consisted of three individuals
familiar with the variables of grit, EI, and/or K-12 public school principals. The experts also had extensive knowledge of qualitative research methods. Qualifying members of the panel met at least three of the following criteria:

- Published articles on grit, EI, or K-12 public education
- Conducted qualitative research within the last five years
- Served as a faculty member of a doctoral program
- Had five years’ experience in public K-12 education
- Held a leadership position in public K-12 education or higher education

Table 4 outlines the expert panel accomplishments.

Table 4

*Expert Panel Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Criteria 1</th>
<th>Criteria 2</th>
<th>Criteria 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel Member 1</td>
<td>Published articles on grit</td>
<td>Conducted qualitative research in the last 5 years</td>
<td>Member of doctoral faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Member 2</td>
<td>Published articles on EI</td>
<td>Conducted qualitative research in the last 5 years</td>
<td>Holds a leadership position in public K-12 education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Member 3</td>
<td>Published articles on public K-12 education</td>
<td>Member of doctoral faculty</td>
<td>Holds a leadership position in public K-12 education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Member checking.** Member checking is verification by participants of accuracy of information gathered (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) concluded member checking is done in interviews as “topics are rephrased and probed to obtain more complete and subtle meanings” (p. 331). During interviews, clarification questions were asked to ensure accuracy. Additional member checking was
done by having participants correct any inaccuracies in transcripts so the data accurately represented the interview.

**Field test/pilot interview.** In qualitative research, the researcher is an instrument of study, thus opening the study to bias. Bias in the procedures and interview questions can be checked through a pilot interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A pilot interview was conducted with a person who met the study criteria but was not part of the study. The pilot interview was observed by an expert researcher who provided feedback about the interview questions and interviewing technique. The expert was an experienced qualitative researcher with extensive knowledge of public K-12 education, the subjects of grit and EI, and expert principals.

**Qualitative Reliability**

External reliability refers to achieving the same results of a study done in a different context or by a different researcher. However, the nature of qualitative research is to explore a specific phenomenon; replication of findings based on individual interviews is not an expected attribute of qualitative research (Leung, 2015). Rather, to ensure data collected are reliable, qualitative researchers utilized multiple methods for gathering data to triangulate the results.

Reliability of the results increases substantially when triangulating data across multiple data sources, which builds credibility of the study (Patton, 2015). As reported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “triangulation of data across inquiry techniques…yield(s) different insights about the topic of interest and increases the credibility of findings” (p. 331). This study employed data triangulation to increase
reliability by collecting data via electronic surveys and corroborating those results and expanding the research via semi-structured interviews.

**Data Collection**

Prior to data collection, the researcher received approval from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) to conduct the study (Appendix I). The researcher also completed a training course in protecting human research participants provided by the National Institutes of Health’s Office of Extramural Research (Appendix J). In addition, prior to data collection, participants were issued assurances their privacy would be protected and were provided the informed consent form (Appendix C) and the *Participant Bill of Rights* (Appendix E).

**Quantitative Data Collection**

Data for the quantitative portion of this study were collected by administering the 8-Item Grit Scale and SSEIT to expert K-12 public school principals in southern California. Both these instruments were combined into one survey with questions to collect demographic information and were administered via Survey Monkey. Prior to data collection, the potential participants were provided with the purpose of the study and confidentiality clause, which were available in a letter that accompanied the survey. Before participants could begin the survey, they were required to read and issue their consent to participate in the study. Data from the survey helped answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 3.

**Qualitative Data Collection**

Three main types of data collection in qualitative research are observations, interviews, and artifact review (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). To elucidate the
perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit and EI impact longevity, semi-structured interviews were conducted. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the data collection mainstay of a qualitative study is personal, in-depth interviews. These in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to understand the voice of the expert principals while producing data to further discover the experiences, opinions, and feelings about this topic.

Once the quantitative data were collected, the researcher purposively selected principals who completed the electronic survey to participate in individual interviews. The researcher also worked with an expert panel to create questions designed to collect data for Research Questions 4 and 5. Additional exploratory questions were also generated to aid in clarifying responses or investigating unanticipated data that arose during the interview process. These questions aligned to the grit framework (Duckworth et al., 2007) and EI framework (Mayer et al., 2008). Prior to the interviews, the interview protocol and questions were field tested via a pilot interview.

The interviews were audio recorded with participant permission (Appendix D). As another means of controlling for bias, the recordings were sent to a professional transcriptionist. Once the interviews were completed and transcripts obtained, the transcripts were emailed to the respective participants to assure accuracy, then prepared for coding.

**Data Collection and Control**

Careful steps were taken to protect the data and participant privacy. Once the data were collected, the researcher removed identifying information to protect the identity of the participants and ensure confidentiality. To aid in describing the findings, each
participant was given a number for the study. The researcher was the only one who had access to the digital files and transcriptions, and all research documents were kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data files remained in a locked filing cabinet until the conclusion of the research study. Once the study was completed, all data files were stored for three years and then destroyed.

Data Analysis

This mixed methods study initially collected quantitative data via an electronic survey using the 8-Item Grit Scale and SSEIT, as well as demographic information. The quantitative data collection was followed by qualitative data collection via individual interviews of purposively selected expert principals. The quantitative data were analyzed followed by the qualitative data. These data were then interpreted to explain the findings of this study.

Quantitative Analysis

Research Questions 1 and 2 were answered by the individual scale scores produced by participants completing the 8-Item Grit Scale and the SSEIT. Data from both the 8-Item Grit Scale and SSEIT were placed in tables for display, review, and further analysis. Means and standard deviations were also calculated to further analyze the data.

Research Question 3 was answered by conducting a correlational analysis between participant grit and SSEIT scale scores. A “correlation coefficient is a number calculated to indicate the strength of the relationship between variables” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 168). Both the 8-Item Grit Scale and the SSEIT produce scale scores, which were then correlated. Correlation between grit and EI was determined
using the Pearson product-moment coefficient. Given both variables resulted in scores considered continuous variables, this was the most appropriate method to use. The strength of the relationship was then reported and analyzed in the findings.

**Qualitative Analysis**

After the completion of the quantitative analysis, the researcher then collected qualitative data via semi-structured interviews to corroborate the quantitative findings and expand the research. Once the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, the researcher reviewed the transcripts several times to aid in the development of initial themes.

The researcher used NVivo to code the data. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software program designed to help researchers code text. Transcriptions were imported into NVivo for coding. The major themes and patterns emerging from the data aligned to Research Questions 4 and 5 investigating the impact of grit and EI on principal longevity. The software program stored the actual text of the themes and calculated the number of respondents and frequency for each code. After completion of the qualitative analysis, data from the electronic surveys were compared to the data from the semi-structured interviews to ascertain patterns.

**Inter-coder reliability.** Inter-coder reliability is the extent to which individuals working separately would make the same coding decisions (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2004). To ensure the data coding process was reliable, a sample was double-coded by an outside researcher. Lombard et al. (2002) argued at least 10% of the interview data should be double-coded to ensure the coding was reliable. In this study, to confirm the themes and frequency counts for the data, 10% was double-coded. The
outside researcher was a fellow doctoral candidate familiar with qualitative research. Lombard et al. (2002) concluded 90% agreement in coding was best and 80% agreement was acceptable to assure the reliability and accuracy of themes and frequencies in the coding. In this study a minimum of 80% accuracy was utilized for the double coding.

**Limitations**

Limitations are the characteristics of the design or methodology that can potentially influence the interpretation of findings (Roberts, 2010). It is crucial researchers safeguard the design of the study to minimize bias, are clear about the limitations of the study, and incorporate intentional strategies to mitigate biases and strengthen the study (Patton, 2015). The following outlines the limitations and efforts utilized to reduce the impact of these limitations.

1. Utilizing purposive and convenience sampling was a limitation of the study. Qualitative data collection was limited to principals willing to participate in interviews. It is possible those willing to be interviewed differed from other principals. As such, the data may not be generalized beyond the participants of this study.

2. Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches relied on self-report. It is possible participants did not provide full and truthful responses or said what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. To reduce the potential effect of this limitation, the researcher ensured participants were aware of the purpose of the study and nothing was garnered from exaggerating responses. In addition, the quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to address this limitation.
3. An integral part of this study’s qualitative research included interviews.

During qualitative research, the researcher becomes an instrument of the study and thus his or her background and attitudes influence the study (Pezalla et al., 2012). Before the study was conducted, safeguards were built into the design to limit the influence of researcher bias, including data triangulation, use of expert panelists, audio recordings of the interviews, and member checking.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the methodology in such a way other researchers could replicate the study. This study focused on the impact of grit and EI on principal longevity and the relationship between grit and EI. This chapter provided a thorough discussion of the methodology used for this mixed methods study. The chapter reviewed the purpose statement and research questions, and presented the study design, population, sample, and instrumentation. In addition, data collection and analysis procedures, including safeguards for the protection and control of data, were explained in detail. Finally, this chapter concluded with a discussion of the limitations of this study. Chapter IV reviews the results and findings from this study.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Chapter IV begins with a review of the study’s purpose statement, research questions, population, sample, and methodology. Next, this chapter describes both the quantitative data and qualitative data collected. The 8-Item Grit Scale and Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) were both used to collect quantitative data on principal grit and emotional intelligence (EI) levels, respectively. Interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. The data collected from the quantitative surveys address Research Questions 1 through 3 whereas the qualitative data collected via interviews address Research Questions 4 and 5.

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what relationship exists between emotional intelligence (EI) and grit among expert principals with three or more years’ longevity. A further purpose was to discover principal perceptions of how EI and grit impacted longevity in their positions.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do expert principals rate their level of EI as indicated on the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)?
2. How do expert principals rate their level of grit as indicated on the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale?
3. What relationship exists between EI and grit scale scores for expert principals?
4. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how EI impacts their longevity in their principalship?
5. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit impacts their longevity in their principalship?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This study followed a sequential explanatory design model whereby quantitative methods were used followed by qualitative methods. In this research design, the quantitative data were gathered via electronic survey, then purposive criterion sampling was used to select interviewees who offered the potential for rich and meaningful data. Data for the quantitative portion of this study were collected by administering the 8-Item Grit Scale and SSEIT in a single survey administered via Survey Monkey. Before participants could begin the survey, they were required to read and issue their consent to participate in the study.

The Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale and the SSEIT were used to measure expert principals’ level of grit and EI, respectively. Statistical analysis helped determine how expert principals rated themselves on these variables and what relationship existed between grit and EI. Once the quantitative data were collected, the researcher purposively selected principals who completed the survey to participant in interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand the perceptions of expert principals related to the impact grit and EI had on longevity in their principalship.

Population

The population for this research study was K-12 public school principals in California. California is home to approximately 10,500 schools (CDE, 2018). With a population over 10,000, it was not reasonable to conduct a study of that magnitude; as such, a target population was used. A list of southern California K-12 public school
principals was generated using CDE’s (2019) Public Schools and Districts Data File. This generated a list of 4,344 with corresponding principals in the location set for the study. This list served as the target population for the study.

**Sample**

To further narrow the sample, principals were selected whose school met two of the sampling criteria: (a) awarded a state (i.e., California Distinguished Schools) or federal (i.e., National Blue Ribbon School) recognition of excellence during the principal’s tenure, and (b) had 75% or more of the indicators on the 2018 California School Dashboard in the blue/green range. By using the CDE lists for National Blue Ribbon schools from 2017 and 2018 and the California Distinguished schools from 2018 and 2019, the potential sample was narrowed to 265 schools and their corresponding principals. By adding the criterion regarding blue/green level indicators on the 2018 California School Dashboard, this decreased the sample to 230 schools and their corresponding principals. From the 230 principals, 30 were selected for the quantitative sampling (15 elementary and 15 secondary) and 12 of those (6 elementary and 6 secondary) were then selected for the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

**Demographic Data**

This mixed methods study included 30 participants for the quantitative portion and 12 for the qualitative portion. For the quantitative portion, participants provided demographic data that included number of years in current principalship to ensure they met the sampling criterion of three or more years at a school; the average number of years as a principal was 6.8 years. They also provided information on school level so equal numbers of elementary and secondary expert principals could be selected. For the
qualitative portion of the study, participants provided information on gender to aid in selecting diverse views. Also, grit and EI levels were available to report as well. Table 5 provides information on the study demographics for the quantitative sample.

**Table 5**

*Study Demographics for Quantitative Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Number of Years in Current Principalship</th>
<th>School Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the qualitative data, six males and six females were selected. Their average number of years as principal was 6.75 years. The average grit score for this sample was 4.23 and the average EI score was 135. Table 6 provides information on the study demographics for the qualitative sample.

Table 6

Study Demographics for Qualitative Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th># of Years in Current Position</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Grit Level*</th>
<th>EI Level*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Data were collected through various means for triangulation of data. The findings in this study were a result of quantitative survey data analysis of 30 participants, 15 expert elementary principals and 15 expert secondary principals. The findings in this chapter were also the outcome of nine hours of interview with 12 expert principals, six elementary and six secondary. After analyzing the data, statistical data were reported for Research Questions 1 through 3 whereas themes emerged to answer Research Questions 4 and 5. The following sections report the data based on research question.
Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: How do expert principals rate their level of EI as indicated on the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)?

The SSEIT is based on the Salovey and Mayer (1990) original model of EI. Participants responded to 33 questions using a five-point Likert-type scale. All 33 items are added up for a total scale score ranging from 33 to 165. The higher the scale score, the more emotionally intelligent an individual is based on established standard deviations. Carmelli (2003) reported the mean EI score on the SSEIT for senior managers was 122.43 with a standard deviation of 12.21, indicating 68% of senior managers’ EI scores were between 110.21–134.65. The Carmelli (2003) study was chosen because senior managers were most similar to principals.

