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Sustaining a Career in Community and Technical College Leadership by Coping with Job Stress Through Emotional Intelligence

A Dissertation by

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Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2018

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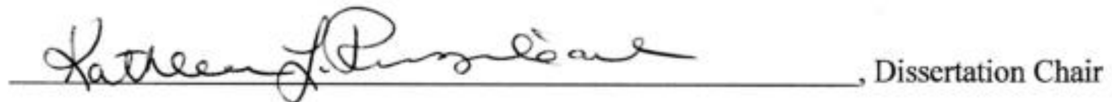

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ABSTRACT

Sustaining a Career in Community and Technical College Leadership by Coping with Job Stress Through Emotional Intelligence

by Claire Yurovchak Korschinowski

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to describe and explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans in the Washington State community and technical college system. A second purpose of this study was to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy.

**Methodology**: For this qualitative phenomenological study, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews from 15 senior-level leaders. Participants identified a variety of ways emotional intelligence factors into coping with organizational role stress.

**Findings**: Findings suggest having self-awareness, expressing one's self to build mutual understanding and trust, using multiple sources of data to inform decision making, having support systems, and optimism were identified as the top themes across each key factor area. Differences were found among leader role type in response frequencies, and coping strategies identified.

**Conclusions:** This study drew eight conclusions on how community and technical college senior-level leaders use emotional intelligence to cope with occupational role stress. The conclusions of this study lead to several implications for aspiring community and technical college leaders, current college leaders who seek to advance in their career,

emotional intelligence and occupational stress researchers, and organizational development practitioners.

**Recommendations**: Further study on emotional intelligence and organizational role stress is needed to obtain generalizable findings to include other types of higher education institutions, larger samples of senior-level community and technical college leaders for comparison of similarities and differences and correlate perceptions between more than one sample.  Other research methodologies are recommended.

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# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The demand for transformational change in higher education creates a challenging environment that leads to stress for individuals who lead and manage these organizations. Occupational stress is a common emotional experience felt by many individuals, especially for those in management positions. Because stress has many detrimental effects, research has focused on how emotional intelligence and coping techniques help to diminish the adversarial impacts of stress. Emotional intelligence and an individual's ability to cope with stress are found to be closely related (J. Ciarrochi, Deane, & Anderson, 2002; Fabes & Eisenberg, 1997; Gohm, Corser, & Dalsky, 2005).

Higher education professionals face many occupational stressors as the current landscape demands transformational change, increased public attention towards institutional accountability, and stiff competition for new enrollments with reduced fiscal resources (Bragg et al., 2014; Woods, 2012). In addition, many of these positions are held by individuals who will retire soon and higher education will be faced with a shortage of individuals who do not wish to go into management or who do not have the skill set to do so (Riggs, 2009; Shults & American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2001). In 2013, the Kim and Cook published an issue brief demonstrating a gap between the number of leaders needed to meet a vacancy demands and the number of professionals who is positioned to step into an executive leadership position.

The demands on community and technical college leaders to innovate with limited resources, find new enrollments as the current enrollments are declining, be accountable to student success, respond to community, business, and industry can be a source of challenge for leaders of these institutions (Katsinas, D'Amico, & Friedel, 2014).

In addition, these leaders are expected to be responsive to local, state, and national government agencies, policies, and initiatives (AACC, 2015). These societal changes have cause many demands on those who are leaders within the higher education profession (Sarros, Wolverton, Gmelch, & Wolverton, 1999; Shin & Jung, 2014; Zakaria, Omar, & Asmawi, 2015). Mattson (2012) indicates that the perceived occupational stress of community college leaders may be a reason why individuals are unwilling to apply for higher-level leadership jobs. This may lead to a shortage of applicants who are willing to take on the high demands and stress associated with having a career at higher levels of leadership in community colleges.

Stress can be damaging to the economy, the organization and the individual (S. Cartwright & Pappas, 2008). Many people desire living a well-balanced, low stress, meaningful life. Stress that is experienced over a long term period can be harmful and has been attributed to many negative aspects to one's life including a variety of illnesses, a lower immune system, heart disease, high blood pressure (Krantz, Thorn, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2013; Sapolsky, 2004). Additionally, organizations are harmed by the occupational stress experienced by its employees. Organizations can see a drop in employee performance, poor employee engagement and attitudes, and increased absenteeism (M. Yong, Nasterlack, Pluto, Lang, & Oberlinner, 2013). If occupational stress is not managed through a set of coping skills, this stress can accumulate over time and have long-term implications on one's overall life-satisfaction and health (Mielczarek et al., 2015; M. Yong, Nasterlack, Pluto, Lang, & Oberlinner, 2012).

Emotional intelligence is considered an ability to manage one's own stress level and emotions and harness them in order to be able to focus on work and working with

other individuals. Research suggests that emotional intelligence might be the key to managing stress that takes place within the workplace (Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005; P. Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel, 2002; Wan, Downey, & Stough, 2014) and might be the key personal attribute that makes a successful leader (D. Goleman, 1998b; D. Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; D. Goleman, McKee, & Boyayzis, 2006). C. Woodland and Parsons (2013) recommend college leaders should be empathic towards multiple stakeholder needs and have strong emotional intelligence as institutional role models. In their article, Floyd, Maslin-Ostrowski, and Hrabak (2010) describe how real leadership emerges when one experiences a crisis or dilemma. They discuss a need for the community college leader to cultivate emotional awareness, active reflection, and engage in collegial conversations as strategies to be a successful leader. Moreover, college employees can experience occupational stress when faced with organizational change or poor leadership (Zakaria et al., 2015). In their study Ismail, Rahman, and Zainal Abidin (2014) determined the presence of pyschological job demand, social support, and job insecurity contributed to occupational stress as a result of organizational factors experienced by community college faculty lecturers. As community and technical college leaders are responsible to cultivate an organizational culture by building a shared understanding amongst staff and faculty, emotional intelligence may serve as a powerful skill that can influence the organization and its employees in a positive manner.

An individual’s ability to cope with occupational stress has been extensively researched and many studies explore the impact of stress on well-being, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Some studies attempt to predict a leader’s ability to cope with stress based upon various personality and

psychological traits (Grant & Langan-Fox, 2006; P. Salovey et al., 2002). Therefore, it is important to explore how the emotional intelligence relates to coping with organizational role stress amongst leaders of community and technical colleges.

## Background

This section provides a brief overview of the research conducted to date for the variables within this study, emotional intelligence, and occupational stress. A more in-depth review of literature can be found in Chapter II.

### Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is known by researchers as the ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of self and of others and use this intelligence as information to guides one's behavior (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1995) and or identify and control emotions in one's self and in others (Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006; D. Goleman, 1998b). As individuals encounter their environment, their brain uses the limbic system for functions such as appetite, anger, feeling, and sexual behavior and when stimulated, emotions are produced. Throughout the literature, researchers suggest that emotional intelligence is learned and can be developed, unlike intelligence or IQ (Cherniss et al., 2006; D. Goleman, 1998a).

As emotional intelligence is developed, individuals learn to take responsibility and initiative for their performance and development, learn to listen to their intuition, read other's body language, and recognize differences amongst individuals (Chopra & Kanji, 2010). The teaching and training of emotional intelligence has been conducted in a variety of settings in corporate and public/non-profit organizations and many resources have been created for training and coaching purposes (Boivin, 2013; Carter, Kelley,

Keaton, & Albrecht, 2011; G. Matthews, Roberts, & Zeidner, 2011; Neale, Wilson, & Spencer-Arnell, 2011). However, McEnrue and Groves (2006) state the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training depends upon the individual's ability, willingness to receive feedback, and possess the level of confidence needed to take action towards improving their emotional intelligence. Several best practices are discussed in the literature as to how an individual may learn emotional intelligence. Sadri (2012) suggests individual coaching, group or team building, personal reflection, and action planning as educational methods that are effective for teaching emotional intelligence to managers and leaders.

**Emotional Intelligence and Leadership**

Effective leadership is making connections to followers through their emotional self (D. Goleman et al., 2006). Parrish's (2011) study on emotional intelligence and higher education leadership suggests that the "development of leaders in higher education is being neglected" (p. 211) and 100% of the study's participants agreed that emotional intelligence is a vital skill for higher education leaders. Boyatzis, Smith, Van Oosten, and Woolford (2013) believed that "all leadership interactions are emotional activities," (p. 192) and sought to disprove skeptics who argue that emotional and social intelligence does not show any validity beyond a personality assessment. In their study on a sales person's leadership and performance, the results indicated that emotional and social competencies had a strong connection to the leader's performance. Føllesdal and Hagtvet (2013) looked at the relationship between emotional intelligence as a predictor of transformational leadership after controlling for the Five Factor Model of personality and general mental ability as a method to isolate emotional intelligence as a unique

characteristic. Their study found no empirical evidence to support their hypothesis and further questioned the validity of the MSCEIT and if it can truly measure emotional intelligence. On the other hand, Cavazotte, Moreno, and Hickmann (2012) investigated the effects of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership and leadership performance of managers. Their results indicated a statistical significance between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership when not controlling for personality traits; however, when controlling for personality traits, the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence became non-significant.

**Emotional Intelligence Impact on the Workplace**

Emotional intelligence researchers have explored the links between emotional intelligence and implications on workplace issues such as job performance, occupational stress, job satisfaction and success (Carmeli, 2003; S. Cartwright & Pappas, 2008; Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006). Additionally, studies have shown positive implications for an organization when the emotional intelligence of leadership is high (J. Ciarrochi & Scott, 2006; Cotê & Miners, 2006; Sy et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002). Most recently Wan, Downey, and Stough (2014) did a study on the relationship of emotional intelligence and workplace boredom, procrastination, and job stress. They found that individuals with greater emotional intelligence were better at coping with stress, had more favorable interpersonal relationships, and better job performance than individuals with lower emotional intelligence ratings. They concluded that employees who possess high emotional intelligence might lead to greater productivity, lower turnover, and less absenteeism.

Studies show emotional intelligence can also distinguish between low and high job performance and job satisfaction. In their longitudinal study over a 40-year period with 450 boys, Kelley and Caplan (1993) found the greater the presence of emotional intelligence predicted high job performance. In addition, employees with high emotional intelligence could self-regulate their emotions as well as identify the positive and negative factors that attribute to their emotional state. Wong and Law (2002) found that emotional intelligence of both the leader and the follower have strong relationships with job satisfaction. Additionally, individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to perform well and experience job satisfaction regardless of their leader's emotional intelligence (Sy et al., 2006).

In another study, which focused on senior management and their success, Carmeli (2003) found significant relationships between emotional intelligence and the withdrawal intentions and job performance of senior managers. While the results of this study were interesting, the researchers were surprised to see the strength of influence senior managers with high emotional intelligence had on the organization as a role model and the strength of the relationship between employee performance as it related to the level of emotional intelligence of their leader.

**Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress**

Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) have demonstrated that emotional intelligence, occupational stress, and organizational commitment have a significant relationship amongst mental health professionals in Greece. The results of their study indicate that high levels of emotional intelligence can have a positive effect on job performance and stress management (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). In another study, Singh and Sharma

(2012) researched the relationship between general intelligence and emotional intelligence, and acute stress and perceived stress management. The results of their study showed an association with high emotional intelligence, and low acute and perceived chronic stress levels, and no relationship between general intelligence and acute and perceived chronic stress levels. They concluded, “Emotional intelligence rather than GI is the attribute suited to handle day-to-day acute and perceived chronic stress” (p.13).

**Emotional Intelligence and Coping with Occupational Stress**

In order to process stressful situations, one has to categorize the situation or environment as stressful. Salami (2010) indicates, “Stress occurs when the magnitude of the stressor exceeds the individual’s capacity to cope” (p. 388). In his research, Salami explores the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being as defined by emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, coping strategies, support systems. The results of this study showed significance between negative states and psychological distress and dissatisfaction. A second finding of this study was the significant predictor of emotional intelligence on the individual’s psychological well-being. Finally, the use of a support system both at work and at home led to the subject’s psychological well-being. Gohm, Corser, and Dalsky (2005) did a study on emotional intelligence and stress and found that for some individuals emotional intelligence may be helpful in reducing stress. However, for those individuals who lack the understanding of their emotions and the ability to control their emotions, they appeared to benefit from emotional intelligence training.

The literature suggests that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on leadership abilities, life satisfaction, job performance, and stress management and

organizational environments. Exploring the connection between emotional intelligence and coping with occupational stress can provide college leaders with a skillset that influences both their leadership abilities, their employees' performance and satisfaction, and college effectiveness.

## Statement of the Research Problem

The National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) is changing its national policy approach by focusing on Total Worker Health (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention [CDC], 2016). According to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) (2016) report, workplace factors, such as stress, are highly correlated to common health problems. Whereas, in the past, these factors have been determined unrelated to the workplace. Interestingly, this evidence is not new concept. Väänänen, Murray, and Kuokkenen (2014) researched the occurrences of work stress publications from 1960 to 2011 and found published research significantly increased in publications in the 1990s through the 2000s by 25% and attributed this growth in awareness towards change in the organizational structures, employee roles, and the type of work performed. It is well established in the literature on occupational health, organizational leadership and management, and organizational psychology that the workplace is a common source of stress within one's life (Carr, Kelley, Keaton, & Albrecht, 2011; Sharma & Sharma, 2014; Väänänen et al., 2014).

Jacobs, Tytherleigh, Webb, and Cooper (2007) also suggest the increased pressures for organizations to perform with limited resources creates a need for additional examination of the impact of stress on employees in higher education institutions. Community and technical college leaders serving as presidents, vice presidents, and

deans have extensive responsibilities for the day-to-day operations and performance outcomes for the institution. Individuals in these positions are required to: (a) solve problems, (b) be flexible, (c) develop and maintain relationships, (d) manage their stress, and (e) be mindful of others stress (Coco, 2009). A leader's ability to manage occupational stress as it relates to his or her role has implications on both employee effectiveness and organizational effectiveness (Chang & Chang, 2007; Gough, 2012; Huynh, Xanthopoulou, & Winefield, 2013). As community college leaders are faced with complex issues and the pressures for accountability, increasing community responsiveness, and sustaining enrollments with limited resources the stress associated with this occupation is significant (Friedel, 2010). High levels of unmanaged occupational stress can lead to harmful effects on the organization as well as impact employee performance, health and job satisfaction (Chandra & Parvez, 2016; Kavitha, 2012).

Past studies have explored the occupational stress of higher education employee groups and focused on the relationships between stress levels, adaptive coping, organizational commitment, health, and job performance (Biron, Brun, & Ivers, 2008; Coco, 2009; Gough, 2012; Ismail et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2007). The results of these studies indicate that occupational stressors affect employees who work within higher education. However, there is a gap within the existing body of research that explores how emotional intelligence relates to coping with organizational role stress for those serving as leaders in community and technical colleges environments. Given the challenging economic and political environments for community colleges, it is critical to

study how leaders can cope with the excessive role stress through the use of emotional intelligence.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans in the Washington State community and technical college system. A second purpose of this study was to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy.

## Central Questions

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews to answer the following central research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of senior-level administrators' use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress?
2. Are there differences between perceived emotional intelligence strategies used for coping with organizational role stress amongst senior-level administrators' position type (presidents, vice presidents, and deans)?

### Research Sub-Questions

The following questions are based upon the five key factors of R. Bar-On (1997) model of emotional intelligence: (a) intrapersonal capacity, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) adaptability, (d) stress management, and (e) motivational/general mood factors. The researcher collected qualitative data to answer the following research sub-questions:

1. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's intrapersonal awareness and understanding of one's own feelings factor into coping with organizational role stress?
2. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's interpersonal awareness, understanding and appreciation for the feelings of others factor into coping with organizational role stress?
3. In what ways does a senior-level administrator adapt to situations and the environment in order to cope with organizational role stress?
4. What emotional intelligence strategies were perceived by senior-level administrators as being successful in dealing with organizational role stress?
5. How do senior-level administrators stay motivated in order to cope with organizational role stress?

## Significance of the Problem

Community colleges are facing more stresses than ever before to provide a high quality education at an affordable price and leadership must navigate social, political, and economic challenges to meet the mission of the community college. Community college leaders must have skill sets to cope with high role stress in order to be successful. Yet the relationship between coping using emotional intelligence and stress managements is extremely limited with community college leaders. This study is significant because it addresses the gap in the research by the exploration of the relationships between self-reported emotional intelligence and coping with stress experienced through a leadership role amongst community college leaders serving as presidents, vice presidents, and deans. Some research has studied emotional intelligence and coping with stress amongst college

students (Collins, 2012; Jones-Schenk & Harper, 2014; Liptak, 2005; Nickerson, Diener, & Schwarz, 2011; Pope, Roper, & Qualter, 2012; Saklofske, Austin, Mastoras, Beaton, & Osborne, 2012) and nursing students (Jones-Schenk & Harper, 2014; Michelangelo, 2013; Pence, 2010). A small body of research exists in the area of stress management and higher education employee groups such as university presidents (Gough, 2012; Welt, 1985), chief academic officers (Murray, Murray, & Summar, 2000) and academic deans (Coco, 2009; Sarros et al., 1999). However, there is no research that looks at the relationship of emotional intelligence and organizational role stress, which also compares community and technical college senior-level leaders.

It is important to understand how emotional intelligence is connected with coping strategies and occupational stress management at the different management levels. Riggs (2009) states that strong leadership must exists with deans, directors, and vice presidents because they have the most influence on the day-to-day operations of a college. Additionally, emotional intelligence proponents and opponents continue to call for new research to be explored to further develop the emotional intelligence as construct (Murphy, 2009). Exploring emotional intelligence as it is related to stress management has implications on both the individual employee and the organization (Jacobs, Tytherleigh, Webb, & Cooper, 2007). Additionally, exploring the coping strategies used by individuals who are employed in different levels of senior administrator roles can serve to inform aspiring college leaders and aid in organizational succession planning (Floyd, Maslin-Ostrowski, & Hrabak, 2010).

According to The American Institute of Stress (2015), stress has increased over the past few decades for the American worker and has been associated with chronic

health issues. Additionally, numerous studies have shown that occupational stress impacts employee health and healthcare costs, contributes towards unproductive behavior, decreased workplace productivity, and a leading indicator of employee burnout. Research published by the University and College Union (UCU) in 2012 found that higher education employees experience greater stress than the broader population. In addition, the Guardian, an online international newspaper, conducted a survey of more than 2,500 academics in the United Kingdom that included high-level executive positions (Shaw, 2014). The results claim a large amount of the sample, 44%, experienced work induced mental health problems (Shaw, 2014).

There is a potential leadership shortage in community colleges and this concern is due to the number of retirements of executive administrators, lack advanced degrees awarded in community college leadership and barriers to advance such as lack of local opportunities and the increased nature of complexity of leading community colleges (McNair, Duree, & Ebbers, 2011). According to the American Association of Community College's (AACC, 2017) report on compensation and benefits of CEO's, nearly 80% plan to retire within the next 10 years. This will be a major turnover in leadership for the community and technical college system (Coco, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2007; Snuggs, 2007). As the change in leadership occurs, it is up to college boards and search committees to find the next leader for their institution. The literature suggests hiring authorities should look for a new type of leader with a wide range of skills. In addition, the added pressures for institutional accountability and increased performance measures with limited resources have a significant impact on the future leaders of community and technical colleges. This change in landscape can be extremely stressful

for the next generation of college leaders and employees (Community, 2012). This proposed research adds to the literature by exploring how emotional intelligence is used by senior-level community and technical college leaders to cope with the stress that is perceived from one's role within their organization. Furthermore, the lack of qualitative studies within the existing body of literature on emotional intelligence and organizational role stress also provides an additional opportunity to examine a phenomenon, explore themes and patterns that can contribute to a greater understanding of leadership practice, and the growth and development of stress coping strategies.

## Definitions

The following definitions were used for the purpose of this study:

*Community college senior-level leader*. A Community college senior-level leader is defined as an individual who serves in a management role and has decision-making authority for either a department or division within the organization. These position titles are often Dean, Vice President, and President.

*Coping*. Coping is the cognitive or behavioral efforts to reduce, mediate, or tolerate external demands created by a stressful situation (Folkman, 1984).

*Emotional intelligence*. Emotional intelligence is known by researchers as the ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of self and of others as information to guide one's behavior (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1995).

*Organizational role*. Organizational role is defined as the role one performs within an organization in response to their assigned role expectation (U. Pareek, 1983).

*Organizational role stress*. Organizational role stress is defined as the stress

experienced form the line of work related to one's assigned role within an organization (U. Pareek, 1993).

*Occupational stress*. Occupational stress can be defined as the experience of unpleasant, negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, frustration, anger, and depression resulting from the workplace relationships or responsibilities (Salami, 2010).

*Stress*. Stress is defined as the result of a relationship between the individual and the environment and the lack of coping strategies to respond to a difficult situation (Folkman, 1984).

*Stressor*. A stressor is defined as a physical, chemical or psychological environmental condition that causes stress (Selye, 1978).

## Delimitations

This study was delimited to a population of senior-level community and technical college leaders serving as presidents, vice presidents and deans in Washington State in 2017.

## Organization of the Study

This study is arranged into four additional chapters. Chapter II is an extensive review the literature as it relates to this study's variables of occupational stress and emotional intelligence of organizational leaders. Chapter III provides the details of this study's research design and methodology used to gather data as well as the population, sample. This chapter also fully explains the data collection and the data analysis processes. Chapter IV reports and explains the findings of this study. Chapter V provides a summary of the findings, conclusions, implications for actions and recommendations for additional research.

# CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is a review of all major works related to the main variables in this study, which includes: (a) occupational stress, (b) organizational role stress, (c) emotional intelligence, and (d) community and technical college senior-level leadership. This review of literature introduces fundamental theories and current research related to the topics in this study. The first section of the review introduces the construct of stress, occupational stress, the cause and effect of occupational stress on the individual as well as an organization, and coping with occupational stress. The second section explores emotional intelligence literature by providing a review on the development of emotional intelligence, the major ability based theories of emotional intelligence; the major trait based theories of emotional intelligence, and scholarly critiques of the emotional intelligence construct. The third section of this literature review summarizes research on the use of emotional intelligence within the workplace and the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress. The last section provides research and background on community colleges, community and technical colleges in Washington State, and the factors affecting community and technical college senior-level administrator's roles and responsibilities.

## Stress

"Stress is a principal social construct created to provide explanation of the behavior of animals, humans, communities and ecosystems in response to adaptational demands" (Jackson, 2013, p. 259). The term "stress" first appears in 17th century literature when the work of physicist Robert Hooke analyzed civil structures such as buildings, bridges, and roads and their ability to sustain the impacts of the natural

environment like weather, temperature, and weight overtime. Hooke's theory on stress relationships, known today as Hooke's Law, has influenced modern research on the topic of *stress* in physiological, sociological, and psychological disciplines (as cited in R. Lazarus, 1993). The word stress comes from the Latin word *stringi* meaning "to be drawn tight" (Selye, 1978).

A substantial body of research exists on the physiological impacts of stress. Hans Selye's (1978) seminal work in the field of physiology and pathology is cited in the literature as the first researcher to discover the existence of a biologic stress response. Specifically, the impact of various stress hormones produced when humans experience a stressor. Selye's use of the word stress is defined as a reaction to a disruption in the mind and in the body (as cited in Chandola, Brunner, & Marmot, 2006). He also emphasized the cause of stress may be physical, chemical, or psychological and are termed "stressors" (as cited in Szabo, Tache, & Somogyi, 2012). The discovery of positive and negative stressors by L. Levi and Anderson (1975) concluded an emotional response to a stressor varies by the individual's perception (Szabo et al., 2012). It is well supported that individual perception of a stressor, either as positive or negative can impact the type of emotional reaction of an individual (Folkman, 1984; Kinman & Jones, 2005; R. Lazarus, 1995; Morris & Long, 2002). R. S. Lazarus (1966) described the perception of stress as three distinct ideas. The first idea is the concept of "harm." Harm is defined as psychological damage that has already occurred to an individual. The second idea is the concept of "threat." Threat is defined as an anticipated harm that has not occurred. The third concept described by R. S. Lazarus is "challenge." Challenge is described as stress experienced as a result from a demand that can be overcome through coping skills.

Interestingly, the biological reactions within the human body do not differentiate between types of stress in regards to a biological or hormonal response when experiencing stress; the body processes positive and negative stress in the same way (L. Levi, 1984; Rabasa & Dickson 2016). The production of cortisol takes place regardless of the type of stress and can have either a stimulating or damaging effect on the individual (Krantz et al., 2013; P. Salovey et al., 2002). When an individual experiences a stressful event that is short-lived, such as a momentarily loss of a cell phone, car keys, or interviewing for a new job, the physiological stress reactions and impacts on the body can be minimal (Carr et al., 2011; Sapolsky, 2004); unless there is an undiagnosed and unknown condition where an acute stress experience triggers a larger biological reaction (American Psychological Association [APA], 2013). Yet, when an individual experiences long-lived stress, the physiological reactions over a long period can be harmful to the individual (Lovallo, 2015). Fletcher and Jones (1993) research determined cumulative acute stress could lead to chronic stress, which influences disease susceptibility in the immune system.

Scanning the literature for the impacts of stress on individual health one can find over 100,000 studies published within 2017 alone. The American Psychological Association (APA) has commissioned an annual nationwide survey to measure the attitudes and perceptions of stress amongst the general population in order to identify sources of stress, identify behaviors used to manage stress and determine the impact of stress (APA, 2015). The APA's (2015) Stress in America report noted work as the second most reported stressor experienced by Americans. The survey also revealed an increasing gender gap, as women consistently report experiencing stress more often than

men.  In addition, the survey revealed that an income gap exist, as lower income households report more stress than those in higher income households.  In addition, regardless of gender or socioeconomic status, those who identified themselves as parents reported experiencing stress more often than non-parents.  Figure 1 shows the top four sources of stress as reported by the Stress in America survey.

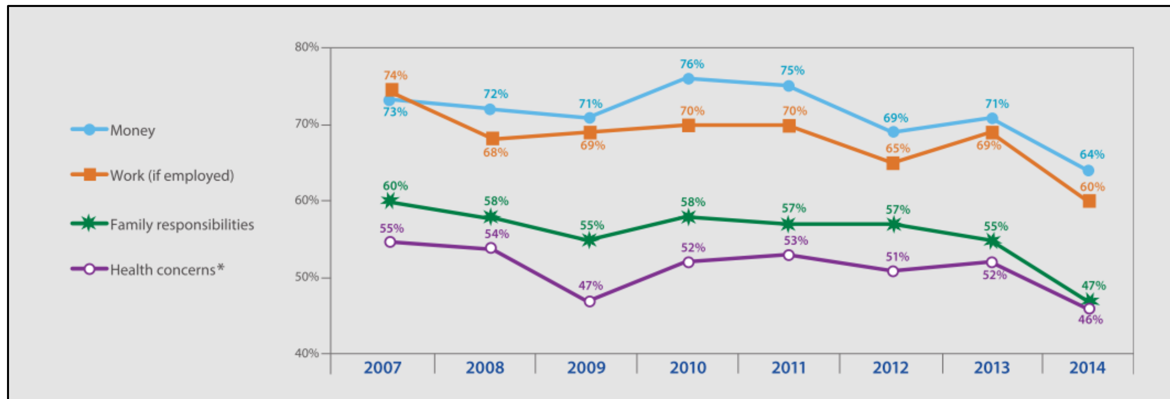



*Figure 1.* The Top Four Sources of Stress. Adapted from “How Stress Effects Your Health,” by American Psychological Association’s Stress in America, Paying with our Health, (2015), Survey Report. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2014/stress-report.pdf

**Occupational Stress**

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reports an increase of the average workday from 7.61 hours per day in 2004 to 7.75 hours worked per day in 2014 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016).  The amount of time one spends during their lifetime working is significant.  Recognizing the significant impact of the work place, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) started a United States workforce initiative and policy development combining the protection of workers in various health and safety hazards as well as the promotion of personal health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016.

NORA is changing their national policy approach by focusing on Total Worker Health (CDC, 2016). According to NORA's report, there is a change in scientific evidence connecting workplace factors as a contributing to common health problems; whereas, in the past, these factors have been determined unrelated to the workplace (CDC, 2016).

Interestingly, this evidence is not new concept. Väänänen et al. (2014) researched the occurrences of work stress publications from 1960 to 2011 and found published research significantly increased in publications in the 1990s through 2000s by 25% and attributed this growth toward a change in the organizational structures, employee roles, and the type of work performed. It is well established in the literature on occupational health, organizational leadership and management, and organizational psychology that the workplace is a common source of stress within one's life (Carr et al., 2011; Grant & Langan-Fox, 2006; Kinman & Jones, 2005; R. Lazarus, 1995; Levy, 2006; Lussier, 2005; Sharma & Sharma, 2014; Topcic, Baum, & Kabst, 2016; Väänänen et al., 2014; M. Yong et al., 2012). Occupational stress is a term used to describe ongoing stress that is related to the workplace and can be related to one's position and responsibilities within an organization the culture of the organization or interpersonal relationships with coworkers (Chandra & Parvez, 2016; U. Pareek, 1983).

**The cause of occupational stress.** Throughout the body of literature on occupational stress, researchers have found various external or environmental and internal or individual factors that contribute to the experience of occupational stress (Ismail et al., 2014; Lussier, 2010). External factors such as frequent and complex changes in an economy places demands on industries and organizations to produce more

with less resources, drive revenue, innovate while at the same time provide quality customer service (Topcic et al., 2016; M. Yong et al., 2012); or environmental factors such as an organizational restructuring or culture. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016), all types of employees are impacted by changes to the economy. This changing environment as described by (Kinman & Jones, 2005) or "challenge" as defined by (R. Lazarus, 1995) can be a source of occupational stress. Internal factors such as interpersonal relationships at work, employee-supervisor relationships, available resources to adequately conduct workload demands; or individual factors such as personality, perception, physical and psychological abilities, and coping skills. In the body of literature, several theoretic models are published and offer a unique perspective on the cause of occupational stress.

