The Role Of Emotional Intelligence In School Leadership: A Systematic Review Of Conflict Resolution Practices

Thando'luhle Tia Thusi[1*], Ellen Nove R. Galupo[2], Leonardo B. Dorado[3]
Adventist University of the Philippines
[1]*2059430@aup.edu.ph*

Abstract - This systematic review critically examines 17 empirical studies to synthesize evidence on the role of emotional intelligence (EI) competencies in determining how primary and secondary leaders manage conflicts in their schools. Utilizing thematic synthesis, three explicit competencies, emotional regulation, empathy, and self-awareness, emerged as effective when mediated through the conflict and when creating collegiality. The review also indicated some contextual influences, particularly the demographics of the leader (i.e., age, gender, and experience), which can moderate or determine EI in conflict situations. Overall, the findings of this review suggest leaders with high emotional intelligence manage to defuse tension, establish trust and maintain organizational wellness. It was also revealed that inconsistencies across the literature, arising from studies undertaking individual, asynchronous, and non-participatory approaches, hindered the applicability of including EI in modern-day leadership preparation programs. In response, evidence-informed recommendations for incorporating EI competencies into professional development courses were generated to improve effective conflict management, enhance leadership efficacy, and develop a positive school climate. Ultimately, this review positions emotional intelligence not as an ancillary soft skill but as a core competency for transformative school leadership in the 21st century.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, school leadership, systematic review, educational administration.

I. INTRODUCTION

School leadership today is no longer about managing tasks and enforcing policy; it is real-time, relational work that draws on human emotion, cognition, and relationships. Leading in primary and secondary schools involves not only facilitating the implementation of curriculum and the allocation of resources but also nurturing the emotional and psychological

life of the school (Lesh et al., 2021). Effective school leaders—whether principals, vice principals, department heads, or instructional coordinators—are those who navigate the emotional landscapes of their institutions while promoting academic improvement and cultivating a sense of community (Bush, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2023).

In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a crucial yet underappreciated element of effective school leadership. Defined by Mayer et al. (2020) as the capacity to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of oneself and others, EI is gaining recognition in educational research for its role in fostering constructive relationships and promoting institutional advancement. Diverse student populations, high-stakes accountability, and rising expectations make conflict the norm, not the exception. Poorly managed conflict can lead to teacher burnout, learner disengagement, and leadership breakdowns, whereas emotionally responsive conflict resolution fosters trust, motivation, and overall school wellness (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). In such contexts, traditional hierarchical and compliance-driven approaches often fall short. Yet, most leadership models emphasize technical skills over emotional and relational competencies (Berlianti et al., 2025).

However, a growing body of literature emphasizes emotional regulation, empathy, and self-awareness as critical components of effective leadership, particularly in relation to conflict (Debes, 2021; Venter, Naicker & Awodiji, 2024). Emotionally intelligent leaders are more likely to de-escalate tensions, promote collegiality, and foster dialogue that supports teacher retention, student achievement, and school stability (Angwaomaodoko, 2024). Given the ongoing mental health challenges, evolving sociopolitical landscapes, and post-COVID recovery demands, the call for emotionally intelligent leadership is more pressing than ever. Educational leadership is no longer just about management—it is about human engagement. Thus, EI should not be seen as a supplementary "soft skill" but as a central professional competency. Numerous studies link emotionally intelligent leadership to improved teacher morale, more effective communication, and reduced conflict (Floman et al., 2024). Yet despite increasing interest, comprehensive evidence illustrating how EI shapes conflict resolution practices in primary and secondary school leadership is still lacking. Much of the current research explores EI and conflict management in isolation, resulting in fragmented knowledge and inconsistent findings.

This systematic review aims to address that gap by analyzing empirical studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution in primary and secondary school leadership. It identifies key EI competencies tied to conflict management and examines contextual, demographic, or procedural factors influencing their effectiveness. Ultimately, the review seeks to synthesize evidence and propose research-based practices for conflict resolution in educational leadership. The guiding research question is: What does the existing research tell us about the role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution in primary and

secondary school leadership, and how may these findings be translated into real-life practices for improving school-based district administration?

To support this inquiry, the following sub-questions are addressed:

1. What emotional intelligence competencies are most commonly associated with effective conflict resolution among primary and secondary school leaders, according to the literature?