The data reported from the 30 participants on the SSEIT includes the individual participants’ scale scores with corresponding level when compared to the Carmelli (2003) standard deviations. In addition, mean scores were calculated for each of the 33 items as well as standard deviations based on the 30 participants for each item. Standard deviation scores describe the level of consistency or variance in participant responses to each of the item responses. The closer the standard deviation is to zero, the narrower the range of variance meaning participants were consistent in their responses (Patten, 2012). Table 7 reports the individual participants’ EI scale scores with corresponding levels when compared to the standard deviations calculated by Carmelli (2003).
### Table 7

**EI Scale Scores and Ratings for Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>EI Scale Score</th>
<th>Above, Within, or Lower than 1 SD from Mean of Carmelli (2003) *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 1</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 2</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 3</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 4</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 5</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 6</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 7</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 8</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 9</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 10</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 11</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 12</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 13</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 14</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 15</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 16</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 17</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 18</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 19</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 20</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 21</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 22</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 23</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 24</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 25</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 26</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 27</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 28</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 29</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 30</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. A = Above or greater than 1 SD above the mean, W = Within 1 SD of the mean, and L = Lower than 1 SD below the mean.*

In comparison, Table 8 reports the mean score and standard deviation for each of the 33 items comprising the SSEIT.
Table 8

Means across the EI Attributes Assessed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EI Attribute</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know when to speak about personal problems</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When faced with obstacles I think of past successes</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to do well on most things</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people find it easy to confide in me</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of others</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major events of my life led me to re-evaluate</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my mood changes, I see new possibilities</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions make my life worth living</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of my emotions as I experience them</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect good things to happen</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to share my emotions with others</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I arrange events others enjoy</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek out activities that make me happy</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the non-verbal messages I sent to others</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I present myself in a way that makes a good impression</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognize the emotions of others by facial expressions</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know why my emotions change</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am in a positive mood, I can come up with new ideas</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have control over my emotions</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually recognize my emotions as I experience them</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compliment others when they have done something well</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel as though I have experienced others’ important events</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am faced with a challenge I give up because I believe I will fail</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help other people feel better when they are down</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use good moods to help myself keep trying to face obstacles</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can tell how people feel by listening to the tone of their voice</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analyzing how the expert principals in this study rated their level of EI using the SSEIT, the average scale scores was 132. When compared to the Carmelli (2003) study’s standard deviation, this mean scale score was in the average range,
meaning a scale score of 132 was within one standard deviation from the mean. Scale scores on the SSEIT for the 30 participants ranged from 105 (which is below 1 SD from the mean of Carmelli) to 152 (which was greater than 1 SD from the mean of Carmelli). When analyzing the individual scale scores based on the expert principals’ responses and comparing those scores to Carmelli’s (2003) standard deviation, 50% of the study’s expert principals were within the average range, 47% were above the average range, and 3% were below the average range.

The 33 items comprising the SSEIT were also analyzed. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each item across the 30 participant responses. Given a 5-point Likert-type scale was used for each item, the scores could range from one to five. When examining the range of means for these 33 items, they ranged from 3.03 (SD = 1.10) to 4.47 (SD = 0.53). The EI attributes from the 33 items rated the highest were: knowing what other people are feeling just by looking at them ($M = 4.47$), expecting to do well on most things ($M = 4.43$), seeking out activities that make him/her happy ($M = 4.43$), and realizing major events in his/her life has made them re-evaluate ($M = 4.37$). The lowest items based on the collective means for each of the EI attributes were feeling as though he/she have experienced others’ important events ($M = 3.07$) and sharing his/her emotions with others ($M = 3.03$).

When evaluating the consistency of how these expert principals rated their EI, a further item analysis was completed by calculating standard deviations for each of the 33 items. The items demonstrating the least variance in responses from the expert principals were being aware of the emotions that he/she feels (SD = 0.48), knowing why his/her emotions change (SD = 0.50), seeking out activities that make him/her happy (SD =
recognizing emotions as he/she experiences them (SD = 0.53), and knowing how others are feeling by the tone of their voice (SD = 0.53). Items that showed the most variance were persevering through challenges (SD = 1.00) and sharing his/her emotions with others (SD = 1.10).

Assessing the variance of responses (standard deviation) coupled with the mean scores for each of the 33 attributes of EI assessed provided insights into patterns and trends that can further guide analysis or garner insights for implications. For example, although the mean score for the EI test item *I like to share my emotions with others* was the lowest rated of the 33 items, it also has the highest variance in responses (SD 1.10). On the other hand, the EI test items *I seek out activities that makes me happy* and *I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them* both had the second highest mean score of 4.43 with small variances, SD = 0.50 and SD = 0.53, respectively. As such, there was a consistency of responses from the expert principals indicating both these items were fairly highly rated. For the item *When I am faced with a challenge I give up because I believe I will fail*, the mean was fairly high at 4.0, but the variance was also quite large with standard deviation of 1.0.

**Findings for Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 was: *How do expert principals rate their level of grit as indicated on the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale?*

The Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale assesses the attribute of grittiness using a five-point Likert-type scale. Participant responses are scored from one to five; the points are summed and divided by eight to acquire the scale score, which ranges from one (i.e., not gritty at all) to five (i.e., extremely gritty). The mean grit score found by Duckworth and
Quinn (2009) was 3.4 with a standard deviation of .70, indicating 68% of Americans have grit scores between 2.7 and 4.1 (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009).

The data reported from the 30 participants on the 8-Item Grit Scale includes the individual participant scale scores. In addition, mean scores and standard deviations are provided for each of the eight items based on responses from the 30 participants in this study. Standard deviations closer to zero indicate more consistency of responses from participants on that specific item. Table 9 reports the participants individual grit scale scores with corresponding levels when compared to the standard deviations calculated by Duckworth and Quinn (2009).
Table 9

Grit Scale Scores for Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Grit Scale Score</th>
<th>Above, Within, or Lower than 1 SD from Duckworth and Quinn Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 1</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 2</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 3</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 4</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 6</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 7</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 8</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 9</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 10</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 11</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 12</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 13</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 14</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 15</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 17</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 18</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 19</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 20</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 21</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 22</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 23</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 24</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 26</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 27</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 28</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 29</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Principal 30</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A = Above or greater than 1 SD above the mean, W = Within 1 SD of the mean, and L = Low or more than 1 SD below the mean.

Table 10 reports the eight grit items with corresponding mean scores and standard deviations based on the 30 participants in this study.
When analyzing how the expert principals in this study rated their level of grit using the 8-Item Grit scale, the mean scale scores was 4.32. When compared to Duckworth and Quinn (2009) and the standard deviations calculated through that study, a mean scale score of 4.32 was in the above average range. The grit scale scores for the participants ranged from 3.88 (within the average range) to 5.00 (above the average range). Examining individual grit scale scores based on the expert principals’ responses and comparing those scores to Duckworth and Quinn’s (2009) standard deviation, 27% of the study’s expert principals were within the average range whereas 73% were above the average range, indicating the expert principals studied had a gritty disposition. Figure 2 presents a scatter plot showing the majority of expert principals rated their EI level within 1 SD while and grit level 1 SD above the means of Carmelli (2003) and Duckworth and Quinn (2009). The figure shows only one expert principal with an EI scale score below one standard deviation with equal distribution of the remaining EI scale scores within and then above one standard deviation. In contrast, no participants had a grit score below one standard deviation with most principals’ grit scale scores above one standard deviation.
An item analysis was conducted to further investigate how these expert principals rated their level of grit. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the eight grit attributes assessed on the 8-item Grit scale. Just like the SSEIT, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used signifying the scores could range from one to five. The range of means for these eight items was 3.80 (SD = 0.76) to 4.85 (SD = 0.19). Attributes of grit rated highest were being a hard worker ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.19$), being diligent ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.25$), and finishing what he/she begins ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.43$). The grit attributes rated lowest by the expert principals were acknowledging setbacks don’t discourage him/her ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.17$) and new ideas and projects distract him/her ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.76$).

It is important to note the highest rated grit attributes of working hard, being diligent, and finishing what was started also had the least amount of variance, indicating
consistency in responses from the participants. In contrast, the lowest rated grit attributes of setbacks do not discourage them and new ideas and projects distract them had the greatest variance in responses from the expert principals. Thus, some of participants ranked these two grit items low whereas others ranked them quite high. Again, analyzing the patterns and trends discovered through comparison of means and standard deviations can aid in determining next steps and implications.

**Findings for Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 was: *What relationship exists between EI scale scores and the grit scale scores for expert principals?*

Research Question 3 was answered by conducting a correlational analysis between participants’ grit and EI scale scores. A “correlation coefficient is a number calculated to indicate the strength of the relationship between variables” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 168). Both the 8-Item Grit Scale and SSEIT produce scale scores, which were then correlated. Correlation between grit and EI was determined using the Pearson product-moment coefficient. The Pearson product-moment coefficient analysis resulted in a correlation of $r = .54$ when assessing the strength of the relationship between the EI and grit scale scores. This indicates a moderate direct, or positive, relationship between EI and Grit scale scores, indicating as EI scale scores increase it would be expected grit scale scores would increase as well. Figure 3 represents the scatter plot with the moderate positive relationship between the EI and grit scale scores.
Figure 3. Scatter plot of relationship between EI and grit scale scores.

Although this set of data revealed a moderate relationship between EI and grit scale scores, further investigation into the cluster indicates outliers in the data set. Outliers are data points that stand out from the rest of the data points and have different values than the remaining data set. It should be noted outliers in the data set could have skewed the analysis.

Findings for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was: What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how EI impacts their longevity in the principalship?

The researcher collected and analyzed data from 12 expert principals (6 elementary and 6 secondary) to elicit their perceptions of the impact EI may have on their longevity. Data collection was gathered during semi-structured, in-depth interviews
using an interview protocol (Appendix G) aligned with the theoretical framework on EI. Appendix H presents an interview question alignment matrix.

After conducting interviews, having the recordings professionally transcribed, conducting member checking for accuracy, and thoroughly reviewing the transcripts, the researcher used the following sentence frame to ensure themes emerging were aligned to the research question: Expert principals perceived EI impacted their longevity by __________. To increase reliability of the data, 10% was coded by a fellow researcher. The other coder confirmed the themes, patterns, and frequency counts of the data collected in this study.

After analyzing the data, frequent responses established 10 major themes related to Research Question 4. The frequency counts ranged from 30–76. Half the themes had responses from all 12 participants with the remaining half from 8–11 participants. The major themes are presented in Table 11 by frequency from highest to lowest, and noting the number of principals (n) who reported the data, followed by narrative descriptions of the themes enriched through direct quotes from participants.

Table 11

*Themes, Frequency Counts, and Sources for Emotional Intelligence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently managing self &amp; others’ emotions for a positive outcome</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing they needed support, training &amp; strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually appraising situations that elicit emotions &amp; the consequences of those emotions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being open and focusing honestly on what you see and hear</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently reflecting on one’s actions and results for growth</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly clarifying and remembering their purpose</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly foster meaningful relationships with stakeholders</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalizing approaches to stakeholders based on needs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually building empathy through perspective taking</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging emotions to resolve conflicts and solve problems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* (n = 12)
**Frequently managing self and others’ emotions for a positive outcome.**

During the interviews, participants were asked a variety of questions aligned to the Mayer et al. (2008) model of EI to specifically elucidate their perceptions of how EI impacted their longevity as a principal. The first theme to emerge with a frequency of 76 was expert principals frequently manage their own and others’ emotions for a positive outcome. All 12 participants provided insights and data to support this theme. For example, Principal 1 stated, “There are constant problems that arise that have emotions attached to those problems and it’s up to you as principal to read and help people manage feelings so we can resolve problems and conflicts for the benefit of students.” Principal 1 further elaborated on strategies he used to manage his own emotions by adding:

> If I’m having a bad day, I just go into a kindergarten classroom for 10 minutes or go out to recess and you know, pick up a basketball or sit down with a kid who’s sitting by themselves and just have a conversation. You automatically feel better. You have to know how to make yourself feel better, you know manage your feelings, otherwise this job will destroy you.

Principal 2 also discussed the necessity to manage her emotions for a positive outcome by offering the following:

> It really has helped with my longevity as a principal being in tune with how I’m feeling. I mean, there are many examples where I’ve been with a teacher and I’m feeling frustrated and if I don’t, if I’m not in tune with how I’m reacting, then I’m not supporting the situation and I’m not helping that teacher grow and learn because then it just becomes about my
emotion. So being in tune with how I’m feeling, being able to then
manage my feelings can help me get to the root cause of what’s going on
and then it helps me make a better plan of action. Managing your
emotions and others’ emotions helps come up with outcomes that work for
all.

Principal 3 also supported this theme by noting, “If you can manage your own
emotions, you can manage this roller coaster, through self-reflection. If you can help
others navigate their emotions, why they feel the way they do, then you can help resolve
conflicts and problems.” Principal 4 also acknowledged, “If I don’t have that open-door
and I don’t put myself in their shoes and I don’t manage my own emotions, then there’s
always going to be conflict and we’re never going to come to solutions to problems.”

During interviews, participants revealed they frequently managed their own and
the emotions of others for positive outcomes, including de-escalating those involved,
generating solutions, and making decision. Principal 5 revealed, “I feel like 10 to 15% of
my job is managing peoples’ emotions,” and he further elaborated by sharing:

Managing their feelings up front is a time saver, then it takes less time to
resolve issues that come up later. Like if I can get that person to come in
my office, sit down, calm down and have a logical conversation then we
can get somewhere positive.

Principal 8 provided an example of how managing a teacher’s emotions helped
achieve a positive outcome, describing:

As a principal, one of the strengths of EI is about making sure that you’re
regulating your emotions and others. For example, I knew I had one of
my teachers who gets upset with change and she was scheduled to get new furniture mid-year. I told her as soon as I found out, but two days before the furniture was going to go in, I went to her again and I said, listen, I know you get upset about change. So, let’s talk about the morning it will be delivered. Get a good night’s sleep, eat a good breakfast, and remember I’ll be there to support you. The bottom line was that she was still upset, but for about 30 minutes and then she was able to move on with her day and teach great lessons to her students. If I had not put in that time helping her cope, there would have been a negative result.

All 12 participants provided rich examples and insights into how managing their own or others’ emotions for positive outcomes contributed to their longevity in their principalship.