An early occupational stress model is the Transactional Model developed by T. Cox and MacKay (1981) who claim occupational stress occurs between the individual and their environment. French, Caplan, and Van Harrison (1982) developed the Person-Environment Fit theory suggesting that stress occurs when a combination of work environment demands exceed the individual's skill set and when the employee's needs are unmet overtime by the work environment. French et al. further emphasize how the interaction between the person and their environment shapes an individual's perception of their work environment and states there are three factors taken into consideration: (a) the objective environment, (b) the objective person, and (c) the objective person-

environment. Figure 2 provides a visual diagram of the interaction of the three factors and how one's perception is shaped within the Person-Environment Fit theory.

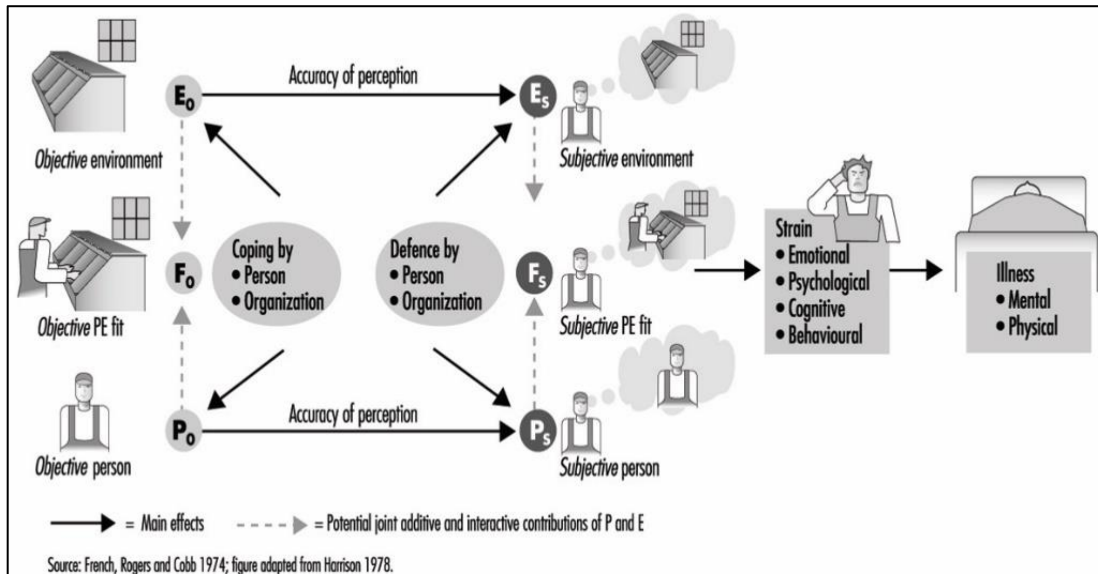



*Figure 2.* Person-Environment Fit Theory. Adapted from "Person-Environment Fit," by R. D. Caplan, 2015. Retrieved from http://www.iloencyclopaedia.org/part-v-77965/psychosocial-and-organizational-factors/factors-intrinsic-to-the-job/factors/person%E2%80%93environment-fit

Karasek (1979) Demands-Control-Support model predicts occupational stress by rating psychological job demands and decision-making authority. Karaseck classifies jobs into four types: (a) "high-strain" jobs where direct illness can be predicted; (b) "active jobs" where there is high psychological demand, yet the employee has control over their work; (c) "low-strain jobs" with low psychological demand and high employee control; (d) "passive job" low demands and low control and average impact is predicted. Figure 3 provides a visual diagram demonstrating the influence of one's control and decision-making levels on one's psychological demand and the potential for stress outcomes.

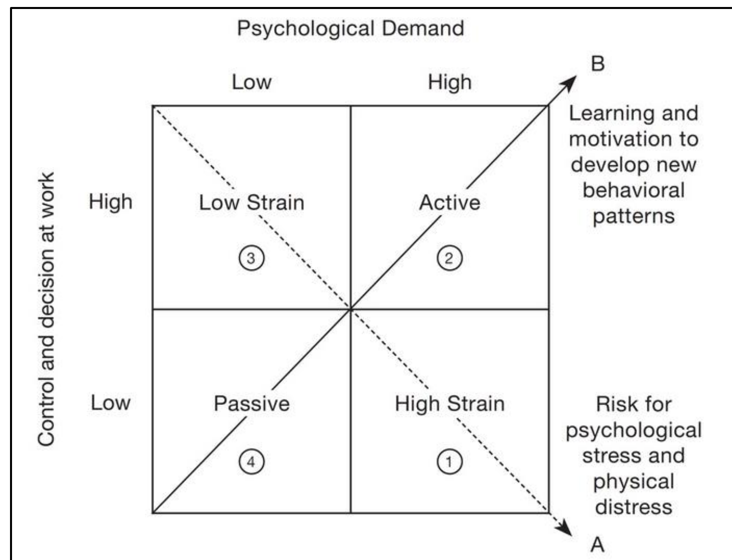



*Figure 3.* Karaseck Demands-Control-Support Model. Adapted from "Work-related stress and musculosketel complaints of orchestra musicians," by E. F. Pereira, F. Kothe, F. T. Bleyer, and C. S. Teieira, 2015, Methods section. Retrieved from http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1806-00132014000200112

Though the Demands-Control-Support model is fundamental in occupational stress research, this model has been criticized for predictability (Fletcher & Jones, 1993; Parkes, 1991). Critics of Karaseck's model suggest the multifaceted nature of an individual workplace should factor into modern research (Bakker, Van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010; R. Lazarus & Rice, 2000; Mofoluwake & Oluremi, 2013). Salami (2010) argues that occupational stress occurs when the demand for a job related task, either physical or mental, exceeds available resources.

On the other hand, the Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) model founded by Siegrist (1996) has been successful in predicting health outcomes related to occupational stress. The ERI model is described as high levels of work related effort or motivation is matched with high levels of reward (i.e., salary, recognition, promotion opportunities and job security) (Mark & Smith, 2012). Therefore, when work demands are high the reciprocation of the reward must be equal for occupational stress to be low. However,

when work related demands are high and the rewards are low, occupational stress is likely to occur (Väänänen et al., 2014). Figure 4 visually describes the forces that can influence the effort and reward balance.

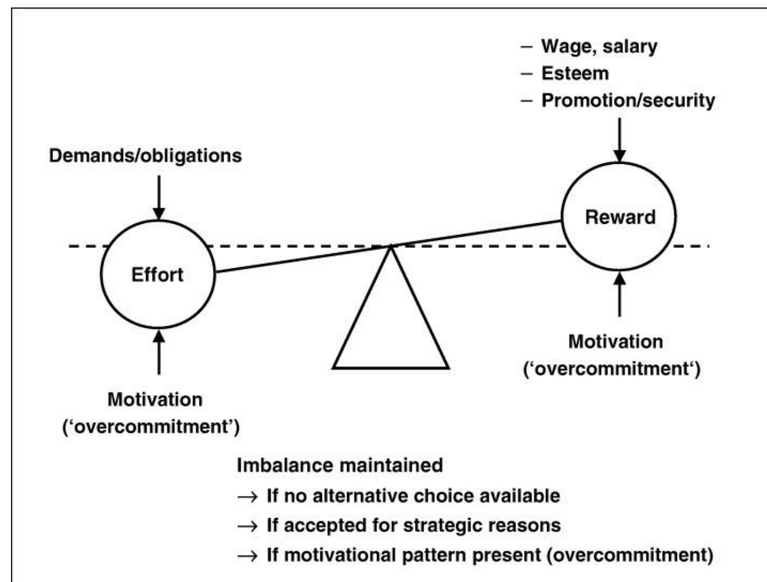



*Figure 4.* Effort-Reward Imbalance Model. Adapted from "Psychosocial work stress is associated with poor self-rated health in Danish nurses: A test of the effort-reward imbalance model," by S. Weyers, R. Peter, H. Boddild, H. J. Jeppesen, and J. Siegrist, 2006, *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, 20*(1), p. 26-34. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/7287180_fig1_Figure-1-The-effort-reward-imbalance-model.

Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) state occupational stress theories such as organizational commitment model by Faragher et al. (2004) considers both the source of the stress/stressor and the outcome of the stress experience are comprehensive and capture the complete stress dynamic. Faragher et al.'s A Shortened Stress Evaluation Tool (ASSET) model describes organizational factors can attribute to occupational stress. Figure 5 describes how organizational factors such as organizational culture, relationships, workload, communication, and workplace demands influence one's organizational commitment and contribute to one's health and well-being.

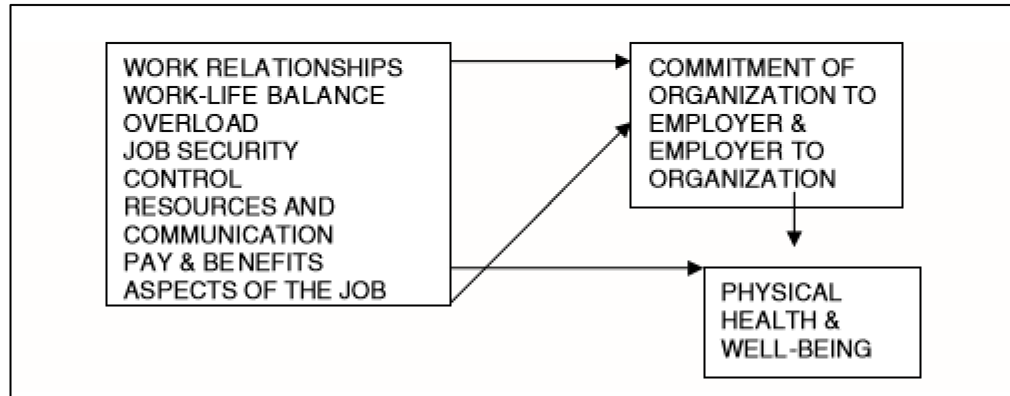



*Figure 5.* A Shortened Stress Evaluation Tool (ASSET). Adapted from *"A shortened* stress evaluation tool (ASSET)," by E. B. Faragher, C. L. Cooper, and S. Cartwright, 2004, Stress *& Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress, 20*(4), 189-201. doi: 10.1002/smi.1010

In Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, and Koch's (2013) study on employee stress, health, and the impact of positive work events found a significant relationship exists between positive work events and perceived stress. Similar significance was found between negative work events and perceived stress levels. In Game's (2007) study on work place culture established stress induced by workplace boredom, pressure to perform from superiors and organizational hierarchy can be a factor in causing stress. A study by Ismail et al. (2014) discussed research on community college lectures and, showed significant associations between occupational stress and organizational factors such as individual decision latitude, perceived job demand, social support, and job insecurity.

In addition to the job related task demands and rewards, occupational stress can be experienced when workplace interpersonal relationships are strained such as poor boss-employee relations (Lussier, 2010). "Management's behavior that is calm, and emulates a participative management style produce less stress. Tight control through autocratic management tends to create more stress" (Mofoluwake, 2013, p. 78). According to (Lussier, 2005), stress could be caused by an organizational climate such as the level of cooperation, level of motivation, and the overall morale of employees. In

agreement with Mofoluwake (2013), Lu, Siu, Au, and Leung (2009), determined organizational structure and organizational climate to be predictable factors of psychological and physical stress.

Likewise, one might suggest experiencing an organizational restructuring, change in leadership or supervisor is a source of stress. Wisse and Sleebos (2016) found organizational change could be a major stress factor for employees. In their study, they sought understanding of why some people experience stress when experiencing an organizational change and others do not experience stress when they experience the same change. Their findings suggest the closer the change is to the employee's sense of self, the greater the feelings of stress. Therefore, an individual's perception which is influenced by many factors such as personality, situational demands, coping skills, experiences, and any other sources of stress influences the perceived skills and resources available to manage workplace demands (T. Cox, Griffiths, & Rial, 2010).

**Occupational stress and organizational leadership roles.** "An organization can be defined as a system of roles that an individual interacts and becomes integrated" (Rajarajeswari, 2010, p. 74). An individual's position or role within an organization and the expectations placed on that individual's performance can be a source of occupational stress (Kavitha, 2012). Organizational leaders are often looked to during uncertain times to determine solutions to complex problems and situations. In order to do so, leaders must be organizational change agents who develop new strategies, processes, and systems to ensure organizational effectiveness. However, change can be stressful to employees and leaders can have impact on the occupational stress that occurs as a result of change initiatives (Wisse & Sleebos, 2016; M. Yong et al., 2012).

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) established a model of stress that is experienced through the exploration and personal identity of social roles in which an individual holds. Role stress is then experienced when there is conflict amongst roles, role ambiguity, and overload of role expectations. U. Pareek (1983) took the construct of role stress and applied it to an organizational setting and established the term "organizational role stress" based upon the following dimensions:

- Inter-Role Distance (IRD): Occurs when there are difficulties in balancing between organizational and non-organizational roles.
- Role Stagnation (RS): Occurs when there are difficulties in taking over the new role responsibilities due to lack of preparedness.
- Role Expectation Conflict (REC): Is experienced when there are conflicting role expectations.
- Role Erosion (RE): Is experienced when some of the important functions of one's role are performed by others or when the credit for one's role performance is given to others.
- Role Overload (RO): Stress results from too high or too many role expectations.
- Role Isolation (RI): Stress results when the role occupant feels isolated due to lack of communication.
- Personal Inadequacy (PI): Stress results from lack of competence for the assigned role.

- Self-Role Distance (SRD): Stress is experienced when the role occupant has to do what they dislike; or their main skills are not utilized; or the perception of self and the role is conflicting.
- Role Ambiguity (RA): Stress results from unclear role expectations.
- Resource Inadequacy (RIn): Stress results when the role occupant perceives that role performance is suffering from lack of external resources (p. 117).

Rajarajeswari's (2010) research on organizational role stress amongst college teachers found significant relationships exist between role overload and role conflict. Priyadarshini and Prabakar's (2016) research on organizational role stress of professionals in the information technology industry found that organizational role stress increased within individuals as it related to their commute distances. In addition, those who reported being married, organizational role stress had a highly negative correlation as it related to one's organizational role. A survey of employees who worked for a large international hotel chain found that a supervisor's lack of communication was identified as the source of frustration, disappointment, anger, sadness, disgust, and stress (Ramesar, Koortzen, & Oosthuizen, 2009). Malik and Noreen (2015) found that perceived organizational support from managers and co-workers had a positive influence on university teacher's occupational stress levels and their well-being.

**The impact of occupational stress.** A wide body of research shows evidence that occupational stress can result in negative outcomes for the individual creating negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, frustration, anger and depression (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2014; Lu et al., 2009; Salami, 2010; M. Yong et al., 2012).

Particularly vulnerable are those who work in helping, face-to-face professions, such as teachers, police, nurses, and social workers. "These occupations tend to attract people with high ideals about what they can achieve; and there lie the seeds of possible burnout" (Fineman, 2003, p. 145).

In addition, research shows evidence that occupational stress has negative outcomes on the organization seen in litigation, lower production and employee satisfaction, poor organizational culture, and profit loss (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2014; Brough, Dollard, & Tuckey, 2014; Ismail et al., 2014; M. Yong et al., 2012).

**Occupational stress and employee health/well-being.** A wide body of research provides evidence that occupational stress can result in negative physical and mental outcomes for the individual. According to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016) report on cases of work related stress and how stress affects workers experience over a 10-year period shows that work related stress impacts the worker significantly. For example, workers with anxiety, stress, and neurotic disorders missed 25 days of work compared to six days of work missed in the all other nonfatal work related injury categories. In addition, the occupations reported the most cases of anxiety, stress and neurotic disorders was in occupations in technical, sales, and administrative support at 39.9%. The second largest reported occupational group was managerial and professional at 23.6%. Differences were also reported amongst the gender within the occupational groups. Females accounted for the majority of reports in the anxiety, stress, and neurotic disorder category ranging from 58.4% to 71.2% over the 10-year reporting period.

Today's research supports Karasek's (1979) Demands-Control-Support model of occupational stress. Ek, Sirviö, Koiranen, and Taanila's (2014) research found significant relationships between poor psychological well-being and work categorized as high demand work and with low control or influence in the outcome. In their study, Goh, Pfeffer, and Zenios (2015) examined multiple workplace factors such as long working hours, job insecurity, low job control, and low organizational fairness as it relates to one's life expectancy. The results of their study suggest that stressful workplaces affect employee lifespans significantly when comparing demographic groups and gender. At the same time, the greater level of education, the less of an impact the stressful workplace factors had on one's lifespan. Goh et al. (2015) research is in line with the early occupational stress studies demonstrating the significance unmanaged occupational stress on an individual's quality-of-life (Folkman, 1984; L. Levi, 1984; L. Levi, 1999). Kompier and Kristensen (2001) summarizes the long-term exposures to occupational stress in Figure 6, which include physical and mental well-being.

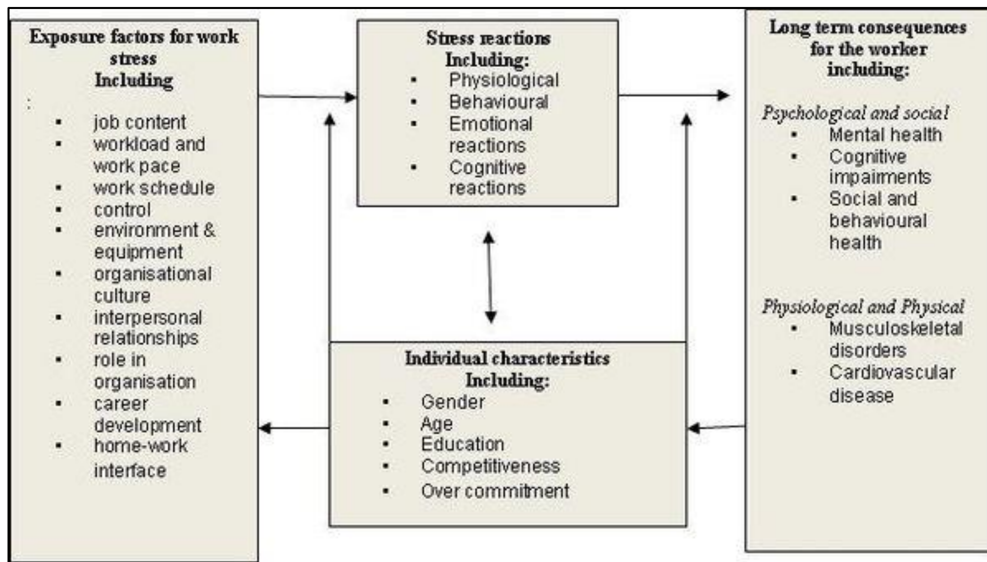



*Figure 6.* Exposure Factors for Work Stress. Adapted from "Work-related stress: Nature and management," by https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/Work-related stress: Nature and management

**Occupational stress and the organization.** Employee stress can cause harm to the organization; "job stress without any other physical illness or injury is a defendable and compensable condition in nearly half of the United States" (Levy, 2006, p. 5). In the United Kingdom between the 2013 and 2014, 39% of all litigation cases were related to work stress (Lockwood, 2015). It is well documented that employee stress lowers performance and job satisfaction, which can threaten organizational effectiveness and productivity (Chandra & Parvez, 2016; Garg, 2015; Johnson et al., 2005; Shin & Jung, 2014; Sy et al., 2006). In Donald et al. (2005), a large sample (N=16,001) study on work environments and employee productivity found the lack of organizational commitment to the employee led to lower performance, satisfaction and stress.

### Coping with Organizational Role Stress

The complexities of individual perspectives, societal changes, and physiological and psychological differences influences the need to have continued research on the topic

of stress and coping (Dewe, 2004). The literature on stress management or coping can be categorized into two themes: the individual coping skills as it relates to one's personality, traits, and emotions and the interaction between the individual and their environment or organization.

**Coping and the individual.** Folkman (1984) refers to coping as the efforts to manage internal or external demands that are created by a stressor. In their model of stress and coping, R. S. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe effective coping is determined by the level of control over the stressor or situation. For example, if the situation is controllable, effective coping comes through problem-focused strategies such as avoidance of dealing with the problem, problem-appraisal or appraisal of stressfulness of the event, and active problem-solving strategies that confront the problem. However, if a stressor is uncontrollable, emotional-focused coping strategies are effective (Fabes & Eisenberg, 1997; R. S. Lazarus, 1966). "We understand the coping process better when we understand the general goals and situational intentions as well as the emotions of the parties encounters" (R. Lazarus, 1993, p. 17).

Past research has explored the impact of personality and the influence on coping with occupational stress. Grant and Langan-Fox (2006) studied combining both personality and individual traits utilizing the Big Five assessment as a predictor for occupational stress amongst managers found strong support that certain personality types, such as high neuroticism with low conscientiousness predicted high occupational stress and poor coping skills. Whereas, low neuroticism with high extraversion and conscientiousness predicated lower occupational strain and greater problem-focused

coping. Furthermore, mindfulness research has found to have a positive impact on coping with stress when practiced frequently (Ramos Diaz, Jimenez, & Lopes, 2014).

**Coping and the organizational environment**. Stress caused from the workplace can have both positive and negative benefits. A certain level of stress can serve as a fuel for motivation and change. In their research, Malik and Noreen (2015) found a statistically significant positive relationship between the perceptions of organizational support and the occupational stress and well-being amongst teachers. The participants' perception of their organization as supportive showed to have a positive influence in moderating perceived occupational stress and well-being. Therefore, organizational change management strategies should consider both the new systems and processes as well as how the employee interacts within the workplace environment (Ramesar et al., 2009).

Throughout physiological, sociological, and psychological literature on stress and the impact of stress is explored extensively. It is well documented that the human body biologically reacts to stressors and those reactions can be harmful to an individual's well-being. Whether caused by one's environment, work place or an individual's perception of a stressful situation, coping with a stress reaction is a necessity for individual and organizational well-being.

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotions are an essential function to mankind. Regardless of culture, it is well known in the field of psychology that humans experience and recognize emotions such as anger, fear, surprise, disgust, happiness, and sadness (Izard, 2013). The early work of researcher Robert Ladd Thorndike (1936) is known for his work in on general

intelligence "IQ." Thorndike was the first to attempt to measure individual social intelligence by including social intelligence as a component of one's IQ. He further defined social intelligence as the "ability to understand and manage people and their emotions" (p. 275) as component of general intelligence and established a distinct difference between academic abilities and social abilities. Thorndike's claim that social intelligence is the main construct which attributes to an individual success in life (D. Goleman, 1996).

Several decades later, the work of Howard Gardner, in *Frames of Mind* (1983) challenged the notion that IQ is the standard for intelligence and the only ability to perform well and succeed in life (as cited in Gardner, 2006). He conceptualized the theory of "multiple intelligences" and established the existence of additional abilities beyond IQ. Gardner (2006) believes that interpersonal intelligence, the ability to understand one's feelings and emotional states, is the most important ability and the key to living an abundant life. The evolution of IQ concepts, through the works of Thorndike and Gardner, have influenced today's emotional intelligence theories.

**Development of Emotional Intelligence**

Proponents claim emotional intelligence can be learned and developed, unlike academic intelligence or IQ (Cherniss et al., 2006; D. Goleman, 1998b). As an individual matures, one learns emotional intelligence skills to take responsibility and initiative for their performance and development, learn to listen to their intuition, read other's body language, and recognize differences amongst individuals (Chopra & Kanji, 2010). The teaching and training of emotional intelligence has been conducted in a variety of settings in educational, corporate and public/non-profit organizations (Boivin, 2013; Carter, 2011;

G. Matthews et al., 2011; Neale et al., 2011). In addition, the development of a leader's emotional intelligence is also popular amongst leadership and management researchers. Critics of emotional intelligence believe that both personality and emotional management are related and discount emotional intelligence as a form of intelligence (Zeider, Matthews, & Roberts, 2004).

Several best practices are discussed in the literature as to how an individual may learn emotional intelligence. Sadri (2012) suggests individual coaching, group or team building, personal reflection, and action planning as educational methods that are effective for teaching emotional intelligence to managers and leaders. However, McEnrue and Groves (2006) state the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training depends upon the individual's ability, willingness to receive feedback, and possess the level of confidence needed to take action towards improving their emotional intelligence.

## Theoretical Variations of Emotional Intelligence

The body of emotional intelligence literature shows theoretical variations. Individual ability based models suggest individuals recognize emotion, reason with emotion, interpret emotion-related information, and process emotional information as part of general problem solving strategies (J. D. Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; P. Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Trait based theories of emotional intelligence focus on a mixture of emotional and social competencies such as "one's ability to think, feel and behave in order to achieve social tasks within a social environment" (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Ramesar et al., 2009, p. 2).

**Ability based emotional intelligence models**. J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1993) ability based model defines emotional intelligence in four ability areas:

- Self-emotional appraisal is the ability to understand and express one's own emotions. This domain is described as the ability to recognize how individuals and those around them are feeling. By recognizing that emotions contain valuable information about interpersonal relationships, individuals adept at perceiving their own emotional cues and accurately identify the meaning of those cues.
- Others emotional appraisal is the ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others. The key to this ability is a thorough understanding of one's own emotions in order to enhance awareness and understanding of others' emotions. This ability may be used to interpret another's emotional state for feedback.
- Regulation of emotion is an ability to regulate emotions as they are experienced. This ability may manifest itself when "people in a sad or negative mood tend to focus on details and search for errors; those in a more positive mood are better at generating new ideas and moving towards solutions" (J. D. Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004, p. 251).
- Use of emotion is the ability to use emotion towards productive activities, performance and decision-making. This ability enables an individual to be open to his or her own feelings, learn from experience, and use the information to make important decisions and influence behavior (J. D. Mayer et al., 2004, p. 199).

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) has been highly supported and used throughout emotional intelligence literature (Groves,

McEnrue, & Shen, 2008; Law, Wong, & Song, 2004; J. D. Mayer et al., 1999; J. D. Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2002; McEnrue & Groves, 2006; Wong & Law, 2002). In their study on developing and measuring emotional intelligence of leaders, Groves et al. (2008) used J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1993) model to develop another instrument for management development and showed statistically significant evidence that emotional intelligence can be developed through training.

Additionally, ability based emotional intelligence research claims to predict a set of outcomes related to health, well-being, leadership ability, and healthy interpersonal relationships (Caruso, Salovey, & Mayer, 2015). Extremera and Rey (2016) found ability based emotional intelligence has significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and positive affect and a negative correlation between negative affect amongst 721 college students in Spain.

Not as well known is Davies, Stankov, and Roberts (1998) ability based model of emotional intelligence with the following four dimensions:

- Appraisal and expression of emotion in one's self.
- Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others.
- Regulation of emotion in one's self.
- Use of emotion to facilitate performance (pp. 990-992).

Law et al. (2004) developed an instrument based upon Davies et al. definition of emotional intelligence, and argued emotional intelligence is an ability measure rather than a personality measure.

**Trait based emotional intelligence models**. Trait or sometimes called "mixed" emotional intelligence models distinguish themselves from ability based emotional

intelligence models and define emotional intelligence as a set of individual competencies and or personality traits displayed within an experience or environment (M. Mikolajczak, Roy, Verstrynge, & Luminet, 2009; Petrides, Siegling, & Saklofske, 2016b).

## Theoretical Framework

R. Bar-On, Brown, Kirkcaldy, and Thomé's (2000) model describes emotional intelligence as a non-cognitive intelligence and an defines emotional intelligence as an array of emotional, personal and social abilities and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures. This model includes the following factors:

- Intrapersonal capacity: The ability to be aware and understand one's self, one's emotions, and to express one's feelings and ideas
- Interpersonal skills: Described as the ability to be aware and understand and appreciate other's feelings as well as to establish and maintain mutually satisfying and responsible relationships with others.
- Adaptability: Described as the ability to verify one's feelings with objective external cues and accurately size up the immediate situation, flexibility to alter one's feelings and thoughts with changing situations, and to solve personal and interpersonal problems.
- Stress management: Strategies deployed to cope with stress and to control strong emotions.
- Motivational and general mood factors: The ability to be optimistic, to enjoy one's self and others and to feel and express positive feelings. (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000, pp. 490-504)

Known for their research on emotional intelligence and management, leadership and organizational environments, the V. Dulewicz and Higgs (1999) theoretical model comprises seven traits: (a) Self-awareness, (b) Emotional Resilience, Motivation, (c) Interpersonal sensitivity, (d) Influence, (e) Intuitiveness, and (f) Conscientiousness. They define emotional intelligence as managing one's own feelings and emotions; being sensitive to and influencing others; sustaining one's motivation and balancing one's motivation and drive with intuitive, conscientious and ethical behavior. In a study by V. Dulewicz, Higgs, and Slaski (2003), the research showed statistically significant relationships between two measures of emotional intelligence, the Dulewicz and Higgs EIQ and the Bar-On EQ-I. Seeking the ways in which leaders develop emotional intelligence, V. Dulewicz and Higgs (2004) modified their original model of emotional intelligence model to reflect the categorizing self-awareness, emotional resilience, and intuitiveness as intra-personal traits and interpersonal sensitivity and influence as inter-personal traits.

D. Goleman's (1996) trait-based emotional intelligence model describes emotional intelligence as: (a) Self-awareness, (b) Self-management, (c) Social-awareness, (d) Social-facility. In D. Goleman's (1996b) *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* and D. Goleman's (1998b) *Working with Emotional Intelligence,* D. Goleman explains the various reasons why emotional intelligence and the ability to be emotionally intelligent has relevancy in leadership, social and personal relationships, and workplace environments. Goleman's publications made the concept of emotional intelligence popular; and at the same time, his work has been criticized for the lack of peer-reviewed publications validating his emotional intelligence model as well as his

claims that emotional intelligence is better at predicting leadership success than IQ (G. Matthews, Roberts, & Zeidner, 2004).