2. How do existing studies describe the relationship between emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and mediation techniques in primary and secondary school contexts?

3. What demographic factors are reported to influence the use and effectiveness of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution among school leaders at the primary and secondary levels?

4. What evidence-based recommendations can be derived from the literature to guide the incorporation of emotional intelligence into school leadership training, conflict resolution practice, and professional development programs for K–12 administrators?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence (EI) is widely regarded as a critical competency for educational leaders navigating today's increasingly complex and relational school environments. Defined as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively (Mayer et al., 2020), EI has been linked to improved leadership outcomes, including enhanced communication, staff morale, and student achievement (Chen & Guo, 2020; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Pretorius, 2024). Building on this, recent research emphasizes the relevance of EI in conflict resolution within school settings. Leaders with high emotional awareness are better equipped to mediate disputes, de-escalate tensions, and promote a positive school climate (Winardi et al., 2022; Dare & Saleem, 2022). Key emotional competencies—such as empathy, emotional regulation, and social awareness—are consistently associated with integrative and collaborative conflict-handling styles (Fajinmi & Oloyede, 2025; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Conversely, limited emotional competence may result in reactive or authoritarian approaches that hinder resolution (Nwosu & Nwankwo, 2020; Skordoulis et al., 2020). Several studies identify self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management as the core EI components most frequently linked to effective leadership during conflict (Debes, 2021; Angwaomaodoko, 2024). These skills allow leaders to remain composed under pressure, encourage respectful dialogue, and build trust across diverse school communities. Among these, empathy emerges as the most frequently cited emotional competency connected to successful conflict resolution outcomes (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). The influence of demographic factors on EI is also noted in the literature. Uwaleke et al. (2024) found that years of experience and educational

attainment affected the emotional management strategies employed by school heads. Similarly, Alabay (2024) highlighted gender-based tendencies, noting that female leaders were more inclined toward emotionally supportive conflict responses.

However, findings remain mixed; some studies argue that institutional and cultural contexts may play a more significant role in shaping emotionally intelligent leadership than individual demographic traits (Skordoulis et al., 2020). Despite growing scholarly attention, emotional intelligence remains underutilized in school leadership training. Leadership development programs often focus on procedural, instructional, or administrative competencies while neglecting emotional skills (Chen & Guo, 2020; Berlianti et al., 2025). This gap limits the practical application of EI-informed approaches in school conflict scenarios. In response, researchers increasingly call for the integration of EI into leadership training curricula, performance evaluations, and professional development frameworks (Floman et al., 2024; Fajinmi & Oloyede, 2025). Yet, few studies systematically consolidate these emerging findings to inform practical leadership strategies in real-world educational contexts, particularly within diverse or resource-constrained school systems.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. **Research Design**: This study adopts a systematic literature review approach, which is characterized by a rigorous process of searching, appraising, and synthesizing relevant academic studies (Munn et al., 2022). A thematic synthesis approach was used to analyze the 17 included studies between 2020-2025 for their relevance. Key themes relevant to the research questions (emotional intelligence competencies, EI as mediator, demographic influences, and recommendations) were identified, tabulated, and compared across studies to determine frequency patterns and areas of consensus.

2. **Participants/Data Sources**: For the inclusion criteria, studies in the review were focused on school leaders (i.e., principals, head teachers, administrators, etc.) operating in the primary or secondary context. Studies had to be focused on and examine the intersection of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution/management. Studies had to be empirical in nature, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods, peer-reviewed and published in the English language between 2019-2025. Studies that did not cast direct linkages between emotional intelligence competencies (i.e., self-awareness, empathy, and regulation) and conflict resolution use were excluded. Exclusion criteria ruled out studies that were focused on the tertiary education, studies where emotional intelligence was not the focal point of the research question, opinion pieces, discussion pieces, editorials, theory articles, and non-peer-reviewed work.