**Recognizing they needed support, training, and strategies.** The next theme from the data with a frequency of 71 responses from all 12 participants was recognizing they needed support, training, and strategies. Participant responses contributing to the development of this theme included concepts such as having a support system and work/life balance, having mentors to guide them in their careers, receiving training in the area of EI, and having a repertoire of coping skills.

This theme was highlighted by Principal 2 who shared, “I think it’s really important that you have people surrounding you that you can one talk to and vent to, you know share your frustrations, then it doesn’t come up at school.” Principal 3 reported “I think I’ve found a better balance of work and personal life. I think we put in long hours and we need to balance that out or we’ll burnout.” Principal 4 acknowledged:
You also need to have a balance. When I go home, I’m with my family, I’m committed to my family time, to all my kids’ activities, and spending time with my husband. You have to have a balance and do those things that make you happy, make you calm, or you won’t last.

Expanding on this concept, Principal 5 revealed, “Experience with the suicides made me realize I’m not superman and I need to ask for help sometimes and reach out for support.” Additionally, Principal 11 commented “I think finding good people to vent with when you go through things is so important and then you’re not just bottling up negative feelings.”

These participants also indicated mentors were beneficial in increasing principal longevity. Principal 2 suggested, “My advice would be to find a great mentor, especially year one and two as those are the hardest years. I had a great mentor that kept reminding me to stay the course.” Principal 10 shared, “There’s so much to do in that first year, I feel that good supports and mentors are crucial to your success and longevity.” Continuing this line of thinking, Principal 5 also shared:

The ability to just like maintain a relatively stable emotional state, um, has been pretty darn helpful. I wasn’t taught how to do it in my job but I was coached to do it in sports. I had great mentors that showed me the importance of staying calm and focusing during those tense times.

Participants expressed training was needed to increase longevity in the principalship. Principal 2 acknowledged:

I think it’s huge to recognize when you need help otherwise I think it’s just slowly exhausting for principals, especially when you’re talking in
that three to five year range, I feel like that’s where most growth in
leadership happens and so there needs to be professional development to
get principals to stick around long enough to make change, cause true
change takes seven to ten years.
Principal 3 commented, “You need skills and to be trained in how to read
emotions, manage emotions, and problem solve when the situation has de-escalated.
That takes time to develop.” In the same way, Principal 5 also revealed:
Now that we’ve lived through the suicide, I’m now aware of some of the
other things that are out there, but at the time nobody tells you in admin
school this can happen, nobody tells you what’s supposed to happen and
how it’s supposed to work. Nobody trains you for the type of emotions
people have around suicide and what to do to help people through that.
Moreover, Principal 6 acknowledged, “Each day, multiple times a day, we are to
understand the emotions of our teachers, students and parents but no one teaches you how
to do this, you’re just supposed to do it.” Similarly, Principal 7 shared “I’ve had a pretty
heavy few years with some pretty big tragedies and no one tells you how to handle those.
You get better at those with experience, but training would be beneficial.” Principal 12
also argued, “You don’t learn about how to handle these situations in your preparation
program. There aren’t regular admin therapy groups to help you out. You have to
persevere, find resources for yourself and those at your school including training.”
Another concept that emerged from this theme was having a repertoire of
strategies, including coping strategies, to increase principal longevity. Principal 10
reported:
You have to have some way to alleviate stress in this job. There is secondary trauma that you experience when you have a student that comes to school that has been kicked out of the house and is homeless and sleeping his car. There’s secondary trauma when you have kids coming to school and the only meal that they’re getting is at school, that creates secondary trauma. When you know that abuse is happening, when a 16-year-old girl gets pregnant by an uncle that’s living in the home, that’s secondary trauma, you’ve got to take care of yourself. You have to have coping strategies if you are going to stay in this position for the long haul.

Principal 11 expanded on this theme by revealing:

A mentor of mine said it’s okay to take a breath, and it’s okay to slow down a little bit, in order to assess the situation. She said, “You’ll last longer in this game if you take care of yourself and just breathe.”

**Continually appraising situations that elicit emotions and the consequences of those emotions.** The following theme emerged from the data with a frequency of 67 references from all 12 participants. The principals reported continually appraising situations that elicit emotions and the consequences of those emotions influence longevity as a principal. Vigilance to potentially emotionally charged situations was reported by all 12 principals to increase their longevity.

Principal 1 shared, “We’re always analyzing the teacher’s emotional state and how they might react to any decisions we make to proactively reduce fall out.”

Considering how EI may contribute to her longevity, Principal 2 reported, “Anticipating certain emotions as you get to know people and how they will react helps you plan for a
better outcome. This makes work more fulfilling so your able to stay longer.” Principal 3 revealed,

Assessing situations to try to figure them out. The more you do it, the more you’re open to it, you learn to get better at it. This helps expose potential landmines you may be up against and then you can strategize what you want to do.

He expanded by commenting, “It comes with self-awareness and understanding which situations are likely to elicit strong emotions, once you have that down, you’ll be better prepared for a longer career as a principal.” Similarly, Principal 5 shared, “Constantly scanning a room to see the reactions of people so I can proactively help people see a different way or find out what’s truly and honestly bugging them. This makes it better for everyone, including me.” As explained by Principal 7,

One of the things that I’m always talking to my APs about is gauging how much we can push on the gas pedal and go. And yes, we need to be at a certain point with our goals, but it can’t be at the cost of everyone’s mental health. We constantly read a situation and determine if we are ready to go or not.

Moreover, Principal 8 acknowledged, “You have to constantly read a situation and you have to read it accurately to meet the needs of everybody that’s in the room, if you don’t then you’ll create stress that will make you want to quit.” She further revealed:

If I successfully assess the situation, I don’t spend as much time spinning my wheels cause if I know somebody’s going to be upset about
something. I can be proactive and knowing who they are, I can help them navigate it earlier, this makes everyone happier.

Principal 10 suggested longevity could be increased by “continually assessing how teachers were going to feel about a given situation, working through that, finding humor in it if possible, and then getting the work done.” Principal 11 provided an example of how he appraised a tragic situation and its emotional consequences by stating:

I called a staff meeting after the shooting and said, ‘hey, we’re here to bear the weight of what’s going on, if you need some time and you want to get out of your classroom cause you just need to take a break, call any of us, any of the admin and we’ll be there.’

He further elaborated about how continually appraising situations and the emotions created by those situations contributed to his longevity, reporting:

I spoke to every single one of my teachers in my office and showed them what the bell schedule would look like and asked them what they thought any possible, negative, unintended consequences could come out of this. It gave people a chance to show me their emotion right there. I think because of that, I was able to then report out that I talked to every single one of my teachers. I was able to address their emotions in the moment so we’d be ready to move forward.

He shared appraising situations and letting individuals share their emotions can help processes and allow change to go more smoothly, which makes the principalship easier. As a result, he shared he was able to stay in his position longer by “doing these internal and external scans of anything that could potentially affect people.” In addition,
Principal 12 acknowledged, “Being able to read situations and having a good understanding of what’s happening emotionally is probably one of the highest contributors to finding success as principal. This will also help you stay in that role.”

**Being open and focusing honestly on what you see and hear.** According to responses from participants, the theme of being open and focusing honestly on what you see and hear had a frequency of 55. All 12 principals had responses contributing to this theme. As explained by Principal 2, “We make a lot of assumptions about what people are communicating, and that’s dangerous territory cause when we start to make assumptions, that’s when we make inaccurate judgments… not really listening honestly to what they are saying.” She further explained this creates conflict and impacts longevity. Principal 3’s perceptions were:

- Truly listening and reading people to understand why they feel the way they do to help diffuse the situation, and listening openly to your staff to accurately assess how they feel, this helps people feel validated that you’re listening and hearing them. This builds trust and they respect that you actually are trying to hear them without totally disregarding them.

Ultimately, this led to remaining in the role of principal longer. According to Principal 4:

- You have to pay very close attention to all aspects of what a person is communicating. You need to listen with your ears and eyes because sometimes people come in at the height of emotion and maybe that’s not really the underlying problem or issue or concern and so you have to help
them regulate their emotions so that you can get down to the bottom of it to help them move forward.

Similarly, Principal 6 revealed:

I think you need to get to know people by listening honestly, seeing what they like, what they do, and this helps build those relationships, which builds trust. That way you don’t have to take things personally. You can listen honestly and realize that this is an opportunity to learn and grow.

Principal 7 stated, “I think when people come at you, have a negative emotion about something that’s happened, you have to be ready just to accept the information for what it is.” He continued, “A lot of times we have to look at what the facts are and realize people all engage with facts differently and have a different emotional experience, and you have to be prepared for not everybody liking what you do.” Elaborating, he also shared, “If you only listen to people that are telling you what you want to hear, then you’re not addressing the entire school community. As a result, you’ll end up with many angry people that will make your job miserable.”

**Frequently reflecting on one’s actions and results for growth.** The next theme emerged with a frequency of 48 references from 11 participants was expert principals frequently reflected on their actions and results for growth. They perceived this increased their longevity in the principalship. In offering an example of how his reflection over time contributed to his growth and ultimately to his longevity, Principal 1 shared:

When reflecting back on all those situations and conversations I tried to avoid early on in my career, I realized that so many of the conversations I wanted to avoid in the past were really unimportant. I mean at the moment
they seemed like a huge crisis, but once you truly go through a tragedy, you recognize those other perceived difficult circumstances weren’t as important. Tragedies help you reflect, determine what’s important, and then remind you of how to move forward. Don’t get me wrong, the parent who is upset about too much or not enough homework still feels their conversation is crucial to their child’s success. I guess what I’m trying to say is that these conversations are easier to have once you’ve gone through a true tragedy as a community.

Principal 1 also offered advice to new principals that could help contribute to their longevity in the role, saying,

I think just the more you can be yourself and be open, the happier you’re going to be. You know, if I had advice to new administrators, it would just be, don’t try to be what you think they want you to be, just be yourself and be vulnerable and be honest and, and you’ll love your job that much more.

Similarly, Principal 2 offered another example of how reflection contributed to her longevity, noting,

I have to recognize in myself that I go fast and I think about some things like, what’s so hard about implementing that new strategy? It’s like, come on, let’s go, so that could be where it’s frustrating for me, but then I have to realize that everyone’s different and everyone learns in a different way.

She continued by offering, “If you’re going to be in this for the long haul then you need to have balance, you need quiet reflective time, too. It helps me reflect on what’s important and renews my joy for the job.” Moreover, she revealed,
There were moments where I wanted to quit and everyone has something to say and something to criticize you on. And at first it just felt like, who wants to do this job? It was overwhelming. Everyone just blames you for everything, right? But reflecting and finding ways for me to have balance helped me see the negative as information not a critique of me.

Principal 3 shared this sentiment by stating, “I think I’ve found a better balance of work and personal life. I think we put in a lot of hours into this job and if we don’t have balance then we’ll likely burn out and quit.” Principal 4 shared a different perception by reporting,

People are complex so there are many opportunities as a principal to experience both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. I find if you can stay open to unpleasant emotions, the information you get from them, you have a bigger opportunity for growth.

She elaborated by stating, “You have to be willing to self-reflect, learn, grow, and adapt if necessary, to last long in this profession.” As identified by Principal 11, “I learned a long time ago that if you don’t focus on regulating your emotions, then you’re going to get fired. Anytime you can use self-reflection to help you handle emotionally charged situations the better. You’ll last longer.” Principal 12 also elaborated by sharing,

Things that I definitely would change and improve upon is the importance of finding a balance of emotionality. My strength was being connected emotionally to people, but it also was a downfall, I came close to quitting multiple times because caring so deeply could be overwhelming, so I needed some supports for me.
She expanded on this perception by acknowledging, “I was so worried about people at times that I didn’t take enough care of myself, which burned me out and left me not wanting to continue in this role. Now I make sure I take care of myself.”

**Constantly clarifying and remembering their purpose.** Responses from participants revealed constantly clarifying and remembering their purpose could benefit principal longevity. This theme had a frequency of 48 from 10 of the principals. Principal 1 illustrated this theme in the following comments”

A teacher might have one parent, but I have all the angry parents cause they always, if they’re not satisfied, they always end up in my office. And, that can be hard, especially after years and years of just feeling like people are disappointed by me all the time. So, it’s important to have positive self-talk and truly know your purpose for coming to work each day. This will help you overcome those negative feelings and enjoy the work.

He further expanded on his this by adding:

The parent who’s threatening to sue me because they didn’t get the teacher they wanted, like that kind of stuff. I didn’t want to deal with that crap anymore. But that big tragedy brought us closer and reminded us about what was important. Then we could focus all of our energy by doing what’s right and important.

Similarly, Principal 12 also reported, “Knowing why I come to work and what’s important helps me stay in this role.” Principal 3 shared a similar view to Principal 1 by acknowledging:
The arguments over who gets what special then become irrelevant because we have a dozen families that now need to rebuild from scratch. These families need shelter, clothes, food etc. Those unpleasant feelings, those tragic situations bring us closer and help us realize we’re more alike than different and we can get through anything when we recognize what’s most important, our purpose.

Additionally, Principal 4 stated “I guess it’s passion and purpose that kept me in this position for over five years because, let’s be honest, this job is complex and hard, so seeing kids learn is what brings me back day after day.” She continued along this sentiment by further reporting, “If I didn’t care about what I did and I didn’t care about the ultimate goal for children, then I wouldn’t be here. You have to know your purpose to do this day in and day out.” She added an additional thought, saying:

Helping children succeed, that’s why we’re here. If I didn’t have that as my guiding principle, then I wouldn’t get anywhere. But even when it gets hard and I have to dig in or I get frustrated, I remember the kids. Sometimes I can’t control what the adults feel. But I can remember I’m here for children. So even when things get bad, you just dig in and keep doing whatever you got to do for the kids.

This thought also connected to Principal 6’s idea that:

Speaking from experience and watching the principals around me, having too many initiatives and no true purpose burned them out. It was sad to watch and even if I would meet with them and I would say, okay, what’s the one thing that you want to be the focus for your school. They just
couldn’t communicate it. They didn’t know their purpose, what was important and couldn’t focus. It was like, you know, just trying to do 15 different things at once equally well was exhausting.