Palmer, Walls, Burgess, and Stough (2001) developed a seven-factor model called Genos Model of Emotional Intelligence. This trait model is designed to measure the use of emotional intelligence behaviors within the workplace. The factors include:

- Emotional Self-Awareness
- Emotional Expression
- Emotional Awareness of Others
- Emotional Reasoning
- Emotional Self-Management
- Emotional Management of Others
- Emotional Self-Control (Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001).

Gignac and Ekermans (2010) study explored the Genos model and the difference of emotional intelligence performed at work amongst black and white race groups found that the Genos Emotional Intelligence self-report measure to be free of cultural bias amongst educated black and white populations in South Africa.

**Critiques of Emotional Intelligence**

G. Matthews et al. (2004) critiqued all major emotional intelligence models and research arguing that the existing body of emotional intelligence literature lacks the consistency, validity, and empirical evidence to scientifically established emotional intelligence as a construct. In addition, ability emotional intelligence and trait emotional intelligence are also viewed as distinct constructs throughout the literature. In addition, the measurement of these constructs are approached differently throughout the literature

(Petrides, 2016a). Furthermore, the lack of a single definition for emotional intelligence has generated many approaches to emotional intelligence research and a variety of interpretations of the results (Zeider et al., 2004).

The variety of assessments developed between the two constructs to measure emotional intelligence is a strong criticism within the current body of literature. Zeider et al. (2004) review of current emotional intelligence research claim the use of existing emotional intelligence assessments in an occupational context for the hiring or placement fall short on validity and caution organizations to consider the relevance of the individual's emotional competencies to the organization. They recommend organizations describe the set of emotional intelligence skills required for position. Similarly, ability based emotional intelligence models are measured through performance assessments such as the MSCEIT developed by P. Salovey and Mayer (1990) and are considered the most valid assessment at identifying individual emotional intelligence levels (McEnrue & Groves, 2006). Critics of the ability based emotional intelligence models argue that ability is limited to the reactions to one's environment (Ramesar et al., 2009). Whereas, trait emotional intelligence models explore the relationship of thoughts, feelings and actions within an environment and rely upon individual interpretation of their own skills and abilities by using self-report assessments such as R. Bar-On and Parker (2000) or the TEIQue developed by Petrides (2016b). Trait emotional intelligence self-assessments are considered reliable, but are criticized for their low convergent validity and divergent validity and lack of a constant definition for emotional intelligence construct (M. Mikolajczak, Menil, & Luminet, 2007; Petrides, 2016a). Lindebaum (2015) attempted to add additional clarity to the mixed views and critiques of emotional intelligence research

through a phenomenological study on the emotional information and its use. Lindebaum's results indicated the emotional intelligence construct needs further clarification and research due to the participant responses which could be connected to one of four dimensions of emotional intelligence, the "ability to regulate emotions" dimension (p. 130).

**Emotional Intelligence and the Workplace**

Gibbs (1995) states "IQ gets you hired, but EQ gets you promoted" (p. 59). As emotional intelligence became popular researchers sought out to understand the relationships between emotional intelligence to job performance and job satisfaction. Multiple studies indicate that high levels of emotional intelligence positively impact employee relations and job performance (Baksh Baloch, Saleem, Zaman, & Fida, 2014; R. Bar-On, 2004; Coco, 2009; Foster & Roche, 2014; Law, Wong, Huang, & Li, 2008; Suifan, Abdallah, & Sweis, 2015). Suifan et al. (2015) studied the effect of a leader's emotional intelligence on employees' work outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and customer service behavior). Their research indicated all emotional intelligence dimensions positively and significantly affect employees' work outcomes. Wong and Law (2002) found that the leader's emotional intelligence affected employee job satisfaction and positive work behavior outside of an employee's required job description, such as helping coworkers with tasks and minimizing interpersonal conflicts. Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall, and Salovey (2006) found that emotional intelligence was related to performance measures and positive work outcomes.

In addition to employee satisfaction and performance, the literature focuses on the traits and skills of an organizational leader. D. Goleman (1998a) claims the key trait that

separates the high performers from low performers is the level of interpersonal capabilities rather than technical expertise. In addition, those who were promoted and seen as a high performer within a managerial or professional position were those individuals who were skilled at interpersonal communication, systems thinking and emotional intelligence competencies (D. Goleman, 1998a). He further claims, "Emotional intelligence in individuals and organizations is emerging as a missing ingredient in the recipe for competitiveness" (p. 9). Aligned with D. Goleman's statement Fineman (2003) asserts leaders are emotion mangers who are in a continuous emotional connection with their followers and articulates "leadership as a process that unites leaders and followers in a complex emotional web" (p. 90).

The term "emotional labor" emerges in the literature and is described as "the gap between what emotion one is required to display and what one really feels" (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000, p. 27). Hochschild (1983) first established the emotional labor concept and established emotional labor as an act between disguising one's real feelings and projecting another feeling or emotion. This is particularly import for leaders who have to balance the appropriateness of their organizational culture and at the same time appeal to the emotions of their followers (Scheibe & Zacher, 2013). M. Mikolajczak et al. (2007) study on emotional intelligence and emotional labor found individuals with high emotional intelligence when confronted with emotional labor had lower rates of burnout and health complaints. M. Mikolajczak et al. suggest the use of strategies to cope with the emotional labor was the mediating factor.

In addition to the emotional intelligence skills of the leader or manager, the interconnection between the individual and their environment is also a concept within the

emotional intelligence and the workplace literature. Similar to occupational stress models, Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory (AET) describes the workplace environment as a series of positive or negative experiences that influences job satisfaction, workplace attitudes, and performance (as cited in Cropanzano, Weiss, & Elias, 2004). Figure 7 provides a visual diagram of the AET theory. The AET diagram shows the personality and the mood held by the individual determines the intensity of the emotional response as it relates to the workplace.

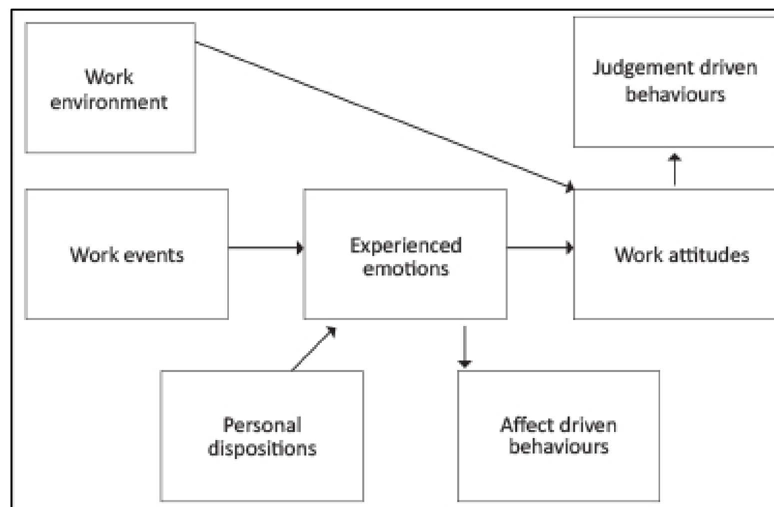



*Figure 7.* Affective Events Theory. Adapted from "Emotions in the Workplace," by N. Ashkanasy & A. Dorris, 2017, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4*(1).

The existing literature shows a direct connection between emotional intelligence and employee satisfaction, performance, and organizational effectiveness (Baksh Baloch et al., 2014; Chiva & Alegre, 2008; Coco, 2009). "In an organizational context, the way that people experience their relationships to work and receive its benefits depends in part on their emotional intelligence" (Alfonso, Zenasni, Hodzic, & Ripoll, 2016, p. 108). In addition, leaders, managers, and organizations can benefit from the attention to workplace emotions and further their understanding how emotions can grow or stifle employee performance and workplace satisfaction (Boyatzis et al., 2013; Cavazotte et al.,

2012; Rumens, 2005). The literature suggests the attention to emotional intelligence within an organizational setting has strong implications for organizational success (S. Cartwright & Pappas, 2006; D. Goleman, 1998b).

**Emotional intelligence and organizational stress.** A larger number of studies conducted in a variety of cultures and countries on various occupations, industries, type of employee, and organizational type have found negative relationships exist between emotional intelligence and occupational stress (Gough, 2012; Ramesar et al., 2009; Rosen, Halbesleben, & Perrewé, 2013; Salami, 2010; Scheibe & Zacher, 2013; Sharma & Sharma, 2014). S. Cartwright and Pappas (2008) suggest emotional intelligence plays a role in helping individuals to control and manage the range of negative emotions that occur when experiencing a work related stressor. Slaski and Cartwright (2003) found high emotional intelligence individuals reported less stress and better physical and psychological health than those with low emotional intelligence scores. R. Bar-On et al. (2000) studied emotional intelligence across three industries and three employee groups from police officers, childcare workers, and mental health educators and found a significant relationship between the age of the employee, their emotional intelligence levels, and stress tolerance. When comparing the general intelligence and emotional intelligence of employees as associated with acute and perceived chronic stress levels, Singh and Sharma (2012) found general intelligence showed no relation to acute or chronic stress levels yet, inverse results were found between emotional intelligence with acute and perceived chronic stress.

Nikolaou and Tsaousis's (2002) large study with mental health professionals (N=212) found positive correlations between employee emotional intelligence and

organizational commitment and negative correlations with emotional intelligence and work stress. Similar results were found in Alfonso et al. (2016) study examining the relationship between self-report/trait emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behaviors found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted "inter-individual citizenship behaviors" (p. 119) such as an ability to manage one's emotions and create positive work relationships amongst adults working in France in various occupations.

## Community and Technical Colleges

Today's community and technical colleges have been transforming institutions since they were established (Bailey & Morest, 2003; Bensimon, Neumand & Birnbaum, 1989). Cohen, Brawer and Kisker (1996) describe the birth of the community college, formerly called junior college, as "an expansion of the secondary school system" (p. 11). In their formation, the community college was born out of a local school district during a period of time when the kindergarten through high school (K-12) education system was under reform. The 1947 U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education report placed great value on education beyond secondary education and called for the establishment of the community college as a separate organization from the secondary system (as cited in Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 1996). As the population within the United States began to grow, so did community colleges. In the late 1940s, there was a total of 650 public and private community colleges within the United States (Cohen et al., 1996). Today, according to the AACC (2017) there are 1,132 community colleges in the United States. These include both public, independent and tribal type institutions.

Community and technical colleges can have a capitol footprint from a multiple campus locations that form a large college district to a small single campus location (Katsinas et al., 2014). The student population and enrollment can also vary greatly amongst the community and technical colleges within a state and throughout the country. According to AACC Fact Sheet (2018), community and technical colleges served approximately 12.2 million students. The student populations attending community and technical colleges are diverse in many demographics. Figure 8 shows a profile of the first time community college student and their reported race and ethnicity ranging from Asian/Pacific Islander to multiple races.

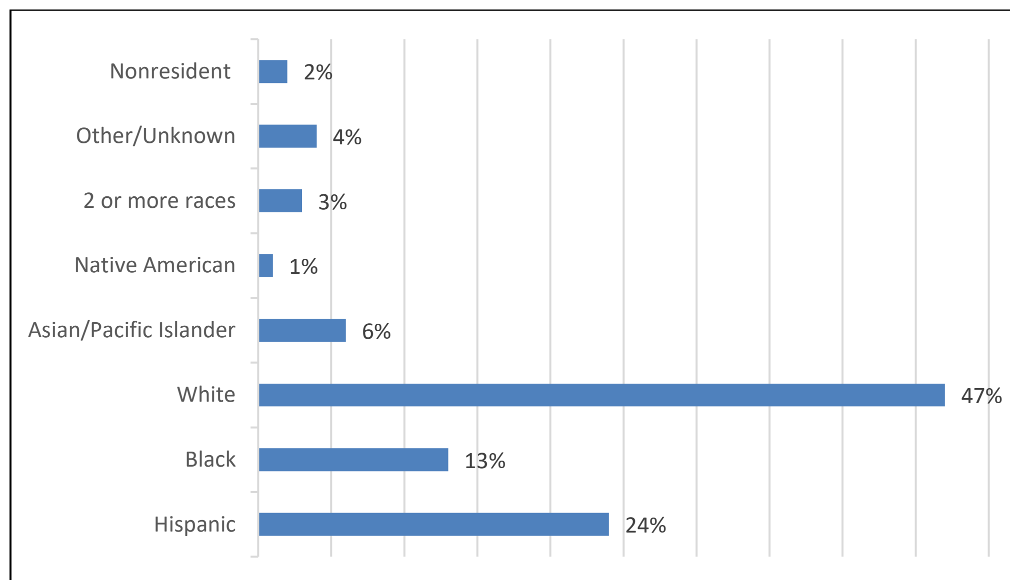



*Figure 8.* Community College Student Demographics. Adapted from American Association of Community Colleges Fast Facts (2018). Retrieved from https://www.aacc.nche.edu/research-trends/fast-facts/

Additionally, the type of enrollment, full-time to part-time varies amongst student populations (Boggs, 2004).

### Mission of the Community and Technical College

The mission of the community and technical college is to provide open access, low cost education, and training programs for all (AACC, 2017; Cohen et al., 1996).

Community colleges are two-year institutions that offer certificates and degrees of higher learning that span the range of offerings from the first two years of a Bachelor's degree, complete Bachelor's degrees, facilitating curriculum articulation agreements so student can transfer their coursework to another college of university, providing short term workforce training programs and industry credentials for both college credit and non-credit (Chan & Derry, 2013). Technical colleges are similar two-year institutions like a community college; however, the technical college's mission is solely focused on workforce development and industry specific training. Thornton and Brattebo (2009) state that within the mission of the community and technical college is career development, workforce training, and continuing education services for those who are living within the service area or local community. The open access mission of the community and technical college has provided equal and fair opportunities for anyone who desires a college education. Therefore, community and technical college student populations are greatly diverse as the open access nature of the institution allows for anyone person to access the services and programs offered at the institution (AACC, 2017).

**The Economic Impact of Community and Technical College**

The community and technical college makes significant impacts on the lives of students, the economy and society (R. Jenkins, 2013; Hanover Research, 2014; Zeidenberg, 2008). A report written by Wright (2013) and published by the Economic Modeling Specialists International stated, "the total effect of America's community college on the U.S. economy in 2012 was $809 billion" (p. 8).

In addition to the impact on society, a community college education also impacts the individual. Zeidenrberg (2008) states "the high-school degree is no longer sufficient to achieve a family supporting income in today's society" (p. 1). The student who attends a community or technical college and earns an associate's degree has higher income potential than an individual with a high school diploma. Figure 9 shows the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) comparison between the weekly earnings of those who earned less than a high school diploma to those who have earned a bachelor's degree. Figure 9 also illustrates a significant income gap exists between those who only earn a High School diploma versus those who earn some level of college education and one could draw a conclusion that income is highly correlated with education and degree obtainment (D. Jenkins, 2011; Zeidenberg, 2008).

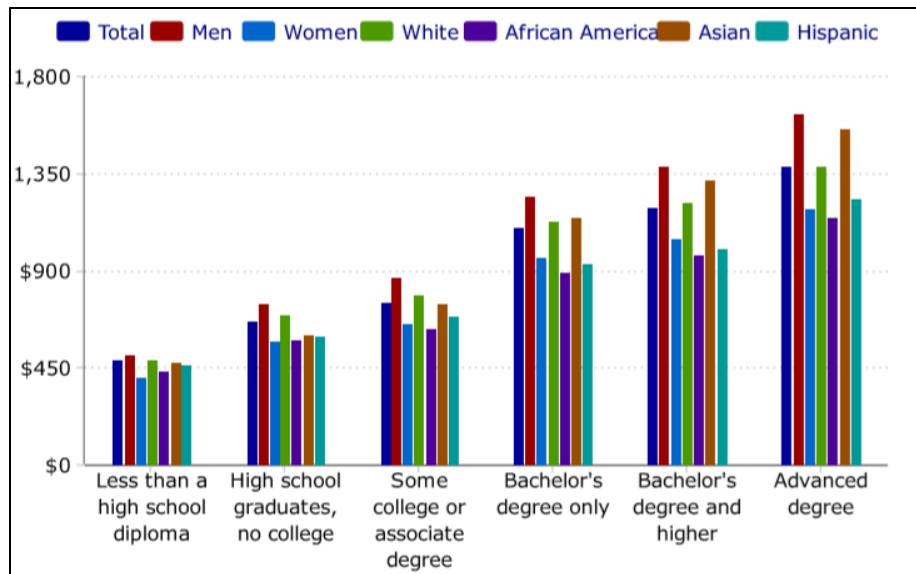



*Figure 9.* Median Weekly Earnings by Education Attainment in 2014. Adapted from "Median Weekly Earnings by Education Attainment in 2014," by Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from *https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/median-weekly-earnings-by-education-gender-race-and-ethnicity-in-2014.htm*

Associate degree earners are less likely to become unemployed compared to the non-college graduate. Figure 10 charts the unemployment rates by educational level.

This chart describes those populations of individuals with a high school diploma are less likely to become unemployed than those with college degrees.

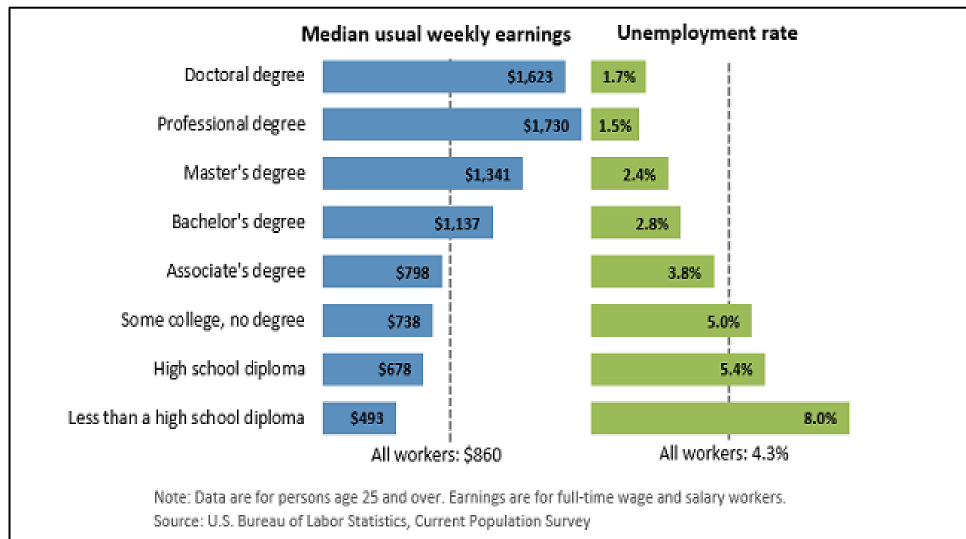



*Figure 10.* Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment. Adapted from "Employment Projections," by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm

**Washington State Community and Technical Colleges**

The Washington State community and technical college system is made up of 34 colleges that are governed through a state board. According to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical College's (SBCTC) (2017) website:

> Each year, about 381,000 students train for the workforce, prepare to transfer to a university, gain basic math and English skills, or pursue continuing education. Our students, graduates and community partners increase the state's quality of life and economic vitality as entrepreneurs, employees, consumers and taxpayers. (About Us section)

Figure 11 shows the geographic location of the colleges and the names of the institutions.

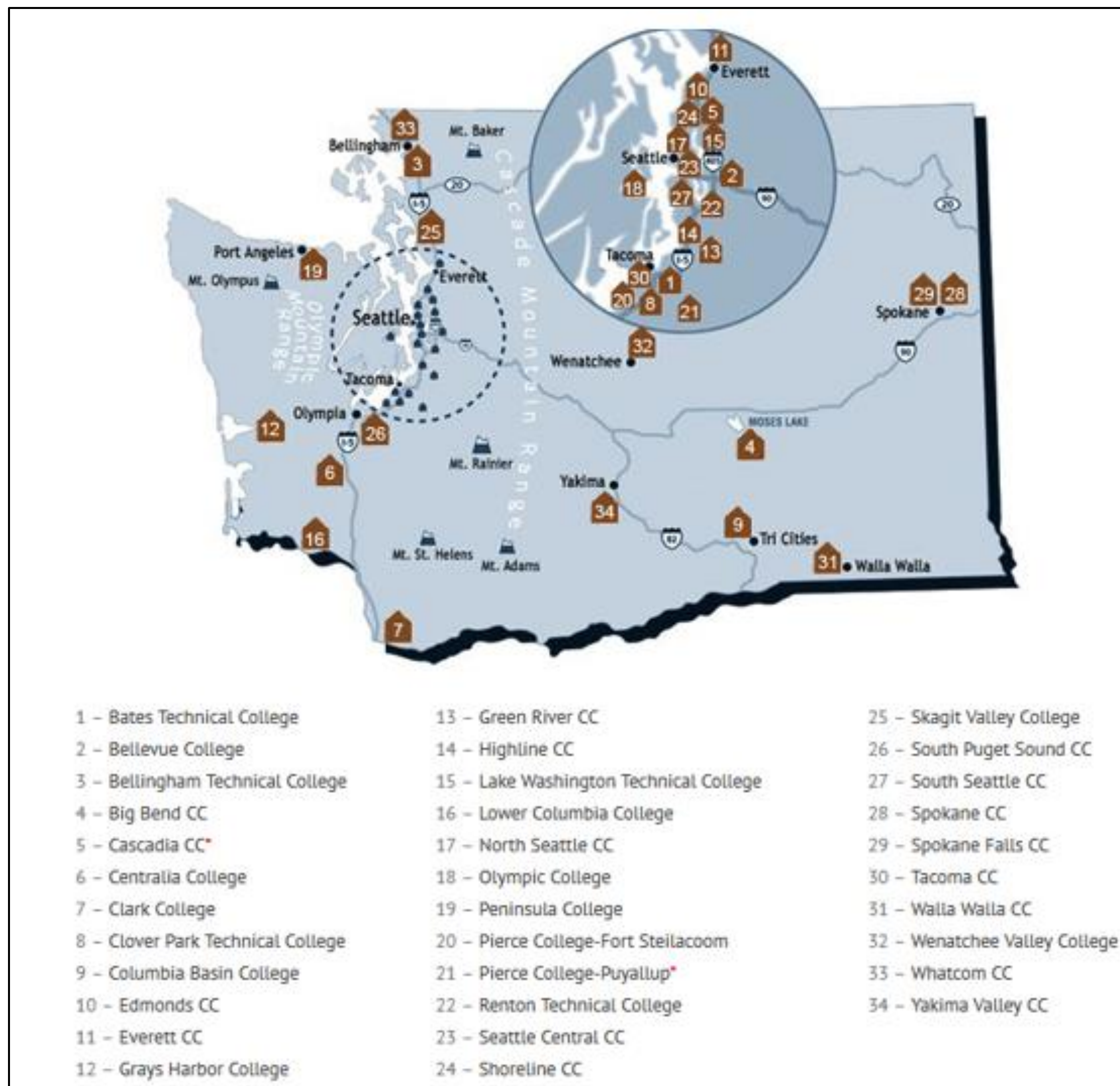



*Figure 11.* Washington State Community and Technical Colleges. Adapted from “Ready to learn more about Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges?,” by The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Retrieved from www.sbctc.edu

The SBCTC mission is focused on three areas: (a) Adult basic skills and education, (b) workforce education, and (c) academic transfer education (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges [SBCTC], 2010). These three areas have a 20.5 billon dollar impact on Washington State’s economy each year (SBCTC, 2017).

**Future Changes in the Community and Technical College**

The community and technical colleges face many challenges according to the Hanover Research Report (2014) report which declares that community colleges are challenged with degreasing budgets and increasing enrollments, fast evolving technologies, and changing student needs. Throughout the country many states provide less funding to their two-year higher education systems each year (Katsinas et al., 2014). With the strain on reliable tax revenue, colleges are faced with doing more with fewer resources. Additionally, higher education funding models are shifting from full-time equivalent funding (FTE) to performance based funding models. Where an institution receives funding for obtaining certain student success benchmarks (D'Amico, Friedel, Katsinas, & Thornton, 2014; D. Jenkins, 2011; D. Jenkins, Wachen, Morre, & Shulock, 2012). In Washington State, the Student Achievement Initiative is a performance base funding model and accounts for a small percentage of the colleges' overall funding allocation. However, it is anticipated the percentage will increase in the future (D. Jenkins et al., 2012).

The open-door mission of the community and technical college presents key issues for the organization determined to meet student needs, as almost no programs require a special or selective admissions process. This presents a challenge to meet student's academic requirements who are not prepared for college level coursework. It is estimated that approximately 60% of community and technical college students receive some developmental or remedial education (Zeidenberg, 2008). Additionally, many community and technical colleges serve low socioeconomic status students compared to four-year universities (Hanover, 2014). It is not unusual for a two-year college student to

lack positive support structures outside of the organizations; therefore, placing additional pressures on the colleges to provide a myriad of student success initiatives aimed at student retention and completion (Chan & Derry, 2013; D. Jenkins, 2011).

**Senior-Level Community College Leader**

The community college leader is critical to the vision and mission setting for the organization (Riggs, 2009). The demands on senior-level administrators to lead community and technical college are multifaceted. In order to be successful, it takes a series of leadership attributes to be successful (Smith, 2011). Skinner (2010) suggests that the leaders of community colleges face dynamics such as:

- accountability in student and program outcomes.
- collaboration from the multiple stakeholders represented within the college's community.
- the need to generate new programs and revenue streams through entrepreneurship
- the ability to manage an external and internal political dynamics in a rapidly changing environment
- the necessity of maintain partnerships and strong reputations amongst community stakeholders.

The community college leader's challenge is the balancing of multiple dynamics in a manner that meets the demands of many stakeholder groups (Eddy & Boggs, 2010).

The demands of leading higher education institutions continue to grow and many potential future leaders may opt out of taking on an enormous responsibility (Kim &

Cook, 2013). In order to be successful within these dynamics, Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005) suggests the senior-level administer must have nine essential skills:

> 1) learning from the past while embracing the future; 2) enriching the inward journey; 3) leading from the center, values; 4) making connections, vision; 5) looking broadly for talent; 6) providing continual leadership opportunities through succession planning; 7) keeping faculty in the mix; 8) forging business and industry connections; and 9) not forgetting students, preparing the future workforce. (p. 2)

The Kim and Cook (2013) report on the future leadership of higher education states the traditional pathway for a senior-level administer in higher education often comes from years of experience in the classroom serving in a faculty role and then moving into positions such as department chair, dean, and vice president of instruction. This career pathway into college leadership has become longer and more limited (Riggs, 2009). Riggs (2009) recommends the community college leader should consider a pathway that develops a portfolio of experiences, where one gains complex leadership and management skills and establishes a broad network of contacts.

In order to enhance the leadership career pathway for current and future community and technical college leaders, the American Association of Community Colleges (2015) published a list of leadership competencies: Organizational strategies which include:

- resource management
- communication
- collaboration

- community college advocacy
- professionalism
- cultural competency

Eddy and Boggs (2010) claim community college leadership is complex and describe the foundation to leadership as,

> Leadership is not composed of a prescribed list of traits or skills. Rather, leadership is multidimensional with the various dimensions existing on continua that reflect the evolution of a leader's understanding of what it means to lead, as well as his or her ability to respond to leadership opportunities in new ways. Key to a multidimensional understanding of leadership is recognition of the fact that all leaders rely to some extent on their core beliefs and underlying schemas in making leadership decisions. (p. 2)

Eddy and Boggs (2010) further describe their multidimensional community college leadership model as addressing the shortcomings of previously published work on community college leadership competencies and claim that current leadership training programs lack the realistic training needed to make tough ethical decisions that impact the organization, its program offerings, and employees.

Johnson (2008) argues, ''what separates successful leaders from unsuccessful ones is their mental models or meaning structures, not their knowledge, information, training, or experience per se'' (p. 85). The ability to cope with the organizational role stress that is perceived by a senior-level administrator is a part of the suite of skillsets one needs to be successful as a community college leader (Gough, 2012; McNair et al., 2011; Shaw, 2014; Smith, 2011).

**Stress in community college senior-level leadership roles.** The extent of organizational role stress amongst senior-level leaders of community and technical colleges within in United States is eluded to in several studies on higher education leaders and job satisfaction yet not studied fully (Biron et al., 2008; Jacobs et al., 2007; Shin & Jung, 2014). Vaughan (2000) writes that the position of community college president comes with joy and great challenges, which can demolish one's self personally, professionally, and emotionally. Floyd et al. (2010) asserts community college leaders forget key aspects to taking care of one's self while serving as a senior-level leader in order to be effective and recommend several strategies to cope with the pressures of community college leadership. Table 1 outlines Floyd et al.'s (2010) four key aspects needed to be a successful community college leader: (a) Leader as Learner; (b) Power for Good; (c) Emotional Maturity; and (d) Stay Connected.