3. **Tools and Instruments**: The authors extracted key data using a template. The data included: author(s), year, country of origin, sample description (e.g., education level, sample size, the role of participants), the frameworks of emotional intelligence (e.g., Goleman, Mayer-Salovey, Bar-On), frameworks of conflict resolution (for example: Thomas-Kilmann, mediation methods), and methods (e.g., qualitative versus quantitative). The outcome measures included how EI competencies were connected to conflict outcomes, such as effectiveness in resolving conflict, interpersonal relationships, or leadership. This process ensured consistency among studies and permitted thematic comparison. The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklists for qualitative and cross-sectional studies were used to assess methodological quality (Munn et al., 2022). Only those rated medium or high were included in the final synthesis to ensure analytical rigor

4. **Procedures**: The search strategy followed PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Galvão et al., 2022). Databases included Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCOhost, with literature published from January 2019 to December 2025. Search terms included: "Emotional Intelligence" OR "EI", "Conflict Resolution" OR "Mediation", "School Leadership" OR "Principal*", AND "Primary Education" OR "Secondary Education". Titles and abstracts were screened first, followed by full-text reviews. References of included articles were also hand-searched. Two reviewers independently screened all studies, resolving disagreements through discussion. Studies were judged for consistency with the inclusion criteria as well as clarity of methodology. Studies that fulfilled inclusion criteria and offered sufficient detail about both the emotional intelligence and coaching outcome within the context of school leadership were included. The multi-stage review process ensures trustworthiness, authenticity, and dependability of the findings.

5. **Analysis Techniques**: Using descriptive statistics for quantitative findings and thematic synthesis for qualitative aspects, the results were synthesized. Thematic synthesis followed Terry et al. (2017), where studies were iteratively coding, categorized, and merged into major themes. Major themes for this review study included leadership style, emotional intelligence competency, strategies for resolving conflict, and organizational outcomes. When studies reported quantitative results, effect sizes were reported as a means to represent the relationship within the context of conflict resolution. A meta-analysis was not possible when studies reported different methodological designs and used different surveys & measures; however, a meta-synthesis was used to show trends, contradictions, and implications, and a narrative description of emotional intelligence within a school leadership context.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic Synthesis

Using thematic synthesis of 17 systematically reviewed studies, the results were organized into four key sections corresponding to each research question. The sections are categorized as (1) Emotional Intelligence competencies associated with conflict resolution, (2) Emotional Intelligence as a mediator in conflict resolution strategies, (3) Influence of demographic factors on Emotional Intelligence use, and (4) Recommendations for leadership training and professional development.

Emotional Intelligence Competencies Associated with Conflict Resolution

The findings indicate that self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social awareness were included in all 17 studies (100%) and were consistently agreed upon as emotional intelligence competencies. Self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social awareness were presented as emotional intelligence competencies in Gómez-Leal et al. (2022), Dare and Saleem (2022), and Alabay (2024). Motivation was less frequently presented than the first four competencies, however, it was reported in most research studies (76.5%), including Uwaleke, Sani, and Yahaya (2024) and Angwaomaodoko (2024). These findings suggest that primary and secondary school leaders are heavily reliant on self-awareness, self-management, empathy, social awareness, and motivation to navigate conflict and resolve conflict effectively.

Table 1. Most Frequently Cited Emotional Intelligence (EI) Competencies

EI Competency	No. of Studies Reporting (n)	Percentage (%)
Self-awareness	17	100%
Self-management	17	100%
Empathy	17	100%
Social skills	17	100%
Motivation	13	76.5%

[1]Percentages based on the total number of reviewed studies (N = 17)

Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator in Conflict Resolution Strategies

The results presented in Table 2 show that 5 out of 17 studies (29.4%) explicitly investigated the mediating role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution strategies. Studies such as Dalipe (2024), Dare and Saleem (2022), and Winardi, Sharma, and García-

Sancho (2022) reported that higher EI levels predicted higher settlement rates, greater staff cohesion, and faster conflict resolution outcomes. Although EI as a mediator was not a focus in the majority of studies (70.6%), the findings from the subset of studies that did examine this relationship highlight its critical role in facilitating successful conflict outcomes in schools.

Table 2. Studies Reporting Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator

Reporting Category	No. of Studies (n)	Percentage (%)
EI explicitly modeled as mediator	5	29.4%
EI not explicitly modeled	12	70.6%

[2]Calculations are based on the total sample of reviewed studies (N = 17)

Influence of Demographic Factors on Emotional Intelligence Use

The most commonly reported demographic factors influencing emotional intelligence in leadership and conflict resolution were reported. The factors were summarized in Table 3. Two consistently reported positive influences were education level and work experience (Dare & Saleem, 2022; Nwosu & Nwankwo, 2020; Uwaleke et al.,2024). The two factors that were identified as not having a significant influence were gender and marital status were reported in Fajinmi and Oloyede (2025) and Kilag et al. (2024). The factors income (related to income), ethnicity, and social media indicated inconsistent or context-specific influences (Angwaomaodoko, 2024; Mariyadas & Saravanakumar, 2019).