Principal 8 also reported, “If I didn’t feel like I was doing something worthwhile, there would be days where I would just pack up and not come back.” She then added, “As I get further in my career, there’s more days where I’m just like, why am I doing this again? And I have to remind myself of my purpose and keep going through some of this stuff.” She then finished by stating:

Why am I here again and why am I being asked to solve so many societies complex burdens? Um, if I didn’t have some sort of belief, this is why I make a difference or a way to kind of think about that, I don’t think I would make it long as a principal.

**Regularly foster meaningful relationships with stakeholders.** Another theme from participant responses was regularly fostering meaningful relationships with stakeholders, which had a frequency of 46 from 11 expert principals. Almost all the principals interviewed indicated regularly fostering meaningful relationships positively contributed to longevity as a principal. Principal 11 shared,

You really got to learn the stories of your people and this helps build those relationships. That’s the most important thing to figure out where people are in their lives and how to help them. I think you have to be emotionally able to connect, to everybody that’s in your school if you are going to make a difference. He described how building and sustaining relationships contribute to increased job satisfaction, which has ultimately led to his longevity. Building on this concept,
Principal 12 commented “I put people before paper. The people that worked for me were the most important piece and the paperwork could get done later.” If you are going to last long in this position, Principal 12 also offered, “What was always important to me was the relationships… staff, students, parents, I needed them to know that I was there along the way, that I cared for and respected each and every one.” Similarly, Principal 3 revealed:

When you have EI, it helps you get through, um, the really tough parts and it helps you build deep relationships with people and that gives me so much joy out of being a principal. And so that’s why I’m still doing it because I have such tremendous joy and I attribute it to the relationships that I’ve been able to build with, parents, with teachers and with students because I know who I am and they know I care about them.

According to Principal 4:

Being genuine and authentic and open, and putting people first I think contributes to the longevity because you start realizing there’s, there’s bigger things in life than just, you know, getting a report done. Realizing how important trust becomes, you know, like we’d have conflicts at school that were easy to navigate and manage at year five because we had an established relationship, similar situations and conflicts would come up here in my first year and it would be a disaster because we didn’t have that established trust, the history together.
Finally, Principal 9 acknowledge, “You build a relationship and then know when to act, when not to act, when to step in, and every once in a while you’ll get it wrong, but in the end, this helps you stay in that role longer.”

**Personalizing approaches to stakeholders based on needs.** An additional theme that emerged from the data with a frequency of 39 reference from all 12 participants was principals personalized their approaches to stakeholders based on individual needs. The responses generated during the semi-structured interviews indicated tailoring their approaches to staff, student, and parent needs could increase longevity in the position as principal. Principal 10 shared:

I learned that not everybody shares my own personal work ethic. And when we have teachers that are out right when the bell rings, it just makes me wonder how successful they can be with students. But I’ve also realized that everybody has different needs, and different ways they balance the stress of teaching which means I need to adjust how I support each one based on what they need.

Expanding on this idea, Principal 11 stated:

If you’re crying about something, here’s a tissue, sit down and talk it out. If you’re super excited about something fantastic, let’s go after that. Why are you excited? It’s a good, good opportunity to jump in. Just create those emotional connections and personalize your approach to your staff, students, and parents. Everyone needs something different.

For example, Principal 2 reported:
There are some teachers where I’ve gone into classrooms and I’m able to give on the spot coaching. It feels good. It feels right. And there are teachers you can’t do that with them. I had this one teacher the first time I tried to offer her real time coaching while she was teaching and seeing just the way she was pulling back, even a couple of steps, just her body language, she didn’t feel comfortable with me coaching her in the classroom. I read that and adjusted my approach for her. Just let it go. I would coach and talk about the lesson after school or make an appointment because that’s what she was more comfortable with.

Principal 4 stated, “Whenever I’m talking to a parent, I have to think of them as a parent and what they must be going through, do I truly understand what they need, are asking for, or wanting.” She expanded her thinking by stating:

I think you have to always consider who you’re talking to and put yourself in their shoes. As a parent, I have to remember how they’re feeling even if it’s different than how I feel as a parent or how I would move forward as a parent. Adjust based on who’s in front of you.

Principal 7 commented he “learned something along the way, that even though I might always be even keel, sometimes people need something a little different to inspire them.” He further revealed, “It’s up to me to adapt to their needs so that I can influence and lead them.” He added, “Then once you know your people you start to recognize the different needs of each of them.” Finally, Principal 9 shared his perceptions stating:

I think that the more that you are able to harness the good part of every human and that being done, like what do people need and how? How are
you addressing their needs in a certain situation? The more positive outcomes you have and people feel good about working with you when you personalize your approach.

These participants shared that ultimately this ability to personalize their approaches to their stakeholder groups contributed to their longevity, although this could take more energy.

**Continually building empathy through perspective taking.** An additional theme that emerged from the data with a frequency of 34 references from 8 participants was continually building empathy through perspective taking while interacting with stakeholders. Principal 1 shared, “How do you empathize with their point of view? Like, hey mama bear, if it was my child, I might be doing the same thing. So that’s been really key to my longevity understanding their perspective.” Principal 10 communicated, “You need to have EI so that you can be able to read people, understand where they’re coming from, empathize with them, so that you can help them and guide them towards a positive outcome.” She continued by describing an example:

There was a situation where we suspended a student and my counselor was sitting between the student and the mother and our resource officer had just left. The student had brought a six-inch hunting knife to school. The mother was so incredibly angry. I didn’t personalize her anger but rather I understood, I understood how disappointed and embarrassed she was. I had to understand where she was coming from. And in most situations if you just create that space and empathize with the parents, it
will dissipate that anger and then you recognize that you’re just there to help that student.

Principal 3 also shared, “Even if people don’t get the outcome they wanted, they are happier knowing that I tried to see things from their side of things and that I was empathetic to their situation.” He elaborated by stating:

Having that empathy for folks and understanding where they are, what they need, what they might be feeling, validates what they are feeling. You can’t really be wrong if that’s their feeling and you acknowledge that for the person. I think me becoming more aware of how others are feeling, acknowledging that for them, being attuned to that as opposed to disconnected from it has probably allowed me to be doing this longer.

Similarly, Principal 6 added:

Being able to be empathetic with others and see where they’re coming from, see where they are, see other viewpoints I think is a huge piece. I find this ability to look at the other sides helps me calm people down and helps me show others how to solve problems. Like I said, EI is huge part of being a principal.

In addition, Principal 9 shared an example:

We had a parent who came in very angry and yelling at our speech teacher. We were just about to call the meeting because he was kind of like really mad about stuff, but I let it go a little bit. I could tell he was almost crying. He was a single dad. His grandma and his mother had to take care of his son. He worked a lot to take care of the family and so he
was never around. He finally shared that he thought his son’s speech problems were all his fault. By staying with the conversation, even while it got heated, we were able to finally get to the point of understanding his perspective and as a dad, I had so much empathy for him.

**Leveraging emotions to resolve conflicts and solve problems.** The final theme that emerged from the data with a frequency of 30 references from eight participants was these expert principals leveraged emotions to resolve conflicts and solve problems. Principal 8 shared, “I think being emotional about something did help solve problems because I felt like it made people feel like this situation was meaningful.” She further elaborated by stating:

People want to say schools are like businesses and they’re not. We’ve got a handful of kids that run on emotionality and parents that get emotional.

I do feel like bringing emotion into problem-solving helps people better relate to why they were upset. They have a vested interest in the solution.

Similarly, Principal 9 commented, “If I know how you’re feeling, then I can help use that to influence you in a positive direction. It can build successful problem-solving.”

He also stated, “Emotional appeals would really pay off, if you get emotional buy-in from the staff they were motivated to make a change.” Principal 10 offered an example highlighting this theme, sharing:

We had to move 15 teachers’ classrooms over break. There were a lot of tears that were shed. We put the supports in place that we could, but we knew that making those changes were going to better serve our students who would be less distance for them to travel during passing periods. I
kept reminding teachers that they wanted their students to be on-time to
class and that this would help. I appealed to the teachers’ emotion
knowing that they wanted their department classrooms to be closer
together. It would affect our PLCs by more collaboration time, which they
wanted. Relying on what they wanted emotionally and using that as
leverage to solve this problem worked. It was about knowing what they
were going to feel about this situation, working through that, and using the
emotions to help solve the problem.

**Findings for Research Question 5**

Research Question 5 was: *What are the perceptions of expert principals
regarding how grit impacts their longevity in their principalship?*

The researcher collected and analyzed data from 12 expert principals (6
elementary and 6 secondary) to elicit their perceptions of the impact grit may have on
their longevity. Similar to Research Question 4, the researcher used the following
sentence frame to ensure themes emerging were aligned to the research question: Expert
principals perceived that grit impacted their longevity by __________. Ten percent of the
data were double coded by a fellow researcher to ensure inter-coder reliability,
confirming the themes, patterns, and frequencies of the data collected.

After analyzing the data collected, the researcher concluded frequent responses
established four major themes related to Research Question 5. It should be noted two
concepts emerged both in the themes of EI and grit: reflection and purpose. The major
themes are presented in Table 12 in order of frequency from highest to lowest, and notes
the number of principals that reported the theme.
Table 12

*Themes, Frequency Counts, and Sources for Grit*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to finish goals and knowing when to course correct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly clarifying and remembering their passion and purpose</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly identifying and focusing on prioritized goals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently persevering through adversity &amp; tragedies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. (n = 12)*

Four major themes emerged from the data regarding grit. Although this is less than the themes developed for the construct of EI, it should be noted the framework for EI has four different components compared to the single component of grit. The frequencies ranged from 37–51 for these four themes, with 9-12 participants mentioning each theme.

Commitment to finish goals and knowing when to course correct. The first theme to emerge with a frequency of 51 was these expert principals commit to finishing goals and know when to course correct, which contributed to their longevity. Ten participants provided insights and data to support this theme. Principal 1 offered the following insights. “If I was switching goals all the time, I don’t think I’d feel good at night. I wouldn’t feel proud of the work I’m doing. You don’t have to finish everything you start, but you should finish what you prioritize.” He elaborated on this thought by sharing:

When I first came here, I reworked the master schedule to give teachers PLC time in the school day. It was such a priority for the teachers, it just felt so good to see this end product and know you’ve made a big difference for the school and students because you had a new idea and knew how to stick to it to see it through.
He further commented:

I think sometimes you have to realize, gosh, we have a ton of sunken costs into this goal and it just didn’t work out the way we want it to work out. Sometimes it’s better to cut your losses and we go in a new direction. That’s perfectly fine too. Know when to adjust when it’s not working.

Principal 12 shared her perceptions on balancing determination to finish with course correcting by adding, “I think you have to have that determination to finish, but not at the expense of doing what’s best for the kids and school. Sometimes, you need to adapt your goals.” Principal 10 recalled how determination to finish goals helped build trust, which in turn increased longevity, saying, “I think that that determination to finish like tells people that you’re going to do what you say you’re going to do. That helps build that trust.” Similarly, Principal 2 acknowledged, “If you can’t adjust your goals when they aren’t working, then you’ll expend a lot of energy on the wrong things.” She elaborated by stating, “Part of it, you need to refine that goal, right? You’re taking in data; you’re refining your priorities based on data. Making adjustments to your goals is different than changing goals because something new comes along.” Principal 8 shared similar sentiments by revealing, “It’s really important to have the determination to see things through…I guess that’s where EI comes in, right? You have to be able to step back and assess, determine how to refine your goal based on priorities.”

Principal 3 commented, “Are you sticking to the same goals? Are they aligned to your mission and priorities? If not, then course correct and learn from setbacks.” To further make his point he shared, “If it’s an important goal, then you’re either tracking or adapting, or you’re plowing on. If path A didn’t work, how do I find path B or C, or
maybe you can’t go right at it right now.” Principal 4 had additional insights into this concept, sharing, “You have to be determined to finish something because if you don’t have perseverance to get through something, especially through something difficult, then you’re not going to accomplish your ultimate goal of making a difference for your kids.” She added, “You have to set goals and see them through and they might not come out so you take the time to reflect and learn from the process, then prioritize new goals or adapt them.”

Finally, Principal 6 shared, “It’s really detrimental to frequently change goals. It’s one thing to reflect and decide you need to change goals or an approach but just to switch because you weren’t focused or you didn’t have a guiding purpose is detrimental.” She continued by acknowledging:

If you know where you’re going and each day you are taking steps, even a small step, toward that goal, then you are reminded each day why you are there. It can be difficult to have so many demands and needs but if you know why you’re there it makes a difference.

**Constantly clarifying and remembering their passion and purpose.** The next theme emerging from the data with a frequency of 44 references from all 12 participants was constantly clarifying and remembering their passion and purpose contributed to their longevity as principals. This concept of knowing one’s purpose and how this can influence longevity in the principalship was established in the responses about EI as well. Knowing one’s purpose may be key to increasing the likelihood of longevity as a principal.
Principal 4 offered these insights, “I guess it’s that passion and purpose that has kept me in this position for over five years because let’s be honest this job is complex and hard, so yeah, seeing kids learn is what brings me back day after day.” Following up on these thoughts she also offered, “The passion part, if I didn’t care about what I did and I didn’t care about the ultimate goal for children, then I wouldn’t be here. You have to know your purpose to do this day in and day out.” Additionally, she provided, “This job has a lot of conflict, a lot of problems to be solved so knowing your reason to come to work each day helps me continue here in my role as principal.”

Principal 7 stated, “Grit is grounded in passion… That’s what’s going to help you get through those obstacles, those setbacks, to continue to persist through when it’s difficult. If you have EI coupled with grit, I feel like that’s a winning pair.” According to Principal 11, “You can really get distracted and lose some passion in this work. You have to remind yourself and do things to help remember that passion, the reason you actually got into the business.” Principal 9 also shared, “Passion is really important, because knowing that by persevering, I am making a difference. I know we’ll get through this and we’re going to be supporting this child. Passion keeps me persevering.” He also offered, “If I didn’t have passion, I don’t get paid enough for this. But the passion is what is key.”