Table 1

*Four Key Aspects of Successful Community College Leader*

| Leader as Learner |
| --- |
| • Be open to using a crisis experience as a learning opportunity.<br>• Presidents no longer have the luxury of a grace period, so build a network of support—people to learn from and with—upon entry.<br>• Be clear and confident about personal values and beliefs. Establish professional boundaries.<br>• Crisis and even loss of a job can help clarify and reclaim one's career identity.<br>• Listen and learn.<br>• Always have an exit plan and the willingness to reframe, to be able to leave on independent terms and in a graceful fashion. |
| Power for Good |
| • Know the expectations before accepting a job, and know that expectations can change with the wind as political power shifts.<br>• Set ego aside, and realize that a president is a placeholder in a position of power, and thus the focus of praise during good times and criticism during difficult times.<br>• Create a work culture where power is shared and where all members including the president—are able to grow and develop. |

(continued)

Table 1

*Four Key Aspects of Successful Community College Leader*

| Emotional Maturity |
|---|
| • Emotions are part of leading and are to be embraced.<br>• Face fear with openness and respect, not arrogance.<br>• Be adaptable and consider multiple perspectives.<br>• Use emotion for good, never for harm.<br>• Pay attention to physical well-being and emotional health. |
| Stay Connected |
| • Have a good friend, and be a good friend.<br>• Develop a personal network of sitting presidents and former presidents.<br>• Find a mentor. Be a mentor.<br>• Create local and external webs of trusted colleagues.<br>• Learn how to use fast-paced communication technologies and media to enhance interpersonal connections.<br>• Establish equilibrium between life at work and home. The presidency is just a job.<br>• Carve out time to stop, think, and reflect regularly.<br>• Turn to spirituality. |

*Note*. Adapted from “Beyond the Headlines: Wounding and the Community College Presidency,” by D. L. Floyd, P. Maslin-Ostrowski, & M. R. Hrabak, 2010. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 149, p. 71.

The challenging dynamics that are described in the literature for senior-level leaders of community and technical colleges extends to the extent of a leader’s preparation which is also of concern (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2014; Friedel, 2010; Riggs, 2009). Bonner's (2013) qualitative case study explored the leadership skills of mid-career and senior community college presidents in the Midwest and found professional grit as it applied to the long hours in which the position requires, the solidarity nature of being a president, and sustaining a passion for the work of the organization influenced the study’s participants ability to be effective as community college leaders. Many studies in the context of community college leadership focus on the college president (Gough, 2012; Pierce, 2010; Vaughan, 2000). However, the president is not the only leader that exists within the organization that is required to be responsive to the external and internal demands facing community and technical colleges

(Bragg, 2000). Wild, Ebbers, and Shelley (2003) sought to further define the stress experienced by the community college dean. Through factor analysis, their research uncovered nine stress factors experienced by community college deans (N=322): "1) role strain; 2) managing human interactions; 3) intrinsic job demands; 4) managing professional/personal life; 5) professional maturity; 6) balancing leadership and scholarship; 7) administrative identity; 8) fiscal responsibilities; 9) external constituency demands" (p. 10). Role strain (11.39% of variance) was the highest factor that contributed to dean's stress.

Another stressor for senior-level administrators is in an attempt to be responsive to the external and internal demands on community colleges is in the realm of initiative burnout. D. Jenkins (2011) call for community and technical colleges to undergo transformation by reforming their instructional approach to streamline educational pathways that lead to further education or employment, redesign their approach to student support services, and restructure the organization to be relevant and responsive. The call for community and technical college transformation is prevalent (McClure, 2011; Zeidenberg, 2008).

## Summary

According to the APA (2014), workplace stress is ranked as the number two cause of stress amongst adults. The literature reviewed would also suggest that stress in the workplace has a negative impact on the organization causing slow production rates, employee absenteeism, and low satisfaction. The employee is also at risk as occupational stress can harm one's well-being. Fineman (2003) writes, "Stress has become a focus of how we fare, or survive, emotionally in the workplace. Stress has also become

fashionable.…a badge of honor" (pp. 137-138). In his book, he suggests that burnout among those who are vulnerable to occupational stress and emotional labor can be a threat to an employee and an organization.

As the literature would suggest occupational stress will occur for both the leader as well as the employee (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; R. Lazarus, 1995; Wisse & Sleebos, 2015). U. Pareek's (1983) organizational role stress model summarizes that stress will likely occur when the role of a community and technical college leader has many complex and competing roles and has limited external resources. Moreover, the emotional intelligence literature suggests, emotional intelligence strategies can affect one's ability to cope with workplace stressors and emotional intelligence might be a mediating factor between organizational role stress and organizational environments. In addition, strong emotional intelligence skills can have a positive impact on one's psychological and physiological being. R. Lazarus and Rice (2000) assert stress and emotions are interdependent of one another.

To be responsive to internal and external demands, meet the needs of a diverse student body, respond to community stakeholders, and account for quality of learning outcomes, community and technical college leaders will need to adapt to their environment and lead their employees through change (Hanover, 2014; D. Jenkins, 2011; The SOURCE on Community College Issues, 2011; C. Woodland & Parsons, 2013). The call for transformational change places pressure on community and technical college senior-level administrator to have the leadership skills necessary to meet the challenge.

## Synthesis Matrix

A synthesis matrix was used to show the relationship between the major themes and variables in this study and the academic sources found within the body of literature. (see Appendix A)

# CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

## Overview

This qualitative study examined the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level community college administrators in the Washington State community and technical college system. This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to describe how emotional intelligence strategies are used within a sample of senior-level leaders as a coping strategy for organizational role stress, describe differences in emotional intelligence strategies amongst senior-level community college leadership positions, and identify successful coping strategies used for managing organizational role stress.

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used for this study and identifies supporting research for this study's approach. The sections in this chapter include: (a) purpose statement, (b) research questions, (c) methodology, (d) variables, (e) population and sample, (f) instrumentation and the process used to gather data, (g) the processes used to protect human subjects, (h) validity and reliability, (i) data collection procedures, and (j) data analysis.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans in the Washington State community and technical college system. A second purpose of this study was to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy.

## Central Questions

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of senior-level administrators' use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress?
2. Are there differences between perceived emotional intelligence strategies used for coping with organizational role stress amongst senior-level administrators' position type (presidents, vice presidents, and deans)?

## Research Sub-Questions

The following questions are based upon the five key factors of R. Bar-On (1997) model of emotional intelligence: (a) intrapersonal capacity, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) adaptability, (d) stress management, and (e) motivational/general mood factors. The researcher collected qualitative data to answer the following research sub-questions:

1. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's intrapersonal awareness and understanding of one's own feelings factor into coping with organizational role stress?
2. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's interpersonal awareness, understanding and appreciation for the feelings of others factor into coping with organizational role stress?
3. In what ways does a senior-level administrator adapt to situations and the environment in order to cope with organizational role stress?
4. What emotional intelligence strategies were perceived by senior-level administrators as being successful in dealing with organizational role stress?

5. How do senior-level administrators stay motivated in order to cope with organizational role stress?

## Research Design

The research design selected for this study was a qualitative phenomenological approach. The objective of the study was to explore the lived experiences of senior-level administrators' awareness and perceived use of emotional intelligence as coping strategies for organizational role stress.

Qualitative research designs are fundamentally known for capturing data on "naturally occurring phenomena" (Patton, 2010, p. 23). Qualitative research produces detailed narrative descriptions of individual viewpoint, perceptions, and experience, which provide a deep understanding of complex behavior (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). McMillian and Schumacher (2010) define nine characteristics as hallmarks of qualitative research: "Natural settings; Context sensitivity; Direct data collection; Rich narrative description; Process orientation; Inductive data analysis; Participant perspectives; Emergent design; and Complexity of understanding and explanation" (p. 321). A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because of the design's robust ability to capture an individual viewpoint, perceptions, and experience. Bamberger, Rugh, and Mabry (2012) describe qualitative research designs as "in situ" "… where data is collected at sites where relevant events naturally or ordinarily occur" (p. 292). The nature of the research questions identified for this study also determined a qualitative approach. For the study, the social context explored was focused on the senior-level administrators' occupational environment and the role they served in the organization. According to McMillian and Schumacher, qualitative inquiry is appropriate

to examine relationships between events and meanings as perceived by the study's participants and can provide explanation why a behavior occurs within a social context.

Patton (2010) describes phenomenology as a foundational theoretical question of qualitative research and fundamentally asking "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?" (p. 104). The use of a phenomenological methodology for qualitative research is considered "widely embraced" (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Through a phenomenological inquiry, the study explored the lived experiences of senior-level administrators' awareness and perceived use of emotional intelligence as coping strategies for organizational role stress. Phenomenology focuses on "exploring how human beings make sense of an experience and transform experience into consciousness" (Patton, 2002, p. 105) regardless if the construct is real (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2012). This methodological approach is appropriate to considering the critical perspective on the emotional intelligence construct which suggests that emotional intelligence is not a real intelligence (Zeider et al., 2004). A strength of the phenomenological approach is the opportunity to explore a lived experience through a common experience by both the researcher and the participants (Patton, 2010).

Qualitative research methods can limit the generalizability of this study's findings to large populations (Bamberger et al., 2012). The research design chosen for this study is limited, as the intent of this study is not to generalize the results to large populations, rather to gain deep understanding of the essence that emotional intelligence plays with one's ability to cope with the perceived stress one experiences while serving in the role as a senior-level community and technical college administrator. Bamberger et al. (2012)

describe the essence of the qualitative researcher is to “work toward detailed, contextual, holistic portrayals of naturally occurring events and experiences” (p. 293).

## Population

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) define a study’s population as “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (p. 129).  The population for this study was individuals who are serving in leadership roles at a college within the community and technical college system in Washington State.  There are 34 community and technical colleges in the State of Washington that range in student enrollments from 1,100 to 25,000.

### Target Population

In order to gather manageable and meaningful data, this study narrowed the population of community and technical college leaders into three target populations: (a) senior-level administrators serving in roles titled president, (b) vice president, and (c) dean from all of the 34 community and technical colleges within Washington State. McMillian and Schumacher (2010) define a target population as different set of criteria that further delimits the study population through a set of characteristics.

**Presidents.** According to the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (2017), an organization of community and technical college presidents, there are 37 individuals who serve in the role as college president or district chancellor within 34 community and technical colleges in Washington State.  These individuals are hired by college Boards of Trustees to be the chief executive officer of the college or district of colleges.

**Vice presidents**. College vice presidents serve as a direct report to the college president or chancellor. Each community and technical college in Washington State may title their vice president differently; however, the State Board for community and technical College's has established a commission system to promote broad system collaboration. This system organizes individuals serving in similar roles within the 34 colleges through a series of commissions and councils. According to this commission system structure, vice presidents lead major college divisions such as finance, instruction, student services, research and development, and human resources.

**Deans.** College deans serve as a direct report to a college vice president or in some organizations to the college president. Position titles may also vary amongst institutions from dean to executive dean, yet the individuals in these organizational roles tend to have responsibilities for the management of departments, the supervision of staff and faculty, and for daily program or department operations.

## Sample

Qualitative phenomenological research premise is to capture the experience of individuals in order to understand the meaning of a particular phenomenon (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, qualitative study samples aim to collect information from a sample that is "knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating" (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010, p. 326). Patton (2010) describes qualitative sampling as an inquiry approach rather than a statistical method.

### Purposeful Sampling

Considered a core theme of qualitative research, purposeful sampling was used to gather meaningful data. Patton (2010) states that purposeful sampling methods are

intentional strategies used by the researcher to gather information rich data relevant to the phenomenon. The first strategy used to select the study sample was based on the convenience of the senior-level administrators. Convenience samples are established through a process where the respondent agrees to partake in the study and is willing to provide information (Bamberger et al., 2012). The second strategy used in this study was criterion based sampling. Criterion sampling establishes a set of specific criteria for which a sample will qualify for study (Patton, 2010). The participants for the study were selected based upon the following organizational role criteria:

- Employed at a community and technical College located in Washington State.
- Occupied a position titled president, vice president or dean. This criterion is critical to the research problem and questions examining the differences amongst leadership roles.
- Held the position titled president, vice president or dean for more than one calendar year. This criterion was important to establish familiarity to the organizational role and to allow time for the participant to encounter organizational role stress.

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) state “information rich” (p. 237) samples must have “clear criteria” (p. 237) and “be appropriate for the research design and problem” (p. 327).

A third purposive sample strategy used was quota sampling. Qualitative research designs do not prescribe a specific number of participants in order to make the study valid (Bamberger, et al., 2012; Paton, 2010). Rather, qualitative designs establish a target sample size that relates to the study’s research problem, considers the availability of

"information rich cases," (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010, p. 328) and ensures that enough data can be gathered to reach a point of redundancy. For this study, an initial quota sample of 15 participants was established. This minimum number of participants included five presidents, five vice presidents, and five deans to ensure different perspectives were included. In addition, a minimum of 15 participants was a manageable number of information rich cases to allow the researcher to explore a phenomenon and generate adequate data. Convenience, criterion based and quota sampling methods were appropriate for this qualitative study. This sampling approach generated a broad sample of individuals who meet the established organizational role criteria in the Washington State community and technical college system.

Site section was limited to colleges within the Washington State community and technical college system and senior-level administrator respondents who met the established criteria. The quota sampling methods included a minimum of five presidents, which ensured five organizational environments were captured within the data.

## Instrumentation

Patton (2002) and McMillian and Schumacher (2010) describe the qualitative researcher as the instrument, unlike in quantitative inquiry. Bamberger et al. (2012) suggests qualitative research requires the researcher conduct "complex, content-centered analysis to recognize and understand patterns, relationships and conditionalities" (p. 289). McMillian and Schumacher (2010) discuss the "qualitative research depends to a great extent on the interpersonal skills of the inquirer such as building trust, maintain good relations, being nonjudgmental and respecting the norms of the situation" (p. 332). In

addition, the researcher must be conscious of any preconceived notions regarding the topic being researched in order to remain creditable (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) describe a technique for a phenomenological study, which is for the researcher to conduct long interviews with the participants directed towards understanding their perspectives on their lived experiences. To better understand the phenomena of how an individual uses emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress, this study utilized semi-structured interview instrumentation structure.

**Theoretical Framework**

Patton (2010) recommends "sensitizing concepts" (p. 279) through a theoretical framework as a best practice to provide an initial direction to a study. The researcher created a set of guiding open-ended questions based upon the key elements described in R. Bar-On's et al. (2000) "noncognitive intelligence" (p. 1108) model of emotional intelligence. The researcher utilized the Bar-On theoretical framework to develop the study's research and interview questions.

**Interview Guide**

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) encourage the qualitative researcher to use some level of structure for personal in-depth interviews. Patton (2002) advises the use of an interview that guide can "significantly enhance the quality of responses" (p. 360), and is an efficient way to gather a complete set of data that allows the researcher to explore, probe, and illuminate a particular topic. The study's research questions and an interview guide were provided to the participants prior to the face-to-face or telephone interviews. The interview guide included an overview of the key elements of Bar-On's model of

emotional intelligence as described the study's literature review (see Appendix B). Providing an interview guide as an instrumentation strategy allowed the researcher to conduct a semi-structured interview using a conversational interview style with participants who are unfamiliar with the research topic (Patton, 2002).

## Validity

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) state qualitative research validity is "the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomenon and the realities of the world" (p. 330). The researcher employed several strategies to enhance the credibility of this study. McMillian and Schumacher state that qualitative researchers should use as many strategies that are logistically possible to ensure design validity. The first strategy used was persistent fieldwork. Persistent fieldwork can be conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews within the location of the phenomena (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). For this study, the researcher intentionally interviewed the participants while they were at their place of work. This allowed the participants to contextualize their thoughts as it relates to their current environment. The second strategy used was "participant language" clarification. The researcher provided the participant with the definitions of terms and words. This strategy ensured clarity of the research questions and interview guide during the interview process (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Additionally, the interview guide was pilot tested by three non-participants who were asked to provide constructive feedback to the researcher regarding the clarity of the interview questions, terms and statements used, and flow of the interview, and communication techniques use by the researcher. Pilot testing an interview guide ensured that the interview questions were easily understood by the study

population (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Third, field notes were taken during the interviews as a strategy to capture and describe the context of the interview. Patton (2010) states that field notes are critical to qualitative analysis and capturing the researcher's observations, insights and interpretations and the researcher's field notes becomes a part of the data. The fourth strategy used during the interview was to "mechanically recorded data" with a recording device to ensure data is captured accurately (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). The audio recordings were made from each of the in-person or telephone interviews, to accurately record the data in preparation for analysis. To enhance the recorded data, notes were also taken during and after the interview. The note taking strategy allowed the researcher to identify important statements, thoughts, and observations of the participants in timely and relevant manner (Patton 2002). The last strategy used was "participant review." The researcher offered each participant the opportunity to review his or her transcripts prior to data analysis. A participant review strategy provides a greater level of accuracy of the data and ensures the researcher fully captures the participant's experience in the manner that the participant intended in his or her response (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

"The inductive, intuitive nature of qualitative evaluation places enormous demands on the judgment capacity of the qualitative evaluator" (Bamberger, 2007, p. 6). Malone, Nicholl, and Tracey (2014) suggest when exploring qualitative research designs, the researcher should identify potential bias within the study design and attempt to minimize where possible. Mylonas and Furnham (2014) aimed to detect and remove bias when conducting a qualitative cross-cultural study by combining several bias-reduction methods and found it unfeasible. They concluded being aware of the size of the bias is

important to avoid erroneous conclusions that can lead to poor interventions or misinterpretations of the study results. As a current senior-level administrator at a community and technical college in Washington State, the researcher intentionally controlled for personal bias by employing the following strategies:

- Code checking. A second researcher was recruited to review transcripts and created independent code categories to assure alignment with the researcher's interpretation of the data. Bamberger et al. (2007) suggest the use of code checking with an expert in the field can strengthen a study's validity.
- Self-awareness. Feedback from the second researcher and self-reflection on behalf of the researcher was maintained throughout the data gathering and data analysis. McMillian and Schumacher (2010) recommend qualitative researchers be aware of their own assumptions, predispositions and influence on the social situation.

## Reliability

The reliability of qualitative research was established through the standardization and trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis process (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2002). In order to establish reliability of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher conducted several strategies. First, the researcher used an interview guide which included a set of guiding open-ended interview questions, a script for the researcher to begin and end the interview, informed consent documents (see Appendix C), confidentiality statement, key terms, and a thank you letter to ensure the interview format and structure was the same for each participant interview, regardless if the interviews were in person or via the telephone. Bamberger et al. (2012) suggest semi-

structured interviews have a protocol with prepared questions yet keep flexibility to ensure that each interview can generate as much authentic data as possible.

**Inter-Coder Reliability**

Inter-coder reliability techniques were used to enhance reliability. Lombard, Snyder-Duch and Bracken (2004) define inter-coder reliability as "a widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate characteristics of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion" (p. 2). Patton (2010) advises the qualitative researcher to compare and seek multiple perspectives in the search for patterns in order to provide a form of analytical triangulation or consensual validation of the study's findings. For this study, the researcher recruited a second researcher to establish inter-coder reliability, review codes, and code categories independently. The process of inter-coder reliability allowed the researcher to gain additional perspective of the themes and meaning of the data. The process used to establish inter-coder reliability was:

1. The primary researcher recruited a second researcher to review transcripts and code in to Nvivo independently.
2. The primary researcher reviewed the data and developed initial nodes, node definitions, node categories, and created a codebook (see Appendix D).
3. The primary researcher shared the transcripts and codebook with the secondary researcher.
4. The secondary researcher coded data independently using the codebook and added new nodes as needed.
5. The secondary researcher provided feedback to the primary researcher as themes developed.

6. According to Lombard et al. (2004) inter-coder reliability is sufficient when the second researcher codes 10% of the data gathered from the primary researcher and through coding comparisons, they reach a minimum of 80% of agreement. Substantive significance of the study's findings was determined by the second researcher coding 13% of the data and reached 88% agreement. The researcher assessed the degree of agreement amongst the independent codes and adjusted final nodes to assure the researcher's interpretation of the data was valid and reliable.

## Data Collection

Phenomenological research is known for the personal in-depth interviews that are conducted with the use of open-ended questions in order to obtain participant's meanings (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). This study used a conversational or semi-structured approach to the interviews along with an interview guide to ensure that specific questions were covered during each interview and each participant received the interview structure. Bamberger et al. (2012), advise that the semi-structured interviewer must adjust wording and the order of questions to maximize the information that develops during the interview.

### Interview Data Collection Process

The following methods were used to collect data during the semi-structured in-depth interviews.

1. The researcher obtained the names and college email addresses for college presidents, vice presidents, and deans with the community and technical

college system in Washington State. These senior-level leaders were sent an email inviting them to participate in this study (see Appendix E)

2. Participation in this study was voluntary and all participants were adults and working professionals.
3. Participants were asked a set of demographic questions to allow for detail in explaining the data.
4. Each interview was recorded and transcribed word-for-word by a transcriptionist. The researcher reviewed the transcripts and audio recordings to ensure accuracy of capturing participant responses.
5. Field notes were taken during each of the interviews to identify certain topics, statements, and responses that were significant. The qualitative researcher reflected and analyzed during the data collection process with the use of field notes and interview reflections identifying key terms and statements (McMillian and Schumacher, 2010).
6. Participants were provided the opportunity to review the transcribed data and provide corrections to their transcript prior to the data analysis.

**Participant's Data**

Patton (2002) states qualitative interviewers must be aware of ethical challenges during the interview process and suggests the use of a philosophical framework while conducting interviews. This study involved human subjects; therefore, an Institutional Research Board approval was received through Brandman University (see Appendix F). Key ethical considerations related to this study and the steps taken to ensure compliance with human subjects' ethical code and data protection were:

- Respect for People's Rights and Dignity. Individuals were treated as autonomous participates and the Brandman University "Research Participant's Bill of Rights" and an informed consent was provided to each participant prior to the interview (see Appendix G).
- Beneficence and Nonmaleficence. No harm will come from the participation in the in-depth interviews.
- Integrity. Data from each interview were collected and not tied to a unique identifier such as an email address, name, or name of an organization.
- The data were stored on a password protected laptop and was only be accessed by the researcher. Data were available to the research committee for the purpose of reviewing and approving this study.

## Data Analysis

Through the data gathering process, the researcher obtained a significant amount of qualitative data. Bamberger et al. (2012) states, "the process for qualitative data analysis involves the identification of patterns for which understandings are developed and interpretations constructed" (p. 314). Patton (2010) refers to this process as "content analysis" (p. 453) where the researcher reviews the data in search for core consistencies, patterns, and significant meanings. In addition, Patton suggests the use of a theoretical framework that can serve as a starting point to interpret data. Patton states that "…the inductive nature of qualitative inquiry emphasized the importance of being open to whatever one can learn, some way of organizing the complexity of experience is virtually a prerequisite for perceptions itself" (p. 279). The theoretical framework of emotional

intelligence and organizational role stress was used as an interpretative model for content analysis.

**Coding**

Research experts suggest computer programs can assist the qualitative researcher during content analysis as a method for managing large amounts of text data (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2010). During the content analysis process, the researcher sought to identify patterns within the data by utilizing a computer program NVivo. NVivo is a computer assisted data management tool designed to assist the qualitative researcher during the search for patterns. McMillian and Schumacher (2010) define a pattern as "a name or a phrase that is used to provide meaning to the segment of data" (p. 371). The NVivo software also titles patterns as "nodes." The researcher uploaded the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews into NVivo and undertook an iterative data review process to search for similarities and repetition in order to produce nodes.

Once the nodes were created, then a node classification system was developed to further organize and examine the data. The classification system linked nodes with similar meaning into broader categories (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2002) states that node categories should meet internal and external credibility in order to ensure the categories are complete. The researcher tested both the nodes and node categories for internal credibility by reviewing and refining the nodes while examining the data for similar concepts and related statements. External credibility was tested by checking for unused data in search for additional or missed data. Additionally, the process of "reflexivity" was used during the content analysis process for the study and was critical for establishing credibility (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2010).

Reflexivity is a process carried out by the researcher to ensure a consciousness about their influence on the data. Qualitative research experts suggest keeping separate reflective notes as a best practice for self-monitoring potential biases and capturing the "self" during data collection and analysis processes (McMillian& Schumacher, 2010). The researcher kept separate reflective notes during the data collection and data analysis process in order to: (a) collect data interpretations as they relate to the theoretical framework, (b) remain in a reflective mindset, and (c) examine one's personal biases and influence on the study findings.

Finally, McMillian and Schumacher (2010) explain through the process of node and category development, patterns will emerge amongst the node categories into broader themes. McMillian and Schumacher suggest the "hallmark of qualitative research is the narrative presentation of evidence" (p. 382) and themes are displayed through describing the lived experiences of the participants, as well as the researcher's lived experience and an overall description of the phenomena.

The study's qualitative phenomenological analytical approach produced detailed descriptions of the participants lived experience. The evidence presented in this study is in the form of text descriptions, quotations, and charts which visually describe the substantive themes. Figure 12 describes the data analysis process for this study.

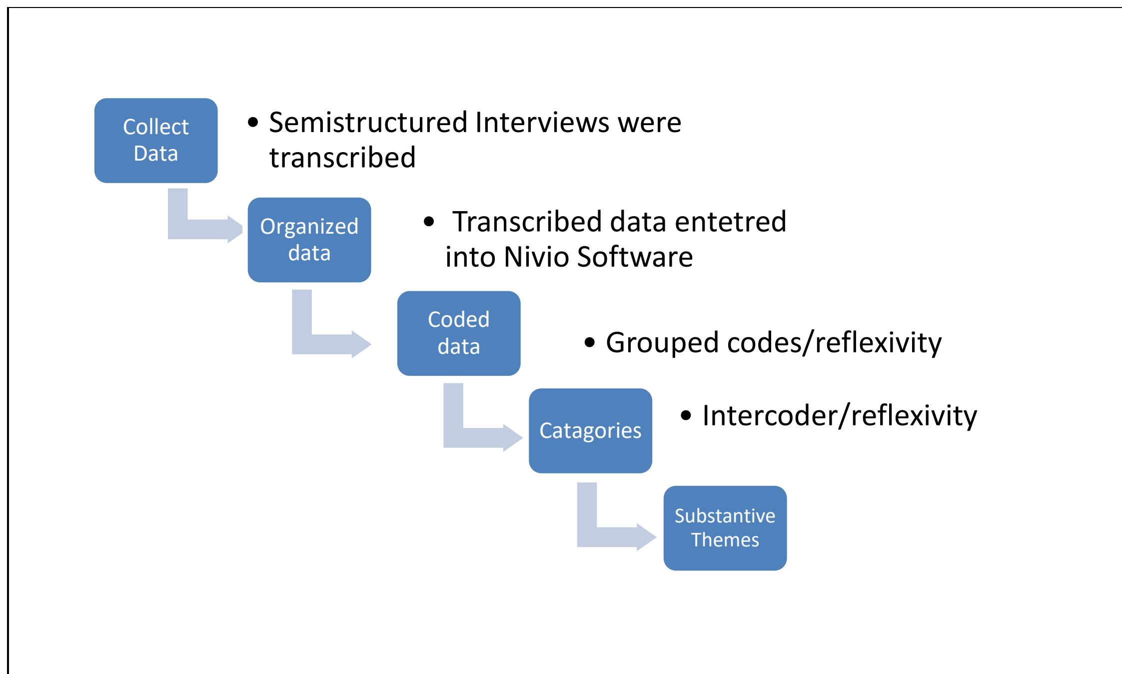



*Figure 12.* Procedural guide for the data collection and analysis process.

## Limitations

This study is limited to the selected research methodology, instrumentation, population and sample, the data gathering procedures, and data analysis process. This study took a qualitative phenomenological approach and explored the lived experiences of the study's participants. Qualitative inquiry limits the generalizability of this study's findings to large populations (Bamberger et al., 2012). The intent of this study is not to generalize the results to large populations, rather to gain deep understanding of a phenomenon. Given the selection of the population and small sample size, this study is limited to the participants shared their lived experiences. Generalization to other senior-level administrators at non-participant colleges is not recommended (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

Additional limitations of this study may be found in the presence of the researcher during the interviews where the participants might have altered an authentic response due

to the experimenter effects during the data collection process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2002). The use of a semi-structured conversational style to conduce the in-depth interviews may have also contributed to this study's limitations. This study was further limited by an ethical framework in which the researcher used to conduct the interviews (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, this study is limited to the bias of the researcher. In an attempt to control for bias, the researcher used a philosophical framework to structure the interviews, code checking, and self-awareness strategies to strengthen this study data analysis and reduce the researcher bias.

**Summary**

This chapter described the chosen methodology as it aligns with the study's purpose statement and research questions. The method for population and sampling was detailed. The instrumentation used as well as the valid and reliable processes the researcher used to gather data were provided. The details of the institutional research board approval and the strategies used to ensure the ethical treatment of human subjects are included. Finally, this chapter described the iterative data analysis process and research limitations.

# CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Senior-level community and technical college leaders face many occupational stressors as the demands for transformational change, increased public attention towards institutional accountability, and stiff competition exists for new enrollments with reduced fiscal resources (Bragg et al., 2014; Woods, 2012). Occupational stress is a common emotional experience felt by many individuals, especially for those in leadership positions (Lindebaum, 2015). Additionally, when the presence of occupational stress is high, organizations can see a drop in employee performance, poor employee engagement and attitudes, and increased absenteeism (M. Yong et al., 2012). If occupational stress is not managed through a set of coping skills, this stress can accumulate over time and have long-term implications on one's overall life-satisfaction and health (Mielczarek et al., 2015; M. Yong et al., 2012). Because stress has many detrimental effects, research has focused on how emotional intelligence and coping techniques help to diminish the adversarial impacts of stress. Singh and Sharma (2012) state emotional intelligence is the attribute suited to handle stress.

In 2013, Kim and Cook published a study illustrating a gap between the number of senior-level leaders needed to meet the vacancy demands and the number of professionals who are in positions to step into an executive leadership position. Mattson (2012) indicates the perceived occupational stress of community college leaders may be a reason there is a shortage of applicants who are willing to take the next step in their career and move into executive positions. To explore this problem further, this study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to describe how emotional intelligence

strategies are used to cope with organizational role stress by a sample of senior-level leaders in the Washington State community and technical college system.

Chapter IV contains a description of the research, data collection, and findings of the study and includes the following sections: purpose statement, central and sub research questions, methodology, population and sample, demographic data, presentation of the data, and summary.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents, and deans in the Washington State community and technical college system. A second purpose of this study was to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy.