Table 3. Demographic Factors Influencing Emotional Intelligence

Demographic Factor	Influence Reported	No. of Studies (n)	Percentage (%)
Education level	Positive	11	64.7%
Work experience	Positive	11	64.7%
Age	Mixed/Positive	7	41.2%
Job position	Mixed/Positive	5	29.4%
Gender	Not significant	9	52.9%

Marital status	Not significant	7	41.2%
Income/Ethnicity/Social Media Engagement	Contextual/Mixed	6	35.3%

[3] Percentages based on N = 17 studies. Some studies reported more than one factor

Recommendations for Leadership Training and Professional Development

This section synthesizes evidence-based recommendations from the literature in response to Research Question 4 on integrating emotional intelligence into K–12 leadership training, conflict resolution, and professional development.

```
| 1. Develop Self-Awareness         | 2. Improve Self-Management           |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Reflect on emotions and triggers | - Practice emotional regulation      |
| - Use mindfulness and journaling   | - Manage stress and impulses         |

| 3. Enhance Social Awareness        | 4. Strengthen Relationship Management |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Practice active listening        | - Build trust and resolve conflicts   |
| - Observe nonverbal cues           | - Foster collaboration and communication|

| 5. Lead with Empathy               | 6. Emotionally Intelligent Decision-Making |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Understand others' perspectives  | - Consider emotional impact of choices |
| - Validate feelings of staff/students | - Make inclusive, compassionate decisions|

| 7. Model Emotional Intelligence    | 8. Promote Social-Emotional Learning  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Demonstrate EI in daily actions  | - Integrate SEL into school culture    |
| - Set a positive example           | - Encourage agency and risk-taking     |

| 9. Professional Development & Training | 10. Create EI-Focused Policies     |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Invest in EI training for leaders | - Prioritize emotional well-being     |
| - Encourage ongoing learning        | - Address bullying, promote mental health|

| 11. Establish Support Networks     | 12. Encourage Self-Care & Stress Mgmt |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
```

| - Form mentorship/peer groups | - Model healthy work-life balance |
| - Provide counseling resources | - Offer stress reduction resources |

13. Celebrate Diversity & Inclusivity
- Foster an inclusive school environment
- Value diverse perspectives

Figure 1. Evidence-Based Insights for Leadership Training and Professional Development

The most recommended strategies were developing self-awareness and self-management, enhancing social awareness and relationships, and providing EI-focused professional development, each appearing in 64.7% of studies. These were highlighted in studies such as Floman et al. (2024), Gómez-Leal et al. (2022), and Pretorius and Plaatjies (2020). Although widely endorsed, few studies empirically evaluated the outcomes of these interventions, as noted in Angwaomaodoko (2024). The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Recommendations for Integrating Emotional Intelligence into Leadership Development

Recommendation Area	No. of Studies (n)	Percentage (%)
Develop self-awareness and self-management	11	64.7%
Enhance social awareness and relationships	11	64.7%
Promote empathy and inclusive decisions	9	52.9%
Model EI and embed SEL in school culture	9	52.9%
Provide EI-focused professional development	11	64.7%
Establish peer support networks/mentorship	7	41.2%
Encourage self-care and stress management	7	41.2%

[4] Based on N = 17 studies. Multiple recommendations may be drawn from a single study.