Principal 5 also had this insight, saying “You have to be aware of your purpose and what you want to accomplish, otherwise there’s nothing inspiring your day to day work.” Likewise, Principal 6 stated:

If your passion connects with why you come to work each day, it makes it easier. Knowing that I wanted to make a difference in a kid’s life helped
me connect my passion and purpose. This kept me coming back and focusing on what was important.

In addition, Principal 7 acknowledged, “Passion and perseverance are necessary in education. You have to have a reason to do what you are doing and the stamina to get it done.” Principal 8 also shared these ideas by stating, “If I didn’t feel like I was doing something worthwhile, there would be days where I would just pack up and not come back.” Finally, Principal 9 suggested, “If you don’t have passion, I don’t think you’re going to persevere and this work needs grit. Passion and perseverance go hand in hand, you have to love what you’re doing.”

**Regularly identifying and focusing on prioritized goals.** Regularly identifying and focusing on prioritized goals emerged from the data with a frequency of 41 references from 11 participants. Principal 10 offered, “Find a few things you want to prioritize and make those the focus, the more clarity you will bring to your staff. Keep coming back to those goals as a guiding beacon for the work that needs to be done.” An additional suggestion was offered by Principal 11, who said:

I used to be an athlete and a coach, you know, and I would always look to the championship game and what potentially could occur in that game. And then, I would backtrack the full season to our first day of practice and figure out everything that I thought that we needed to do, along the way, in order to get to that final point. It’s similar with a school year. Look at where we want a group of students, set a goal, make a plan, and stay focused on that plan from day one.
Principal 2 shared, “You have to help each team prioritize what’s important and constantly direct them toward those goals. If they prioritize, then they will buy into the goals.” On the other hand, she also shared, “If you don’t have clear goals, then you’re just going through the day. We’re just waiting to see what’s happening and putting out fires. Being purposeful and clear, then you are setting the priorities of what needs to be accomplished.” Principal 3 offered a similar sentiment, saying, “If our purpose is not linked to our priorities of what we want to do and we don’t stay focused then it will likely not happen.” He elaborated by stating, “Identify what you want to accomplish and stay focused daily.” Along similar thinking, Principal 4 commented, “Stay focused on your identity, who you are, what your purpose is, then getting there becomes easier to see. You always keep your eye on the prize, your priorities.” According to Principal 7:

Focus is very important because if you’re all over the place, you’re never going to get anything accomplished and your staff isn’t going to respect you because they’re going to be lost. They will wonder what in the world are you trying to do. This will destroy trust and it will take even longer to build that trust back up, so stay focused, know your goals, and lead by example.

In addition, he also offered, “You have to prioritize and you have to figure out what has to be done first, what is going to help the staff get there, what are the priorities for staff and students.” He further elaborated by stating, “Set goals, see them through, and if they weren’t the right goals, then reflect and learn from the process and establish new priorities.”
Principal 5 shared these thoughts and added, “You’ve got to prioritize and find what’s really important, why do you need to do this, and constantly review those goals from a focused point of view. Spend time bringing people on board and really communicating its importance.” Lastly, Principal 8 recommended, “Identify a few things and do them well and be successful at it, then pick maybe a couple more things and you know, add to your priorities but stay focused.”

**Consistently persevering through adversity and tragedies.** An additional theme that emerged from the data with a frequency of 40 references from all 12 participants was consistently persevering through adversity and tragedies. Ten of 12 participants specifically spoke about tragic events that occurred at their schools or within their communities affecting their school, and how insights gained from these tragedies reset their perspectives on what was important. Their ability to persevere through these tragedies helped increase their longevity by reestablishing their purpose and gaining trust and respect in the community. Principal 1 said,

We are the mudslide school. It was our campus. We had to build a school from scratch in a matter of days. We went to [the] city college. It was intense and we had three classes in one portable. We had no books, we had no rugs, we didn’t have child-size chairs. You just work 18 hours a day and you figure it out. You had to have grit and persevere; people were counting on you. We felt better about that work, working 18 hours a day then just like an average week here with a parent who’s angry over something insubstantial, right. I would rather work 18 hours a day doing really good important work than a six hours day where people are griping
and groaning about stupid little stuff. Tragedies help you reflect, determine what’s important and then reminds you of how to move forward. Don’t get me wrong, the parent who is upset about too much or not enough homework still feels their conversation is crucial to their child’s success, I guess what I’m saying is that these conversations are easier to have once you’ve gone through a true tragedy.

Principal 2 had three parents’ deaths in one year and discussed how persevering through those tragedies made her stronger, more capable, and able to remain in her position longer. She described:

One year I had three parents of students die unexpectedly. It was a lot for our staff to process and made it difficult, and yet at the same time it helped us realize what was truly important. You have all kinds of setbacks and obstacles, but I find that the significant events or tragedies helped build community and if you can lead your school through these setbacks, you have a stronger community that will trust and respect you in the end. I was stronger as a result of these tragedies and felt more capable. If you don’t have perseverance, sticking to it, being able to keep going when things get hard. I mean, if you don’t have that, then you won’t last long. There’s lots of surprises that may happen, some good, some tragic, and you need to lead during those times.

Principal 3 also experienced tragic wildfires affecting his students and families. He offered how this experience helped him prioritize and persist on behalf of his students and families, saying:
We had the Thomas fire here; I had several staff and students lose homes. These types of tragedies really ground a person into what is most important. The arguments over who gets what special become irrelevant because we have a dozen families that now need to rebuild from scratch. These families need shelter, clothes, food etc. Those unpleasant feelings, those tragic situations bring us closer and help us realize we’re more alike than different and we can get through anything when we recognize what’s most important. I had to keep going and step up as the leader. I found resources that energized me during those days. As a result, our community is closer.

Principal 4 had a lock-down situation at her elementary school and an armed suspect was randomly shooting in the area. She described:

A few years back, probably about my third year as principal, my school went on lock-down. This is an elementary school and we had a man in the area randomly shooting a gun. I was at the district office at the time and drove immediately back to my school. I called my husband and explained the situation and he said, “I know what you’re going to do.” I went back because I needed to be the kind of leader that would be there for my staff and students regardless of the fear or anxiety that this situation created. Because I went back to my site, there was a shift in trust and respect with my staff and parent groups. I’d say before this event, I wasn’t sure if I could stick around as principal. This work can be a lot. After, I felt more
supported by my staff and that we were a team that could handle anything.

That kept me here.

Principal 5 realized through tragic events at his school his perseverance required resources and a support system. He also reported feeling more capable after going through this experience, sharing:

There was one time a couple of years ago, we had a series, four or five different, just heavy things ended up happening. We had teachers who lost their parents and then a student suicide. As a principal, everybody comes to you with those things and you’re providing support to all of them. I wanted to be there for the teachers and students, but I realized I need support myself if I was to lead, persevere, through these tragedies. The experience with the suicide made me realize I’m not superman and that I need to ask for help sometimes and reach out for support.

Principal 7 also had multiple tragedies occur last year, including a student taking a classroom hostage with a gun while threatening suicide. He also had the father and son, employee and student respectively, involved in the San Diego synagogue shooting. He was able to persevere in the face of these tragedies due to the supports and systems he had in place. He also acknowledged his capacity and confidence were broaden as a result of leading through these tragedies, explaining:

I’ve had a pretty heavy few years with some pretty big tragedies and no one tells you how to handle those. You get better at those with experience though. I realize now my ability to persevere through these situations helped build my confidence and capacity. Last year we had a lockdown
situation where a kid took a classroom hostage and threatened to commit suicide, which was a really, really tough situation. I managed that very well. In fact, we got a lot of kudos for the management of that situation. Then coming right out of that, a former student and his father who works here now were the ones involved in our synagogue shooting here in San Diego. Because the father still works here, there were giant emotional responses, mostly from our staff. And that’s where I had sort of figured out, I needed help to move through these events and get our school back on track. Luckily, I’d build up a support system and was able to get myself in a space to lead again. It was just a lot. I thought I didn’t have the capacity to do this work anymore. I would say probably if I didn’t have my support system in place, then I wouldn’t have made it through those events. And so, I would say the system of support probably saved our school and saved my job.

Principal 8 recounted her experience with a counselor death, student suicide, and the number of students experiencing suicidal ideation on her campus. She discussed how she persevered through these tragedies by building her awareness, gauging the impact they had on teachers and students, and relying on the community. She said:

We do tend to have a lot of suicidal ideations on the campus. We have a pretty high-pressure school and some kids get really stressed out. I would say there’s been probably significant stress on teachers and students. I think gauging the level of stress that this creates on the campus takes a lot of awareness. At my last school where I was principal, we had a
counselor die and we had a student commit suicide. These events were really community building. I could rely on the community to help me persist through this work went it gets emotional. Also, you had to really be aware of what you were feeling so you could be a solid leader.

Principal 10 and Principal 11 both shared stories involving suicide. Each of these principals shared how knowing why they were coming to work each day helped them persevere through these tragedies. Principal 12 told a story of one of her 5th grade students losing her mother while giving birth to her baby sister. As a result, this 5th grade student was left to care for her baby sister. The principal shared,

My second year we had a 5th grade student who lost her mother giving birth to her baby sister. That in and of itself was horrible for this child to go through and we tried to create an environment each day where she could thrive. But she started acting out in such a devastating manner, it was heart breaking to see. She was so incredibly angry, and I could understand why. She was in charge of caring for her baby sister because her father had to work nights to care for the family. Can you imagine this tiny innocent baby that was a constant reminder that her mother died as a result of this child’s birth? Knowing how to persevere in these situations is difficult. They can lead to emotional exhaustion. You get knocked off your path as an administrator. But you remember that this 5th grade girl needs me, needs me to be strong. So, perseverance is the most important part of the job. Knowing that tomorrow you got to get up and you have
500 people that are waiting for you so put a smile on your face and keep going for them.

**Summary**

This chapter focused on the data and findings regarding the five research questions guiding this study. Half the expert principals rated their EI greater than one standard deviation from the mean identified by Carmelli (2003). EI attributes rated highest were: knowing what other people are feeling just by looking at them, expecting to do well on most things, seeking out activities that make him/her happy, and realizing major events in his/her life has made them reevaluate. The EI attributes with the least amount of variance were being aware of one’s emotions, knowing why one’s his/her emotions change, seeking out activities that make him/her happy, recognizing emotions as he/she experiences them, and knowing how others are feeling by the tone of their voice.

Almost 75% of participants rated their level of grit greater than one standard deviation from the mean noted by Duckworth and Quinn (2009), indicating they were a gritty group of expert principals. The attributes of grit rated the highest by participants were being a hard worker, being diligent, and finishing what he/she begins. These attributes also had the least amount of variance in participant responses.

The Pearson product-moment coefficient analysis showed a correlation of $r = .54$ between EI and grit scale scores. This indicated a moderate positive relationship between EI and grit. A positive relationship indicated as EI scale scores increased, grit scale scores also increased. Although the data revealed a moderate relationship between EI and grit scale scores, the data set had outliers that could have skewed the analysis.
The final part of this chapter examined the perceptions of expert principals on the impact of grit and EI on longevity in the principalship. Through 12 semi-structured interviews, the researcher discovered several themes in the data. The top five themes when investigating the impact of EI on principal longevity were frequently managing self and others’ emotions for a positive outcome; recognizing they needed support, training, and strategies; continually appraising situations that elicit emotions and the consequences of those emotions; being open and focusing honestly on what was seen or heard; and frequently reflecting on one’s actions and results for growth. The themes had similarities with the highest rated EI attributes, including assessing emotions, seeking out strategies for happiness, and reflection.

The top three themes when exploring the impact grit has on principal longevity were committing to finish goals and knowing when to course correct; constantly clarifying and remembering their passion and purpose; and regularly identifying and focusing on prioritized goals. These themes also had similarities with the highest rated grit attributes. The similarities included finishing what one begins and diligence. Commonalities were also noted were among the themes for both EI and grit; having purpose and reflective practices emerged from participant responses.

Chapter V discusses the findings in more detail. It focuses on major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research. Lastly, the chapter concludes with remarks and reflections.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V begins with a review of the study’s purpose statement, research questions, methods, population, and sample. The remainder of the chapter describes the major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions based on those findings, and implications for actions based on the conclusions. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and final remarks.

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what relationship exists between emotional intelligence (EI) and grit among expert principals with three or more years’ longevity. A further purpose was to discover principal perceptions of how EI and grit impacted longevity in their positions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do expert principals rate their level of EI as indicated on the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)?

2. How do expert principals rate their level of grit as indicated on the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale?

3. What relationship exists between EI and grit scale scores for expert principals?

4. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how EI impacts their longevity in their principalship?

5. What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit impacts their longevity in their principalship?
Research Methods

A mixed methods study was conducted to deeply understand the relationship between EI and grit and to discover expert principal perceptions of how these personal attributes impacted their longevity. The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches were selected for this study to complement each other and provide greater breadth and depth of research. This study followed a sequential explanatory design model whereby quantitative methods were used initially to collect baseline data followed by qualitative methods to dig deeper into the results. The quantitative data were gathered via electronic survey in which principals rated their level of grit and EI using the 8-Item Grit scale and SSEIT, respectively. Thirty principals meeting the sampling criteria were selected for the quantitative data collection. Of the 30 principals, 15 were at the elementary level and 15 were at the secondary level. Then, purposive criterion sampling was used to select 12 principals for interviews, six from the elementary level and six from the secondary.

Population

The population for this research study was K-12 public school principals in California. California is home to approximately 10,500 schools (CDE, 2018). With a population over 10,000, it was not reasonable to conduct a study of that magnitude; as such, a target population was used. A list of southern California K-12 public school principals was generated using CDE’s (2019) Public Schools and Districts Data File. This generated a list of 4,344 with corresponding principals in the location set for the study. This list served as the target population for the study.
Sample

To further narrow the sample, principals were selected whose school met two sampling criteria: (a) awarded a state (i.e., California Distinguished Schools) or federal (i.e., National Blue Ribbon School) recognition of excellence during the principal’s tenure, and (b) had 75% or more of the indicators on the 2018 California School Dashboard in the blue/green range. Using CDE’s lists for National Blue Ribbon schools from 2017 and 2018 and California Distinguished Schools from 2018 and 2019, the potential sample was narrowed to 265 schools and their corresponding principals. By adding the criterion regarding blue/green level indicators on the 2018 California School Dashboard, this decreased the sample to 230 schools and their corresponding principals. From the 230 expert principals, 30 were selected for the quantitative survey and 12 were further selected for interviews.