## Central Questions

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews to answer the following central research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of senior-level administrators' use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress?
2. Are there differences between perceived emotional intelligence strategies used for coping with organizational role stress amongst senior-level administrators' position type (presidents, vice presidents, and deans)?

### Research Sub-Questions

The following sub research questions are based upon the five key factors of R. Bar-On (1997) model of emotional intelligence: (a) intrapersonal capacity, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) adaptability, (d) stress management, and (e) motivational/general mood factors. The researcher collected qualitative data to answer the following research sub-questions:

1. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's intrapersonal awareness and understanding of one's own feelings factor into coping with organizational role stress?
2. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's interpersonal awareness, understanding and appreciation for the feelings of others factor into coping with organizational role stress?
3. In what ways does a senior-level administrator adapt to situations and the environment in order to cope with organizational role stress?
4. What emotional intelligence strategies were perceived by senior-level administrators as being successful in dealing with organizational role stress?
5. How do senior-level administrators stay motivated in order to cope with organizational role stress?

## Methodology

In order to identify and describe senior-level leader's perceptions regarding the organizational role stress and use of emotional intelligence strategies, a qualitative phenomenological research method was selected for this study. The researcher served as the instrument of the study though the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the

primary method of data collection. The interview protocol was implemented using an interview guide which allowed the interviewer to gather in-depth data on the lived experience of the study's sample. The interview guide was developed based upon the theoretical framework provided in the literature review. R. Bar-On's (1997) framework for emotional intelligence conceptually grounded the interview questions that focused on the participants lived experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding the use of emotional intelligence strategies to cope with organizational role stress.

The researcher conducted three pilot interviews with three non-participants from the study's population in order to further develop and verify the effectiveness of the interview process, interview questions, terms and words. Modifications were made to the study's demographic questions, interview questions, and possible probing questions based upon the pilot review process.

**Interview Process**

Fifteen in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted between October 6, 2017 and December 8, 2017 at the participants work location or via telephone depending upon the availability of each participant. Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) approved the research design and interview guide prior to data collection. The data collection processes were designed to protect human subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2002). Personal information, which identified participants and selected sites were available to only the researcher and the chair of the dissertation committee.

Prior to the interview, participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and the interview process through the distribution of the interview guide. Included in the

interview guide was the Brandman University Research Participant's Bill of Rights, general informed consent document, and the digital audio recording consent document for which each participant signed prior to beginning interviews. The researcher began interviewing each participant using the interview guide. Audio recordings were taken at each interview with the participant's permission to be transcribed for data analysis. Each participant was asked the same interview questions in the same order. Probing questions were asked throughout the interviews to ensure that examples were articulated and explored as extensively as possible. Upon conclusion of the interviews, participants were informed about the privacy of their information, the process to review their interview transcripts to ensure data was recorded accurately, and were thanked for their participation.

## Population

There are 34 community and technical colleges in the state of Washington that range in student enrollments from 1,100 to 25,000. The population for this study was individuals who are serving in leadership roles at a college within the community and technical college system in Washington State. In order to gather manageable and meaningful data, this study narrowed the population of community and technical college leaders into three target populations: (a) senior-level administrators serving in roles titled president, (b) vice president, and (c) dean from all of the 34 community and technical colleges within Washington State.

### Sample

The sample was identified using a combination of purposeful sampling strategies: (a) convenience, (b) criterion based, and (c) quota sampling methods. This sampling

approach generated a broad sample of individuals who meet the established organizational role criteria in the Washington State community and technical college system. Fifteen senior-level administrators were selected based on the following organizational role criteria:

- Employed at a community and technical college located in Washington State.
- Occupied a position titled president, vice president, or dean. This criterion is critical to the research problem and questions examining the differences amongst leadership roles.
- Held the position titled president, vice president, or dean for more than one calendar year. This criterion was important to establish familiarity to the organizational role and to allow time for the participant to encounter organizational role stress.

Site section was limited to colleges within the Washington State community and technical college system and senior-level administrator respondents who met the established criteria. Quota sampling methods included a minimum of five presidents, which ensured five organizational environments were captured within the data. Nine sites were identified for participation and a total of 15 participants were selected from those sites.

**Demographic Data**

Demographic characteristics provide relevant information regarding the study population and sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten, 2012). The researcher used a demographic data sheet to collect the following information: (a) gender, (b) age, level of education, (c) service in higher education, (d) length of service in the Washington

State community and technical college system, (e) position title, and (f) length of time served in current position. The sample included gender diversity; nine of the participants identified as female, and six participants identified as male. Table 2 provides a full breakdown of the participant demographics by gender as it relates to the participant's organizational role. Sixty percent of the participants were female in each of the senior-level administrator roles, president, vice president, and dean and 40% of the participants were male in each of the senior-level roles.

Table 2

*Participant Demographics: Gender*

| Participant Group | Female | Male |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President | 3 | 2 |
| Vice President | 3 | 2 |
| Dean | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 9 | 6 |

Throughout the senior-level administrator roles, the sample comprised some age diversity across all target populations. Table 3 provides a full breakdown of the participant demographics by age as it relates to the participant's organizational role.

Table 3

*Participant Demographics: Age*

| Participant Group | 25-29 years | 30-49 years | 50-64 years | 64 and over |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| President | - | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Vice President | - | 2 | 3 | - |
| Dean | 3 | - | - | 2 |
| Total | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 |

Eighty percent of all participants were either working towards a doctorate degree or already earned a doctorate degree. All participants had earned a graduate degree with three holding a master's degree, and eight earning a doctoral degree. Table 4 provides a

full breakdown of the participant demographics by highest level of education completed as it relates to the participant's organizational role.

Table 4

*Participant Demographics: Highest Level of Education Completed*

| Participant Group | Masters | Doctorate in progress (all but dissertation) | Doctorate |
|---|---|---|---|
| President | - | 1 | 4 |
| Vice President | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Dean | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 3 | 4 | 8 |

The participants also had substantial experience within the Washington community and technical college system with 80% of the respondents having more than 10 years of experience. Table 5 provides a full breakdown of the participant demographics by length of time working in the in Washington community and technical colleges.

Table 5

*Participant Demographics: Number of Years Working in Washington Community and Technical Colleges*

| Participant Group | 1-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 20+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| President | - | | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Vice President | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Dean | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | - |
| Total | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 |

The participants in each target population level had shorter lengths of service within their current position, with the majority of the respondents having 1-5 years of experience within their current role. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the participant demographics by length of time working in the participant's current position.

Table 6

*Participant Demographics: Number of Years Serving in Current Role*

| Participant Group | 1-5 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 20+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| President | 4 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Vice President | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Dean | 3 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Total | 10 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

## Presentation of Data

This section presents the data and reports the results of this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state qualitative research presents data through narrative descriptions and visual representations that allow the reader to conceptualize the study's results. This study used a phenomenological approach to describe how the key factors of R. Bar-On's (1997) emotional intelligence model are used within a sample of senior-level leaders as a (a) coping strategy for organizational role stress, to (b) describe differences in emotional intelligence strategies amongst senior-level community college leadership positions, and to (c) identify successful coping strategies used for managing organizational role stress. The results are organized by the central research questions and the five research sub-questions.

## Results for Research Questions

### Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: *What are the perceptions of senior-level administrators' use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress?*

In analyzing the data, five major themes and six sub themes emerged that described the perceptions of senior-level administrator's use of emotional intelligence to cope with organizational role stress: (a) self-awareness, (b) expresses one's self to build

understanding and trust, (c) data driven decision making, (d) support systems, and (e) optimistic towards self and career. Each of these themes are presented and explored in the following section.

**Self-awareness theme**. An awareness of one's self was a consistent major theme across all 15 participants. This major theme was referenced 43 times from 15 different sources. Participants were asked how they cope with their emotions when managing work stress. Participants described their perspectives on how they use self-awareness for coping, how they remain aware of their emotional state, how they consider the impact of their communication, and engage in self-assessment.

***Awareness of one's emotional state***. Participants describe how awareness of one's personal feelings and emotions at any time during the day is important to being a senior-level leader. Participant 13 discussed the strength of knowing one's self and not allowing stress to have influence by stating, "*stresses are going to come, they're going to go, but I'm not going to let them control who I am*" and Participant 10 described their self-awareness in the role as president by stating:

> I am not the president; it's the position of the president. And nobody wants an exhausted, snotty-nosed, grumpy president. They want someone who has their stuff together. Who's calm and encouraging, and they feel like they can trust, and who is running the organization appropriately. So I try to be mindful that good self-care, and being mindful of how I show up at the college and in the community, is really important. That is my job.

Another participant reflected on how they learned emotional awareness over time. The element of experience in learning how to cope also factored into self-awareness sub theme as this participant reflected:

> I guess my age and experience is also a factor. I think over time you learn, as we mature we learn those coping strategies, we learn that you have to live each day and appreciate life so it's how you view yourself and how you view life and the fact that you can't just let work just overpower you or overwhelm you, you know. (Participant 9)

Another senior-level leader described their self-awareness as like a cognitive muscle that grows in strength as one experiences situations overtime throughout their career. "*I tend to think of coping with stress like flexing a muscle. Each time I experience stress, I flex my coping muscle*" (Participant 1)

In addition to learning how to cope with emotions through experience, several participants described the experience of holding different positions in different organizations as a contributor to their ability to cope with stress. Participant 15 said,

> Overall, stress level at this institution and in this position, I would say, is lower than at other institutions that I've been at and also lower because of the years of experience I've had now, versus eight years ago when I was a brand new VPI.

Besides being aware of one's emotional state, participants discussed the thought processes they used to maintain awareness of their emotions and the importance of pausing and reflecting on their response before reacting and communicating.

> In some instances, too, it's definitely a need to manage my own emotions within it because I'm a cheerful person, I see the best of things, but if something starts

> getting on my nerves then I find myself reacting or taking a defensive piece. I need to pause and I run through my mind, okay, look at what you're doing and how do you want to be reacting in this, and it helps me to then say, 'Well this is what I'm experiencing right now or how I'm interpreting this, is this correct or not,' and then to also in that same few instances in my mind try and think about what that other person's point is, what are their goals, and to try and put us back on common ground in terms of what we're trying to accomplish and what we're reacting to. (Participant 6)

Participant 13 described how they are conscious of their environment and verbal and non-verbal communication when being in the public eye:

> Another stress that goes unnoticed simply because of the fact that you have to be very conscientious of who's watching. Who's watching you and why are they watching you. Being a public figure, I'm just about the face of the college because when the president is not the face of the college, I am the face of the college as the next designee. There are stressors that come along with that. You have to be able to perform every day. There are a lot of people that are counting on you in your role.

Another leader discuss how they maintain an awareness of their communication when they are frustrated stating,

> It can be very demoralizing if you have a supervisor not listening to you, or being condescending or hurtful, or whatever it is, even if they're frustrated as well. When I'm frustrated with a staff member, let's say for example my administrative assistant, I tend to be very sensitive about not being rude, or overbearing, or

frustrated. I tend to try to keep that separate and try not to demoralize by letting my emotions affect them in a way that's not gonna be helpful for them. (Participant 7)

***Sets boundaries***. Another sub theme that emerged in the data was the ability to establish professional boundaries with colleagues to cope with work stress. The boundaries described by the participants were between personal time and work time and work and non-work relationships. Participant 12 stated,

> When I was younger and I wasn't as good at setting boundaries. One of the things, as you get onward in the organization, you have to be a good role model. When you don't set boundaries, your people won't set boundaries.

Another example of establishing boundaries was described as setting clear expectations for when work communication occurs, "*I also set a clear expectation of the employees that work for me, that they're not supposed to email when they're on vacation either. So if they're on vacation and they email me, I tell them to knock it off*" (Participant 15). Another senior-level leader reflected, "*making sure that staff know that if they don't have boundaries that the job will eat them up and spit them out. They won't want to do the job*" (Participant 2).

***Assessment of self.*** The last sub-theme that emerged was assessment of self. Several participants referenced the importance assessing and evaluating one's self by actively seeking out feedback from others.

> I'm very sensitive to the reputation of this campus as a culture and a community, and I want it to be a community where the students, and teachers, and staff aspire to be. It is important to take the time and effort it takes to elevate yourself, your position. (Participant 7)

One senior-level leader discussed their relationship with direct reports and how important providing authentic feedback with one another can be for reducing stress and building and maintaining effective work relationships by stating:

> If I am doing something, I always bring it back to what I feel. If I'm doing something that is creating a barrier to the outcome that I want, somebody can point that out to me, so I can change, I'm happy about that. In the moment, I might be a little bit deceptive, or whatever, but after I think about it, I'm gonna be really, really happy that person brought that up for me, and I'm gonna trust that person more. Because they took their relationship with me seriously enough, and they took the work that I was doing seriously enough to want to help me. (Participant 1)

In addition to seeking feedback amongst coworkers in order to cope with stressful situations, Participant 9 suggested assessing one's work-life and home-life balance early in one's career as an important process to setting a foundation for successful coping. Participant 9 stated:

> I'd like to think it's important for individuals who are just starting their career…put their life in perspective in terms of work, personal life so you know how you're going to cope prior to even starting your career so you can discern, what are the important things, you know what do I want out of life? What kind of

work life balance do I want. Kind of helps you set the tone, provides a foundation for how you're gonna look at life, professional and personal life.

**Express one's self to build mutual understanding and trust theme**. This theme was referenced 60 times across 15 different sources. Expression of one's self was discussed as a mechanism to build rapport between coworkers, understanding of decision-making processes and trust among teams. Participant 13 reflected upon acknowledging the passions of others as well as their own can establish trust relationships and stated,

> I realized that they care and what I need to do is honor that they care. I also let them know that I care. However, getting to Z may look different for them based on their role but getting to Z is my ultimate goal.

The results were mixed on how senior-level leaders use social environments to develop relationships during stressful times, "*We are out to drinks, once a week during that period when things are really bad. I am like, 'Okay. Thursday night, we're all going for cocktails*' (Participant 11). Whereas another senior-level leader described how they keep clear lines between forming relationship at work and not socializing in non-work environments by stating, "*you have to establish a coping mechanism for relationships, keeping them separate at work*" (Participant 8).

***Expression of appreciation and gratitude***. A sub theme that emerged among the senior-level leaders was the ability to express appreciation towards another. One leader revealed their mantra:

> I'm like, if we're have to make a hard decision, people get a soft landing. People who I've had stressful times and I had to move them on. They come back a year

> or so later and were like, 'You did that nicely. You were kind. You could have been really mean and nasty, but you weren't.' I want to show them grace. (Participant 11)

Participant 1 made a similar statement,

> People have given us 5, 10, 15 years of their lives. We're going to make sure that we show some gratitude around that. And if they make a mistake we also need to show grace, as most people do not try to make mistakes.

Participant 7 stated how they are conscious of providing positive and supportive messages to their colleagues when life events occur or goals were accomplished as way to show appreciation and gratitude by stating:

> I try to make sure that folks realize that I do have a lot of concern about them as individuals, even one of the things that I do pretty frequently is I go out and buy a whole bunch of sympathy cards, so I try to stay very aware that people have relatives who are sick or ill. I try to make sure that we get cards sent around and we remind ourselves to support each other, send out some monthly messaging where it's my schedule and what we're doing, but also appreciation for specific things that have accomplished.

***Directness***. Another sub theme discussed by several leaders was the need to be direct with others when expressing decisions or feelings. Participant 2 stated, "*I think it's always important to be as direct as possible, not to beat around the bush about it*." Another participant had a similar response. "*I put all the chips on the table. Say what you mean and mean what you say*" (Participant 3). One leader discussed how they are direct in acknowledging negative feelings by stating: "*An acknowledgement that*

*something may not be initially the way somebody wanted or maybe disappointing. But you're acknowledging, trying to find the common ground*." (Participant 4)

The results indicated an importance of holding difficult conversations is necessary for establishing strong interpersonal relationships.

> So my biggest strategy is to just not be afraid of the conversation. And that took me a lot of years of growth in my leadership to be able to not be afraid of where the conversation's gonna go. So being willing to just open it up and say, 'hey, I'm sensing some tension in our relationship. What's going on?' or, 'here's some examples of why things don't seem to be going well. Can you talk to me about what's happening from your perspective?' And then being willing to share what's happening from my perspective. (Participant 5)

Another leader shared an example of holding a difficult conversation as a method to address ineffective communication.

> I had a direct report that I was working with recently, who has a problem with interpersonal communication with other people, and it cause problems for themselves, because they're not taking into account the other people, the person on the other side. And so, my strategy for that, was to talk about how that was hurting what they wanted to accomplish. (Participant 4)

**Data driven decision making theme.** Using multiple sources of data to inform decisions theme was referenced 41 times across 15 different sources. Senior-level leaders were asked to describe how they remain objective and accurately assess situations. All participants described how they use many data sources to inform decisions. One leader stated their need to see results before drawing conclusions or

making decisions. *"I just need to see the data and then make the best decision for the institution*" (Participant 11). Another senior-level leader described how data is used to create a common understanding, test assumptions and ensure institutional mission fulfillment during decision making processes.

> We have the common framework to talk about what that is, how we're going to do it, how we're going to look at data to do it. We're very translucent with the data, which is also a strategy that may work for some institutions, may not work for others. That strategy actually came from our faculty. They wanted to see each other's data. We had a group of them. When we did that, it burst the whole thing open in a positive way, which we were concerned that it would go in the negative direction. It's been a very positive thing as we stick to those organizational core values, transparency, integrity, sustainability of the institution, student-centeredness. If we're going to make a decision, how does it impact on the students and what's it going to be down the road? I think when I can come back to those values and data decision making. Having more data has really been helpful to us. We can look at the data. We can say, now is that an assumption that we're holding? Is that an assertion? (Participant 12)

In addition to looking at data to provide the full story, one can also use the data to present solutions. One other senior-level leader described how multiple perspectives and narratives should be considered during decision making.

> Every day there's gonna be somebody to come in and challenge you, that's gonna come in with their own agenda. But is it my agenda? Is it the institution agenda? What most people tend to do is only try to see through one lens. Well when

you're only seeing through one lens you're gonna miss something. Sometimes I have people come in from finance and they only want me to see it from a bean counting or financial perspective restricting and I'm constantly saying ‘okay I see that but can you tell me what other options. Can you provide solutions?’ (Participant 13)

Beyond numerical data, or multiple perspectives and options, one participant discussed interpreting non-verbal ques as a form a data.

> You learn, if you're gonna be good at what you do, you have to learn to read faces. You have to learn to look at that table, before you walk up to it, and make a decision about how engaged you're going to make them when you walk up. And if you do it for awhile, you get good at that. I still use those skills, when I walk into a room. I still try to size up the mood in the room, the group, as a whole, are people interacting with each other? Are they all sitting there checking their phones and nobody's talking to each other? What's going on here, in the subtext? (Participant 1)

**Support systems theme.** The use of a support system to cope with stress was referenced 61 times across 15 different sources. All 15 participants discussed a successful strategy for stress management which was having support systems in place both in and outside of the workplace. Participant 10 described their at work support system as critical to their success, “*I'm fortunate to have a confidante here. A former colleague that works here. So I do have someone that I can talk to confidentially*.” Another leader stated, “*Another coping mechanism, I think, are colleagues. I have them in all levels of the institution. I'm probably more loose-lipped than some presidents, but I*

*have relationships across the college*" (Participant 14). Participant 11 commented on the strength and trust among their work team and described it as effective, "*I think having an executive team that we have right now, where I don't have to watch my back. That makes that stress level so much easier.*"

In addition to support systems within one's organization, participants referenced the need to have strong supports systems outside of the workplace.

> I had someone tell me a long time ago that you have to have silent partners. Silent partners to me are those individuals that are outside of your organization. They're outside of your institution, they're mentors to you who you can actually bounce something off that is not confidential but you can give them scenarios and you can say 'you know, here's a scenario.' They are in it for your best good. People that you have known for quite some time. I have silent partners in other states. (Participant 1)

Others describe their family members provided supporting relationships. "*I go home and vent to my husband*" (Participant 12). Participant 11 described their home as an escape by stating: "*My home life is set up like a resort. And, I can just go there and be Dad*."

***Connected with coworkers***. When leaders described their motivations, being connected to coworkers emerged as a sub theme. One senior-level leader responded by describing their work relationships:

> It's also knowing that there are some things that are motivating to all human beings, which is having relationships with your co-workers, and trying to get some team building, because I've spent more time with the people at work then I spend with my family, right? So, when I'm trying to make sure that we have

> some time to do some team building, because that's important for everybody's motivation. If you feel connected, you're more likely to want to stay on. (Participant 1)

Participant 13 described their motivations being influenced by the connections with others at work:

> I choose to do it. I have the desire to continue to help others through education and so it's easy for me to get up in the morning. When I get here, it's all about my staff. It's about my staff. I'm excited to find out what did they do, how was your day, what's going on and just catching up, checking in. I walk through the corridor early in the morning before I actually do anything. I may walk around and see how people doing.

**Optimistic towards self and career theme.** Expressing optimism towards one's self and career was referenced 20 separate times from 12 different sources. One leader reflected on their optimistic perspective. "*I think that positivity has really helped me get through some of the difficult stuff and more of a glass half full approach*" (Participant 2). Participant 11 stated their use of humor allows for positive frame of mind.

> I laugh a lot. I spend a lot of time just enjoying life. I mean, I walk around kind of, humming, singing. I have fun at work. One of my core philosophies is to think from a place of prosperity, not poverty.

When workplace stressors alter one's optimistic mood, the element of time passing can provide distance from the workplace stressor and allow an optimistic mood to return.

> Some of the things that drag you down a little bit, give it a couple of days and

things are always seem to be a little bit better. In the heat of the moment something may seem desperate or negative, but time usually changes that. I just think looking on the bright side there is something to be said for that. (Participant 2)

Table 7 presents the major themes and sub themes by the number of sources and references.

Table 7

*Major Themes and Sub Themes by Frequency of References*

| Major Themes and Sub Themes | Number of Sources | Number of References to Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Self-Awareness | 15 | 43 |
| Awareness of one's emotional state | 5 | 7 |
| Sets boundaries | 6 | 10 |
| Self-assessment | 6 | 8 |
| Expresses one's self to build mutual understanding and trust | 15 | 60 |
| Expressions of appreciation and gratitude | 14 | 25 |
| Directness | 10 | 20 |
| Data driven decision making | 15 | 41 |
| Support Systems | 15 | 61 |
| Strong work relationships | 14 | 30 |
| Optimistic Towards Self and Career | 12 | 20 |

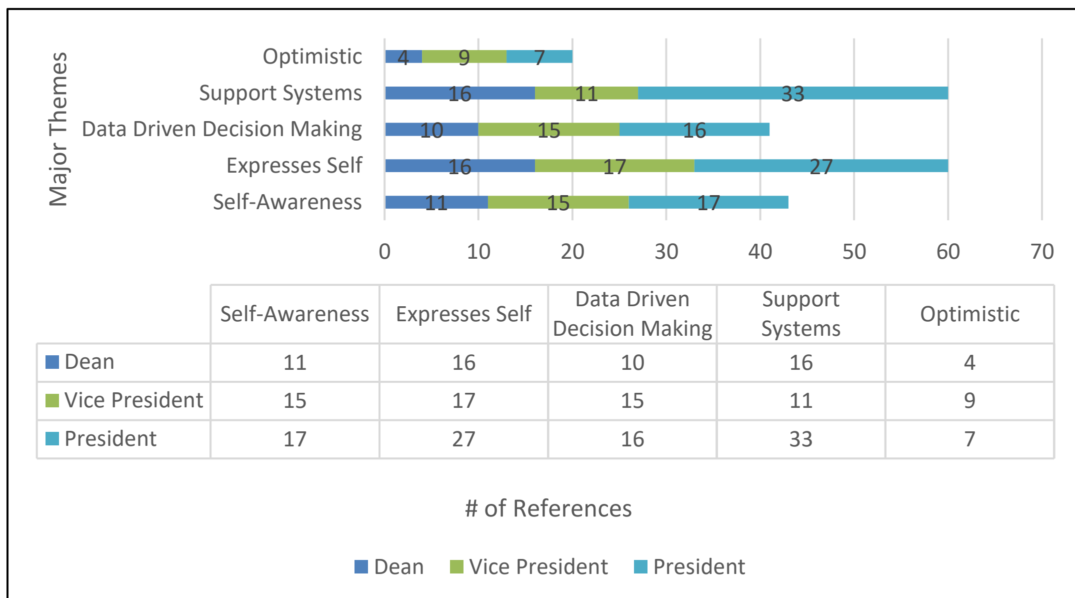
**Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 asked*: Are there differences between perceived emotional intelligence strategies used for coping with organizational role stress amongst senior-level administrators' position type (presidents, vice presidents, and deans)?*

Through further analysis and coding, the researcher explored the differences among senior-level leader role types in following areas: (a) in the number of references

across the five major emotional intelligence themes, (b) in perceived stress management strategies used to cope with organizational role stress, and (c) in the self-care strategies used to cope with occupational role stress.

**Differences by role type**. Differences emerged among the participants by role type president, vice president, and dean and the number of references in each of the five major themes: (a) self-awareness, (b) expresses one's self to build understanding and trust, (c) data driven decision making, (d) support systems, and (e) optimistic towards self and career. Figure 13 displays the number of references in each of the five major theme areas specific to the senior-level leader role type. In general, presidents provided the greatest number of references (100) across the five major themes; whereas, vice presidents provided the second most references (67) and deans provided the least references (57). The support systems major theme and expresses one's self to build understanding and trust major theme was referenced the most by all senior-level leader role types. Optimistic towards self and career major theme was referenced the least number of times by all senior-level leader types.




| | Self-Awareness | Expresses Self | Data Driven Decision Making | Support Systems | Optimistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dean | 11 | 16 | 10 | 16 | 4 |
| Vice President | 15 | 17 | 15 | 11 | 9 |
| President | 17 | 27 | 16 | 33 | 7 |

Figure 13. *Differences between Major Themes by Role Type.*

***Deans***. Deans referenced the use of support systems and expressing one's self to build understanding and trust the most frequent and referenced optimistic towards self and career the least frequent. Table 8 shows the number of sources and references for the participants serving in the role of a dean. One dean discussed the act of expressing curiosity of others feelings and thoughts helps to build understanding and trust in work relationships by stating, "*I use trying to be curious about somebody else's feelings about their decision-making process. I also try and be curious about what they feel about how they're doing"* (Participant 1). Deans also perceived the optimism towards themselves and their career allowed them to be successful at coping with organizational role stress. Participant 4 described how they remain optimistic when coping with stress,

> I tend to try to be positive no matter what. I just look for opportunities to be positive. I don't know, it just sounds really sappy, but I just don't have the energy to dwell on things that are going to zap my energy.

Table 8

*Number of Sources and References for Major Themes by Dean Role Type*

| Major Themes | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | 5 | 11 |
| Expresses Self | 5 | 16 |
| Data Driven Decision Making | 5 | 10 |
| Support Systems | 5 | 16 |
| Optimistic | 4 | 4 |

***Vice presidents***. Vice presidents referenced the ability to express one's self to build understanding and trust the most frequent, similar to deans. Whereas, optimistic towards self and career was referenced the least, like the deans and presidents. Table 9 shows the number of sources and references for the vice president participants amongst

the five major themes. Vice Presidents discussed the elements of expressing themselves to build trust amongst their direct reports and within their organizations. When asked how they solve interpersonal problems at work, Participant 11 said, "*So, have some interpersonal time with individuals one-on-one, and then let them know that you think you're thinking about their career and you care about them.*" Another vice president stated how they believe communication is an essential skill of a strategic leader. "*Don't be afraid to use good communication skills. How am I doing? Is there something I can do to improve on what you're doing? That's what my role is*" (Participant 13).

Table 9

*Number of Sources and References for Major Theme by Vice President Role Type*

| Major Themes | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | 5 | 15 |
| Expresses Self | 5 | 17 |
| Data Driven Decision Making | 5 | 15 |
| Support Systems | 5 | 11 |
| Optimistic | 4 | 9 |

***Presidents***. Similar to vice presidents and deans, presidents referenced optimistic towards self and career the least. However, support systems major theme was referenced the most frequently by presidents. Table 10 shows the number of sources and references for those respondents serving as presidents. Participant 14 discussed the importance of finding the right support system and one that can be trusted especially in the role as president:

> When there's stresses from the community, that there's people willing to help you out but it takes a little bit of trust building for me. I felt like I could not trust some entity outside of the individuals that I've worked with. That's how I pretty much

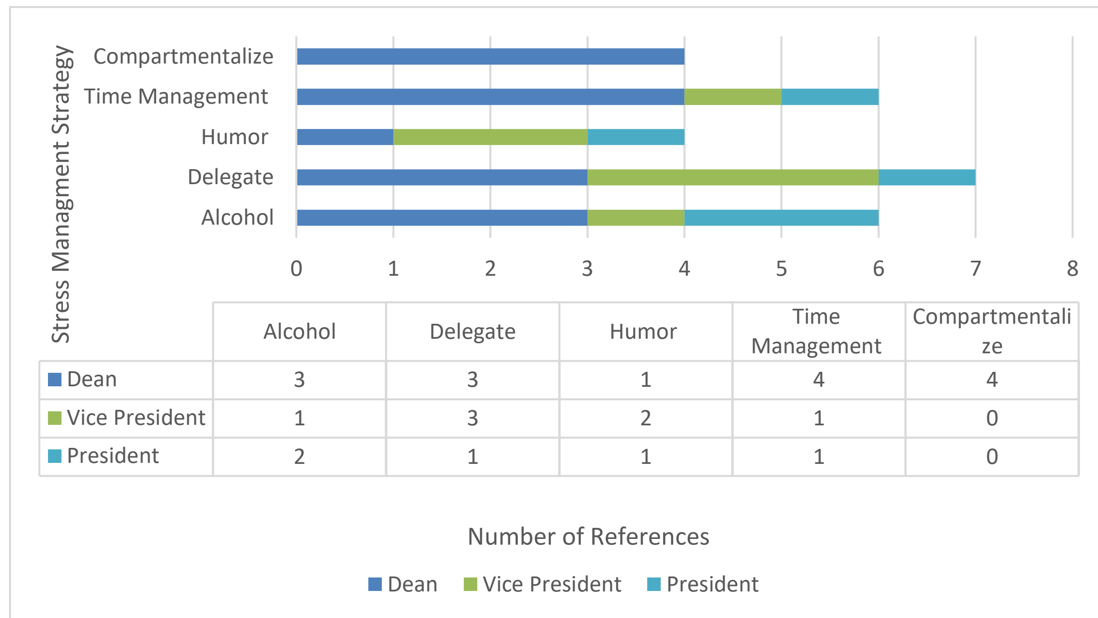
deal. We're not only people that were put here, but of course, with home, with family, keeping it internal because you develop trust with them, they know how to work with me in alleviating stress, which is a sense of comfort.