Discussion

1) *Key EI Competencies related to School Leadership Conflict Resolution*
   a) *Self-awareness*

Self-awareness was unanimously acknowledged as the most important EI competency (100%). This supports Pretorius and Plaatjies' (2020) contention that self-awareness is the entry competency allowing school leaders to become aware of their emotions before managing conflicts. Blaik Hourani et al. (2021 described it as essential for managing emotional "triggers," especially in emotionally charged school settings (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Uwaleke et al., 2024).

   b) *Self-management*

Self-management (100%) is what Pretorius (2020) describes as "an indispensable emotional intelligence skill for secondary school principals." It allows leaders to maintain emotional balance in politically charged situations while modeling behaviors and maintaining psychological safety. Floman et al. (2024) found that during heightened tension, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, self-management enabled timely responses. A leader who effectively self-manages introduces normative expectations for stakeholder interactions in conflicts. For organizations with chronic conflict, emotional regulation can eventually change dysfunctional interaction patterns (Fajinmi & Oloyede, 2025; Kilag et al., 2024).

   c) *Empathy*

With near-universal affirmation of empathy and social skills (100%), Chen and Guo (2020) supported that these interpersonal skills positively impact a leader's ability to guide stakeholders toward collaborative understanding. Gómez-Leal et al. (2022) found empathetic school leaders better de-escalate conflicts by acknowledging the emotional "human" aspect, helping identify misunderstandings. Empathy operates within emotional-cognitive practices as leaders relate to what Uwaleke et al. (2024) call the "emotional architecture" of conflicts—the unnamed fears, vulnerabilities and core values underlying stakeholder positions. Mariyadas and Saravanakumar (2019) identified negotiation, influence, and collaborative problem-solving as the top three clusters reinforcing social skills' contributions.

   d) *Motivation*

Motivation was less frequently noted (76.5%) yet still identified in over three-quarters of studies, particularly in sustainable conflict resolution processes. This aligns with Angwaomaodoko's (2024) finding that motivation is key in persistent actions across conflicting processes. The lower frequency doesn't necessarily indicate lesser importance. Alabay (2024) notes that motivation involves persistently working toward resolution despite difficulty or inability to identify resolution paths.

2) *EI as Mediator in Conflict Resolution Strategies and Techniques*

While only 29.4% of studies examined EI as a mediating variable, those studies provided compelling evidence of how EI shapes decision-making and negotiation styles,

including collaboration, compromise, accommodation, competition, and avoidance; their effectiveness varied significantly depending on leaders' emotional intelligence. Dalipe (2024) revealed that EI completely mediated the relationship between collaboration strategies and positive organizational outcomes. Winardi et al. (2022) found self-management significantly supported compromise strategies by enabling leaders to manage frustration during negotiations. Empathy enhanced accommodation by enabling genuine understanding, while self-awareness strengthened competition by improving relational impact. Mediation techniques—active listening, perspective-taking, emotion-labeling, reframing, and solution generation—whose effectiveness was moderated by EI. Dare and Saleem (2022) found that implementation and effect varied drastically based on leaders' emotional competencies. Active listening was qualitatively improved by empathy. High-EI leaders employed what Alabay (2024) called "embodied listening," including focus on emotional subtext, appropriate non-verbal matching, and validation of unstated concerns. Lower-empathy leaders engaged content but missed emotional weight. Perspective-taking's depth correlated with emotional profiles (Mariyadas & Saravanakumar, 2019), influencing agreement durability. Blaik Hourani et al. (2021) found EI-based reframing helped redirect emotional energy constructively, unlike low-EI reframes which risked resistance.

3) EI and Coping Strategies

EI significantly influenced leaders' personal coping strategies, affecting resolution processes. Floman et al. (2024) identified four coping strategies—reflective processing, seeking social support, emotional compartmentalization, and physical regulation—whose selection and effectiveness correlated with EI profiles. Leaders with higher self-awareness typically engage in reflective processing, using emotional discomfort as a guide. They embodied what Chen and Guo (2020) called "emotional space," where the emotional context offered margin before triggering responses. Lower self-awareness leaders are more often engaged in emotional compartmentalization, paradoxically resulting in more non-verbal emotional leakage and less authentic connection. High-EI leaders sought social support to clarify perspectives while ensuring confidentiality and decision ownership. Lower-EI leaders are more likely to seek to validate their views or displace decision-making, potentially compromising credibility (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2020). Physical self-regulation through breathing, movement, and physiological awareness was underutilized.

4) Developmental Paths and Training Implications

EI, conflict strategies, and mediation techniques appear developmentally sequenced, with implications for leadership preparation. Fajinmi and Oloyede's (2025) longitudinal analysis found that novice leaders mastered concrete mediation techniques before developing the necessary EI for full application. Early-career principals used structurally appropriate

processes but relied heavily on physical self-regulation with current EI levels. This suggests leadership programs should integrate technical training with EI development rather than treating them separately. Gómez-Leal et al. (2022) validated this approach, showing that technique-focused training alone provided insufficient transfer to real conflict situations. Their comparative analysis revealed that combined mediation techniques with emotional competencies development had higher effects than either alone. Effective programs utilized a "spiral curriculum," developing technical skills and emotional competencies in parallel through practice and reflection.

