Instructional Leadership and Emotional Intelligence: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Exploring Students’ Perspectives about their Learning Experiences in Online Education

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Many people misinterpret their own emotional reactions, fail to control emotional outbursts, or act strangely under various pressures, resulting in harmful consequences to themselves, others, and society. (Drigas, & Papoutsi, 2018). Therefore, emotional intelligence is important in every aspect of life especially in instructional leadership and working with others. Another study claimed that the instructor’s ability to demonstrate aspects of emotional intelligence in different elements of course design and instruction is key to helping learners cultivate emotional intelligence, an important competence in management and leadership (Majeski, Stover, Valais, & Ronch, 2017).
Introduction

Background of the Study

Within the field of education, more research is needed to understand the students’ perspective of what emotional characteristics and type of instructional leadership that will support positive learning experiences in online classrooms.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis study was to examine the role of emotional intelligence in online education from the student’s perspective regarding their learning experiences in their online graduate programs.
Significance of the Research Study

Anticipated Goals

Goal #1: To identify any best practices related to instructional leadership in the classroom that can enhance emotional intelligence to better support students in the online learning environment.

Goal #2: To identify any insight into what students’ definition of emotional intelligence is and how it is experienced in their online education experiences.
Research Questions for the Study

1. To what extent do instructional leadership practices influence the emotional intelligence of students in the online learning environment?

2. To what extent do students demonstrate emotional intelligence within the online learning environment?

3. From the student’s perspective, how do they define emotional intelligence in the online learning environment?
Research Method—Qualitative Approach

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Research Design—Content Analysis

- Content analysis can be used on all types of written texts no matter where the material comes from (Bengtsson, 2016).

- This research design is deemed appropriate because content analysis is a well-established data analysis method that has evolved in its treatment of textual data. Specifically, the researcher used the latent content analysis to help interpret what is hidden deep within the text to discover the implied meaning regarding how instructional practices influence the emotional intelligence of students in the online learning environment (Kleinheksel, Rockich-Winston, Tawflk, & Wyatt, 2020).
Data Collection Plan

- The study did not involve contact with any human subjects. The researcher analyzed publicly available secondary source documents in which the authors have identified themselves.

- Data collection was achieved through analyzing primary and secondary sources such as websites, books, academic journals, videos, and online interviews made available publicly in databases regarding online students as they share their stories about perceptions of emotional intelligence and instructional leadership used in their online learning experiences.
Data Collection Plan

- Researcher conducted an initial search for published peer-reviewed academic journal articles in the ProQuest Database focusing on research within a 20-year period (2000-2020). The following website to access the ProQuest Database was: https://library.phoenix.edu/proquest

- This data was used to identify the presence of key themes, categories, and codes that allowed the researcher to simultaneously engage in a process of self-reflection and exploration of the role of instructional leadership and emotional intelligence on student’s learning experiences in the online learning environment.
FIRST STEP: COMPREHENSIVE SEARCH

- Utilizing the following search terms (words and phrases):
  - Emotional intelligence and instructional leadership in online education
  - Emotional intelligence and online learning
  - Emotional intelligence and instructional leadership

1. 127, 590 results identified in the ProQuest Education Database
2. 1,548 results identified in the ProQuest Education Database
3. 1,348 results screened
   - 568 records excluded for not being EI-related.
   - 559 records excluded for no mention of EI.
4. 221 records assessed for eligibility
5. 18 results included in the Qualitative Analysis

Figure 1: ProQuest Education Database flow

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Discussion

Key Findings, Limitations, Future Research, Contribution to the Industry
### Key Findings

**What’s been covered in the field from 2000-2020 on Emotional Intelligence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N= Search Results</th>
<th>Identified Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10 N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Teaching with a questioning mind, classroom discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Positive behavior support, language learning, bilingual education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>eLearning, developing online programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>eLearning, developing online programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Learner engagement, using poetry &amp; visual arts to develop emotional intelligence, instructional design, video games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>English as a Second Language, learning styles, supplemental instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Use of student portfolios, using online technologies, hybrid degree programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Classroom management, teaching critical skills and problem-solving skills, integrating technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Instructional design, response to intervention, teacher burnout, bullying and social support, building interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Social climate of learning environments, socialization, emotional competence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Key Findings

### What’s been covered in the field from 2000-2020 on Emotional Intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N=Search Results</th>
<th>Identified Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Relationship between students’ emotional intelligence, social bond, and interactions in online learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>No Articles; but a dissertation on emotional intelligence and graduate student satisfaction at online institutions of higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>Teaching effectiveness, emotional intelligence of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Emotional design in multimedia learning, emotional intelligence and learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Emotional intelligence in online higher education courses, online faculty perceptions about the value of emotional intelligence in online classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Role of teachers’ emotional intelligence in enhancing student achievement, emotional and cultural intelligence of international students in USA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>Teachers’ emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and teacher effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Emotional intelligence and teacher engagement in classroom, developing emotional intelligence and the role of higher education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings

Students’ perspective of Emotional Intelligence

1. Students are coming to class with more Emotional Intelligence than their instructors.

2. The more EI they have, the higher they will perform in their studies and self-advocate.
Key Findings
Instructors’ perspective of Emotional Intelligence

1. Instructors believe that both interpersonal skills and flexibility were most important.

2. Instructors may be able to see this perception for students but may not be able to see how this may look in their own online teaching practices. Therefore, more genuine self-reflection and student feedback are needed to help online instructors grow.
Limitations

1. The original research design for this study was a phenomenological research design.

2. Due to COVID-19, there were no human subjects in this study. Student interviews were not feasible to gain more insights into their perceptions about emotional intelligence in online education.

3. Time was limited due to having to go back through IRB to gain research design approval during a pandemic.

4. Eleven Databases within ProQuest Education were utilized instead of including other types of textual data to conduct content analysis.
Future Research

For Administration, Lead Faculty Leadership Roles, Staff, Instructors, and Students

1. Conduct a qualitative research study that includes student interviews, questionnaires, and/or data collection methods to gain rich insights into their lived experiences in their online courses.

2. Conduct a study that focuses on the emotional intelligence of administrative staff and other lead faculty leadership positions in how they interact with online instructors.

3. Conduct a quantitative research study that focuses on the emotional intelligence traits within learning organizations for faculty, staff, administration.

4. Conduct a mixed method research study that includes both student interviews and emotional intelligence instruments to gain insights into how to support them in the online learning environment.
1. Findings suggest that learning organizations should focus more on personal mastery and mental models to help both faculty and students increase their emotional intelligence.

2. Findings can be used to help higher education institutions recognize that more resources should be geared towards developing skills in self-regulation and self-motivation for both students and faculty.

3. Provide learning opportunities that will develop communication, leadership, conflict management, building bonds, collaboration/cooperation, and teamwork for both students and faculty.

4. Provide self-care opportunities for faculty and leadership, even if it means to create an adjunct faculty pool to avoid burnout so faculty can show up willing, ready, and able to serve consistently with each course assignment.
It’s not about how much you know, but how much you care. Students can sense this in interactions with you. Happiness is an inside job and when we all show up willing, ready, and able that level of servitude will become a part of the fabric of the online learning environment.
References


THANK YOU!

Got Questions About the Study? drhollandj@email.phoenix.edu or drholland.education@gmail.com