Table 10

*Number of Sources and References for Major Theme by President Role Type*

| Major Themes | Number of Sources | Number References |
|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | 5 | 17 |
| Expresses Self | 5 | 27 |
| Data Driven Decision Making | 5 | 16 |
| Support Systems | 5 | 33 |
| Optimistic | 4 | 7 |

**Stress management strategies**. Differences also emerged amongst the perceived stress management strategies used by senior-level leaders to cope with organizational role stress. Participants were asked to identify their top stress management strategies used for coping with organizational role stress. The data presented two lists of how senior level leaders cope with organizational role stress: (a) top five stress management strategies, and (b) self-care strategies. Figure 14 provides a visual representation of the top five stress management strategies as referenced by senior-level leader role type. In this analysis, the use of delegation was referenced the most by all of the senior-level leader role types.




| | Alcohol | Delegate | Humor | Time Management | Compartmentalize |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dean | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Vice President | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| President | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Figure 14. *Differences of Top Five Stress Management Strategies by Role Type.*

***Deans***. Deans referenced the use of time management strategies and compartmentalizing their lives more than vice presidents and presidents. Deans described how the act of time management allows for successful coping with stress. Several deans stated how they use their calendar and support staff to ensure a sense of control over their work environment. *"I set my priorities and I control my time well, but I talk to my supervisor too"* (Participant 8). Another dean discussed how working with support to ensure the correct balance of tasks, meetings and worktime was critical to her success by stating: "We're pretty in-sync and so, on a weekly basis, she is also looking at my calendar, and helping me to understand the places where I will need gaps and some time alone in my office" (Participant 3).

***Vice presidents***. Vice presidents referenced delegation more than presidents and deans. One vice presidents described how they delegate when they are stressed and cannot respond in a professional manner.

> As frustrated as I was, I knew if I sent that email, it would just result in hurt feelings. Instead, I went to a different person and said, 'Look, I'm really frustrated right now. Can you do me favor and can you get on the phone and call so-and-so to handle this?' Because if I send that email out, I'm just gonna hurt people's feelings. (Participant 7)

Another discussed how they delegate emotional stress to the dean. "*I would say delegate decisions, but also delegate my emotional stress to others. Not only the staff here, but the dean as well*" (Participant 4).

***Presidents.*** Presidents referenced establishing boundaries more than vice presidents and deans. Participant 12 described how they set boundaries for oneself in order to cope with stress:

> Boundaries are really important. I know I can go home frustrated today, tomorrow's a different day. I'll come back tomorrow, it'll be a fresh day. I don't have to deal with this today. Maybe some days you do, but some days you can give yourself some space. You've still got to be able to continue to set boundaries. That's something that happens all the time. So you have to figure out how you constantly maintain and pushing the envelope, which are boundaries. But because when you are in that senior group, I'm 24 hours.

**Self-care strategies.** Many of the senior-level leaders discussed the need for self-care in the moment of experiencing a stressor. The data presented a list of perceived self-care mechanisms used when coping. Differences were found in the responses amongst the senior level leader role types regarding their self-care strategy used when coping with organizational role stress. Overwhelmingly, the participants in each of the senior-level

roles referenced the use of exercise for coping the most frequent. Getting enough sleep was referenced the second most frequently by all senior-level roles.

***Deans***. Of the five deans interviewed, the use of exercise for coping with stress was referenced the most. Several deans described how they walk around campus, visit with faculty and students as a means to cope. Participant 5 reflected,

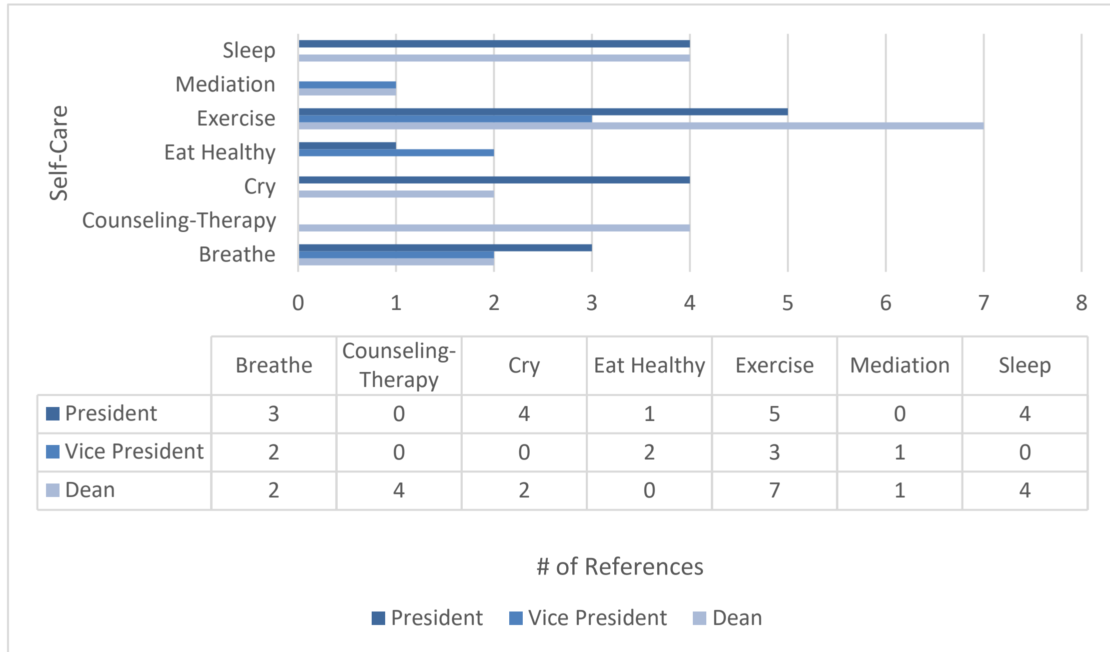
> In the moment to be able to take a step back and get some perspective, so for me that often times means just taking 10 minutes to go take a walk, get some fresh air, kind of get a little bit of distance from it.

***Vice presidents***. Of the five vice presidents who were interviewed, they also referenced exercise the most often similar to deans and presidents. However, this group of senior-level leaders provided the least references for self-care strategies.

***Presidents***. Of the five presidents interviewed, the second most referenced self-care mechanism was crying as a release for workplace stress. One president disclosed, "*Sometimes I close my office door and cry. Tears are my release. Just get frustrated with the system as a whole*" (Participant 12). Participant 3 stated, "*I've cried at work, more times than I would like to admit. Because, I've been overwhelmed.*"

Presidents referenced sleep as frequently as crying. One president recalled, "*I try and get more sleep when that occurs because I realize that does make a difference for me. I have to sometimes make a point I'm gonna get more sleep so I'll have a better day tomorrow" (Participant 6).*

Figure 15 provides a visual representation of the self-care strategies and the frequencies of references by senior-level leader role type.




| | Breathe | Counseling-Therapy | Cry | Eat Healthy | Exercise | Mediation | Sleep |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| President | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| Vice President | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Dean | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 4 |

*Figure 15. Self-Care Strategies by Role Type.*

## Results for Research Sub-Questions

The findings for the research sub-questions helped to inform the findings for the central research questions.

### Research Sub-Question 1

Research Sub-Question 1 asked: *In what ways does a senior-level administrator's intrapersonal awareness and understanding of one's own feelings factor into coping with organizational role stress?*

Intrapersonal capacity is defined as the ability to understand one's self, one's emotions and to express one's feelings and ideas (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000). There were 85 separate references that created the two intrapersonal capacity themes and four sub themes.

**Self-awareness**. Self-awareness was referenced 43 times by 15 different sources. This theme and sub themes emerged as one of the major themes for this study. The results of this theme and sub themes were discussed in the central Research Question 1.

**Self-management**. Self-management was referenced 24 times from 13 different sources. One sub themes emerged under the self-management theme. The importance of setting boundaries and not taking things personally was captured among the participants. One leader reflected on the ways in which they do not take work conflicts and stressors personally as a way to cope with organizational role stress. "*I've learned you can't take things personally. I never said you can't be emotional. But you can't take things personal. I think that that is the most important thing is how do you see problems. Do you see them as opportunities?*" (Participant 13).

***Depersonalize issues***. The sub theme of self-management discussed by several participants was one's ability to depersonalize issues that emerge within the workplace. Participant 14 discussed how they work to depersonalize workplace issues by listening and holding back a defensive response:

> There has been some indications where students will claim that I'm the oppressive of administrator. From their perspective, they don't know my history. All they know is, the system is not working for them and they see me as the leader of this institution. I must be the oppressor. There's those times where I'm like I don't want to just stop students in this case and say, 'Hold on. This is my life work and I'm passionate.' …there is that gut moment where this student is accusing me of being an oppressive person… Through that, it's listening, you're holding on to the

> gut check, try not to defend is what I do for myself, and then ask the student to help me towards the solution.

Furthermore, senior-level leaders identified the importance of staying calm, remaining objective, and appearing impartial when coping with work issues.

> That's why I think self-reflection is really critical for leaders, that take a step back. Am I reacting a certain way because it's this person who's constantly pushing my buttons? Or how can I be really objective and let go? Somethings you just have to let go. I think you have to careful because other people perceive you have favorites. Or they may say, 'You like this person better than that person.' It's important to always be as impartial as possible. Even if you're feeling a little stressed about a particular thing that you're trying not to let that show to others. Because then people can form judgements and it doesn't help you to appear partial. (Participant 2)

Another way senior-level leaders describe how they cope with stress when dealing with frustrations, conflict and work related issues is by recognizing the source of the conflict. Participant 8 described their thoughts about removing the personal out of the situation at hand by stating:

> I try putting myself in their shoes versus my shoes, so try not to get defensive and just basically understand that it's probably not me, it's just who I am. It's my position. In fact, faculty now have even said to me when we're having conversations. I try not to personalize too much. A lot of times things are coming at you pretty intensely, so to really figure out is this about me personally or is

there some way I can help in this situation with the position that I have. Many times they're frustrated because of the system, or a glitch in the system.

Table 11 shows the coding frequencies for intrapersonal capacity themes and sub themes for Research Sub-Question 1.

Table 11

*Intrapersonal Capacity Themes and Sub Themes*

| Interpersonal Capacity Themes and Sub Themes | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Self-Awareness | 15 | 43 |
| Awareness of one's emotional state | 3 | 5 |
| Sets boundaries | 6 | 10 |
| Self-assessment | 4 | 4 |
| Self-Management | 13 | 24 |
| Depersonalize issues | 3 | 5 |

*Note*: Sources include transcribed interviews.

**Research Sub-Question 2**

Research Sub-Question 2 asked: *In what ways does a senior-level administrator's interpersonal awareness, understanding and appreciation for the feelings of others factor into coping with organizational role stress?*

Interpersonal skills is described as the ability to be aware and understand and appreciate other's feelings as well as to establish and maintain mutually satisfying and responsible relationships with others (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000). There were 139 separate references that generated three different interpersonal awareness themes and four sub themes: (a) awareness of other's feelings and perspectives, (b) expresses one's self to build mutual understanding and trust, and (c) seeks understanding.

**Awareness of other's feelings and perspectives**. This theme was referenced 26 times across 11 different sources. Having an awareness of other's feelings and

perspectives was deemed a critical skill by a majority of the participants for problem solving, coping with interpersonal conflict, and stress. A senior-level leader reflected,

> People are people, so they bring their feelings to work. People have a hard time separating their emotions sometimes from things they want or things that might be happening at work. It just really helps to acknowledge that there are feelings that people have about things. It helps I think if you're a relationship-focused leader to acknowledge that that is a part of the whole picture. (Participant 2)

At the same time, Participant 2 discussed the need for leaders to refrain from making decisions based upon their emotions and feelings of others by stating:

> You have to keep being as objective as possible in decision-making. I think there's always gonna be people that you probably work with better. I've learned over time that sometimes you can get in trap of feeling a certain way about someone. Maybe there's somebody who's just always a thorn in your side. You're just expecting that. That's why it's important to try to always rise above that kind of thing and be objective and look at each situation separately. Otherwise, you may fall into the trap of making a snap decision or judgment about something that wouldn't be totally fair because you're reacting in a certain way.

However, some senior-level leaders believe a consideration needs to be given towards the stakeholders involved and their influence and authority within one's origination. "*One of the first things I've learned is, it depends who's feelings it is. In my career I've learned that if there are a couple of types of people that are upset with me, that's just par for the*

*course right, and if they're not upset, I'm not doing my job*" (Participant 15). Participant 14 recognized that decision making from senior-level leaders can create conflict and stress within an organization and by accepting this fact is critical to successful leadership and work relationships:

> My methodology is, this line of work is going to be difficult. It's the proverbial question that people are asking you if, 'Do you ever make the decision?' I say to myself, 'Everyday, I make the wrong decision, because I'm never going to make everyone happy. Someone is always going to feel like my decision is the wrong decision.' Recognizing that I'm not going to make people happy, that I want to be compassionate towards individuals as they presented an issue, but being compassionate with them or for them can take a personal toll because people might see weakness as you're trying to be compassionate and understanding towards them.

Another leader discussed how they use civility as a mantra for coping with opposing views of stakeholders.

> I believe and that I use for myself, but I also try to indoctrinate others with that whole principle of civility. Even now where there's difficulty with the political waters where we're seeing students and the staff and faculty that are taking very strong opposing political views. I try to say 'Let's have a dialogue of what does it mean to be human and relate to others.' I try to build that into my opportunities to speak to the college campus. That way, it's not like when they see me I'm talking about how bad the budget is, it's not that stories, but how can we really develop to be better, full-rounded

> individuals that understand what it means to be civil in a workplace or civil when we deal with our students. (Participant 8)

**Expresses one's self to build mutual understanding and trust**. This theme was referenced 60 times by 15 different sources and emerged as one of the major themes for this study. The results of this theme and sub themes were discussed in the central Research Question 1.

**Seeks understanding**. All 15 participants discussed the importance of seeking understanding in a stressful situation. This theme was referenced 45 times by 14 different sources and accounted for 32% of the interpersonal skill references. One of the leaders responded by saying how the majority of a leader's job is to build mutually satisfying relationships,

> I think that 85% or 80% of the job of a senior administrator job is understanding and interpersonal stuff. Building relationships, understanding where people are coming from, understanding their jobs to the best of your ability. None of us have done everybody's job. (Participant 1)

Another shared how understanding others and what is important to them as individuals contributes towards strong relationships. "*I try and be very, very human, and remember that the person on the other side is also very, very human, and that person's trying to do a good job*" (Participant 10). Participant 5 described, "*I think it's really important when you talk about making decisions, how do you consider others. I believe that when you engage people to find out a little bit more with regards of what it is that's important to them.*"

Another leader stated how they seek understanding of those who work for them:

> I do a lot of- I have team meetings with all of my employees together but then I have one on ones where I'm getting to know them. I'm trying to find out the old thing is what are they passionate about. Yeah, you have a clearly defined role, but, I want to be able to incite the passion. The fire that burns them with inside. It's almost like when you're going to a grocery store and there's that lost leader. You have a huge store but there's always that lost leader that people cannot leave the store without purchasing. For me the passion is that lost leader that you need to be able to notice and I think that's getting to know your people. When you get to know people, you build trust. You build a level of understanding. You can speak to them in their language and understand what their needs are. I think that's really important for me. (Participant13)

***Active listening***. Many of the participants who discussed seeking understanding also referenced listening. One senior-level leader stated how they learned to use active listening techniques to ensure strong communication and understanding.

> I learned early on about active listening. That has been very helpful in communicating with people about this is how, this is what this sounded like to me. Or, this is how this impacted me. Is that what you meant? Was that what you were thinking? A lot of times that turns out to be wrong. People have the opportunity to hear it from your perspective of how the impact of an action or some words have. It helps to clear the air.

I think it's always best to do that as quickly as you can after something has occurred. (Participant 2)

Another discussed how they intentionally hold conversations with multiple stakeholders as a method to understand other's feelings and thoughts on an issue or potential decision.

I seek a lot of multiple perspectives. I think that sometimes that might be frustrating to others. They want a decision made, but for me I need to talk and hear what might the result be if we did this and are there other alternatives that should be considered. I felt like I needed to hear what they had to say about it and I wanted them to hear my thoughts on it as well. I felt like it helped and it might just be because I felt like it helped me, but I feel like it helped restore some communication because I didn't want them stewing in the background without feeling like they had a chance to say something about it. For me, it was helpful and I don't know if it was helpful for them, but I felt it was because it felt like the barrier was moved aside. (Participant 6)

***Mediate.*** Several leaders discussed how they have to seek understanding by being a mediator of between others to either solve a conflict or determine a solution to a problem. Participant 14 described how they use mediation:

When conflict that occurs, what I want to first do is make sure that there is a sense of, 'All right, let's share perspectives. That's your truth. This is the other person's truth.' …and then I would want to facilitate the discussion. It starts with, really, the understanding of where is each

person coming from. With the clarity of that, then I try to get far more legalistic.

Another senior-level leader reflected on how they pull conflicting perspectives together and facilitate a conversation as a strategy to seek understanding,

> I usually find myself as the mediator. I'll give you an example. I had a director, new director, and a faculty member who were not getting along. I called a conference, because we all needed to talk about something. I told them that it was about tenure because, the new director had not been through tenure and she was going to be this person's administrator, on the tenure. I told them that I wanted to talk to them about tenure. I didn't want to talk to them about tenure, I just wanted the two of them in the room, and not come in huff and puffin'. So, they came in and they sat down and I said, ‘You know what? This is what's going on. And as the dean of this division, both of you fall under my purview. So, let's talk about this.’ And I pulled out the tenure handbook and I gave one, one and one the other. And before we were finished. I brought the other thing that was causing conflict. They got heated for a little bit. We all had an opportunity to get some information about that particular subject matter. And then, I ended it by saying, ‘Okay. Great. We have something's out here that’s a bit challenging. Know that I'm going to pull the team together again, in two days. So, I'm gonna need for the two of you to continue working on this aspect of it. Can we do that?’ (Participant 3)

Table 12 shows the coding frequencies for interpersonal awareness themes and sub themes for Research Sub-Question 2.

Table 12

*Interpersonal Themes and Sub Themes*

| Interpersonal Themes and Sub Themes | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Awareness of other's feelings and perspectives | 11 | 26 |
| Expresses one's self to build mutual understanding and trust | 15 | 60 |
| Expressions of appreciation and gratitude | 14 | 25 |
| Directness | 10 | 20 |
| Seeks Understanding | 14 | 45 |
| Active Listening | 3 | 3 |
| Mediator | 5 | 6 |

*Note.* Sources include transcribed interviews.

**Research Sub-Question 3**

Research Sub-Question 3 asked: *In what ways does a senior-level administrator adapt to situations and the environment in order to cope with organizational role stress?*

Adaptability is defined as the ability to verify one's feelings with objective external cues and accurately size up the immediate situation, flexibility to alter one's feelings and thoughts with changing situations, and to solve personal and interpersonal problems (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000). In the study, 80 separate references generated three major adaptability themes; alters feelings and thoughts to solve problems; Selflessness; uses multiple sources of data to inform decisions.

Alters personal feelings and thoughts to solve problems. Alters personal feelings and thoughts in order to solve problems was referenced 22 times across 13 different sources, and comprising of 27% of all adaptability reference. During heated interactions, one leader recommended hiding personal feelings and being conscious of one's non-verbal response,

> You just have to do a physical distraction, like poke a pen in your hand, to hide what you are truly feeling in those contempt moments. Also, make sure those eyes don't roll. Just do that kind of like slow lifting your eyelids. Slowly, breathe in to manage your nonverbal cues. (Participant 8)

**Selflessness.** This theme was supported by 14 statements across 13 different sources and comprised 27% of all adaptability reference. Senior-level leaders described the dynamics of making selfless decisions as individuals or as a team. Participant 12 described the mechanism used when individual disagreements are prohibiting progress within decision making groups.

> We have a concept that we call disagree and connect. We bring something to the table. We can hash it out, knocked down, drag out, have every opinion in the world, bring in every piece of data we want, bring in whatever we want. Right up until the point where the decision gets made, you can go at it full force. We will argue, all of us, they can argue with me, we do it on my team; we do it in executive team, up until we make the decision. When we make that decision and we walk out that door, we are united. That's the decision. Here are the talking points. Here's what we're going for. That part is really, really critical. I think being transparent and authentic where you can be.

Another leader described how their leadership team unifies during decision making. "*Once we have done our due diligence, we are all jumping together. My phrase to my team is, you either pull me from a cliff or push me in. Either way we are all going together*" (Participant 14)

Besides becoming united around decisions, the importance of including stakeholders from groups of people potentially impacted by a decision can serve the senior-level leader well during decision making process. One leader reflected on the types of decisions made by leaders and how to empower others by intentionally including them into the decision making process by stating:

> If it was an emergency and I needed to make a decision without including, I'll make a decision. I think that making decisions in an emergency is quite different from making decisions in any other situation. As it relates to, when to comes to planning and you're going to make decision that's going to impact others, I think you better get others engaged and involved. You're gonna build more allies by inclusion. It think that's the most important thing when you're looking at an organization. Do you want people against you or for you? Our job is to coach, mentor and facilitate. In many cases to advocate. You cannot do that if you are making decisions without involving them. (Participant 13)

**Data driven decision-making**. This theme was referenced 41 times by 15 different sources and emerged as one of the major themes for this study. The results of this theme and sub themes are discussed in the central research question one.

Table 13 shows the major themes developed in the adaptability factor of emotional intelligence for Research Sub-Question 3.

Table 13

*Adaptability Themes*

| Adaptability Themes | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Alters feelings-thoughts to solve problems | 13 | 22 |
| Selflessness | 10 | 14 |
| Data driven decision making | 15 | 41 |

*Note:* Sources include transcribed interviews.

**Research Sub-Question 4**

Research Sub-Question 4 asked: *What emotional intelligence strategies were perceived by senior-level administrators as being successful in dealing with organizational role stress?*

Stress management is defined as strategies deployed to cope with stress and to control strong emotions (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000). Out of all the five key factors, stress management was referenced the most with 176 separate references from all 15 respondents and generated three different stress management themes and one sub theme.

**Self-Care.** This theme made up 26% of all stress management references, was referenced 41 times across 14 different sources. Participant 1 described how they recognized the impact of organizational role stress and had to learn to compartmentalization skills in order to cope and stated:

> When I first started, when it was most stressful, I didn't understand how much it was affecting me. It took me about two years to really understand. It was like, 'Okay. This is really bothering me. I need to get out of here. I need to fix this.' The things, exercise, meditation, those self-care things didn't really start happening until the second or third year. I really wish that I had spent more time

learning how to compartmentalize. It's a learned skill. Compartmentalization is absolutely a learned skill. How can you be present.

Getting enough sleep was also referenced by senior-level leaders as important to successful coping. Participant 6 reflected:

> I try and get more sleep when stress occurs because I realize that does make a difference for me. I don't go to bed easily at night. I often feel sleepy at night, so I'm up too late often times. I have to sometimes make a point I'm gonna get more sleep so I'll have a better day tomorrow.

Another leader referenced, "*I do try to sleep seven to eight hours a night. And for the most part, that's been pretty successful*" (Participant 10). Participant 1 described their action plan when stress occurs, "*when I'm really stressed, I try to do the three things related to my physical health: eat better, exercise, and sleep*."

Exercise was also referenced by serval senior-level leaders as a strategy to cope with organizational role stress. One leader recalled how physical activity provides a healthy stress release. "*I work out a lot and that really helps me*" (Participant 12). Another discussed getting out of their office and going on walks during the day as another form or physical stress release.

> The other way that I deal with stress is I go for walks. I get out and I go for walks. Sometimes it's around the campus to remind me why am I doing this. It might be going and visiting a classroom to remind me that we're in the human development business and everything I do is affecting somebody's life. (Participant 13)

**Time away.** The second strongest theme for stress management was taking time away. This theme was supported by 51 statements from 12 of the 15 respondents. Senior-level leaders describe taking small breaks during the workday or taking longer stents of time away from work to gain perspective as effective coping strategies. One leader states, "*Something that I've learned over the years is I do a pretty good job of scheduling and taking vacation*" (Participant 15). In addition, Participant 15 commented, "*and I do not work while on vacation*." Participant 13 discussed how they plan time away from work in advance:

> I try to get vacations on the books, blocked out nine to 12 months in advance. I make plans, usually to go somewhere, so it's not something that can be changed. If something comes up, you're going to be gone. Communicate with folks that I'll be gone during those periods of time. Make sure that I have someone that's appointed to be in charge in my absence. I'm very clear with folks that I don't check email when I'm on vacation, but if people needed to text me because there was something urgent, they could. I actually just got back from a two week trip and it was the first time ever no one from work called or texted me while I was out.

**Support systems.** Support systems was referenced 61 times by 15 different sources. This theme and sub themes emerged as one of the major themes for this study. The results of this theme and sub themes are discussed in the central Research Question 1.

Table 14 shows the coding frequencies for stress management themes and sub theme for Research Sub-Question 4.

Table 14

*Stress Management Themes and Sub Themes*

| Stress Management | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Self-Care | 14 | 46 |
| Time Away | 12 | 51 |
| Support Systems | 15 | 61 |
| Strong work relationships | 10 | 26 |

*Note.* Sources are from transcribed interviews.

**Research Sub-Question 5**

Research Sub-Question 5 asked: *How do senior-level administrators stay motivated in* order to cope with organizational role stress?

Motivational and general mood factors are defined by one's ability to be optimistic, to enjoy one's self and others, and to feel and express positive feelings (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000). For the motivational and general mood key factor 36 references were made from 15 separate sources and generated two themes and one sub theme.

**Personal connection with organizational mission and values theme**. Fifteen comments were made referencing a personal connection with the organizational mission and values as a motivating factor across 11 different sources. Many of the senior-level leaders described a connection or an alignment between personal mission and values with their organizations mission and values. One senior-level leader describes staying motivated by:

> I feel incredibly fortunate because ... They always talk about the right fit. Finding an organization that fits. And I really do feel like this is a great fit. And I'm very clear that I am where I'm supposed to be. I am supposed to be here for a while. I'm very clear about what I want to accomplish, why I want to accomplish it. And

> I feel very fortunate that pretty early on in my career, I came across the colleges, and so strongly believe in the mission. It's in alignment with who I am and how I was raised and my values. And that the role of advocate for our students and for our colleges is something that is congruent with who I am and what I believe. And so there's never a question of, 'am I not contributing, or am I doing the right thing, or am I at the right place?' So there's meaning in the work that I'm doing, and that is very motivating. And it helps to keep in perspective stressful situations. (Participant 10)

A different participant described how their core value is in alignment with the social justice mission of community and technical college. "*It's really important to me that economic mobility, social mobility be at the core of the mission of the work I do, and we do that*" (Participant 12). Participant 11 connected their personal values with their organizations values.

> I have this value system, and I'm lucky enough to work in an institution that has the value system that says we really want to change students' lives. If we're doing our job and focusing there, we can have all kinds of disagreements about how to get to it. If we're in on the values, then you're not going home at night thinking I'm working for a place that I don't want to work. I think that part of the coping mechanism for me is really good.

In addition to aligning personal values with organizational values, respondents described an intrinsic motivation felt when working with students and leading an organization that positively influences lives.

> Well, I think it's always good to take a step back. We can take ourselves too seriously. I think in the big picture we're all here, to me, for one common cause of supporting students to better their lives. I think it helps me to think about that and the influence that you have and the ripple effect of helping somebody improve their life through education. You can see it. You can see it right happening in front of your eyes with their children, their families, their successes through their jobs, employment. When you see that, it makes it all seem worthwhile. It does help to focus then not on the negative stuff but on the way that you're making a positive difference. (Participant 2)

Furthermore, when leaders described their most stressful moments, they referenced keeping the college mission at the forefront of the mind, which provides the compass during difficult situations. "*I work with a group of people that have similar goals, similar philosophies, and are in unison about where we want to go. So, that puts a lot of the petty bullshit behind*" (Participant 15). Lastly, Participant 12 provided a perspective on how to keep focused on the positive influences by stating:

> I think a lot of it is relationship to mission and relationship to people and understanding that predominantly people want to do the right thing. If you can figure out how to help them get to that space, most of the people we have are here because they want to be here. They like what they're doing. They feel connected to the mission. If we can just keep that in the front of our minds instead of letting all the frustrating things take over. Knowing we're making a difference. We make a difference every day. Sometimes you don't remember that, but trying to put that forethought.

**Optimistic towards self and career.** This theme was referenced 20 times by 12 different sources. This theme and sub theme emerged as one of the major themes for this study. The results of this theme and sub themes are discussed in the central research question one.

Table 15 shows the coding frequencies for motivational mood factors themes and sub theme for Research Sub-Question 5.