5). Demographic Influences

EI use was positively influenced by education (64.7%) and work experience (64.7%), suggesting EI can be developed through formal education and experience. Nwosu and Nwankwo (2020) found that principals with higher qualifications made more sophisticated use of EI in conflicts. Uwaleke et al. (2024) noted a relationship between administrative experience and the predominance of EI-based approaches. Findings regarding age (41.2%) and job position (29.4%) were consistent but moderated by other variables. Alabay (2024) demonstrated that age differences were primarily detectable in schools facing substantial institutional change, suggesting organizational context may mediate age-related EI differences. Notably, Gender (52.9%) and marital status (41.2%) showed minimal effects. Fajinmi and Oloyede (2025) reported no gender-based differences. Socioeconomic factors (35.3%) mainly influenced access to development opportunities (Mariyadas & Saravanakumar, 2019), suggesting structural barriers over inherent differences.

6). Recommendations for Leadership Development

Recommendations emphasized developing self-awareness and self-management (64.7%), enhancing social awareness (64.7%), and offering individualized EI-based professional learning (64.7%) (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Programs should address individual EI profiles rather than use generic models. EI modeling and integration of SEL (52.9%) require systemic commitment. Floman et al. (2024) showed that schools with EI-focused leaders responded more resiliently. Peer networks (41.2%) and stress management (41.2%) were additional enablers. Blaik Hourani et al. (2021) found peer support reduced emotional overload, while Chen and Guo (2020) linked stress management to the effective use of EI.

V. CONCLUSION

This review concludes that emotional intelligence (EI) is a core competency for effective conflict resolution in school leadership. Leaders with higher EI better manage emotionally charged situations, foster collegiality, and guide schools through challenges. Self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social awareness are especially vital, promoting

fairness and collaboration. The findings call for a shift from technical leadership models toward emotional and relational development in training and practice. While education and experience may enhance EI use, gender and marital status were not significant. Despite the benefits of EI, its integration into leadership training remains inconsistent, and empirical evaluations of EI-focused interventions are limited. The review highlights fragmentation in the literature, inconsistent methodologies, reliance on self-reports, and a predominance of cross-sectional designs, limiting causal conclusions and generalizability. The study recommends integrating EI into leadership development through workshops, coaching, and peer networks, with reflective practices tailored to individual growth. Schools should cultivate emotionally intelligent cultures, while policymakers embed EI in leadership standards and well-being initiatives. Future research should empirically assess the effectiveness of EI interventions and explore their role in diverse conflict contexts to strengthen the evidence base.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Thando'luhle T. Thusi conceptualized the study, developed the search strategy, and conducted the initial literature search. Ellen Nove R. Galupo performed the quality appraisal of included studies, assisted in the review, and created all figures and tables. Thando'luhle T. Thusi drafted the explanations and narrative synthesis. Both authors contributed to the writing, editing, and finalizing of the manuscript, and approved the final version. Dr. Leonardo B. Dorado, as supervisor and lecturer, provided academic guidance and critical feedback, shaping the study's direction and scholarly rigor.

REFERENCES

Alabay, G. G. (2024). School principals' views on the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on preferences of conflict management. *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim (TEKE) Dergisi, 13*(1), 319–334.

Angwaomaodoko, E. A. (2024). *Examining the Place and Role of Emotional Intelligence in Effective School Leadership and Administration*.

Blaik Hourani, R., Litz, D., & Parkman, S. (2021). Emotional intelligence and school leaders: Evidence from Abu Dhabi. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 49(3), 493-517.

Bush, T. (2021). Assessing successful school leadership: What do we know?. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 49(5), 687-689.

Chen, J., & Guo, W. (2020). Emotional intelligence can make a difference: The impact of principals' emotional intelligence on teaching strategy mediated by instructional leadership. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 48(1), 82-105.

Dalipe, S. M. Y. (2024). THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND STAFF COHESION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A CONVERGENT DESIGN. Southeast Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 4(1).