Major Findings

Several major findings were discovered from this research study. These major findings provided insights to generate conclusions, which in turn aided in the creation of implications for action. The following are the assertions made by this researcher.

10 Attributes of Emotionally Savvy Expert Principals

The following major finding is a culmination of the analysis of the data gathered for both Research Questions 1 and 4. In this study, 10 EI attributes were identified as most representative of the expert principals studied. These 10 attributes were ranked the highest and had the least variance in responses from participants. The following are the 10 EI attributes identified as most characteristic of the participants in this study.
1. Knowing what other people are feeling just by looking at them ($M$ 4.47, $SD$ 0.53)

2. Seeking out activities that make him/her happy ($M$ 4.43, $SD$ 0.50)

3. Knowing why my emotions change ($M$ 4.23, $SD$ 0.50)

4. Complimenting others when they have done something well ($M$ 4.35, $SD$ 0.58)

5. Recognizing the emotions of others by facial expressions ($M$ 4.23, $SD$ 0.57)

6. Presenting myself in a way that makes a good impression ($M$ 4.30, $SD$ 0.60)

7. Realizing major events in his/her life has made them re-evaluate ($M$ 4.37, $SD$ 0.63)

8. Having control over his/her emotions ($M$ 4.23, $SD$ 0.62)

9. When faced with obstacles I think of past successes ($M$ 4.23, $SD$ 0.68)

10. Other people find it easy to confide in me ($M$ 4.23, $SD$ 0.68)

In addition, also discovered in this study, most of these attributes directly aligned with the number one theme regarding how EI contributed to expert principal longevity. The top EI theme from this study was frequently managing self and others’ emotions for a positive outcome. These 10 EI attributes not only aligned with the number one EI theme from this study, but they also aligned with the Mayer et al. (2008) hierarchical EI framework reinforcing their model of acquisition of these attributes.

**The Four Ps of Grit: Passion, Purpose, Priorities, and Perseverance**

This major finding was determined through synthesis of information garnered from the analysis of data collected for Research Questions 2 and 5. This study revealed
three grit attributes identified as most like the expert principals studied and these attributes also had the least amount of variance. The three attributes were:

- I am a hard worker ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.19$)
- I am diligent ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.25$)
- I finish whatever I begin ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.43$)

Furthermore, these attributes also aligned with the number one grit theme of commitment to finish goals and knowing when to course correct. Equally important, the remainder of the themes from this study exploring how grit contributed to longevity of expert principals complemented these three attributes. The four concepts generated from the themes as a result of data analysis included the need for passion, purpose, priorities, and perseverance, or the four Ps of grit. All 12 participants shared examples of how these four qualities impacted their longevity. These expert principals provided examples and insights 44 times as it related to clarifying and remembering their passion and purpose. Participants provided 41 examples on regularly identifying and focusing on prioritized goals. They also shared their thoughts about consistently persevering, especially when faced with tragedies.

**Synergy of Expert Principals Grittiness and Emotional Savviness**

Data analysis from Research Question 3 provided insights culminating in this major finding. The Pearson product-moment coefficient analysis resulted in an $r = .54$ when assessing the strength of the relationship between EI and grit scale scores. This indicated a moderate positive relationship between EI and grit, signifying to a moderate degree as EI scale scores increase grit scale scores would increase as well. Further investigation also found outliers in the data set which could skew the analysis. This
A direct relationship indicated a synergistic relationship between grittiness and emotional savviness, which offered potential implications for extending the tenure of expert principals at school sites.

**Power of Purpose and Reflection**

This major finding was determined through synthesis of information gathered from the analysis of data collected for Research Questions 4 and 5. Both purpose and reflection emerged from the data about how EI and grit contributed to participant longevity. All 12 participants referenced the power of purpose a total of 92 times whereas the power of reflection was mentioned 85 times. A deeper investigation into the remaining themes revealed a hierarchy of concepts developed based on the frequency each concept was mentioned or how the concepts build upon each other. As a result, Table 13 lists concepts ranked in order and culminating in a principal’s ability to foster meaningful relationships through personal approaches and leveraging emotions.

**Table 13**

Grit and EI Concepts Leading to Meaningful Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Purpose</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reflection</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Emotions - Managing self &amp; others’ emotions for a positive outcome</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-care - Need for support, training &amp; strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Focus - Identifying and focusing on prioritized goals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Determination - Commitment to finishing goals &amp; knowing when to course correct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Openness - Being open &amp; focusing honestly on what you see and hear</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Appraisal - Appraising situations that elicit emotions &amp; the consequences of those emotions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Empathy - Building empathy through perspective taking</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Relationships - Fostering meaningful relationships by personalizing approaches and leveraging emotions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Necessity of Support, Training, and Strategies

Further analysis of the data from Research Questions 4 and 5 revealed all 12 principals recognized they needed support, training, and strategies. Participant responses indicated there were specific supports, strategies, and trainings impacting their longevity. These included having a support system in place, strategies for better work/life balance, training in the area of EI, and a repertoire of coping skills. In addition, the number one support these expert principals discussed was having mentors to guide them in their careers. The participants expanded on how mentors provided a support system, shared strategies for better work/life balance and helped them develop various coping strategies.

Unexpected Findings

Two unexpected findings were discovered from this research, gritty principals valued EI as a greater contributor to longevity despite rating higher on grit rather than EI and the need to consistently persevere through adversity and tragedies.

Gritty Expert Principals Value EI as a Greater Contributor to Longevity

The first unexpected finding was these expert principals rated their level of grit, on average, higher than their level of EI. Almost half the participants rated their level of EI on the SSEIT greater than 1 SD from the mean whereas almost 75% of participants rated their level of grit on the 8-Item Grit Scale greater than 1 SD from the mean. This indicated these participants were a gritty group of expert principals. However, when asked in interviews whether grit or EI contributed to longevity more than the other, eight participants noted EI as a larger contributor. However, each of these eight also agreed they could not do it without grit. For example, Expert Principal 2 reported “I’m going to have to go with EI…I mean they’re both important, but if I had to give the edge, it would
be EI because I think that’s the largest component of what I do each day.” Similarly, Principal 5 stated, “It’s EI for sure. So much of what we do is interact with people, that’s the business we’re in. By far EI, but you need both.” The remaining four reported EI and grit equally contributed to their longevity and no one attributed their success solely to their grit. Therefore, the participants represent a gritty group of expert principals who recognize the value of EI coupled with grit.

**Navigating Tragedies with Grit and EI**

The next unexpected finding was the need for these expert principals to persevere through extensive and significant tragedies. Ten of the 12 expert principals interviewed shared tragic events that occurred at their schools or within their communities while under their leadership. These 10 principals indicated persevering through these tragedies helped increase their longevity by re-establishing their purpose and gaining trust and respect in the community; they also noted the impact these tragedies had on their own mental health and stress levels.

Principal 1 shared “tragedies help you reflect, determine what’s important and then reminds you of how to move forward.” Principal 3 expanded on this sentiment by stating, “I’m not sure how I made it through those days after the fire. No one tells you how to handle the fact that you have 80% of your school in shock from the trauma, including yourself.” Principal 7 reported, “Last year at times, it was just too much, shootings, suicides, and then the synagogue shooting. Everyone was relying on me and I felt alone; I wasn’t sure I had the capacity to do this job anymore.”

Many of the principals discussed that at the onset and while navigating the tragedy, they questioned their ability to remain in their positions. It was during these
critical times they felt lost as to what to do and who to turn to for support. In addition, these expert principals felt the burden of caring for all those relying on them during these tragedies, including staff, students, families, and at times, the community. It was not until after they successfully navigated these tragedies, they could recognize the benefits they offered, such as helping them prioritize what was important and reestablish their purpose.

Conclusions

This study examined the impact grit and EI have on longevity of expert principals. Based on the major and unexpected findings, this study produced six conclusions. The conclusions are supported by the findings of this study and the literature.

Conclusion 1: EI attributes can be Developed through Practice, Guidance, and Training

Based on the identification 10 EI attributes that most represented the expert principals of this study and the majority of those attributes aligned with the number one EI theme of managing self and others’ emotions for a positive outcome, it was concluded specific EI attributes can be developed through practice, guidance, and training, which led to the type of disposition needed to increase longevity in a principalship. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) claimed EI is a fluid skill that can be cultivated through awareness and commitment. Training in the area of EI demonstrated benefits to various fields, including education and organizational management (Schutte & Bhullar, 2018). Schutte et al. (2013) assessed the effectiveness of EI training programs by conducting a meta-analysis of over 435 participants. They found managers who received a 4-week EI training program reported increased morale and decreased work-related stress (Schutte et
They concluded EI training programs demonstrate promise and indicated preliminary positive effects; however, more studies on EI intervention programs need to be conducted to indicate the exact effect size of such programs.

**Conclusion 2: Grit Attributes can be Developed through Focus, Guidance, and Effort**

Given the finding three grit attributes revealed were most like the expert principals studied, that these grit attributes reinforced the number one grit theme of commitment to finish goals, and the remaining themes were derived from the concepts of passion, purpose, priorities, and perseverance, it was concluded specific grit attributes can be developed through focus, guidance, and effort, which led to the type of temperament needed to increase longevity for expert principals. Both grit and EI can be developed through training and focus (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Duckworth, 2016; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2018).

**Conclusion 3: 10 Guiding Practices lead to Principal Longevity**

Based on the finding of a hierarchy of concepts developed from the themes that emerged from Research Questions 4 and 5, it was concluded a set of 10 guiding practices extend expert principal longevity. These 10 guiding practices include actively clarifying and remembering the principal’s purpose, reflecting and adjusting based on purpose, building awareness and management of emotions of self and others, taking care of self with strategies and support, focusing on prioritized goals, determining to finish goals and knowing when to course correct, remaining open to what one sees and hears, appraising situations that elicit emotions and the consequences of those emotions, building empathy through perspective taking, and fostering meaningful relationships. Just as Mayer et al
(2008) found that managers demonstrating high levels of EI were able to foster trusting relationships and increase productivity from workers. Principals engaged in these 10 practices can also ultimately foster trusting relationships that have a positive impact for staff and students.

**Conclusion 4: Mentors Contribute to Principal Longevity**

Given the finding the number one support these expert principals reported was having a mentor, it was concluded mentors contribute to the longevity of expert principals. The need for additional support and how a lack of this support leads to principal turnover was discussed in the literature review. Relational issues that lead to principal turnover included principals’ feeling a lack of support (Kearney et al., 2012; School Leaders Network, 2014; Rangel, 2018) as well as feeling isolated (Finnigan & Daly, 2017; School Leaders Network, 2014).

School Leaders Network (2014) also asserted principals lacked the support needed from the organization to be successful in their position. This study further asserted that 95% of principals reported that they learn on the job and that there was little to no professional learning to aid in necessary skill development (School Leaders Network, 2014). Moreover, the study concluded that the “absence of attention to ongoing support and training” (School Leaders Network, 2014, p. 8) led to high levels of stress. Mentoring can help alleviate stress as well as provide principals with both support and training.

**Conclusion 5: High Levels of Grit and EI Contribute to Principals Longevity**

As evidenced by the finding the vast majority of participants rated their grit higher than 1 SD from the mean and the majority of these expert principals recognized EI
as a larger contributor to their longevity as a principal, it was concluded high levels of both of these attributes contribute to principals remaining in their principalship. This synergistic relationship between grit and EI extended the longevity of the expert principals studied. This affirms and expands the research by Schutte et al. (2013) that EI does contribute to retention or longevity. It also builds on the research that grit is also a factor to longevity or retention (Eskreis et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2013). In addition, “Viewing emotions as all-important would be a mistake, as it represents a false dichotomy…relying on emotional characteristics, or on motives, or on any single part of personality would leave the individual unbalanced” (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2008, p. 514). These researchers suggested that success comes from a more balanced individual and based on this conclusion the balance of grit and EI extended longevity.

**Conclusion 6: Principals Need Clear Policies, Procedures, and Protocols to Help Navigate Tragedies**

Based on the finding that tragedies such as fires, mudslides, shootings, and suicide are becoming common place at schools and within communities affecting staff, students, families, and principals, coupled with the fact these tragedies increase stress levels for principals, it was concluded principals need clear policies, procedures, and protocols to help navigate tragedies. Professional learning regarding trauma informed care and secondary trauma may increase principal longevity as well.

**Implications for Action**

The six conclusions inspired the following implications for action. These recommendations are directed to individuals involved in higher education principal
preparation and induction programs, as well as K-12 public school superintendents, school boards, and personnel departments. They are directed toward those K-12 educational agents who determine allocations of funding for professional learning activities, including coaching/mentoring for principals; develop policies and procedures from recruitment and retention of expert principals; determine the content for administrator preparation and induction programs; and develop and implement policies and procedures for emergency preparedness, including protocols for tragedies.

**Implication for Action 1**

Based on the finding specific EI attributes identified as most representative of the expert principals studied aligned with the number one EI theme, and the conclusion specific EI attributes can be developed through practice, guidance, and training, it is recommended school districts allocate funding toward principal professional learning opportunities specifically for the development of these 10 identified EI attributes. Although the Mayer et al. (2008) hierarchical model can serve as the basis of EI skills to be developed, it should be enhanced with the 10 EI attributes discovered from this study. EI professional learning should meld the Salovey et al. (2008) framework with the 10 EI attributes from this study to focus on developing the following EI skills:

- Build awareness of thoughts and feelings without attachment
- Develop skills to attend to thoughts and feelings for recognition
- Perceive emotions accurately in self and others
- Use emotions to facilitate thinking, which includes perspective taking and empathy, generating emotions to relate to others, leveraging emotions to garner cognitive thinking, and inferencing
• Understand the culture and language of emotions, including recognizing cultural differences, how people feel under certain circumstances, and appraising situations that elicit emotions

• Manage emotions to obtain specific goals, including managing own and others’ emotions to achieve a desired outcome; evaluating strategies to maintain, reduce, or intensify emotional response; engaging with emotions when helpful and disengaging when not; and staying open to pleasant and unpleasant emotions and the information they convey

Through guidance, principals can develop an EI plan based on deficits within the hierarch of these six skills. This plan should be reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed. The plan can also be reviewed and guided through the aid of a mentor.