Table 15

*Motivational and General Mood Themes and Sub Theme*

| Motivational/General Mood | Number of Sources | Number of References |
|---|---|---|
| Personal connection with organizational mission and values | 11 | 15 |
| Optimistic Towards Self and Career | 12 | 20 |
| Connected with coworkers | 4 | 4 |

*Note:* Sources are from transcribed interviews.

## Summary of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans in the Washington State community and technical college system. A second purpose of this study was to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy.

This chapter presented the data related to the study's central questions and research sub-questions. The data were derived from 15 semi-structured interviews and nine site locations. The data presented 516 references across the five key factors of emotional intelligence. Data were coded and analyzed, which generated five major

themes and six sub themes for central Research Question 1. The themes for Research Question 1 were: (a) self-awareness, (b) expresses one's self to build understanding and trust, (c) data driven decision making, (d) support systems, and (e) optimistic towards self and career. The analysis provided a rich description on the lived experience of how senior-level leaders use emotional intelligence and the strategies used to cope with organizational role stress. Central Research Question 2 explored the differences amongst senior-level leadership role types. Differences were found in three areas: (a) in the number of references across the five major emotional intelligence themes, (b) in perceived stress management strategies used to cope with organizational role stress, and (c) in the self-care strategies used to cope with occupational role stress.

Chapter V presents a final summary of the study, including major findings, unexpected findings and conclusions. The chapter also includes implications for action, recommendations for further research and reflections of the researcher.

# CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to explore the lived experiences of community and technical college senior-level leaders and discover themes that add to the body of literature on emotional intelligence and organizational role stress. Through data analysis, themes and sub themes were formed. Chapter V begins with the restating of the study's purpose, research questions and provides an overview of the key findings, and unexpected findings from the study. The second part of this chapter discusses conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research and concludes with the researcher's remarks and reflections.

## Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by senior-level community and technical college leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans in the Washington State community and technical college system. A second purpose of this study was to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy. The research questions for this study included the central questions and five research sub-questions, one for each of the emotional intelligence key factors: (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal, (c) adaptability, (d) stress management, and (e) motivation/mood factors. The central research questions were: *What are the perceptions of senior-level administrators' use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress?* and *Are there differences between perceived emotional intelligence strategies used for coping with organizational role stress amongst senior-*

*level administrators' position type (presidents, vice presidents, and deans)?* The research sub-questions were:

1. I what ways does a senior-level administrator's intrapersonal awareness and understanding of one's own feelings factor into coping with organizational role stress?
2. In what ways does a senior-level administrator's interpersonal awareness, understanding and appreciation for the feelings of others factor into coping with organizational role stress?
3. In what ways does a senior-level administrator adapt to situations and the environment in order to cope with organizational role stress?
4. What emotional intelligence strategies were perceived by senior-level administrators as being successful in dealing with organizational role stress?
5. How do senior-level administrators stay motivated in order to cope with organizational role stress?

## Research Methods

The research method used in this study was a qualitative phenomenological approach. Through a phenomenological inquiry, the study explored the lived experiences of senior-level administrators' awareness and perceived use of emotional intelligence as coping strategies for organizational role stress. To better understand the phenomena of how an individual uses emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress, this study utilized semi-structured interview structure. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews held at nine site locations in Washington State. The data were transcribed, entered in Nvivo, and analyzed for emerging themes.

## Population and Sample

The target population was divided into three categories: (a) senior-level administrators serving in roles titled president, (b) vice president, and (c) dean from all of the 34 community and technical colleges within Washington State. The sample was comprised of 15 senior-level leaders five from each of the roles titled president, vice president and dean and met the following criteria:

- Employed at a community and technical college located in Washington State.
- Occupied a position titled president, vice president or dean: This criterion is critical to the research problem and questions examining the differences amongst leadership roles.
- Held the position titled president, vice president or dean for more than one calendar year: This criterion was important to establish familiarity to the organizational role and to allow time for the participant to encounter organizational role stress.

## Findings

The central purpose of this study was to discover how senior-level leaders in community and technical colleges cope with organizational role stress by using five key factors of emotional intelligence. Through data collection and analysis process several key findings emerged on how senior-level leaders use emotional intelligence strategies to cope with organizational role stress. A summary of the major findings is presented as it relates to this study's central questions and sub-research questions.

## Major Findings

**Finding 1**. Senior-level leaders described the ways in which intrapersonal awareness and understanding of ones one feelings factors into coping with organizational role stress. *Self-awareness* emerged as a major finding among the intrapersonal capacity references and is aligned with several other trait based emotional intelligence models (V. Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004; D. Goleman, 1995; Palmer et al., 2001). This theme generated three sub themes where leaders describe the ways in which they remain self-aware:

***Awareness of one's emotional state***. Senior-level leaders discussed the importance of knowing ones strengths in leadership and communication and when limits are reached. Findings from the literature review acknowledges that intrapersonal intelligence, the ability to understand one's feelings and emotional states, is the most important ability and the key to living an abundant life (Gardner, 2006). Alfonso et al.'s (2016), study predicted one's organizational citizenship behaviors by one's abilty to manage their own emotions.

***Sets boundaries***. Senior-level leaders believed they must be conscious of setting realistic boundaries between personal time and work or family time. Senior-level leaders were clear about how they set boundaries when on vacation and with their support staff so they can balance the daily demands of the workplace. Eddy and Boggs (2010) state the community college leader's challenge is the balancing of multiple political dynamics in a manner that meets the demands of many stakeholder groups.

***Partakes in a level of self-assessment***. Senior-level leaders described the significance of taking the time to be reflective and mindful of the influence they have as a

senior-level leader. Mindfulness research has found to have positive impact on coping with stress when practiced frequently (Ramos Diaz et al., 2014).

**Finding 2.** Senior-level leaders described how they expressed one's self to build understanding and trust as way in which interpersonal skills, awareness of other's feelings and perspectives factor into coping with organizational role stress. *Expresses one's self to build mutual understanding and trust* emerged as a major finding among the interpersonal skill references. This major finding is aligned with Davie et al. (1998) ability based model of emotional intelligence where the use of appraisal and recognition of emotion in others is used to facilitate performance.

Occupational stress research suggests organizational climate can predict work related stress and leaders (Lu et al. 2009; Lussier, 2005; Mofoluwake, 2013). Moreover, Fineman (2003) asserts leaders are emotion-managers who are in a continuous emotional connection with their followers. Participants describe how they express themselves in order to build trust and understanding within their organizations through:

***Expressing appreciation and gratitude.*** As a way to establish positive relationships, expressing appreciation and gratitude was a major interpersonal skill that was reviled. The findings from the literature review identify positive relationships where individuals felt supported by their organization and leaders can influence stress levels (Malik & Noreen, 2015; Ramesar et al., 2009).

***Being direct***. "*Directness,*" was described as a way to establish a culture of trust. Ramesar, Koortzen, and Oosthuizen's (2009) research found a supervisor's lack of communication was identified as the source of frustration, disappointment, anger, sadness, disgust, and stress. Scholars claim interpersonal capabilities rather than

technical expertise is the key trait, which separates the high performers from low performers (Baksh Baloch et al., 2014; Boyatzis et al., 2013; Cavazotte, et al., 2012; Mofoluwake & Oluremi, 2013).

**Finding 3.** Senior-level leaders describe the ways they remain flexible and alter one's feelings and thoughts to changing environments by *using data to inform decision making*. This theme emerged as the major theme among the adaptability references. The findings in the review of literature on occupational stress claim external factors can place demands on industries and organizations to be in a constant state of change (Topcic et al., 2016; M. Yong et al., 2012). This changing environment can be a source of occupational stress (Kinman & Jones, 2005; R. Lazarus, 1995). When senior-level leaders describe the ways in which they remain objective and accurately size up situations, they described how they use multiple sources of data to inform decisions. Folyd et al. (2010) state college leaders need to possess an emotional maturity and be able to consider multiple perspectives when making decisions.

**Finding 4.** Senior-level leaders who were successful in deploying stress management strategies to cope with organizational role stress describe having *support systems* as the major theme in coping with organizational role stress. Support systems theme generated a majority of all references within the stress management key factor area. Salami (2010) indicates support systems both at work and at home as a key factor in coping with occupational stress and psychological well-being. Other scholars have found support systems to significantly influence occupational stress levels (Ismail et al., 2014; Malik & Noreen; 2015). Floyd et al. (2010) asserts community college leaders forget key aspects to taking care of one's self while serving as a senior-level leader. In

order to be effective leader the literature recommends leaders develop several strategies to cope with the pressures of community college leadership.

**Finding 5.** Senior-level leaders who were successful in coping with organizational role stress describe their motivational mood factors as *optimistic towards themselves and their career*. The optimistic towards self and career theme emerged as a theme among the motivational mood key factor references. Respondents describe their motivation and ability to persist through stressful events occur at work by holding a positive attitude. Emotional intelligence scholars claim positive relationships exist between emotional intelligence and attitudes (Carmeli, 2003; Lopes et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002; M. Yong, et al., 2013). The workplace environment can be a series of positive or negative experiences that influences job satisfaction, workplace attitudes, and performance (Cropanzano et al., 2004). Many of the senior-level leaders in this study described their work relationships as providing a positive influence on their ability to remain optimistic towards one's self and career.

**Finding 6**. Many of the senior-level leaders described their development of stress coping mechanisms and emotional intelligence skills through their leadership experiences across multiple leadership positions. Scholars claim that emotional intelligence is developed (R. Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Caruso et al., 2015; Cherniss et al., 2006; V. Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004; D. Goleman, 1998a). As an individual matures, one learns emotional intelligence skills take responsibility and initiative for their performance and development, learn to listen to his or her intuition, read other's body language, and recognize differences amongst individuals (Chopra & Kanji, 2010). Differences were found among senior-level leader position type (president, vice president, and dean) when

comparing the frequencies of the five major themes. Across all of the themes, presidents had the most references (100) as it compares to vice presidents (67) and deans (57). In one key factor, vice presidents were found to reference motivational mood factors slightly more than presidents and deans. Deans were found to have the least number of references among all of the emotional intelligence key factors. Furthermore, the demographic data indicates, those participants who served in the role as president had the most number of years worked within the Washington community and technical college system; had earned the most degrees; and had the most amount of life experience (age).

**Unexpected Findings**

Two unexpected findings were found in this study. The first unexpected finding emerged in the motivational/mood key factor responses. When specifically asked what keeps senior-level leaders motivated in their line of work, 11 of the respondents described a deep connection between the mission of their organization and their personal values. The expressions of a strong personal connection by the study's participants and the organizational mission aligned with the literature and predictive occupational stress models (T. Cox & MacKay, 1981; French et al., 1982).

The second unexpected finding became known through the number of participant responses in the stress management key factor. Senior-level leaders indicated that the line of work was stressful, but at the same time provided insight regarding their perspective on their work related stressors. On several occasions, leaders discounted their work stressors by contrasting the type of decisions senior-level college leaders make, claiming that college leaders impact student lives, but do not impact life or death level decisions. Scholars assert the source of the stress/stressor and the outcome of the

stress experience are comprehensive and capture the complete stress dynamic (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Faragher et al., 2004).

## Conclusions

Using the major findings and the review of literature, the researcher drew conclusions concerning how senior-level leaders use the key factors of emotional intelligence (intrapersonal capacity, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and motivational/mood factors) to cope with organizational role stress.

### Conclusion 1: Those who Aspire to be a Community or Technical College Leader Should Develop a Breadth of Emotional Intelligence Skill

The ability to cope with the organizational role stress is a part of the suite of skillsets one needs to be successful as a community college leader (Gough, 2012; McNair et al., 2011; Shaw, 2014; Smith, 2011). Senior-level leaders who participated in this study demonstrated an understanding and an ability to use multiple emotional intelligence key factors to cope with organizational role stress. Evidence supporting this conclusion includes:

- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study were able to articulate how they used several of the emotional intelligence key factors in order to cope with organizational role stress.
- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study referenced more than one key factor as useful for coping with organizational role stress.

Therefore, it is concluded that aspiring leaders of community and technical colleges need to possess a breadth of skill sets that include intrapersonal capacity, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and motivational/mood factors.

**Conclusion 2: Senior-Level Leaders who have Self-Awareness Through Understanding one's Emotions, Considers the Impact of their Communications and Performs Self-Assessments are more Likely to be Effective Coping with Organizational Role Stress**

Scholars have demonstrated how the ability to be aware and control one's emotions as a leader is effective at reducing work related stress (Gohm et al., 2005). D. Goleman (1996, 1998b) and Palmer et al. (2001) advocated for self-awareness as a measure for effective leadership skills. All (100%) of the senior-level leaders who participated in this study demonstrated how self-awareness is important to being an effective leader with effective coping skills. Supporting data for this conclusion include:

- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study demonstrated how knowing one's self and their stress triggers is critical coping skill.
- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study revealed how they are aware of the impact of their communication as a leader.
- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study described the necessity of self-reflection and assessment to be effective at coping with role stress.

Therefore, it is concluded senior-level leaders who have self-awareness and can understand one's own emotions, considers the impact of their communications and preforms self-assessments are more likely to be effective coping with organizational role stress.

**Conclusion 3: Senior-Level Leaders who can Express Themselves to Build Mutual Understanding and Trust are more Likely to Cope with Organizational Role Stress**

The ability to communicate one's self effectively is a necessary for college leaders to facilitate the performance of others (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998). All (100%) of the senior-level leaders who participated in this study referenced the importance of their ability to express themselves to build mutual understanding and trust within their organization when dealing with stressful situations. Additional supporting evidence includes:

- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study revealed how they express appreciation and gratitude as a means to foster trust relationships.
- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study described how being direct in communication is useful to develop mutual understanding.

Therefore, it is concluded that senior-level leaders who can express themselves to build mutual understanding and trust are more likely to cope with organizational role stress.

**Conclusion 4: Senior-Level Leaders who can Accurately Assess Situations from Multiple Data Sources to Make Informed Decisions are more Likely to Cope with Organizational Role Stress**

Changing organizational environments can be a source of stress for the organizational leader (Kinman & Jones, 2005). The ability to alter ones thoughts and feeling in order to make decisions is an essential skill for college leaders (Floyd et al., 2010). All (100%) of the senior-level leaders who participated in this study described how they use multiple sources of data to accurately assess stations and inform their decision making processes. Additional evidence supporting this conclusion includes:

- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study described the importance of making the best decision for the organization through seeking multiple perspectives and sources of data.

Thus, it is concluded that senior-level leaders who can accurately assess situations from multiple data sources to make informed decisions are more likely to coping with organizational role stress.

**Conclusion 5: Senior-Level Leaders, who Adhere to Develop Stress Management Strategies and have Strong Support Systems Both at Work and Outside of Work, are More Likely to Cope with Organizational Role Stress**

Salami (2010) articulates stress occurs when the magnitude of the stressor exceeds the individual's capacity to cope. Senior-leaders in this study recognized being in the role as a college leader is stressful. Out of all five key factors, a majority (90%) of the study's participants referenced possessing stress management strategies. Evidence supporting this conclusion include:

- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study strongly recommended the need of support systems both in and outside of the work place.
- Senior-level leaders who participated in this study described how they have developed a collection of stress management strategies through various career and life experiences.

Therefore, it is concluded that senior-level leaders who adhere to developed stress management strategies and have strong support systems both at work and outside of work, are more likely to cope with organizational role stress.

**Conclusion 6: Senior-Level Leaders who are Successful at Coping with Organizational Role Stress Possess an Optimistic Frame-of-Mind**

The majority (80%) of senior-level leaders articulated how they remain in a positive frame-of-mind during stressful situations. Scholars have found that optimistic attitudes and emotional intelligence are closely aligned (Carmeli, 2003; Lopes et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002; M. Yong et al., 2013). Additional evidence supporting this conclusion includes those senior-level leaders who referenced the various ways their work environments are positive and supportive. Therefore, it is concluded that senior-level leaders who are successful at coping with organizational role stress possesses an optimistic frame-of-mind.

**Conclusion 7: Senior-Level Leaders Strengthen Their Emotional Intelligence Through Leadership and Life Experiences**

Emotional intelligence research has highlighted the import role of emotions and emotion management in leadership practice. The literature also suggests that individuals can develop their emotional intelligence skills (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009; Chopra & Kanji, 2010). Senior-level leaders expressed how their past leadership experiences strengthened their emotional intelligence and coping abilities. Across all of the key factors of emotional intelligence, presidents had the most references (173) as it compares to vice presidents (159) and deans (131). Additional evidence supporting this conclusion is found within the demographic data for presidents, vice presidents, and deans. The demographic data indicate:

- Those participants who served in the role as president had the most number of years worked within the Washington community and technical college system,

had earned the most degrees, and had the most amount of life experience (age).

Therefore, it is concluded that senior-level leaders strengthen their emotional intelligence through leadership and life experiences.

**Conclusion 8: Senior-Level Leaders with a Strong Personal Connection to the Community and Technical College Mission are More Likely to Perceive Their Work Environment as Less Stressful**

A large majority of the respondents perceived a deep personal connection between the mission of their organization and their personal values. The literature suggest occupational stress occurs between the person and their environment. The need to have leaders who have deep personal connection to the organizational mission can predict how stressed senior-level leader perceive their work environment (T. Cox & MacKay, 1981; French et al., 1982). Therefore, it is concluded senior-level leaders with a strong personal connection to the community and technical college mission are more likely to perceive their work environment as less stressful.

## Implications for Action

The conclusions of this study lead to several implications for aspiring community and technical college leaders, current college leaders who seek to advance in their career, emotional intelligence, and occupational stress researchers, and organizational development practitioners.

- The participants in this study described the importance of having support systems that provide mentoring, guidance, and support both in and outside of the workplace. Aspiring college leaders should consider assessing,

developing networks for providing professional support. Senior-level leaders should consider and assess existing support systems and foster new networks to provide professional support.

- The developmental aspect of emotional intelligence and the positive impacts of coping with organizational role stress, college leaders, human resource departments, and managers should encourage emotional intelligence training employees. As a result, organizations who train their employees to have strong emotional intelligence skills may see greater productivity, low turnover, and less absenteeism.
- This study produced five major themes that describe the ways in which senior-level leaders successfully cope with organizational role stress. Researchers of emotional intelligence and organizational role stress should develop self-assessment/professional development tool based upon these themes that provides the community and technical college senior-level leader feedback on work related stress levels. This assessment tool would allow leaders to recognize early signs of stress and develop coping strategies before one's health and well-being or employee-employer relationships are strained.
- Human resource departments and hiring managers must recruit senior-level leaders with strong emotional intelligence skills. Hiring processes could be developed to screen applicants for the appropriate use of emotional intelligence skills.
- Aspiring college leaders or new senior-level leaders should develop stress management strategies early in their career. Perhaps, education and coaching

of stress management strategies should be introduced during high school years, when individuals are developing employability skills such as time management, teamwork, technology skills and communication.

- Organizational development consultants and emotional intelligence training programs could provide real-time coaching/counseling services for leaders who are experiencing occupational stress events. Leaders described how they developed emotional intelligence and coping through experience. Coaching/counseling services could be useful service for leaders who are developing their portfolio of coping strategies.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon the findings of this study, several recommendations are made for future research concerning organizational role stress of community and technical college leaders.

- The population for this study was limited to the college senior-level leaders who work within the Washington State community and technical college system. It is recommended that a comparative study of the perceptions of senior-level leaders in other educational type of higher education institutions explore similarities and differences in the findings.
- During the interviews, several participants referenced the importance of emotional intelligence both in the hiring of leaders and within themselves. A mixed methods study could be conducted to measure the differences between perceived emotional intelligence of a senior-level leader and the perceived use of emotional intelligence amongst the leader’s employees.

- The current study focused on how senior-level leaders use emotional intelligence to cope with organizational role stress. A longitudinal study could be conducted collecting how senior-level leaders develop emotional intelligence throughout their career. In this study, findings indicated deans referred to fewer coping mechanisms. Researchers may consider exploring leader's development and use of emotional intelligence over time. It is also important to understand if deans with higher emotional intelligence are the ones who get promoted into the higher positions.
- Further study on emotional intelligence is needed to obtain generalizable findings to larger college leader populations. Quantitative studies with a larger representative samples of senior-level leaders is recommended.
- The current study focused on how senior-level leaders use Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence to cope with organizational role stress. Additional research could explore how other emotional intelligence theoretical frameworks influence organizational role stress and coping.
- The findings in this study indicate senior-level leaders perceive the use of multiple stress management strategies to be effective when coping with organizational role stress. Future research should consider exploring the effectiveness of stress management strategies by measuring physiological stress response when leaders deploy stress management strategies.
- The findings in this study indicate senior-level leaders use optimism when coping with organizational role stress. Future research should be conducted on the source of an optimistic mindset of leaders.

## Concluding Remarks and Reflections

The demand for transformational change in community and technical colleges creates stressor for individuals who lead and manage these organizations. Higher education professionals face many occupational stressors as the current landscape demands transformational change, increased public attention towards institutional accountability, and stiff competition for new enrollments with reduced fiscal resources (Bragg, 2014; Woods, 2012). Occupational stress is a common emotional experience felt by many individuals, especially for those in leadership roles (J. Ciarrochi & Scott, 2006; Cotê & Miners, 2006; Føllesdal & Hagtvet, 2013; Sadri, 2012). Because stress has many detrimental effects, this study focused on how senior-level leaders use emotional intelligence to cope with workplace stressors. This study was conducted due to the lack of literature on coping with organizational role stress of senior-level community and technical college leaders. The results of this study illustrate the ways senior-level community and technical college leaders use emotional intelligence to cope with organizational role stress.

When discussing this research topic with colleagues and participants, many were delighted to share their lived experience of role stress. As practitioner of higher education administration for the past 15 years and as a senior-level administrator in the Washington community and technical college system for the last five years I have a personal understanding of the situations, external demands, stressors, and organizational dynamics of a this study's population and sample. Through the process of conducting this study, I was delighted to learn that senior-level leader organizational role stress is a real occurrence. It was an enlightening experience to learn how college leaders grow and

develop their coping strategies throughout their career. My eyes were opened to the breadth of coping strategies used by senior-level leaders in various stressful situations and encounters. Through conducting this study, I have gained a depth of understanding of the affects emotional intelligence has on coping with organizational role stress.

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# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

## Synthesis Matrix

| References | Definition of occupational stress (OS) and organizational role stress | Coping with OS and impact | Stress/ in Higher Ed leaders | OS in Community College leaders | Personal attributes of Leaders | Definition of EI/EI Constructs/Theories | EI and Coping with OS | EI and Workplace | Impact on hiring practices | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| (NIOSH, 2016). Work organization and stress-related disorders program. | x | | | | | | | | | |
| AACC. (2015). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Alfonso, L., Zenasni, F., Hodzic, S., & Ripoll, P. (2016). | | | | | | | x | x | | |
| Association, A. P. (2014). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Austin, E. J., Saklofske, D. H., & Egan, V. (2005). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Bakker, A. B., van Veldhoven, M., & Xanthopoulou, D. (2010). | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Baksh Baloch, Q., Saleem, M., Zaman, G., & Fida, A. (2014). | | | | | | | | x | | |
| Bar-On, & Parker, J. D. (2000). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Bar-On, Brown, J. M., Kirkcaldy, B. D., & Thomé, E. P. (2000). | | | | | | x | x | | | |
| Bar-On. (2004). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Barra, M. E. (2008). | | | | | | x | x | | | |
| Bechtel, B. C. (2010). | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Biron, C., & Karanika-Murray, M. (2014). | x | | x | x | | | | | | |
| Biron, C., Brun, J.-P., & Ivers, H. (2008). | | x | x | | | | | | x | |
| Boivin, K. (2013). | | | | | | | x | | | |
| Bono, J. E., Glomb, T. M., Shen, W., Kim, E., & Koch, A. J. (2013). | x | x | x | | | | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bornheimer, M. E. (2010). | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | |
| Boyatzis, R. E., Smith, M. L., Van Oosten, E., & Woolford, L. (2013). | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Bragg, D. D., Kirby, C., Witt, M.A., Richie, D., Mix, S., Feldbaum, M., Liu, S., &Mason, M. (2014, February). Transformative change initiative. | | | | x | | | | | | |
| Brough, P., Dollard, M. F., & Tuckey, M. R. (2014). | | x | | | | | x | | x | |
| Carillo, I. M. (2011). | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Carmeli, A. (2003). | | | | | | | x | x | x | |
| Carter, P. J. (2011). | | | | | | x | | x | x | |
| Carr, J., Kelley, B., Keaton, R., & Albrecht, C. (2011). | x | x | x | x | | | | | | |
| Davies, M., Stankov, L., & Roberts, R. D. (1998). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Dewe, P. (2004). | x | x | | | | | | | x | |
| Donald, I., Taylor, P., Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S., & Robertson, S. (2005). | | x | x | | | | | | x | |
| Drotos, A. L. (2012) | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Dulewicz, V., & Higgs, M. (1999 | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Dulewicz, V., & Higgs, M. (2004). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Dulewicz, V., Higgs, M., & Slaski, M. (2003). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Ek, E., Sirviö, A., Koiranen, M., & Taanila, A. (2014). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Eschleman, K. J., & LaHuis, D. (2014). | x | x | | | | | | | x | |
| Extremera, N., & Rey, L. (2016). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Fabes, R. A., & Eisenberg, N. (1997). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Faragher, E. B., Cooper, C. L., & Cartwright, S. (2004). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Field, A. (2013). | | | | | | | | | | x |
| Fletcher, B. C., & Jones, F. (1993). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Floyd, D. L., Maslin-Ostrowski, P., & Hrabak, M. R. (2010). | | | x | x | | | | | | |
| Focht, J. W. (2010). | | | x | x | | | | | | |
| Folkman, S. (1984). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Føllesdal, H., & Hagtvet, K. (2013). | | | | | | x | | x | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Foster, C., & Roche, F. (2014). | | | | | | x | | x | | |
| Friedel, J. N. (2010). | | | x | x | | | | | | |
| Game, A. M. (2007). | | x | | | | | | x | | |
| Gardner, H. (2006). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Gignac, G. E., & Ekermans, G. (2010) | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Goh, J., Pfeffer, J., & Zenios, S. (2015). Error | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Gohm, C. L., Corser, G. C., & Dalsky, D. J. (2005). | | | | | | x | xx | | | |
| Goleman, D. (1995). | | | | | | x | | x | | |
| Goleman, D. (1996). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Goleman, D., McKee, A., & Boyayzis, R. (2006). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Gough, R. J. (2012). | | | xxx | xx | | | | | | |
| Grant, S., & Langan-Fox, J. (2006). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Grawitch, M. J., Ballard, D. W., & Erb, K. R. (2015). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Groves, K. S., McEnrue, M. P., & Shen, W. (2008). | | | | | x | x | | x | | |
| Huynh, J. Y., Xanthopoulou, D., & Winefield, A. H. (2013). | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Ismail, N., Rahman, A., & Zainal Abidin, E. (2014). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Izard, C. E. (2013). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Jackson, M. (2013) | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Jacobs, P. A., Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webb, C., & Cooper, C. L. (2007). | | x | | | x | | | | | |
| Jones-Schenk, J. J. j. w. e., & Harper, M. G. m. h. w. e. (2014). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Kahn, R. L., Wolfe, D. M., Quinn, R. P., Snoek, J. D., & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964) | x | | x | | | | | | | |
| Karasek, R. (1979). | x | | x | | | | | | | |
| Katsinas, S. G., D'Amico, M. M., & Friedel, J. N. (2014). | | | x | | x | | | | | |
| Kavitha, P. (2012). | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Kelley, R., & Caplan, J. (1993). | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Kinman, G., & Jones, F. (2005). | x | x | | | | | | | | |

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| Krantz, D. S., Thorn, B., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J. (2013). | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Labor, U. S. D. o. (2016). | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Law, K. S., Wong, C.-S., & Song, L. J. (2004). | | | | | | x | | x | | |
| Lazarus, R. (1993). | x | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Lazarus, R., & Rice, V. (2000). | x | | x | | | | | | | |
| Lazarus, R. S. (1966). | | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). | x | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Leubsdorf, B. (2006). | x | | x | | | | | | | |
| Levi, L. (1984). | x | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Levi, L. (1999). | x | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Levi, L., & Andersson, L. (1975). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Lindebaum, D. (2015). | | | | | x | xxx | x | x | x | xxx |
| Liptak, J. J. (2005). | | | | | x | | | x | | |
| Lockwood, G. (2015). | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lopes, P. N., Grewal, D., Kadis, J., Gall, M., & Salovey, P. (2006). | x | | | | | | | | x | |
| Lovallo, W. R. (2015). | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Lu, C.-q., Siu, O.-l., Au, W.-t., & Leung, S. S. W. (2009). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Luzebetak, A. K. (2010). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| MacCann, C., Fogarty, G. J., Zeidner, M., & Roberts, R. D. (2011). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Malik, S., & Noreen, S. (2015). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Mark, G., & Smith, A. P. (2012). | | | | | | x/dis | | | | |
| Matthews, G., Roberts, R. D., & Zeidner, M. (2004). | | | | | | x/dis | | | | |
| Matthews, G., Roberts, R. D., & Zeidner, M. (2011). | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Mattson, C. (2012). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Mayer, J. D., & Geher, G. (1996). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1993). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1995). | | | | | | x | | | | |