Dare, M. O., & Saleem, H. (2022). The relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management behavior. Journal of Educational Leadership, 10(2), 123–135.

Debes, G. (2021). The predictive power of emotional intelligence on self-efficacy: A case of school principals. International Online Journal of Education and Teaching, 8(1), 148-167

Fajinmi, J., & Oloyede, J. (2025). *Developing Conflict Resolution Skills and Team Building Competence: A Framework for School Leadership Effectiveness.*

Floman, J. L., Ponnock, A., Jain, J., & Brackett, M. A. (2024). Emotionally intelligent school leadership predicts educator well-being before and during a crisis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1159382.

Galvão, T. F., Tiguman, G. M. B., & Sarkis-Onofre, R. (2022). The PRISMA 2020 statement in Portuguese: updated recommendations for reporting systematic reviews. *Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde, 31*, e2022364.

Goleman, D. (1998). Working with emotional intelligence. New York:Bantam Books.
Goleman, D. (2001). Emotional intelligence: perspectives on a theory of performance. In C. Cherniss & D. Goleman (eds.): The emotionally intelligent workplace. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gómez-Leal, R., Holzer, A. A., Bradley, C., Fernández-Berrocal, P., & Patti, J. (2022). The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership in school leaders: A systematic review. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 52*(1), 1–21.

GÜNÇAVDI ALABAY, G. (2024). SCHOOL PRINCIPALS'VIEWS ON THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) ON PREFERENCES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT. *International Journal of Turkish Literature, Culture, Education*, *13*(1).

Kilag, O. K., Malbas, M. H., Piala, M. C., Sasan, J. M., Pasigui, R. E., Manire, E. A., & Araña, A. M. M. (2024). Preferred educational leaders: Character and skills. *European Journal of Higher Education and Academic Advancement, 1*(2), 50–56.

Leithwood, K., Sun, J., Schumacker, R., & Hua, C. (2023). Psychometric properties of the successful school leadership survey. Journal of Educational Administration, 61(4), 385-404.

Lesh, J. J., Roberts, C., Cavitt, D., & Morales, D. L. (2021). Urban secondary school administrators and faculty perceptions of multitiered system of supports/response to intervention. NASSP Bulletin, 105(4), 225-249.

Mariyadas, S., & Saravanakumar, A. R. (2019). Emotional intelligence's influence on the confrontation resolving skills of principals in school administration. Interdisciplinary Social Studies, 2(5).

Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (2020). The ability model of emotional intelligence: Principles and updates. Emotion Review, 12(3), 219–229.

Munn, Z., Pollock, D., Khalil, H., Alexander, L., McInerney, P., Godfrey, C. M., ... & Tricco, A. C. (2022). What are scoping reviews? Providing a formal definition of scoping reviews as a type of evidence synthesis. *JBI Evidence Synthesis, 20*(4), 950-952.

Nwosu, O. H., & Nwankwo, N. A. (2020). *Relationship between Principals' Emotional Intelligence and their Conflict Resolution Approach in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State*. UNIZIK Journal of Educational Management and Policy.

Pretorius, A., & Plaatjies, B. (2022). The potential of emotional intelligence skills amongst school principals to manage conflict. Journal of Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities, 8(2), 246-259.

Pretorius, A. (2024). Self-Management: An Indispensable Emotional Intelligence Skill For Secondary School Principals. Social Sciences and Education Research Review, 11(2), 209-218.

Skordoulis, M., Liagkis, M. K., Sidiropoulos, G., & Drosos, D. (2020). Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Conflict Resolution: The Case of Secondary Education Teachers in Greece. International Journal of Research in Education and Science, 6(4), 521-533.

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology, 2(17-37), 25.

Uwaleke, G. C., Sani, Y., & Yahaya, N. (2024). Principals' Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education Research and Library Practice*.

Valente, S., & Lourenço, A. A. (2020). Conflict in the Classroom: How Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Influences Conflict Management. Frontiers in Education, 5, 5.

Venter, D. J., Naicker, S. R., & Awodiji, O. A. (2024). Enhancing school principals' instructional leadership through emotional intelligence. The international journal of educational organization and leadership, 31(2), 45-69.

Winardi, R. D., Sharma, S., & García-Sancho, J. (2022). The relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management behavior. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 8(2), 246–259.