**Implication for Action 2**

Given the finding a set of grit attributes were aligned to the top grit theme and the discovery of the four Ps of grit, and the conclusion these grit attributes can be developed through focus, guidance, and effort leading to increased lengths of principalships, it is recommended K-12 public schools invest in funding principal professional learning opportunities targeting development of grit and specifically the commitment to finish goals and knowing when to adjust. These learning opportunities can be conducted in conjunction with the previously mentioned EI professional learning opportunities.

Based on the findings from this study and the incorporation of the four Ps of grit, the following actions will help guide and focus principals on setting, prioritizing, and committing to goals through the components of grit:
• Passion – principals establish personal passions and their passions involving K-12 education

• Personal Purpose – principals affirm their personal purpose and why they chose a career in K-12 public education

• Prioritizing – principals identify district initiatives, site goals, and personal needs, prioritizing goals aligned to the principal’s passion and purpose, and use purpose and passion as a guidepost to prioritize goals

• Perseverance – principals develop acts each day that remind them of their passion, purpose, and prioritized goals, and establish a set time and specific actions each day directed toward obtaining prioritized goals

• Reflection – principals take time to reflect on their plan weekly, focusing on whether they remember their passion and purpose daily, take actions each day toward their prioritized goals, assess progress, and then adjust

**Implication for Action 3**

Based on the benefits of a synergistic relationship between grit and EI, it is recommended administrator preparation and induction programs interested in extending the length of expert principals’ tenure need to incorporate information on these attributes into their curriculum content. It is recommended these agencies examine their course syllabi and incorporate content on frameworks for these attributes, benefits of these attributes, and how to develop these attributes as an educational leader.

**Implication for Action 4**

As evidenced by finding a hierarchy of concepts developed from the themes in this study coupled with the conclusion that these 10 guiding principles increase longevity
of principals, it is recommended K-12 educational institutes interested in increasing expert principals’ time at a school site must develop systems to aid principals in implementing these guiding practices. For example, newly hired principals would complete a training module on the guiding practices. The module would include information on how to develop and sustain these practices. The 10 guiding practices are as follows:

- **Purpose** – development of practices to constantly clarify and remember the principal’s passion and purpose
- **Reflection** – development of practices to regularly reflect and adjust along the way based on his/her purpose
- **Emotions** – development of practices to build awareness and manage emotions of self and others for a positive outcome
- **Self-Care** – development of practices to help principals recognize they need support to develop a repertoire of effective coping strategies
- **Focus** – development of practices to identify and focus on prioritized goals
- **Determination** – development of practices to aid in commitment to finish goals and knowing when to course correct
- **Openness** – development of practices to understand each principal perceives situations and interactions through their own personal lens, developed through their experiences and beliefs, and development of practices to be open to focus honestly on what one sees and hears
- **Appraisal** – development of practices to help principals appraise situations that elicit emotions and their consequences
• Empathy – development of practices for principals to continually build empathy through perspective-taking
• Relationships – development of practices to aid principals in regularly fostering meaningful relationships by personalizing approaches and leveraging emotions

**Implication for Action 5**

Given the finding the number one support these expert principals reported was having a mentor, and the conclusion mentors contribute to increased longevity of expert principals, it is recommended K-12 school districts interested in extending longevity of expert principals invest in formalized mentoring programs for beginning principals. Newly hired principals would benefit from being paired with a mentor for their first three years of employment. The literature indicated the highest rates of principal turnover occurred after years one, 25% and three, an additional 50% (School Leaders Network, 2014). Therefore, offering supports such as mentors during this time frame could help with retention, especially retention of expert principals. The mentoring approach can be paired with the professional learning opportunities for developing EI and grit (Implication for Actions 1 and 2) and the newly hired principal module on the 10 guiding practices (Implication for Action 4).

**Implication for Action 6**

As evidenced by the finding the vast majority of participants rated themselves higher on grit and the majority recognized EI as a larger contributor to their longevity, and the conclusion high levels of grit and EI contribute to principal longevity, it is recommended K-12 public schools interested in increasing longevity of expert principals
should invest money into employing and retaining gritty principals willing to develop both the attributes of grit and EI. K-12 public schools need to assess and evaluate principal recruiting, hiring, and retention practices. This would include actions to increase the likelihood of hiring and retaining gritty principals willing to develop EI and further advance their grittiness. Personnel departments would benefit from assessing grit and EI levels prior to hiring; however, rather than administering grit or EI self-assessments or self-rating scales, which are contraindicated in high-stakes situations, personnel departments would benefit from creating interview protocols that elicit levels and attributes of grit/EI in scenarios and examples during the interview process. Moreover, K-12 public schools would benefit from investments in professional learning opportunities to develop and capitalize on the attributes of grit and EI in their principals. These specific plans for professional learning opportunities were reviewed in Implication for Actions 1, 2, and 4.

**Implication for Action 7**

Based on the finding tragedies such as fires, mudslides, shootings, and suicides are becoming common place and the conclusion that that principals need clear policies, procedures, and protocols to help navigate tragedies, it is recommended that K-12 public school districts need to develop policies, procedures, and protocols to help site administrators navigate these tragedies. K-12 school districts could benefit from developing an emergency preparedness team to specifically help write policies, procedures, and protocols in collaboration with law enforcement and mental health providers for various tragedies. Additionally, districts should offer specific supports and/or mentoring to school principals to help them successfully navigate such tragedies.
These protocols should help guide the site administrator when faced with these events especially at the onset of the tragic event as guidance to help reduce the initial stress. Protocols should be developed for death of various stakeholders, student suicide, active shooter, classrooms taken hostage, loss of a classroom or school due to natural disasters, or other similar tragedies. Although it is taxing to think through these events, each principal who discussed involvement in tragedies all shared it would have been helpful to have guidance and procedures to follow. Such protocols need to be provided to site administrators with follow-up training, and districts should invest in funding professional learning opportunities regarding trauma-informed care.

**Implication for Action 8**

Considering the complexities that principals face today and the amplified stress they are experiencing due in part to the increased level of tragedies that our schools are exposed to, it is recommended that the California School Board Association (CSBA) review and digest this study so that future actions and initiatives of the CSBA can support the attributes that can extend successful principals’ longevity including grit and EI. As indicated by this study emotional intelligence and the development of these skills play a crucial role not only in the success of educational leadership but in extending the longevity of effective educational leadership.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the researcher recommends further research in the following areas to expand the understanding and knowledge of how grit and EI contribute to longevity of principals:
As this was the first study to investigate the potential relationship between grit and EI, and the impact these attributes have on longevity of expert principals, it is recommended this study be replicated to allow for further investigation into the contributions grit and EI have in increasing longevity of expert principals. It would also further tease out specific themes that can be compared to these themes to fine tune the guiding principles and EI/ grit attributes to be targeted for development.

Research indicates the most crucial times for retention of expert principals come at the end of year one and three. Given the implications for action that professional learning helps develop grit and EI, and the need for principal mentoring, it is recommended a study be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of these approaches. A pre-post assessment of grit and EI levels could be conducted to explore principal perceptions of the impact these types of training and mentoring models have on principal longevity.

Given this research revealed a moderate relationship between EI and grit and the presence of outliers in the data, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with a larger population of expert principals to further explore the relationship between these two attributes. In addition, coupling the proposed quantitative research with qualitative research investigating principal perceptions of the relationships between these two attributes could be beneficial. This could aid in the expansion of research regarding the synergistic relationship between grit and EI.
• Considering how gritty the participants were and the fact that they valued EI as a contributor to their longevity, another area of focus for future research includes an investigation into how grit and EI are developed. Exploring the experiences of a principalship or the experiences leading up to their principalship that allowed them to develop grit and/or EI could further guide mentoring and professional learning to extend expert principals tenure at school sites for the benefit of the staff and students.

• This study discovered most of these principals experienced significant tragedies at their school sites. A study exploring how grit and EI help principals navigate and persevere through these tragic events could provide beneficial insights for professional learning opportunities and the development of emergency policies, procedures, and protocols.

• A future study to identify and describe the best practices for developing EI and grit in prospective principals is warranted. Considering the implications for actions identifying the specific EI and grit skills to be developed a study that identified and described the best practices for developing the most effective skills can aid in refining these approaches and extending principal longevity.

• A final area for future research would be an investigation into the types of social-emotional learning, formal or informal, principals experienced that aided in the development of grit and EI.
Concluding Remarks and Reflections

In serving in the educational field for over 25 years, it is my opinion the site administrator has one of the most difficult, important, and complex positions in K-12 education. One of my career goals is to continue supporting and guiding site principals so students, staff, and families can benefit. This dissertation process helped me understand my purpose and provided me with drive to pursue opportunities to support expert principals in hopes of extending their longevity. I am grateful for the opportunity to explore this dissertation topic and I look forward to sharing my results to contribute to the expanding body of research on the importance gritty and emotionally savvy K-12 educational leadership.

Reflecting on the dissertation process, it was validating to find these attributes did contribute to expert principal longevity and inspiring to find season veteran expert principals making a difference while caring deeply for their staff, students, and communities. Based on my research into these expert principals, I have hope for our educational system and specifically our youth of tomorrow. It is exciting to know principals guided by purpose and reflection while given the supports and training necessary to develop and advance grit and EI can do great things while navigating substantial tragedies and the complexities of a site principalship.
REFERENCES


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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A – SYNTHESIS MATRIX

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<tr>
<th>Principal Turnover</th>
<th>Role of K-12 Principal</th>
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APPENDIX B – INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

STUDY: The Impact of Grit and Emotional Intelligence on the Longevity of Expert Principals

November___, 2019

Dear Prospective Study Participant,

You are invited to participate in a mixed-methods study to investigate how expert principals rate their level of grit and emotional intelligence as well as how these expert principals perceive the impacts that grit and emotional intelligence have on their longevity. The main investigator of this study is Marcia Hamilton, Doctoral Candidate in Brandman University’s Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were chosen to participate in this study because your school has earned a state or national recognition of excellence in the last two years and 75% or more of the 2018 California dashboard indicators were in the blue/green range.

There are two parts of the study including electronic survey and interviews. Participation in the electronic survey alone will be 7-10-minutes while participation in the electronic survey and interviews will take approximately one hour. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this mixed methods study is to determine what relationship exits, between emotional intelligence and grit, as determined through self-rated surveys by expert principals. A further purpose is to discover expert principal’s perceptions of how emotional intelligence and grit impact longevity in their position.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, then you may proceed with the electronic survey. At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would like to participate in a voluntary interview. The researcher will then contact those interested participants to schedule an interview. During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions designed to allow me to share the perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit and emotional intelligence impact longevity in their position.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are minimal risks to your participation in this research study. It may be inconvenient to spend up to one hour in the interview. However, the interview session will be held at an agreed upon location, to minimize this inconvenience.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, however, your input and feedback could help add to the research regarding factors that may contribute to longevity of expert principals. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, policymakers, and educators. Additionally, the findings and recommendations from this study will be made available to all participants.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study, and any personal information you provide, will not be linked in any way. It will not be
possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

You are encouraged to ask questions, at any time that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact me at [Contact Information Omited] or by email at [Contact Information Omited]. You can also contact Dr. Phil Pendley by email at [Contact Information Omited]. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Respectfully,
Marcia Hamilton
Marcia Hamilton
Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Marcia Hamilton, Doctoral Candidate

TITLE OF CONSENT FORM: Consent to Participate in Research

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: This study is being conducted for a dissertation for the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program at Brandman University. The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to determine what relationship exits, between emotional intelligence and grit, as determined through self-rated surveys by expert principals. A further purpose is to discover expert principal’s perceptions of how emotional intelligence and grit impact longevity in their position.

PROCEDURES: In participating in this research study, I agree to either partake in electronic survey only or in electronic survey plus an audio-recorded, semi-structured interview. The interview will take place, in person, at a predetermined location, and will last approximately an hour. During the electronic survey I will be asked to rate my level of grit and emotional intelligence by answering fixed-choice questions. While during the interview, I will be asked a series of questions designed to allow me to share my perceptions of how grit and emotional intelligence impact longevity as a principal.

I understand that:

a) The possible risks or discomforts associated with this research are minimal. It may be inconvenient to spend up to one hour in the interview. However, the interview session will be held at an agreed upon location, to minimize this inconvenience.

b) I will not be compensated for my participation in this study. The possible benefit of this study is to add to the research regarding factors that may contribute to longevity of expert principals. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, policymakers, and educators. The findings and recommendations from this study will be made available to all participants.

c) Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Marcia Hamilton, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate. I understand that Ms. Hamilton may be contacted by phone at [contact information] or email at [contact information]. The dissertation chairperson may also answer questions: Dr. Phil Pendley at [contact information].
d) I may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

e) The study will be audio-recorded, and the recordings will not be used beyond the scope of this project. Audio recordings will be used to transcribe the interviews. Once the interviews are transcribed, the audio and interview transcripts will be kept for a minimum of three years by the investigator in a secure location.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be informed, and my consent re-obtained. If I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your choice below. Clicking on the “agree” button indicates that you have read the informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate. If you do not wish to participate in this electronic survey, you may decline participation by clicking on the “disagree” button.

The survey will not open for responses unless you agree to participate.

☐ AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and “Bill of Rights.” I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in the study.

☐ DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey
APPENDIX D – AUDIO RELEASE FORM

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: The Impact Grit and Emotional Intelligence have on Longevity of Expert Principals.