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| Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (1999). | | | | | | x/inst. | | | | |
| Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2002). | | | | | | x | | | x | |
| Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). | | | | | | x/inst. | | | | |
| McEnrue, M. P., & Groves, K. (2006). | | | x | x | | | | | x | |
| McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. . (2010). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| McNair, D. E., Duree, C. A., & Ebbers, L. (2011). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Michelangelo, L. (2013). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Mielczarek, A., Kasprzak, J. D., Marcinkiewicz, A., Kurpesa, M., Uznańka-Loch, B., & Wierzbowska-Drabik, K. (2015). | | x | | | | x | | | | |
| Mikolajczak, M., Menil, C., & Luminet, O. (2007). | | x | | | | x | | | | |
| Mikolajczak, M., Roy, E., Verstrynge, V., & Luminet, O. (2009). | | | | x | x | x | | | | |
| Milhoan, P. L. (2008). | | x | | | | x | | | x | |
| Mofoluwake, A. P., & Oluremi, A. H. . (2013). | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Morris, J. E., & Long, B. C. (2002). | | | | | | x/dis. | | | | |
| Murphy, K. R. (2009). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Murray, J. P., Murray, J. I., & Summar, C. (2000). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Neale, S., Wilson, L., & Spencer-Arnell, L. (2011). | | | | | | x | | x | x | |
| Nickerson, C., Diener, E., & Schwarz, N. (2011). | | | | | | x | | x | | |
| Nikolaou, I., & Tsaousis, I. (2002). | x | x | | | | x | x | | x | |
| NIOSH. (2016). | x | | x | | | | | | | |
| Palmer, B., Walls, M., Burgess, Z., & Stough, C. (2001). | | | | | x | x | | | | |
| Pareek, U. (1983). | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Pareek, U. (1993). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Parkes, K. R. (1991). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Parrish, D. (2011). | | | | | x | x | | x | x | |
| Patton, M. Q. (2010). | | | | | | | | | | xqual |
| Pence, P. L. (2010). | | | | | | x | | | | |

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| Petrides. (2016). | | | | | | x | x | x | | |
| Petrides, Siegling, A. B., & Saklofske, D. H. (2016). | | | | | | | x | | | |
| Pierce, T. A. (2010). | | | | x | x | | | | x | |
| Pope, D., Roper, C., & Qualter, P. (2012). | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Priyadarshini, M., & Prabakar, S. (January 2016). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Rabasa, C., & Dickson, S. L. (2016). | x | | | x | x | | | | | |
| Rajarajeswari, S. (2010). | | x | | | | x | x | | | |
| Ramesar, S., Koortzen, P., & Oosthuizen, R. (2009). | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Ramos Diaz, N. S., Jimenez, O., Lopes, P.N. . (2014). | | | | x | x | | | | | |
| Riggs, J. (2009). | | | | | x | x | | | | |
| Sadri, G. (2012). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Saklofske, D. H., Austin, E. J., Mastoras, S. M., Beaton, L., & Osborne, S. E. (2012). | | x | | | | x | | | | |
| Salami, S. O. (2010). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). | | x | | | | x | | | | |
| Salovey, P., Stroud, L. R., Woolery, A., & Epel, E. S. (2002). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Sapolsky, R. (2004). | | x | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Sarros, J. C., Wolverton, M., Gmelch, W. H., & Wolverton, M. L. (1999). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Selye, H. (1978). | | | | | x | x | | | | |
| Shank, J. C. (2012). | | | | | | | x | | | |
| Sharma, R., & Sharma, K. (2014). | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Shaw, C. (2014). | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Shin, J. C., & Jung, J. (2014). | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Shults, C. (2001). error | x | x | | | | x | | | | |
| Singh, Y., & Sharma, R. (2012). | | | | | x | S | | | | |
| Skinner, R. A. (2010). | | | | | x | x | | x | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Snuggs, K. L. (2007). | | | | | x | x | | x | x | x |
| Suifan, T. S., Abdallah, A. B., & Sweis, R. J. (2015). | | | | | | x | x | | | |
| Sy, T., Tram, S., & O'Hara, L. A. (2006). | x | | | | | | | | | |
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| The American Institute of Stress. | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Thorndike, R. L. (1936). | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Thorndike, R. L., & Stein, S. (1937). | | x | | | | | | | x | |
| Topcic, M., Baum, M., & Kabst, R. (2016). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Väänänen, A., Murray, M., & Kuokkenen, A. (2014). | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Wan, H. C., Downey, L. A., & Stough, C. (2014). | | | x | x | x | | | | | |
| Welt, R. C. (1985). | x | | | | x | | | | | |
| Wisse, B., & Sleebos, E. (2015). | | | | | x | x | | x | | |
| Wong, C.-S., & Law, K. S. (2002) | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Woodland, C., & Parsons, M. H. (2013). | | | | | x | x | | x | | |
| Woods, C. (2012). | | | | x | x | x | | x | | |
| Yoder, D. M. (2004). | x | x | | | | | | | x | |
| Yong, M., Nasterlack, M., Pluto, R., Lang, S., & Oberlinner, C. (2012). | x | | | | | | | | | |
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| Zeider, M., Matthews, G., & Roberts, R. D. (2004). | | | | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX B

## Interview Guide

**Brandman University, Doctoral Dissertation**

Researcher: Claire Korschinowski
Participant # _______

College # ________

Date of interview: _____________

[Introduction script]

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. My name is Claire Korschinowski and I am a doctoral student at Brandman University studying Organizational Leadership. My research is specifically looking at organizational role stress as it relates to emotional intelligence amongst leaders employed in the Community and Technical College system in Washington State.

Brandman University requires that I go over the informed consent forms and that I obtain your signature for consent. I sent you the forms in advance and want to make sure that you had an opportunity to review them. As you know, I am digitally recording our interview today and if you need me to stop, the recording just let me know. Additionally, if there is a question you are not comfortable addressing, please let me know and we will move on to the next question.

The reason for the digital recording is to ensure that your responses can be transcribed verbatim. Your name, your position, and your college will not be known to anyone other than myself and the chair of my committee. I will have a code system and you will be given a participant number so I can organize data. After the transcripts are completed, you have the ability to review them and provide corrections to any of the statements, intent or terminology.

Do you have any questions before we get started? (Obtain signatures)

At this time, may I have your permission to turn on the recorder?

Before I begin to ask you questions, I want you to know that my dissertation is examining the role of emotional intelligence in the management of organizational role stress for leaders within the community and technical college system in Washington State. I am trying to gain in-depth information of how leaders perceive their role stress and use emotional intelligence as coping strategies. During our conversation today, please speak from the perception of your role as a (president, vice president, or dean) senior-level administrator. My intent is to explore the strategies used to manage organizational role stress one experiences from their work.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

**Demographic Questions:**

1. Gender: How do you identify?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other
2. What is your age?
   - 25-29 years old
   - 30-49 years old
   - 50-64 years old
   - 64 and over
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   - Bachelors
   - Masters
   - Doctorate in progress (all but dissertation)
   - Doctorate
4. What is your length of service within the Washington State Community and Technical College system?
   - 1-5 years
   - 5-10 years
   - 10-15 years
   - 15-20 years
   - 20+ years
5. How long have you served in your current role?
   - 1-5 years
   - 5-10 years
   - 10-15 years
   - 15-20 years
   - 20+ years
6. What is your position title?
   - President/Vice President/Dean

**Research and Interview Questions Crosswalk: Based upon Key Factors of Bar-On (1997) Model of Emotional Intelligence.**

<table>
<tr><td>Bar-On Key Factors</td><td>Intrapersonal capacity: The ability to be aware and understand one's self, one's emotions and to express one's feelings and ideas</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">RQ: In what ways does a senior-level administrator's intrapersonal awareness and understanding of one's own feelings factor into coping with organizational role stress?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Interview Question Prompt: In general on a scale of 1 to 7 how stressed do you feel fulfilling your duties?<br>Possible Probes: 1= low, 7= high.<br>2. Interview Question: Are there part of your work duties that are more stressful than others? What are they? Why are they stressful?<br>3. Interview Question: How do you cope with your feelings when managing organizational stress?<br>Possible Probes: What examples or situations can you provide me?</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Bar-On Key Factors</td><td>Interpersonal skills: described as the ability to be aware, understand, and appreciate other's feelings as well as to establish and maintain mutually satisfying and responsible relationships with others.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">RQ: In what ways does a senior-level administrator's interpersonal awareness, understanding and appreciation for the feelings of others factor into coping with organizational role stress.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4. Interview Question: When making decisions, how do you consider others' feelings or reactions?<br>Possible probes: Is this stressful? How does coping with the situation influence your role as a leader?<br>5. Interview Question: How do the feelings of others influence you and your role at work?<br>Possible Probes: Do the feelings of other help or hurt job stress? Can you provide examples?<br>6. Interview Question: How do work relationships factor into your decision-making?<br>Possible Probes: Is this stressful? Why or Why not is this stressful?<br>7. Interview Question: What strategies do you use to solve interpersonal problems at work?<br>Possible Probes: Do you involve others within your organization? Are these conflicts with yourself or amongst others? Is this stressful? How do you cope in these situations?</td></tr>
</table>

| Bar-On Key Factors | Adaptability; described as the ability to verify one's feelings with objective external cues and accurately size up the immediate situation, flexibility to alter one's feelings and thoughts with changing situations, and to solve personal and interpersonal problems. |
|---|---|
| **RQ: In what ways does a senior-level administrator adapt to situations and the environment in order to cope with organizational role stress?** | |
| 8. Interview Question: What strategies do you use to solve interpersonal problems at work?<br>*Possible Probes: Do you involve others within your organization? Are these conflicts with yourself or amongst others? Is this stressful? How do you cope in these situations?*<br>9. Interview Question: As a leader, how do you remain objective and accurately size up situations?<br>*Possible Probes: Is this important as a leader? Why or why not?* | |

| Bar-On Key Factors | Stress management; strategies deployed to cope with stress and to control strong emotions. |
|---|---|
| **RQ: What emotional intelligence strategies were perceived by senior-level administrators as being successful in dealing with organizational role stress?** | |
| 10. Interview Question: When you are frustrated at work what are some positive ways to cope with stress? Negative ways?<br>11. Interview Question: What do you consider your top three work related stressors?<br>12. Interview Question: Based upon the list provided, what are your top three coping mechanisms?<br>*Possible Probes: Provide the list of coping mechanisms and discuss. Are there other strategies you would add to the list?*<br>13. Interview Question: How do you perceive your work related stress low, moderate or high?<br>*Possible Probes: Why? Is there something about your role that is particularly stressful?* | |

| Bar-On Key Factors | Motivational/general mood factors; the ability to be optimistic, enjoy one's self and others, and to feel and express positive feelings. |
|---|---|
| **RQ: How do senior-level administrators stay motivated in order to cope with organizational role stress?** | |
| 14. Interview Question: How do you identify what motivates others at work? *Possible Probes: Is this important as a leader? Why or why not?* 15. Interview Question: How do you maintain a positive frame of mind at work? *Possible Probe: What examples can you provide?* | |

*Note*. Adapted from "Emotional expression and implications for occupational stress: An application of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)," by R. Bar-On, J. M. Brown, B. D. Kirkcaldy, and E. P. Thomé, 2000. *Personality and Individual Differences, 28*(6), 1107-1118. Retrieved from doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00160-9

**Interview Questions**

1. (Prompt): On a scale of 1 to 7 how stressed do you feel fulfilling your duties?
    a. Possible Probes: 1= low, 7= high.
2. Are there part of your work duties that are more stressful than others? Why?
3. How do you cope with your feelings when managing organizational stress?
    a. Possible Probes: What examples or situations can you provide me?
4. When making decisions, how do you consider others' feelings or reactions?
5. How do the feelings of other influence you and your role at work?
    a. Possible Probes: Doe the feeling of the other help or hurt job stress? Can you provide examples?
6. How do relationships at work factor into your decision-making?
    a. Possible Probes: Why or Why not is this stressful?
7. What strategies do you use to solve interpersonal problems at work?
    a. Possible Probes: Do you involve others within your organization? Are these conflicts with yourself or amongst others?
8. As a leader, how do you remain objective and accurately size up situations?
    a. Possible Probes: Is this important as a leader? Why or why not?
9. When have you had to alter suppress your own feelings and negative thoughts with a work situation to handle situations?
    a. Possible Probes: Does this alerting happen in the moment or over time. How? Please describe further.
10. When you are frustrated at work what are some positive ways to cope with stress? Negative ways?
11. What do you consider your top three work related stressors?
12. Based upon the list provided, what are your top three coping mechanisms?
    a. Possible Probes: Provide the list of coping mechanisms and discuss
13. How do you perceive your work related stress low, moderate or high?
    a. Possible Probes: Why? Is there something about your role that is particularly stressful?
14. How do you identify what motivates others at work?
    a. Possible Probes: Is this important as a leader? Why or why not?
15. How do you maintain a positive frame of mind at work?

**Interview Questions**

**List of Possible Coping Strategies**

| Breathing techniques | Has a solid support system |
|---|---|
| Can limit self-imposed stress/pressures | Practices relaxation techniques |
| Sets priorities/Does not overcommit | Establishes health work/home boundaries |
| Can control ones feelings of frustration | Can take control over their decision making |
| Seeks understanding rather than reacting | Talks to Coworkers |
| Denies the stress of others | Talks to supervisor |
| Understands when a stress limit has been reached | Takes time to recharge/gets enough sleep |
| Exercises | Eats healthy/Smart food choices |
| Delegates | Takes breaks during the day |
| Manages time well | Manages expectations of one's self and others (boss) |

**List of Possible Coping Strategies**

| Breathing techniques | Has a solid support system |
|---|---|
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| Exercises | Eats healthy/Smart food choices |
| Delegates | Takes breaks during the day |
| Manages time well | Manages expectations of one's self and others (boss) |

APPENDIX C

## Informed Consent Documents

Informed Consent

Title: Sustaining a Career in Community College Leadership: Exploring the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Role Stress.

Researcher: Claire Korschinowski

Purpose of study: The study is a dissertation in Organizational Leadership program at Brandman University. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the use of emotional intelligence for coping with organizational role stress as perceived by a sample of senior-level community and technical college leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans. A second purpose of this study is to describe the differences in perceptions amongst senior-level leader's use of emotional intelligence as a stress coping strategy.

Procedures: All participants will be interviewed individually. The semi-structured interview will take approximately one hour and will be digitally audio recorded. Permission for audio recording will be provided on an additional form. The interviews will take place in a private room to be determined by the participant. Participants will be offered the ability to review their final transcripts in order to clarify intent.

There are approximately 10 questions in the interview, with the possibility of some follow questions. Follow up questions are only to clarify or add more detail to your original responses. The topic of the interview questions will be about participants' perceptions regarding the role of emotional intelligence in managing organizational role stress. All participants must be aware that a professional transcription service will be employed to transcribe the interviews.

Safeguards: Safeguards to minimal risks include:

Time: The researcher will monitor the time during the interview process. If the allocated time has expired and the interview is still occurring, the researcher will stress the voluntary nature of staying beyond the anticipated allocated time to complete the interview. If the length of the interview is inconvenient for you, you may stop participating in the interview at any time without any consequence. There are no consequences of any kind if you decide not to participate.

Confidentiality: Interview responses will be kept confidential and available only to the researcher and the chair of this dissertation. Interview recordings will be locked in a safe place at the researcher's home. Interview responses will not be linked to your name, address or institution. This is done to maintain confidentiality.

Professional Transcription Service: The professional transcription service will not receive participant name, address or any other private form of identification. Within the

interview, the participant may inadvertently name a person, place or institution. All of those references will be removed from the final draft but will be in the audio recording. There is a minimal risk that due to the professional transcription service but keep in mind they are a professional company and recognize that their professional integrity would be at stake if they violated any trust with clients.

As a participant I understand the following: The possible risks of this study are minimal. However, there may be some discomfort as a result of participating in the interview. I understand that I do not need to answer any interview questions that cause discomfort.

I will not be paid for my participation in this study. The possible benefit of this study is an increased understanding of higher education planning with a particular focus on the role of communication. The findings and recommendations from this study will be made available to all participants.

Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Claire Korschinowski, available by email at ckorschi@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Questions may also be addressed by the dissertation chairperson: Dr. Kathleen Ringenbach, ringenba@brandman.edu.

I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

I also understand that 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. I understand that 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 at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618 or phone them at (949)341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights.

I have read the above and understand the terms of my participation in this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I hereby agree to participate in this study.

Printed Name of Participant_______________________________________

Signature of Participant _____________________Date________________

Signature of Researcher _____________________Date________________

Digital Audio Recording Consent Form

Title: Sustaining a Career in Community College Leadership: Exploring the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Role Stress.

Researcher: Claire Korschinowski

I understand that the research project in which I am agreeing to participate concerns my perceptions of the use of emotional intelligence for coping conwith organizational role stress as perceived by a sample of senior-level community and technical college leaders serving as college presidents, vice presidents and deans. I understand that IN; INI will be interviewed for approximately one hour. I understand that this study is the basis for a dissertation that may be submitted for publication at a later date.

I further understand that the researcher will hold my responses in strict confidence and that no comments will be attributed to me by name in any reports on this study. I recognize that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my participation in this study at any time or decline to answer any questions.

I hereby give my consent to allow digital audio recording of my interview. I understand that I can elect to receive a copy of my transcript once the digital audio recording has been transcribed so that I can review or clarify intent.

Participant Name (Print)
______________________________________________________

Signature of Participant
______________________________Date_____________________

Signature of Researcher
______________________________Date_____________________

Please check _____ if you would like to receive a copy of your transcript

If checked above please provide a mailing address below.

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

APPENDIX D

**Codebook**

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| Adaptability | Adaptability; described as the ability to verify one's feelings with objective external cues and accurately size up the immediate situation, flexibility to alter one's feelings and thoughts with changing situations, and to solve personal and interpersonal problems. (Bar-On) |
| Alter feelings-thoughts | An ability to adjust thoughts in order to obtain an objective perspective and to problem solve. |
| Data Driven Decisions | the use of data or multiple resources and perspectives to make sound decisions. |
| Selflessness | An ability to suppress one's personal feelings in order to solve problems or handle a situation in a professional manner. |
| Interpersonal Skills | Interpersonal skills: described as the ability to be aware, understand, and appreciate other's feelings as well as to establish and maintain mutually satisfying and responsible relationships with others (Bar-On). |
| Awareness-other | Having knowledge of or consideration for another's feelings and emotions and perspectives |
| Expresses Self | One's ability to communicate personal thoughts or feelings as well as organizational processes and procedures used to manage work situations/stressors. |
| Appreciation | |
| Directness | An ability to communicate thoughts and emotions in a clear and straightforward manner. |
| Seeks Understanding | A continuous and intentional act of seeking and interpreting of another's feelings or emotional ques prior to judging the situation or stressor. |
| Active Listening | A communication technique used in counselling, training, and conflict resolution. It requires that the listener fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said. |
| Mediator | A person who attempts to make people involved in a conflict come to an agreement; a go-between. |

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| Intrapersonal Capacity | Intrapersonal capacity: The ability to be aware and understand one's self, one's emotions and to express one's feelings and ideas (Bar-On). |
| Self Awareness | The act of understanding one's emotions as it relates to the situation and environment. |
| Considers the impact of communication | understands how communication is important to achieve successful outcomes. |
| Experience | Having the knowledge of or understanding of situational outcomes based upon past encounters with simular scenarios. |
| Self-assessment | assessment or evaluation of one's self or one's actions and attitudes, in particular, of one's performance at a job or learning task considered in relation to an objective standard. |
| Self Management | the act of controlling and expressing one's emotions as it is appropriate within the workplace |
| Depersonalize | Does not personalize work-related issues. |
| Setting boundaries | Setting a limit what you will accept from another's words, behaviour, emotions and relationships |
| Motivational Mood Factors | Motivational/general mood factors; the ability to be optimistic, enjoy one's self and others, and to feel and express positive feelings. |
| Mission Driven | The mission of the organization for which the participant works is closely aligned with personal values. |
| Positive-optimistic | A manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind |
| Fulfilling work relationships | Co-worker relationships that create positive meaning towards the success of the professional, team or organization. |
| Strategies | |
| Stress Management Strategies | Examples of coping strategies |
| Negative Stress Management Strategies | Negative stress management strategies: Negative qualifier is determined by the participant as a negative stress management strategy |

| Name | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Alcohol Consumption | The act of using alcohol substance as a means to cope with stress. |
| Procrastination | The act of putting off, delaying or addressing something requiring attention. |
| Positive Stress Management Strategies | Positive stress management strategies: Positive qualifier is determined by the participant as a positive stress management strategy. |
| Accomplish small tasks | The act of creating small wins for one's self in order to tackle larger projects or problems. |
| Alcohol Consumption | The act of using alcohol substance as a means to cope with stress. |
| Compartmentalization | A subconscious psychological defence mechanism used to avoid cognitive dissonance, or the mental discomfort and anxiety caused by a person's having conflicting values, cognitions, emotions, beliefs, etc. within themselves. Compartmentalization allows these conflicting ideas to co-exist by inhibiting direct or explicit acknowledgement and interaction. |
| Delegate | To give responsibility or authority to another person. |
| Established Boundaries | Setting a limit what you will accept from another's words, behaviour, emotions and relationships |
| Humour | The act of creating experiences to provide laughter, positive environments or moods. |
| Retail Therapy | The act of buying special things for one's self in order to cope with stress. |
| Time management | The process of organizing and planning for specific situations or activities. |
| Writing | The act of authoring or composing words, writing emails, letters, journal entries in order to express emotions. |
| Stress Management | Stress management; strategies deployed to cope with stress and to control strong emotions. |
| Self Care | An intentional or deliberate activity done to manage mental, emotional and physical health or to cope with stressors. |
| Breathe | To take in air as a mechanism to cope with stress. |

| Name | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Counselling-Therapy | The provision of assistance and guidance in resolving personal, social, or psychological problems and difficulties, especially by a professional. |
| Cry | To shed tears or weep as a mechanism to cope with stress. |
| Eat Healthy | Being deliberate about the types of foods that are consumed to keep one’s self full of energy and feeling good. |
| Exercise | An activity of physical effort to improve health or fitness or cope with stress. |
| Meditation | The act of thinking deeply or focus one's mind for a period of time, in silence or with the aid of chanting, for religious or spiritual purposes or as a method of relaxation. |
| Sleep | A condition of body and mind such as that which typically recurs for several hours every night, in which the nervous system is relatively inactive, the eyes closed, the postural muscles relaxed, and consciousness practically suspended. |
| Support system | Individuals or a network of people relied upon to provide perspective or emotional support. |
| Work Relationships | |
| Time Away | Taking a break, a vacation, spending time a way from the stressor in order to gain perspective in order to cope. |

APPENDIX E

## Participation Request Letter

Dear (name of potential participant)

This letter is a follow up to our recent phone introduction and conversation. As you know your name was given to me as a potential candidate to interview for my research. I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the Education Department. I also work at Clover Park Technical College as a Dean of Instruction for Aerospace, Manufacturing, Trades, Technology and Workforce Development.

I'm interested in your perception regarding the influence emotional intelligence has on work related stress. I am seeking your thoughts, feelings and behaviors as well as situations, events, places and people connected with your organizational role stress and emotional intelligence experience.

I'm asking for your participation in this study by agreeing to an interview that will last no more than one hour. At any time during the interview you may stop or take a break or move on to other related questions. The interview will be digitally audio recorded. Interview recordings will be locked in a safe place. All interview responses will be kept confidential and made available to myself and my dissertation committee chair. Immediately after the interviews are transcribed and reviewed by me they will be shared with individual participants to ensure accuracy clarify intent of quotes.

I have included a consent forms for you to review. There is no need to print them as I will physically bring them to our interview for you to sign.

Please respond to this email and include the best number to reach you if you wish to participate further in the study. When I receive your responding email I will contact you to arrange a day, time and location for your personal interview.

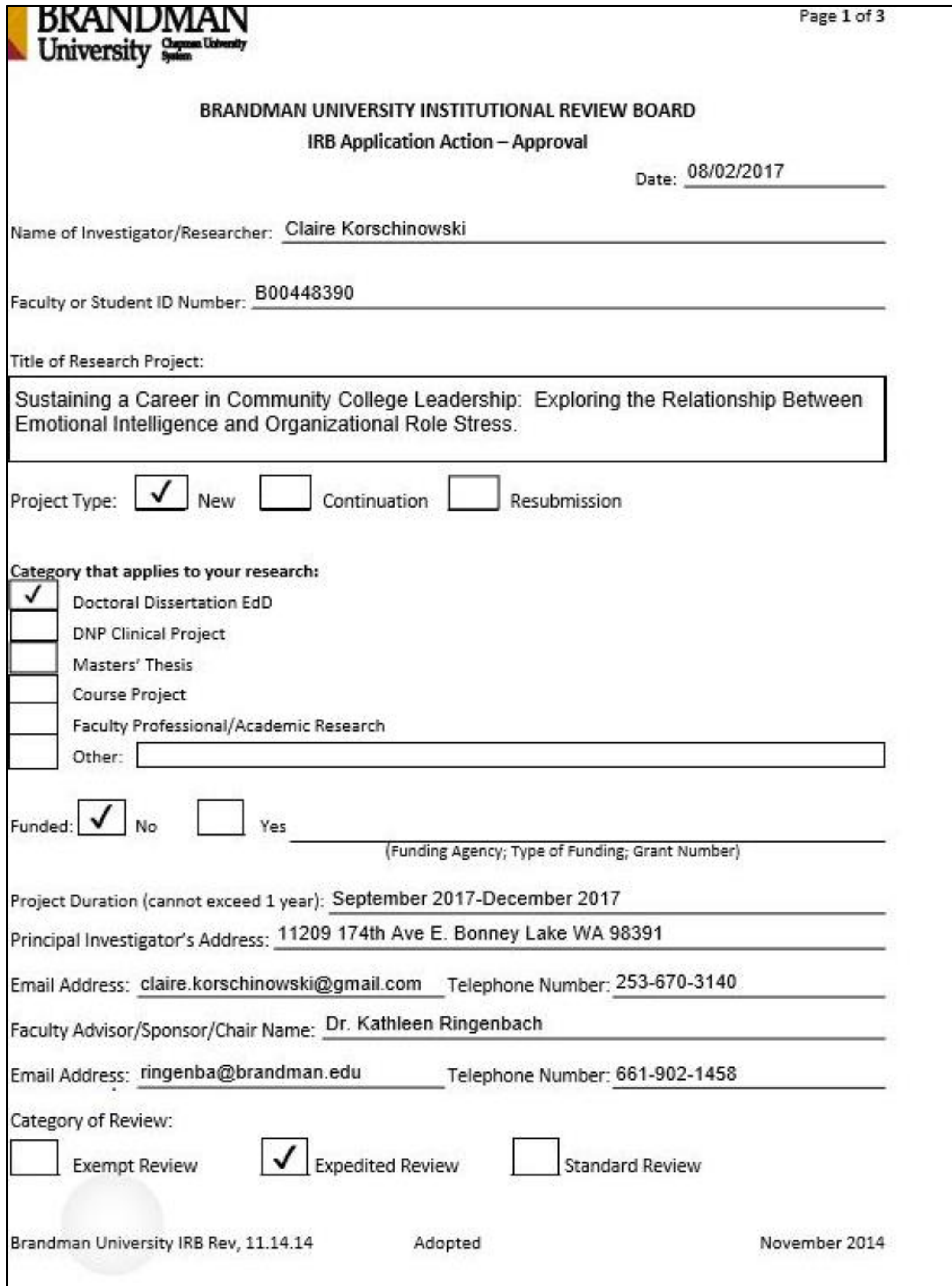
If you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Claire Korschinowski
Doctoral Candidate
Brandman University
ckorschi@mail.brandman.edu
Phone:xxx.xxx.xxxx

APPENDIX F

**IRB Approval**



BRANDMAN University Chapman University System

Page 1 of 3

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

IRB Application Action – Approval

Date: 08/02/2017

Name of Investigator/Researcher: Claire Korschinowski

Faculty or Student ID Number: B00448390

Title of Research Project:

Sustaining a Career in Community College Leadership: Exploring the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Role Stress.

Project Type: ☑ New ☐ Continuation ☐ Resubmission

**Category that applies to your research:**

- ☑ Doctoral Dissertation EdD
- ☐ DNP Clinical Project
- ☐ Masters' Thesis
- ☐ Course Project
- ☐ Faculty Professional/Academic Research
- ☐ Other:

Funded: ☑ No ☐ Yes
(Funding Agency; Type of Funding; Grant Number)

Project Duration (cannot exceed 1 year): September 2017-December 2017

Principal Investigator's Address: 11209 174th Ave E. Bonney Lake WA 98391

Email Address: claire.korschinowski@gmail.com Telephone Number: 253-670-3140

Faculty Advisor/Sponsor/Chair Name: Dr. Kathleen Ringenbach

Email Address: ringenba@brandman.edu Telephone Number: 661-902-1458

Category of Review:

☐ Exempt Review ☑ Expedited Review ☐ Standard Review

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14 Adopted November 2014

**BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**
**IRB APPLICATION ACTION – APPROVAL**
***COMPLETED BY BUIRB***

**IRB ACTION/APPROVAL**

**Name of Investigator/Researcher:** Claire Korschinowski

☐ Returned without review. Insufficient detail to adequately assess risks, protections and benefits.

☐ Approved/Certified as Exempt form IRB Review.

☐ Approved as submitted.

☑ Approved, contingent on minor revisions (see attached)

☐ Requires significant modifications of the protocol before approval. Research must resubmit with modifications (see attached)

☐ Researcher must contact IRB member and discuss revisions to research proposal and protocol.

Level of Risk: ☐ No Risk ☑ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

IRB Comments:

1. Clarify how you will obtain contact information of participants.
2. In Data Collection, cite the 3rd party Bar-on survey instrument.

IRB Reviewer: Jalin Johnson

Telephone: ____ Email: ____

BUIRB Chair: Doug DeVore Date: 08/18/17

**REVISED IRB Application** ☑ **Approved** ☐ **Returned**

**Name:** Doug DeVore

**Telephone:** 623-293-2421 **Email:** ddevore@brandman.edu **Date:** August 30, 2017

**BUIRB Chair:** Douglas DeVore

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14 Adopted November 2014

APPENDIX G

**Research Participant's Bill of Rights**

**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 course of 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