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY
16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD
IRVINE, CA  92618

I authorize Marcia Hamilton, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate, to record my voice. I give Brandman University and all persons or entities associated with this research study permission or authority to use this recording for activities associated with this research study.

I understand that the recording will be used for transcription purposes and the information obtained during the interview may be published in a journal/dissertation or presented at meetings/presentations.

I will be consulted about the use of the audio recordings for any purpose other than those listed above. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising correlated to the use of information obtained from the recording.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the above release and agree to the outlined terms. I hereby release all claims against any person or organization utilizing this material.

_____________________________________________  __________________
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party  Date
BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB Adopted November 2013
The Impact Grit and Emotional Intelligence have on Longevity of Expert Principals

Welcome to this Survey for Expert Principals

Thank you for agreeing to participate. Your feedback is important to better understand factors that contribute to retention of expert principals. The purpose of this mixed methods study is to determine what relationship exists between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Grit of expert principals. A further purpose is to discover principals perceptions of how EI and Grit impact longevity in their positions.

There are a total of 44 questions that will take approximately 7 - 10 minutes to complete. In the initial email requesting your interest in this study you received an information letter, Informed Consent, and Participant Bill of Rights.

1. To begin the survey please select agree. You may decline participation by clicking disagree.

   □ AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of and have read the Informed Consent and Participant Bill of Rights. I give my consent to participate in this study.

   □ DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this survey.
# The Impact Grit and Emotional Intelligence have on Longevity of Expert Principals

The following questions will assess your level of grit and emotional intelligence. There are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. For the most accurate score, think of how you compare to most people - not just the people you know well, but most people in the world. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer honestly. Answers range from "very much like me" to "not like me at all" or "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Let's begin.

2. I have served as principal at my current school site for:

- [ ] 1 year
- [ ] 2 years
- [ ] 3 years
- [ ] 4 years
- [ ] 5 years
- [ ] 6 years
- [ ] 7 years
- [ ] 8 years
- [ ] 9 years
- [ ] 10 years
- [ ] 11 - 15 years
- [ ] 16 or more years

3. My school site is at the ________ level.

- [ ] Elementary
- [ ] Secondary
- [ ] Both

4. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.

- [ ] Very much like me
- [ ] Mostly like me
- [ ] Somewhat like me
- [ ] Not much like me
- [ ] Not like me at all

5. Setbacks don't discourage me.

- [ ] Very much like me
- [ ] Mostly like me
- [ ] Somewhat like me
- [ ] Not much like me
- [ ] Not like me at all
6. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.
   ○ Very much like me  ○ Not much like me
   ○ Most like me       ○ Not like me at all
   ○ Somewhat like me   ○ Not like me at all

7. I am a hard worker.
   ○ Very much like me  ○ Not much like me
   ○ Most like me       ○ Not like me at all
   ○ Somewhat like me   ○ Not like me at all

8. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.
   ○ Very much like me  ○ Not much like me
   ○ Most like me       ○ Not like me at all
   ○ Somewhat like me   ○ Not like me at all

9. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.
   ○ Very much like me  ○ Not much like me
   ○ Most like me       ○ Not like me at all
   ○ Somewhat like me   ○ Not like me at all

10. I finish whatever I begin.
    ○ Very much like me  ○ Not much like me
     ○ Most like me       ○ Not like me at all
     ○ Somewhat like me   ○ Not like me at all

11. I am diligent.
    ○ Very much like me  ○ Not much like me
     ○ Most like me       ○ Not like me at all
     ○ Somewhat like me   ○ Not like me at all
12. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

13. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

14. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

15. Other people find it easy to confide in me.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
16. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

17. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

18. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

19. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
20. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

21. I expect good things to happen.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

22. I like to share my emotions with others.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

23. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
24. I arrange events others enjoy.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

25. I seek out activities that make me happy.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

26. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

27. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
28. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

29. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

30. I know why my emotions change.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

31. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
32. I have control over my emotions.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

33. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

34. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

35. I compliment others when they have done something well.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree
36. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

37. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

38. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

39. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree
40. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.
   □ Strongly agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither agree nor disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly disagree

41. I help other people feel better when they are down.
   □ Strongly agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither agree nor disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly disagree

42. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.
   □ Strongly agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither agree nor disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly disagree

43. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.
   □ Strongly agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither agree nor disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly disagree
44. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.
   ○ Strongly agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly disagree

45. Would you be interested in participating in an interview that will be approximately 30-45 minutes to further study grit and EI?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

46. If yes, please add your email address so the researcher can contact you.
APPENDIX G – INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewer: Marcia Hamilton

Interview time planned: Approximately one hour

Recording: Digital voice recorders

Written: Field notes

Introductions: Introduce ourselves to one another.

Opening Statement: Thank you for agreeing to spend some time with me today. My name is Marcia Hamilton and I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I am a former elementary school principal and worked for Moorpark Unified in that role for five years. I now work at the district office as an accountability and categorical specialist.

Given the changing landscape of public K-12 education, it is important to understand factors that may increase the likelihood of longevity of expert principals. Additionally, considering that public K-12 schools are facing high rates of principal turnover, it is important to deepen our understanding of why some principals choose to remain in their positions for three or more years. As a former principal, I was curious about exploring the impacts of various personal traits or attributes, things that we could grow or develop, that could contribute to longevity. This led me to this research in exploring the impact that grit and emotional intelligence may have on expert principal longevity as well as the relationship between those two attributes.

Interview Agenda: I anticipate that this interview will take about one hour today. As a review of the process leading up to this interview, you were invited to participate via phone call after you completed the electronic survey. Prior to the electronic survey you signed an informed consent form that outlined the interview process and the condition of complete anonymity for this study. You also read the Letter of Invitation and the Participant’s Bill of Rights. Thank you for signing the Audio Release Form in advance of this interview. Next, I will begin the audio recorder and ask a list of questions related to the purpose of the study. I may take notes as the interview is being recorded. If you are uncomfortable with me taking notes, please let me know and I will only continue with the audio recording of the interview. Finally, I will stop the recorder and conclude our interview session. After your interview is transcribed, you will receive a copy of the complete transcript to check for accuracy prior to the data being to data analysis. Please remember that anytime during this process you have the right to stop the interview. If at any time you do not understand the questions being asked, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Are there any questions or concerns before we begin with the interview? I will be conducting approximately 10 - 12 interviews with others like yourself who are expert principals. To ensure the data collected is pure, I may not engage in a lot of dialogue with you during the interview.
**Background Question:**

1. How long have you served as a principal throughout your career?
2. How long have you served as principal at your current site?

**Content Questions:** In preparation for the content questions I wanted to remind you that the purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what relationship exists, between emotional intelligence and grit, as determined through self-rated surveys by expert principals with three or more years’ longevity. A further purpose was to discover the principal’s perceptions of how emotional intelligence and grit impacted longevity in their positions.

**Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional Intelligence is a set of interrelated competencies to adaptively perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotions in the self and others…to control and utilize feelings wisely (Schutte & Bhular, 2018). This includes perceiving emotions in self and others, utilizing emotions for thinking, using emotions for understanding, and ultimately managing emotions of self and others to obtain positive outcomes for all.

1. In your own words please describe how emotional intelligence pertains to your role as a principal.
2. Please describe how your ability to perceive and assess your emotions may have contributed to your longevity as a principal.
3. Tell me your understanding of how your ability to discriminate accurate vs. inaccurate emotional expression may have affected your longevity as a principal?
4. What, if any, impact did your ability to read the emotions of others have on your longevity?
5. Describe how assessing and adjusting your own emotions may have influenced your longevity.
6. What are your thoughts on how appraising the situations that are likely to elicit emotions has impacted your longevity?
7. What difference, if any, does understanding how others may feel in the future or under certain circumstances contribute to longevity as a principal?
8. How might, if at all, staying open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings and to the information they convey aid in your longevity?
9. What impact, if any, could effectively managing one’s own or other’s emotions to achieve a desired outcome impact longevity?
10. Is there anything that you haven’t had a chance to share regarding how emotional intelligence may contribute to longevity in your role as principal?

**Grit:** Grit is defined as “passion and perseverance for long-term goals” (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007, p. 1087) despite obstacles, setbacks or boredom.

1. In your own words tell me how perseverance and passion for long-term goals relates to your role as a principal.
2. Please describe how having new ideas and/or projects impacts your longevity as a
principal.
3. Tell me how setbacks or obstacles influence your longevity as a principal.
4. What’s your thinking on how changing focus from one project to another due to changing interests effects your longevity as a principal?
5. Describe ways in which your personal work ethic contributes to your longevity as a principal.
6. What impact, if any, does frequently switching goals have on your longevity as a principal?
7. How does, if at all, maintaining focus on projects or initiatives influence your longevity as a principal?
8. What is your understanding of how determination to finish what you begin impacts your longevity as a principal?
9. Please describe how personal diligence contributes to your longevity as a principal.
10. Is there anything that you haven’t had a chance to share regarding how grit may contribute to longevity in your role as principal?
11. What are your final thoughts on how grit and emotional intelligence may contribute to your longevity in your position as principal?
## APPENDIX H – INTERVIEW QUESTION DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Question(s)</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1</strong> - How do expert principals with three or more years’ longevity rate their level of emotional intelligence as indicated on the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)?</td>
<td>Quantitative RQ – No qualitative IQ for this question.</td>
<td>Source 1 - Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2</strong> - How do expert principals with three or more years’ longevity rate their level of grit as indicated on the Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale?</td>
<td>Quantitative RQ – No qualitative IQ for this question.</td>
<td>Source 2 - Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ3</strong> - What relationship exists between emotional intelligence scale scores and the grit scale scores for expert principals with three or more years’ longevity as a principal?</td>
<td>Quantitative RQ – No qualitative IQ for this question.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Emotional Intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Question(s)</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ4</strong> - What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how emotional intelligence impacts their longevity in their principalship?</td>
<td>IQ1 - In your own words please describe how emotional intelligence pertains to your role as a principal.</td>
<td>Source 3 – Salovey, Mayer &amp; Caruso Model (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IQ2 - Please describe how your ability to perceive and assess your emotions may have contributed to your longevity as a principal.</td>
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<td>IQ3 – Tell me your understanding of how your ability to discriminate accurate vs. inaccurate emotional expression may have affected your longevity as a principal?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IQ4 – What, if any, impact did your ability to read the emotions of others have on your longevity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQ5</td>
<td>Describe how assessing and adjusting your own emotions may have influenced your longevity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQ6</td>
<td>What are your thoughts on how appraising the situations that are likely to elicit emotions has impacted your longevity?</td>
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<td>IQ7</td>
<td>What difference, if any, does understanding how others may feel in the future or under certain circumstances contribute to longevity as a principal?</td>
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<td>IQ8</td>
<td>How might, if at all, staying open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings and to the information they convey aid in your longevity?</td>
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<td>IQ9</td>
<td>What impact, if any, could effectively managing one’s own or other’s emotions to achieve a desired outcome impact longevity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQ10</td>
<td>Is there anything that you haven’t had a chance to share regarding how emotional intelligence may contribute to longevity in your role as principal?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RQ5</strong></td>
<td>What are the perceptions of expert principals regarding how grit impacts their longevity in their principalship?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IQ11</strong></td>
<td>In your own words tell me how perseverance and passion for long-term goals relates to your role as a principal.</td>
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<td><strong>IQ12</strong></td>
<td>Please describe how having new ideas and/or projects impact your longevity as a principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IQ13</strong></td>
<td>Tell me how setbacks or obstacles influence your longevity as a principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IQ14</strong></td>
<td>What’s your thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source 4</strong></td>
<td>Duckworth 8-Item Grit Scale (2009)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Interview Question</td>
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<td>IQ15</td>
<td>Describe ways in which your personal work ethic contributes to your longevity as a principal.</td>
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<td>IQ16</td>
<td>What impact, if any, does frequently switching goals have on your longevity as a principal?</td>
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<td>IQ17</td>
<td>How does, if at all, maintaining focus on projects or initiatives influence your longevity as a principal?</td>
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<td>IQ18</td>
<td>What is your understanding of how determination to finish what you begin impacts your longevity as a principal?</td>
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<td>IQ19</td>
<td>Please describe how personal diligence contributes to longevity as a principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQ20</td>
<td>Is there anything that you haven’t had a chance to share regarding how grit may contribute to longevity in your role as principal?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQ21</td>
<td>What are your final thoughts on how grit and emotional intelligence may contribute to your longevity in your position as principal?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

1. Each Research Question must be addressed.
2. Interview Questions should tie directly to a Research Question.
3. Each Interview Question should have a source/rationale for asking it that ties directly to the purpose and RQ’s of the study, so the information acquired addresses the Purpose and RQ’s.
APPENDIX I – BUIRB APPROVAL

BUIRB Application Approved As Submitted: Marcia Hamilton

MyBrandman <my@brandman.edu>                                 Fri, Nov 8, 10:31 AM (4 days ago)
to me, Philip, buirb, Vikki ↓

Dear Marcia Hamilton,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at BUIRB@brandman.edu. If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the “Application Modification Form” before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at the following link: https://irb.brandman.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,
Doug DeVore, Ed.D.
Professor
Organizational Leadership
BUIRB Chair
ddevore@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu
APPENDIX J

Certificate of Completion of Training by National Institute of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural research Protecting Human Research Participants

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Marcia Hamilton successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 05/15/2018

Certification Number: 2819473

National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research
Re: Dissertation Research with Grit Scale

Hi Marcia,

You're welcome to use my scales! See my Penn website below. There are no restrictions for non-commercial uses for research, translation, or education.

With grit and gratitude,

Angela

Angela Duckworth

Have you signed up for my Thought of the Week?

Founder and CEO, Character Lab
Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania
Faculty Co-Director, The Behavior Change For Good Initiative
Faculty Co-Director, Wharton People Analytics
Twitter | Instagram | Facebook | LinkedIn
Re: Permission for SSEIT

Nicola Schutte <nischutte@une.edu.au>

Thank you for your message.

You are welcome to use the scale. Please find attached the manuscript copy of a published chapter that provides more information.

Kind regards, Nicola Schutte